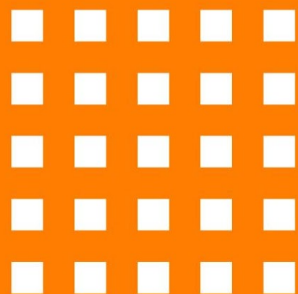




Analyzing Contemporary Propaganda

by the
Media Education Lab



LESSON PLANS

These lesson plans provide activities to extend learning from the
Mind Over Media online platform
www.mindovermedia.eu

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There has never been a more important time to explore the complex role of propaganda in contemporary society. Through this curriculum, learners gain knowledge, activate critical thinking and creativity, and deepen their sense of social responsibility. These lessons can be used with or without access to digital technology and Internet access.

1. Defining Propaganda

There are many different definitions of propaganda, but all definitions share some common themes. These definitions reflect changing time periods and contexts.

2. Recognizing Propaganda Techniques

Although propaganda takes many forms, it can be recognized by its use of techniques that activate strong emotions, simplify ideas, respond to audience needs, and attack opponents.

3. To Share or Not to Share

It is important to consciously reflect on the potential benefits and harms that may result from propaganda because people participate in the spread of propaganda when they share with their social networks.

4. Where Propaganda Is Found

It can be challenging to recognize propaganda when it is found in entertainment, education, and news because do not expect to be persuaded by these types of content.

5. Analyzing Propaganda with Critical Questions

Analyze propaganda by asking critical questions about the message that identify its author, purpose, and point of view. Also consider multiple interpretations of how people may respond to the message.

6. Talking Back to Propaganda

When you demonstrate your ability to comment, critically analyze, and put propaganda in context by creating a short video response, you are using the power of image, language, and sound to convey important ideas.

7. Keep Learning

For the intellectually curious individual, there's a lot more to learn about propaganda. Deepening your knowledge of propaganda is excellent preparation for work, life, and citizenship.

8. Reflect on Propaganda

Reflecting on what you have learned about propaganda helps you internalize new knowledge and apply it to everyday life.

Lesson 1: Defining Propaganda

Room set-up needs: Projection screen, projector & laptop tech, seats in semi-circle with ability to move into groups in various areas of the room

Materials needed: Access the Mind Over Media platform at www.mindovermedia.eu and make copies of the Lesson 1 Worksheet for this session

Time Needed: One 45-minute period

Target Audiences: Youth (ages 11 and up), parents, teachers

Key Theme: There are many different definitions of propaganda but all definitions share some common themes and these definitions reflect changing time periods and contexts.



LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Participants will:

- understand that propaganda is defined in different ways depending on the culture, time period, and the context
- recognize that propaganda activates strong emotions, simplifies ideas, appeals to audience needs, and values, and targets opponents
- develop a sense of social responsibility for the appropriate sharing of propaganda
- increase their confidence in expressing their views and in participating in discussions of controversial topics where people have differences of opinion
- reflect on propaganda's potentially beneficial or harmful nature and its impact on individuals and society

MIND OVER MEDIA | WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

These activities focus on contemporary 21st century propaganda, which we define as distinct from historic propaganda produced in earlier time periods. Set the stage by playing the introductory video for Mind Over Media, located at www.mindovermedia.eu. Then use this sequence of activities to stimulate discussion and dialogue.

LESSON 1. DEFINING PROPAGANDA

Instructions for the instructor:

- Share, display or read aloud** the definitions of propaganda located under the “Learn” tab at the Mind Over Media website, using the Lesson 1 worksheet.
- Activity:** Learners work with a partner to review the definitions and discuss: Which elements in the definition do you like best?
- Share out:** As learners explain the definitions they like best, notice that the definitions come from different time periods and cultures.
- Discuss:** Why might the definitions of propaganda change over time and between cultures?
- Activity:** Create a custom definition of propaganda using elements from the definitions to express your personal understanding of the concept as it is relevant to the 21st century.
- Take-away message:** Propaganda is defined in different ways but it has always been an important part of contemporary society and it continues to have relevance today.

Lesson 1 Worksheet

Defining Propaganda

Neil Postman once wrote that of all the words we use to talk about talk, the word “propaganda” is the most mischievous. That’s because the word has a wide variety of definitions. Use the Learn tab at the Mind Over Media (www.mindovermedia.eu) and review propaganda definitions. Then identify which ideas are most relevant to your experience. After discussing the definitions, write your own personal one-sentence definition of contemporary propaganda on the back of this page.



