It is no question that nowadays women are seen as increasingly more equal to their male counterparts, but not in all aspects. Women’s magazines are still oft regarded as trivial catalogues meant to advertise, not inform. In the essay “Sex, Lies and Advertising” by Gloria Steinem, she addresses content in relation to advertising, as well as the advertisements themselves and how they pose the largest issue to publication of free-speaking women’s magazines like *Ms.* Steinem served as a leader and media spokeswoman for the women’s liberation movement in the late 1960s and 1970s, as well as editor in chief of *Ms.* magazine. Advertisements in women’s magazines have taken a severe toll on the editorial content and depth of these publications, which is why women’s magazines continue to be not taken seriously. Throughout the essay, Steinem focuses on three main points. First, she argues that women’s magazines have advertisement expectations that men’s magazines do not. Second, she addresses the prominent history of control asserted by advertisers on women’s magazines. Last, the financial toll that rejecting these harsh requirements of advertisers has. Although Steinem does an exemplary job at describing the chains that advertisers place on women’s magazines, her argument is principally one-sided, and relies heavily on pathos and the emotional appeal to women.

Steinem’s purpose to composing this essay is to provoke a change in the content of women’s magazines. Steinem believes that women’s magazines can be regarded as true journalism, but she cannot complete this swap on her own. She calls her audience to help her in
making this change. “If readers were to act in a concerted way to change traditional practices of all women’s magazines and the marketing of all women’s products, we could do it.” (36). This article is aimed at educated women, who possess similar views to Steinem, and are eager to witness a change. Although Steinem is writing to a specific audience, she relies heavily on the use of pathos through many examples of prejudice that will appeal to women. This tactic is smart, but it limits her use of the other two rhetorical appeals, and may make it seem as though her essay establishes an emotionally driven tone. In this essay, Steinem maintains an eloquent and precise writing style, and avoids verbosity.

When I sit down to read 17 magazine or Teen Vogue, I know exactly what I am getting myself into. By this I mean, I am not surprised when I open a magazine to reveal hundreds of advertisements and beauty product endorsements. Reading these magazines provides a “getaway” for me, from my countless textbooks. Once a month, I am delighted to hunker down and absorb mindless written entertainment and the same goes for my mother and many of my friends. Although I do thoroughly enjoy well-written editorial works, I also am a teenage girl, and love to learn how to do the latest trendy French braid. In this aspect of Gloria Steinem’s essay, she does not address the women like me. I am all for correcting the misconception of women’s magazines, but at the same time, this change should not discontinue the sale of trash and beauty magazines. I would appreciate more depth in the superficial articles of Teen Vogue, but I am not insistent upon it, because magazines are not my only literary resource.

From end to end, Steinem harshly criticizes companies that exhibit serious constraints on the format and perception of their advertisements. She recounts a meeting with Leonard Lauder, owner of Estee Lauder, who sternly refuses to advertise in Ms. mainly because he believes the readership is too unkempt to buy his products. Steinem is right in believing this is outrageous,
but she does not look at his argument from a business standpoint. “Surveys show they are more likely to buy such things than the readers or, say, *Cosmopolitan* or *Vogue,*” (30). Steinem explains to Lauder. This is a confusing example made by Steinem, because at the end of her argument, she lets her emotions seep out of the essay upon stating, “His company had the appeal of having been started by a creative and hardworking woman, his mother, Estee Lauder.” (30)

This illustration is polarized to the business themed essay, but plays along with the emotions of other hardworking women who are reading this piece. For the duration of the essay, Steinem critiques other magazines and advertisers, but fails to do so with her own. Although many of her arguments are business-based but emotionally driven, Steinem still does an exceptional job at disclosing the prejudiced attitude towards women’s magazines.

In this essay, Steinem harshly criticizes the prejudiced attitude exhibited by society towards women’s magazines. She shares various personal experiences to strengthen and justify her argument, but does not counter these arguments through the eyes of a businessman, like the advertisers that are so power-hungry. Although Steinem does an exemplary job at describing the chains that advertisers place on women’s magazines, her argument is principally one-sided, and relies heavily on pathos and the emotional appeal to women.