

Propaganda

A. Definitions

1. Propaganda is biased information designed to shape public opinion and behavior.
2. Euphemisms and symbols are the building blocks of propaganda.
 - a. A Euphemism is the substitution of an inoffensive term for one that is considered offensive.
 - b. A Symbol is a mark, sign or word that indicates, signifies, or is understood as representing an idea, object. Especially a material object used to represent an abstraction.

B. Propaganda Techniques

1. Assertion
 - a. Enthusiastic or energetic statement presented as fact, but not necessarily true.
 - b. The statement should be accepted without question.
2. Bandwagon
 - a. An appeal to follow the crowd.
 - b. Tries to convince that one side is the winning side and that winning is inevitable.
 - c. Appeals to a person's desire to be on the winning side.
3. Card Stacking
 - a. Selective omission which involves only presenting information that is positive to an idea or proposal and omitting information contrary to it.
4. Glittering Generalities
 - a. Uses words that have different positive meaning for individual subjects, but are linked to highly valued concepts (honor, glory, love of country).
 - b. Words that demand approval without thinking since such an important concept is involved.
5. Lessor of Two Evils
 - a. Tries to convince audience of an idea or proposal by presenting it as the least offensive option.
 - b. Used to convince people to make sacrifices.
 - c. Adds blame on an enemy country or political group.
6. Name Calling
 - a. Uses derogatory language or words that carry a negative connotation when describing an enemy.
 - b. Attempts to arouse prejudice among the public by labeling the target something that the public dislikes.
7. Pinpointing the Enemy
 - a. Simplifies a complex situation by presenting one specific group or person as the enemy.
 - b. Makes things black or white, clear-cut, right or wrong.
8. Plain Folks
 - a. Convinces the public that his or her views reflect those of the 'common person'.

- b. The candidate tries to appear to be working for the benefit of the 'common person'.
- 9. Simplification/Stereotyping
 - a. Reduces a complex situation to a clear-cut choice involving good and evil.
 - b. Commonly used in swaying both uneducated and educated audiences.
- 10. Transfer
 - a. An attempt to make the subject view a certain item in the same way as they view another item.
 - b. Used to transfer negative feelings for one object to another.
 - c. In politics, this technique is often used to transfer blame or bad feelings from one politician to another or from one group of people to another.

C. Propaganda Traits

- 1. Uses truths, half-truths, or lies.
- 2. Selectively omits information.
- 3. Simplifies complex issues or ideas.
- 4. Plays on emotions.
- 5. Advertises a cause.
- 6. Attacks opponents.
- 7. Targets desired audiences.

D. Examples of Nazi Propaganda Themes

- 1. Making a Leader
- 3. Making a Nation/Völk
- 4. Indoctrinating Youth
- 5. Defining the Enemy
- 6. Rallying the Nation

E. Concluding Questions

- 1. What is the difference between education and propaganda?
- 2. Can you create a democracy while eliminating a core democratic principle like freedom of expression?
- 3. What is incitement? When is violent language a crime?
- 4. The Holocaust happened because individuals, groups and governments made choices to act, or not to act. How were these decisions influenced by propaganda?