- 1. Propaganda** is one means by which large numbers of people are induced to act together.
– Bruce Lannes Smith & Harold Lasswell, *Propaganda, Communication and Public Opinion*, 1946
- 2. Propaganda** is a form of information that panders to our insecurities and anxieties.
– Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes*, 1962
- 3. Propaganda** is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.
– Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 1986
- 4. Propaganda** is intentionally-designed communication that invites us to respond emotionally, immediately, and in a either-or manner.
– Neil Postman, *Technopoly*, 1994
- 5. Propaganda** is a form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotions, attitudes, opinions, and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages (which may or may not be factual) via mass and direct media channels.
– Richard Alan Nelson, *A Chronology and Glossary of Propaganda in the United States*, 1996
- 6. Propaganda** is indifferent to truth and truthfulness, knowledge and understanding; it is a form of strategic communication that uses any means to accomplish its ends.
– Walter Cunningham, *The Idea of Propaganda*, 2002
- 7. Propaganda** is a form of communication aimed towards influencing the attitude of a population toward some cause or position.
– Wikipedia, *entry on propaganda*, 2008
- 8. Propaganda** appears in a variety of forms. It is strategic and intentional as it aims to influence attitudes, opinions and behaviors. Propaganda can be beneficial or harmful. It may use truth, half-truths or lies. To be successful, propaganda taps into our deepest values, fears, hopes and dreams.
– Steven Luckert and Susan Bachrach, *The State of Deception*, 2007

Lesson 2: Recognizing Propaganda Techniques

Room set-up needs: Projection screen, projector & laptop tech, seats in semi-circle with ability to move into groups in various areas of the room

Materials needed: Access the Mind Over Media platform at www.mindovermedia.eu and make copies of the Lesson 2 Worksheet for this session

Time Needed: One 45-minute period

Target Audiences: Youth (ages 11 and up), parents, teachers

Key Theme: Although propaganda takes many forms, it can be recognized by its use of techniques that activate strong emotions, simplify ideas, respond to audience needs and attack opponents.



LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Participants will:

- understand that propaganda is defined in different ways depending on the culture, time period, and the context
- recognize that propaganda activates strong emotions, simplifies ideas, appeals to audience needs, and values, and targets opponents
- develop a sense of social responsibility for the appropriate sharing of propaganda
- increase their confidence in expressing their views and in participating in discussions of controversial topics where people have differences of opinion
- reflect on propaganda's potentially beneficial or harmful nature and its impact on individuals and society

LESSON 2. RECOGNIZING TECHNIQUES

Instructions for the instructor:

- Introduce** the idea that propaganda can be distinguished from other forms and genres of communication by some distinctive properties. Use the Lesson 2 handout and visit the Mind Over Media website tab labeled "Propaganda Techniques." Propaganda generally appeals to audience when it:
 - Evokes strong emotion**
 - Appeals to audience needs**
 - Simplifies information and ideas**
 - Attacks opponents**
- Apply:** Select an example of contemporary propaganda from the Mind Over Media website gallery and identify which techniques are used.
- Activity:** Learners work together in pairs to identify how an example of propaganda may use one or more of the four techniques of propaganda.
- Share out:** Learners offers examples from their work with a partner. The instructor can display examples as students explain their reasoning.
- Discuss:** Which of these four techniques is potentially most powerful? Which is most dangerous? Why? Invite participants to use evidence and reasoning to explain their ideas.
- Take-away message:** Propaganda evokes strong emotions, appeals to audience needs, simplifies information and ideas, and attacks opponents. These four techniques can bypass the critical thinking that is necessary to analyze these powerful forms of persuasion. That's why recognizing propaganda techniques can be an important first step in developing critical thinking about media messages.

Lesson 2 Worksheet

Recognizing Propaganda Techniques

Propaganda appears in a variety of forms but four common techniques make it easy to spot. To successfully influence people, propaganda activates strong emotions, simplifies information & ideas, responds to audience needs & values, and attacks opponents. After reading about these four techniques below, visit the Mind Over Media website (www.mindovermedia.eu) and search for examples of propaganda that use these different techniques. Then discuss: Which of these four techniques is potentially most powerful? Which is most dangerous? Why?

Technique 1: Activate Strong Emotions

Propaganda plays on human emotions—fear, hope, anger, frustration, sympathy—to direct audiences toward the desired goal. In the deepest sense, propaganda is a mind game—the skillful propagandist exploits people’s fears and prejudices. Successful propagandists understand how to psychologically tailor messages to people’s emotions in order to create a sense of excitement and arousal that suppresses critical thinking. By activating emotions, the recipient is emotionally moved by the message of the propagandist. What emotions are important for those who create propaganda? Fear, pity, anger, arousal, compassion, hatred, resentment—all these emotions can be intensified by using carefully selected labels.



Technique 2: Simplify Information & Ideas

Propaganda may use accurate and truthful information, or half-truths, opinions, lies and falsehoods. Successful propaganda tells simple stories that are familiar and trusted, often using metaphors, imagery, and repetition to make them seem natural or "true." Oversimplification is a way of describing things using catchy and memorable short phrases that become a substitute for critical thinking. Oversimplifying information does not contribute to knowledge or understanding, but because our brains naturally seek to reduce complexity, this form of propaganda can be effective.

