

Powerful Words: Propaganda Can Change Your Mind

General Overview

Propaganda is a powerful tool used to sway people's opinions on certain issues. Examples of propaganda can be found in many different formats. A definition of propaganda is: Any technique that attempts to influence the opinion, emotions, attitudes, or behavior of a group in order to benefit the sponsor.

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Recognize propaganda in several different formats
- Create propaganda
- Analyze an ad
- Become aware of the importance of archival collections

Preparation

Students should discuss the definition of propaganda, as well as, their immediate reactions to the word. Students should read the propaganda techniques on the worksheet provided.

Activities

Students should study the examples of propaganda.

The following questions should provoke discussion.

- Is advertising propaganda?
- Is propaganda always a bad thing?
- What has not been addressed in each sample of propaganda?
- What is the difference between propaganda and education?
- Do your parents use propaganda on you?
- Do you use propaganda on them?
- In each sample what positive messages are sent?
- In each sample what negative messages are sent?
- Why would an archives save such materials?

Enrichment and Extension

After a discussion about propaganda have the students bring in an example of current propaganda.

Have the students create a piece of propaganda based on something in which they believe
Create a collage of ads

Using the samples of historical or current propaganda discuss the techniques used by the creator. Discuss whether or not a different technique might have been used more effectively.

Sources

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www.globaled.org/curriculum/cm4.html

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"The Edenton Ladies' Tea Party," a British cartoon lampooning women's revolutionary commitment (Library of Congress)

- 1) This is a parody--lampooning or making fun--of women's excitement over the Liberty Rhetoric of the Revolutionary War. Remember that this was printed in England to make the colonials in America look foolish. Point out the ways in which this cartoon makes fun of the colonials in general, and women in particular.
- 2) How does this image point out the "unnaturalness" of women's interests in politics? What will be, according to the cartoon, the consequences of women's political participation? Pay attention to the baby on the floor at the bottom center of the image.
- 3) The women in this image are drafting a pledge to refuse to drink tea and other "taxables." Why would this be an especially significant thing for women to do? What sort of a document do you think the women in this image would be writing? Write a draft of that document.
- 4) Those who read the caption of this drawing at the time might have thought first that a "Ladies' Tea Party" would be a fashionable party with finger food. But they also might have associated it with "The Boston Tea Party," when a group of Boston men dumped tea into the harbor in protest against British taxation policies. Compare the image of that raid with the image put forward in this depiction of a "Tea Party." Are there elements of "riotousness" in this image of a tea party that would remind viewers of the Boston tea party?