Propaganda

“Propaganda is a truly terrible weapon in the hands of an expert.” Adolf Hitler

Propaganda is biased information designed to shape public opinion and behavior. It draws upon techniques and strategies used in advertising, public relations, communications, and mass psychology. It simplifies complicated issues or ideology for popular consumption, is always biased, and is geared to achieving a particular end. Propaganda generally employs symbols, whether in written, musical, or visual forms, and plays upon and channels complex human emotions towards a desired goal. It is often employed by governmental and private organizations to promote their causes and institutions and denigrate their opponents. Propaganda functions as just one weapon in the arsenal of mass persuasion.

In contrast to the ideal of an educator, who aims to foster independent judgment and thinking, the practitioner of propaganda does not aim to encourage deliberation by presenting a variety of viewpoints and leaving it up to the audience to determine which perspective is correct. The real danger of propaganda lies when competing voices are silenced and unchecked, then propaganda can have negative consequences.

Propaganda can be used for good and harmful purposes.

# Techniques

## Ad hominem (name-calling)

A Latin phrase that has come to mean attacking one's opponent, as opposed to attacking their arguments.

## Appeal to fear

Appeals to fear seek to build support by instilling anxieties and panic in the general population

## [Bandwagon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argumentum_ad_populum)

Bandwagon and "inevitable-victory" appeals attempt to persuade the target audience to join in and take the course of action that "everyone else is taking."

## Cherry picking or card stacking

“The art of propaganda is not telling lies, but rather selecting the truth you require and giving it mixed up with some truths the audience wants to hear.”

## Common man

The "[plain folks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plain_folks)" or "common man" approach attempts to convince the audience that the propagandist's positions reflect the common sense of the people. It is designed to win the confidence of the audience by communicating in the common manner and style of the target audience.

## Glittering generalities

Glittering generalities are emotionally appealing words that are applied to a product or idea, but present no concrete argument or analysis.

## Testimonial

Testimonials are quotations, in or out of context, especially cited to support or reject a given policy, action, program, or personality. The reputation or the role (expert, respected public figure, etc.) of the individual giving the statement is exploited.

## [Transfer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transfer_%28propaganda%29)

Also known as association, this is a technique of projecting positive or negative qualities (praise or blame) of a person, entity, object, or value onto another to make the second more acceptable or to discredit it.