Recognizing Propaganda Techniques

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Technique 3: Respond to Audience Needs & Values

Effective propaganda conveys messages, themes, and language that appeals directly, and many times exclusively, to specific and distinct groups within a population. Propagandists may appeal to you as a member of a family or by using your beliefs and values, racial or ethnic identity, your personal aspirations and hopes for the future, or even your hobbies or favorite celebrities to influence you. Sometimes, universal values are activated, as when our deepest human values—the need to love and be loved, to feel a sense of belonging and a sense of place—are activated by propaganda. By creating messages that appeal directly to the needs, hopes, and fears of specific groups, propaganda becomes personal and relevant. When messages are personally relevant, people pay attention and absorb key information and ideas.



Technique 4: Attack Opponents



Propaganda can serve as a form of political and social warfare by identifying and vilifying opponents. It can call into question the legitimacy, credibility, accuracy, and even the character of one's opponents and their ideas. Propaganda can also be used to exclude specific groups of people, incite hatred, or cultivate indifference. Because people are naturally attracted to conflict, a propagandist can make strategic use of controversy to get attention. Attacking opponents also encourages "either-or" or "us-them" thinking which suppresses the consideration of more complex information and ideas.

Lesson 3: To Share or Not to Share

Room set-up needs: Projection screen, projector & laptop tech, seats in semi-circle with ability to move into groups

Materials needed: Access the Mind Over Media platform at www.mindovermedia.eu and make copies of the Lesson 3 Worksheet for this session

Time Needed: One 45-minute period

Target Audiences: Youth (ages 11 and up), parents, teachers

Key Theme: it is important to consciously reflect on the potential benefits and harms that may result from propaganda because people participate in the spread of propaganda through sharing with their social networks.



LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Participants will:

- understand that propaganda is defined in different ways depending on the culture, time period, and the context
- recognize that propaganda activates strong emotions, simplifies ideas, appeals to audience needs, and values, and targets opponents
- develop a sense of social responsibility for the appropriate sharing of propaganda
- increase their confidence in expressing their views and in participating in discussions of controversial topics where people have differences of opinion
- reflect on propaganda’s potentially beneficial or harmful nature and its impact on individuals and society

LESSON 3. TO SHARE OR NOT TO SHARE

Instructions for the instructor:

- Introduce** this idea: More propaganda is spread virally—from person-to-person—than through one-way transmissions from newspapers, broadcasters, governments or advertisers. Today, “liking” and sharing a social media post can be a powerful way to influence the people in our social networks. This is because we trust our friends more than we trust people we do not know.
- Explain:** Many people do not make careful decisions about whether “to share or not to share.” They might share online content automatically without too much thinking. They might share, for example, when their strong feelings are activated. But before sharing, we should first review the message carefully, understand it, and reflect on its value to us and its value to the people in our social networks.
- Activity:** Can you find examples of propaganda you would feel comfortable sharing? Learners review and rate examples of propaganda. The tab labeled “Rate” presents users with a random example of propaganda. Working with a partner, learners review examples and provide a rating on the “beneficial-to-harmful” scale. Read the comments shared by others. Discuss: Would you share this example with your social network? Why or why not?
- Share out:** Participants describe examples of propaganda that they would feel comfortable sharing with their social networks and other examples that they would never share. Discuss: What patterns are evident in the choices people make?
- Take-away message:** It’s important to evaluate propaganda by considering its social benefits and potential harms. Media messages can influence people’s attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and values. Some propaganda can be interpreted as beneficial and other propaganda is considered harmful. But because we interpret media messages differently, people don’t always have the same interpretations about whether a particular example is beneficial or harmful.

Lesson 3 Worksheet

To Share or Not to Share



Viral marketing is a promotional strategy in which audience participation and interaction is activated to intentionally spread a message.

New forms of propaganda use strong emotions and surprising or unconventional content to inspire people to share content with others. Today, many people “like” or share a message after only a quick scan of the headline and image. They may choose to share content because it may be pleasurable or give them status among their social networks. But when people share content without first reading, viewing, or considering it, they can contribute to the spread of propaganda. We should “think before we share.”

Activity: Working with a partner, visit the Mind Over Media website (www.mindovermedia.eu) and use the “Rate” tab to access examples of propaganda. Then complete the two tasks below:

Find an example of content on the Mind Over Media Website that you would be VERY willing to share with your social network.

Find an example of content on the Mind Over Media Website that you would NOT willing to share with your social network.

Lesson 4

Where Can Propaganda be Found?

Room set-up needs: Projection screen, projector & laptop tech, seats in semi-circle with ability to move into groups in various areas of the room. Access to cell phones or laptops enables students to use the Mind Over Media platform.

Materials needed: Access the Mind Over Media platform and make copies of the Lesson 4 Worksheet for this session at www.mindovermedia.eu

Time Needed: One 45-minute period

Target Audiences: Youth (ages 11 and up), parents, teachers

Key Theme: It can be challenging to recognize propaganda when it is found in entertainment, education, and news because we do not expect to be persuaded by such content.



LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Participants will:

- understand that propaganda is defined in different ways depending on the culture, time period, and the context
- recognize that propaganda activates strong emotions, simplifies ideas, appeals to audience needs, and values, and targets opponents
- develop a sense of social responsibility for the appropriate sharing of propaganda
- increase their confidence in expressing their views and in participating in discussions of controversial topics where people have differences of opinion
- reflect on propaganda's potentially beneficial or harmful nature and its impact on individuals and society

LESSON 4. WHERE CAN PROPAGANDA BE FOUND?

Instructions for the instructor:

- Introduce** the idea that propaganda can be found in many different forms and genres of communication and expression. People might easily recognize advertising as propaganda, but may be less likely to notice propaganda in news, education or entertainment media.
- Distribute copies** of Lesson 4 worksheet to learners to review the six locations where propaganda can be found. These locations are: (1) advertising, (2) education, (3) entertainment, (4) journalism and public relations, (5) government and politics, and (6) activism and advocacy. You may want to ask students to read or have students read aloud the descriptions for each.
- Demonstrate Use of Website:** At the Mind Over Media website, open the tab labeled "Browse." Visually scan to find an example of an ad and ask students to see if it meets the definition of propaganda discussed in Lesson 1. Review concepts from Lesson 2 by asking: What propaganda techniques are used in this ad? Does it attack opponents, appeal to audience needs, activate strong emotion, or simplify ideas?
- Activity:** Students should search the Mind Over Media website, individually or with a partner, to find examples for all six locations where propaganda may be found, making notes on the worksheet to describe their choices. Students can use the website "Search" or "Sort" functions to find examples. They may also choose to search for examples online and then upload new examples to the website using the "Upload" tab.
- Share out:** Ask students to identify one example each of entertainment, education, and news that is a form of propaganda. After viewing or displaying them, discuss the question: *Which has a greater impact on society: propaganda in entertainment, propaganda in education, or propaganda in news?* Students should explain their answers using evidence and reasoning.
- Take-away message:** Propaganda in entertainment, education and news is not always easy to spot. People can be blind to propaganda that aligns with their existing world view. Social theorists have suggested that propaganda is a form of social control that unifies and stabilizes society, while others see it as repressive and limiting to human freedom. People need to decide for themselves how to make sense of the many forms of propaganda to which they are exposed.

Lesson 4 Worksheet

Where Can Propaganda Be Found?

Activity: Working individually or with a partner, read about the 6 locations where propaganda can be found. Then brainstorm at least one contemporary example for each of the six locations and describe it briefly in the space below.

<p>Advertising: There is a difference between advertising and propaganda. Advertising supports sales and marketing goals. Advertisers want to generate increased consumption of their commercial products and services by using a variety of forms of mass media and digital media to persuade readers, viewers, users or listeners. The public is generally aware of advertising and recognizes its purpose. Many forms of mass media that can be accessed for free—including broadcast television, radio, and search engines—depend on selling advertising space to businesses that want to sell products and services to audiences. But advertising can be propaganda when it activates strong emotions, attacks opponents, or simplifies information to shape people’s attitudes and behaviors.</p>	<p>YOUR EXAMPLE:</p>
<p>Education: From kindergarten to college, some forms of education are explicitly designed to lead people to accept a particular world view. Education can be a form of indoctrination when certain doctrines, ideas, information, values and beliefs are not permitted to be questioned. Propaganda enters the classroom in many ways. Many businesses and technology companies provide curriculum materials to educators. These are explicitly designed to promote a particular point of view. For example, Monsanto and other biotechnology firms provide videos, lesson plans, and other materials for science teachers. In Illinois, a state law mandates that schools promote a positive image for coal mining.</p>	<p>YOUR EXAMPLE:</p>
<p>Entertainment: Some stories are just entertainment, but many stories are also a form of propaganda. Stories offer ideas and information about good and evil, right and wrong, thus embedding values and ideology into narrative form. In many American movies and video games, violence is depicted as justified and morally courageous, which is a value message that is generally not questioned in society. Another way that propaganda is embedded in entertainment is through native advertising or sponsored content, where a company’s world view is presented as a form of entertainment.</p>	<p>YOUR EXAMPLE:</p>

Where Can Propaganda Be Found?

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<p>Journalism and Public Relations: Public relations is the term used for communication professionals who seek to shape perceptions and influence public opinion on behalf of a business client. In the U.S., there are four public relations professionals for every working journalist. PR people feed journalists information based on the agenda and goals of their clients. They may aim to get information and positive opinions about a business into the news by carefully crafting events, video news releases, blogging, newsletters, policy documents, and social media posts. In general, people are not aware of how public relations efforts have shaped the content of newspaper articles, blog posts, or other online information.</p>	YOUR EXAMPLE:
<p>Government and Politics: Throughout the 20th century, the United States has generated war propaganda by defining battles as conflicts between good and evil. Politicians use propaganda to get elected. They talk to reporters about topics and issues that get printed or broadcast as news. Propaganda can also used to help improve public health or address social issues. You may be familiar with public service announcements (PSAs) that aim to alter your behavior. By reshaping perceptions of social norms, public service campaigns can have a beneficial impact on changing attitudes and behaviors.</p>	YOUR EXAMPLE:
<p>Activism and Advocacy: People who are trying to improve society or create social change use propaganda to influence public opinion. Activists try to promote social, political, economic, or environmental change through using communication activities and public events that attract attention and influence people's knowledge, attitudes, and opinions.</p>	YOUR EXAMPLE:

Lesson 5

Analyzing Propaganda with Critical Questions

Room set-up needs: Projection screen, projector & laptop tech, seats in semi-circle with ability to move into groups in various areas of the room. Access to cell phones or laptops enable students to use the Mind Over Media platform but this is not required for this activity.

Materials needed: Access the Mind Over Media platform and make copies of the Lesson 5 worksheet for this session at www.mindovermedia.eu under "For Teachers"

Note: Smartphone cards shown in Lesson 5 are available for purchase at <https://mediaeducationlab.com/curriculum/materials>

Time Needed: One 45-minute period

Target Audiences: Youth (ages 11 and up), parents, teachers

Key Theme: Analyze propaganda by asking critical questions to identify the author, purpose and point of view of the message and consider multiple interpretations in how people may respond.



LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Participants will:

- understand that propaganda is defined in different ways depending on the culture, time period, and the context
- recognize that propaganda activates strong emotions, simplifies ideas, appeals to audience needs, and values, and targets opponents
- develop a sense of social responsibility for the appropriate sharing of propaganda
- increase their confidence in expressing their views and in participating in discussions of controversial topics where people have differences of opinion
- reflect on propaganda's potentially beneficial or harmful nature and its impact on individuals and society

LESSON 5. ANALYZING PROPAGANDA WITH CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Instructions for the instructor:

- Introduce** the idea of analyzing media messages as a process of asking questions and exploring ideas that may have multiple responses and interpretations. Review the Lesson 5 worksheet, which displays the Media Literacy Smartphone as a visual metaphor for a specific approach to the critical analysis of media messages.
- Review** the Media Literacy Smartphone icons by explaining them briefly:
 - Reality Check:** Consider what is accurate and inaccurate about the content of a media message.
 - Private Gain or Public Good:** Consider who is benefitting financially (or in other ways) from the distribution of this media message.
 - What's Left Out?** Noticing omitted information helps to identify the point of view of a media message.
 - Values Check:** How does this media message align with or contradict your own values?
 - Read Between the Lines:** What ideas are implied but not stated directly in the media message?
 - Stereotype Alert:** Consider the ways that stereotypes are used to influence your emotions.
 - Solutions Too Easy:** Consider how the media message attracts your attention by simplifying ideas.
 - Record/Save for Later:** Decide upon the overall worth and value of the message.
- Activity:** Working individually or with a partner, learners select an example of propaganda to analyze at the Mind Over Media website (www.mindovermedia.eu). Alternatively, the teacher may select an example for students to analyze. With a partner, they discuss and consider the issues raised by the icons on the Media Literacy Smartphone and then write brief answers to the Five Key Questions of Media Literacy.
- Share out:** Students identify some ideas that emerge from the discussion, explaining their answers using evidence and reasoning.
- Take-away message:** Propaganda is meant to evoke emotions that bypass critical thinking. When propaganda is critically analyzed, insights are revealed that enable people to make more rational judgments and evaluation of the ideas and information presented.

Lesson 5 Worksheet

Analyzing Propaganda with Critical Questions

Activity: Working individually or with a partner, select an example of propaganda to analyze at the Mind Over Media website (www.mindovermedia.eu). With your partner, discuss and consider the issues raised by the icons on the Media Literacy Smartphone and then write brief answers to the five Key Questions of Media Literacy.



Lesson 6

Talking Back to Propaganda

Room set-up needs: Projection screen, projector & laptop tech, seats in semi-circle with ability to move into groups in various areas of the room. Access to cell phones or laptops is needed in order for students to create media for this activity.

Materials needed: Access to the Mind Over Media platform www.mindovermedia.eu and Adobe Spark (www.spark.adobe.com). Make copies of the Lesson 6 worksheet for all students.

Time Needed: This lesson works best when deadline pressure is applied. It is designed for two 45-minute periods.

Target Audiences: Youth (ages 11 and up), parents, teachers

Key Theme: When you demonstrate your ability to comment, critically analyze, and put propaganda in context by creating a short video response, you are using the power of image, language and sound to convey important ideas.



LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Participants will:

- understand that propaganda is defined in different ways depending on the culture, time period, and the context
- recognize that propaganda activates strong emotions, simplifies ideas, appeals to audience needs, and values, and targets opponents
- develop a sense of social responsibility for the appropriate sharing of propaganda
- increase their confidence in expressing their views using images, language, and sound
- participate in discussions of controversial topics where people have differences of opinion
- reflect on propaganda's potentially beneficial or harmful nature and its impact on individuals and society

LESSON 6. TALKING BACK TO PROPAGANDA

Instructions for the instructor:

- Introduce** the idea of analyzing media messages as a process of asking questions and exploring ideas that may have multiple responses and interpretations. If needed, review Lesson 5 where learners analyzed an example of propaganda using the Media Literacy Smartphone to engage in critical analysis of media messages.
- Activity:** Distribute and review the Lesson 6 activity worksheet. Working individually or with a partner, learners select an example of propaganda to analyze at the Mind Over Media website (www.mindovermedia.eu). With a partner, they:
 - Generate questions:** List questions that come to mind in responding to the propaganda example.
 - Respond to questions:** Review the questions on the worksheet to identify the most valuable considerations.
 - Gather information:** Using the Internet and other research sources, find information to help answer these questions.
- Explain:** Making a video can be a good way to “talk back” to propaganda. Today, many online platforms make it easy to create media. Introduce Adobe Spark using a 6-minute video demonstration, available at <https://youtu.be/kxzge9GzVbE>.
- Establish** a time limit for students to complete their work. Explain that students need about 50% of the time to plan and develop their ideas and 50% of the time to produce their video. People working in media businesses always face deadline pressure and it can help promote creativity.
- Share out:** After students complete their work, they can post their completed videos to the Padlet Wall: <https://padlet.com/hobbs/mindovermedia>. There, learners can view and discuss examples and offer feedback to comment on the work. They can also rate and comment on examples developed by others.
- Take-away message:** Creating media is a powerful way to develop your ideas and share them with others. When people “talk back” to propaganda using the power of video images, language, and sound, they can influence the ways others interpret and understand ideas and information. Being a socially responsible communicator means offering trustworthy information and opinions deeply rooted in evidence and reasoning.

Lesson 6 Worksheet

Talking Back to Propaganda



Activity: Working individually or with a partner, select an example of propaganda to analyze at the Mind Over Media website (www.mindovermedia.eu). After research and discussion, create a video response that synthesizes some of the most important ideas and insights you learned, using Adobe Spark (www.spark.adobe.com) a simple video production tool.

YOUR PROPAGANDA EXAMPLE: _____

WRITE YOUR QUESTIONS:

What questions does this example raise for you? _____

CONSIDER MORE QUESTIONS: Discuss some of the questions below:

- **The Message:** What is the topic or informational content of the information and ideas being expressed?
- **Techniques:** What symbols and rhetorical strategies are used to attract audience attention and activate emotional response?
- **Environment and Context:** Where, when, and how is this message usually encountered by people?
- **Means of Communication & Format:** What is the genre of the message and how does this particular form influence audiences?
- **Audience Receptivity:** How are people likely to think and feel about the message and how free they are to accept or reject it?

RESEARCH & PLAN

Use the Internet to search for information to help you answer one or more questions. Remember:

- + **Take notes:** Capture the most interesting information you find.
- + **Gather images:** Make screenshots of visual content that helps you answer these questions.
- + **Before you produce, discuss:** What is the most important insight you wish to communicate about your propaganda example?

PRODUCE

Working under deadline pressure, use Adobe Spark (<http://www.adobe.spark.com>) a free video production platform, to create a short video commentary on your propaganda example. Sequence ideas, language and images to produce a video commentary to express your perspective on the example you selected. Remember that videos under 2 minutes are more likely to be viewed than longer videos.

SHARE & DISCUSS

Post your completed work on the Padlet Wall: <https://padlet.com/hobbs/mindovermedia>. Here learners can give feedback and offer comments on the work of others

Lesson 7

Keep Learning

Room set-up needs: Projection screen, projector & laptop tech, seats in semi-circle with ability to move into groups in various areas of the room.

Materials needed: Access to cell phones or laptops may be needed in order for students to research and write. Make copies of Lesson 7 worksheet for all learners.

Time Needed: One 45-minute period plus homework time for reading, writing and independent study

Target Audiences: Youth (ages 11 and up), parents, teachers

Key Theme: There's a lot more learn about propaganda for the intellectually curious individual. Deepening your knowledge of propaganda is excellent preparation for work, life, and citizenship.



LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Participants will:

- understand that propaganda is defined in different ways depending on the culture, time period, and the context
- recognize that propaganda activates strong emotions, simplifies ideas, appeals to audience needs, and values, and targets opponents
- develop a sense of social responsibility for the appropriate sharing of propaganda
- increase their confidence in expressing their views using images, language, and sound
- participate in discussions of controversial topics where people have differences of opinion
- reflect on propaganda's potentially beneficial or harmful nature and its impact on individuals and society

LESSON 8. ON PROPAGANDA: KEEP LEARNING

Instructions for the instructor:

- Introduce** the idea that people have been writing about propaganda for 3,000 years. For the independent learner, this topic is rich, complex and fascinating. There is so much more to learn!
- Activity:** Distribute and review the Lesson 8 worksheet. Learners explore resources independently to continue their learning, composing a 300-word blog post or other multimedia production to summarize the new information they discover. Key elements of the work should include:
 - Offer a Summary of Key Ideas:** You explain something you learned by reading, viewing or listening.
 - Connect to Your Experience:** Show how the new ideas are meaningful and relevant to your life.
 - Generate New Questions:** Describe the questions that entered your mind as you were reading, listening or viewing. Explain why these questions are interesting or important.
- Share out:** After students complete their work, they can post a link to their work here: <https://padlet.com/hobbs/keeplearning>. At this website, they can also review and comment on the ideas shared by others.
- Take-away message:** There's so much to learn! Deepening your knowledge of propaganda is excellent preparation for work, life, and citizenship.

Lesson 7 Worksheet

Keep Learning



ARTICLES

European Parliament (2015). At A Glance: Understanding Propaganda and Disinformation. <http://bit.ly/2K6z39v>

Nielsen, Rasmus Kleis and Graves, Lucas (2017). “News You Don’t Believe”: Audience Perspectives on Fake News. Reuters Institute, University of Oxford. <http://bit.ly/2QsRc50>

Waller, j Michael (2006) “Ridicule as a Weapon.” This essay offers insight on the use of humor as a form of propaganda in warfare. <http://bit.ly/2OgWsHs>

Zannettou, Savvas and Blackburn, Jeremy (2018, September 7). “How Russian Trolls Behave Online.” *U.S. News and World Report*. This article describes efforts to identify new forms of propaganda used to destabilize world politics. <http://bit.ly/2xaayny>

Braudy, Leo (essay). “Entertainment or Propaganda?” This essay offers a historical look at how American Hollywood films embedded propaganda into narrative <https://learcenter.org/pdf/WWBraudy.pdf>

BOOKS

Roberts-Miller, Patricia (2017). *Demagoguery and Democracy*. New York: The Experiment. Explores the rhetorical strategies used by political leaders who promote populism that can divide and damage democracies.

Holiday, Ryan (2012). *Trust Me, I’m Lying*. New York: Penguin. This book explains how online marketing is used in ethically questionable ways to influence public opinion.

Luckert, Steven and Bachrach, Susan (2009). *The State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda*. New York: W.W. Norton. This is the definitive guide to Hitler’s use of propaganda as a political candidate, as a dictator, and for war and mass murder.

VIDEOS

Introduction to Propaganda. From the Academy of Ideas, this 7-minute video summarizes key ideas from the work of Jacques Ellul on propaganda. <https://youtu.be/-WpFzTplp28>

News Channel or Propaganda Tool? This 7-minute Listening Post video explores RT, Russia’s English speaking channel as a form of contemporary propaganda. <https://youtu.be/XIMAM7-etlw>

Why Obvious Lies Make Great Propaganda. This Vox News segment explores the Russian “firehose of falsehoods” used as a form of disinformation and propaganda in both Russian and American politics. <https://youtu.be/nknYtIOvaQ0>

Reality Show President: Inside the White House PR Machine. A 12-minute film on how presidents shape their public image through photography and media representation. <https://youtu.be/1WrZKgTNE0g>

Education vs Indoctrination. This Brainwaves Anthology interview with philosopher Jason Stanley offers a reflection on social studies education as a form of social control through propaganda. <https://youtu.be/HQy4yDx01bA>

Poetry and Propaganda. A three-minute video by FilmScapel Productions about how educators use the power of poetry as a form of propaganda to activate learners’ emotions. <https://vimeo.com/137574152>

7 Propaganda Techniques Used on You Everyday. From How Stuff Works, this video introduces techniques like name calling, glittering generalities, testimonials, institutional transfer, bandwagon, plain folks and more. <https://youtu.be/q8R9MDt4jEc>

Meet Edward Bernays, Master of Propaganda. From Corbett Report Extras, this video introduces the work of Edward Bernays, who understood the social benefits of propaganda as a means to advance consumer culture and democracy. <https://youtu.be/44I3pMouCnM>

FILMS

The Propaganda Game (2015). This documentary by Alvaro Longoria shows examples of propaganda in North Korea.

The Century of the Self (2002). This British documentary series by Adam Curtis explores the work of Sigmund Freud and Edward Bernays in developing powerful ideas about how to use human nature to control and shape public opinion.

Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media (1993). Canadian filmmakers Mark Achbar and Peter Wintonick follow Professor Noam Chomsky as he promotes his book, *Manufacturing Consent*, explaining how media controls public opinion.

Lesson 8

Reflect on Propaganda

Room set-up needs: Projection screen, projector & laptop tech, seats in semi-circle with ability to move into groups in various areas of the room. Access to cell phones or laptops is needed in order for students to comment through the use of a virtual exchange platform.

Materials needed: Access to the Mind Over Media platform www.mindovermedia.eu and Flipgrid (www.flipgrid.com), which requires a computer or cellphone with camera and microphone. Make copies of the Lesson 8 worksheet for all students.

Time Needed: One 45-minute period.

Target Audiences: Youth (ages 11 and up), parents, teachers

Key Theme: Reflecting on what you have learned about propaganda helps you internalize and apply new knowledge to everyday life.



LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Participants will:

- understand that propaganda is defined in different ways depending on the culture, time period, and the context
- recognize that propaganda activates strong emotions, simplifies ideas, appeals to audience needs, and values, and targets opponents
- develop a sense of social responsibility for the appropriate sharing of propaganda
- increase their confidence in expressing their views using images, language, and sound
- participate in discussions of controversial topics where people have differences of opinion
- reflect on propaganda's potentially beneficial or harmful nature and its impact on individuals and society

LESSON 7. REFLECT ON PROPAGANDA

Instructions for the instructor:

- Introduce** the idea of reflection as a part of learning where you discover what you really think and feel. When learners take time to reflect, they deepen their understanding of new ideas and are able to apply these ideas to everyday life.
- Explain:** Making a video comment can be a good way to reflect on your own learning and life experience.
- Activity:** Distribute and review the Lesson 7 worksheet. Learners select one question to answer. First, learners review the comments made by others. These are found at the Mind Over Media website: <http://bit.ly/MOMreflect>
- Time to Work:** Learners can be advised to make some notes and first plan out what they want to say to answer the question. Using the green “plus” button, users can follow the instructions to make a video comment using Flipgrid.
- Share out:** After students complete their work, they can review and comment on the ideas shared by others.
- Take-away message:** Reflecting on what you have learned about propaganda helps you internalize and apply new knowledge to everyday life.

Lesson 8 Worksheet

Reflect on Propaganda

Activity: Working individually, select one or more of the questions below and create a short video response, using the Flipgrid platform available at the Mind Over Media website: <http://bit.ly/MOMreflect>



Harms and Benefits of Propaganda

- What are the dangers, risks, and potential harms of propaganda? What are some potential benefits of propaganda for individuals and the general public?
- Describe a piece of propaganda that you think is beneficial and explain why you would consider sharing it with people in your social network.
- Describe a piece of propaganda that you would never share with your social network and explain why you would not share it.

Propaganda in Your Life

- How do you experience propaganda in your daily life?
- Are you now or have you ever been a propagandist? If so, please describe your efforts. If no, explain why you are not.
- When is propaganda ethical? When is it unethical?
- Do you think young people should be exposed to and also learn about contemporary propaganda? Why or why not?

Reflection on Learning

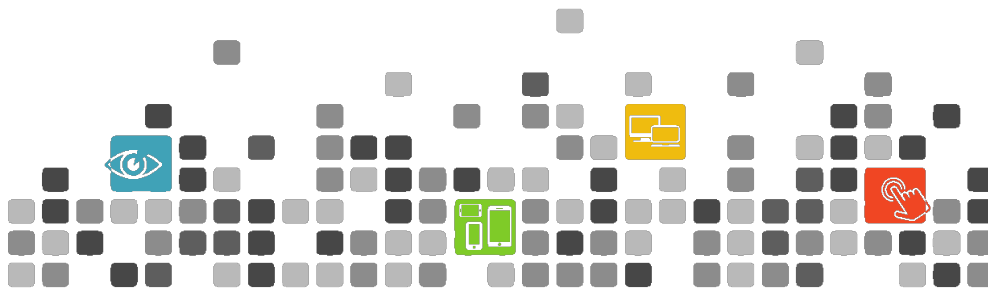
- What was the most interesting or important thing you learned about propaganda?
- What questions do you have after completing the workshop? What would you like to learn more about?
- What surprised you most about how others interpreted propaganda examples?

Credits

Mind Over Media: Analyzing Contemporary Propaganda resulted from a collaboration between Renee Hobbs and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in developing [educational programming and resources](#) to support the special exhibition, *State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda*. At the Museum, David Klevan led the website initiative. At the Media Education Lab, Renee Hobbs, Kaylen Shimoda, Frank Baker, Jonathan Friesem, Sandy McGee, and Lili Schlessler contributed to the development of the program. Special thanks to JoAnna Wasserman, whose insight on propaganda (past and present) inspired us all. Web design and production services were provided by [Night Kitchen Interactive](#), and [Drushup](#) developed the multilingual features of the platform.

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These eight lesson plans were developed by Renee Hobbs at the Media Education Lab and the online video reflection questions were developed by Samantha Stanley. The Planet of Propaganda podcast series was developed by Nikita Duke. The mission of the Media Education Lab is to advance the quality of media literacy education through scholarship and community service. Learn more: www.mediaeducationlab.com



media education lab