

Propaganda: What's the Message?

Time Needed: One to two class periods

Materials Needed:

Student worksheets, Gallery Walk copies

Copy Instructions:

Student packet (*Six pages double-sided; class set*)

Gallery Walk (*One copy for the room*)

Learning Objectives. Students will be able to:

- Differentiate among forms of persuasive media.
- Identify bias, propaganda, and symbolism in media.
- Identify forms of propaganda in use.

STEP BY STEP

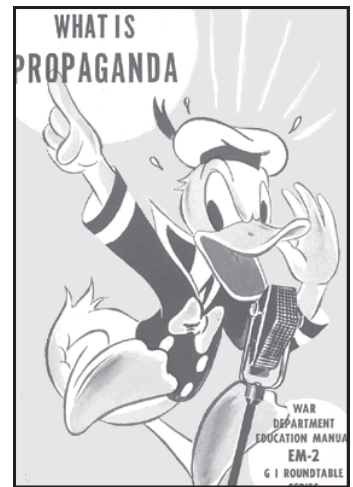
- TEACHER PREP** Place each page of the *Gallery Walk* around the classroom and divide the class into seven groups prior to teaching this lesson. (The groups will be rotating through these during class.)
- ANTICIPATE** by asking students how they might try to convince someone to do something. (Examples: parents to extend curfew, teacher to postpone a due date, choice of movie with friends, etc.) Ask students if there are any common techniques.
- DISTRIBUTE** one student packet to each student.
- READ** through the packet with the class, answering questions or clarifying terms along the way if needed.
- DIVIDE** students into up to seven small groups to rotate through the *Gallery Walk* pages.
- INSTRUCT** students to spend 3-5 minutes at each station and complete the *Gallery Walk* pages in their student packet. (Tip: use an egg timer to keep track of the pace) If you have time for an 8th station, you can ask the students to stop at the challenge page as well.
- REVIEW** the answers to the stations.
- ASSIGN** students to complete the two *Activity* pages in their packet as review.
- CLOSE** by asking students to think of all the places these propaganda techniques can be found. (TV, radio, internet, conversations, advertisements, etc.)

What's the Message?

Name: _____

Propaganda

Did you know the average teen is exposed to over 3,000 advertisements per day? Without the skills to look critically at all these messages, it's easy to be persuaded by them without even realizing it. **Propaganda** is media that uses carefully-crafted messages to manipulate people's actions and beliefs. It has one purpose, and one purpose only: to persuade you. There are a variety of propaganda techniques. They use **biased**, or one-sided, messages and are designed to appeal to peoples' emotions instead of their judgment and reasoning. How many of the following techniques do you recognize from your own exposure to propaganda?



Oprah Winfrey and Barack Obama in 2008.

Testimonials

Testimonials usually involve celebrities or other respected people **endorsing**, or officially supporting, a product or idea. The person giving the testimonial could be famous, knowledgeable about the product (such as a doctor talking about medicine), or just an ordinary person who claims the product has worked for them. When the testimonial comes from a celebrity, the hope is that you will want to use the product or support the idea simply because they do. Other testimonials try to persuade you to use or support something because it is good for you or it worked for others. Beware, though, because people are usually paid to give endorsements (except in politics).

Ask yourself: Who is quoted in the testimonial? Is this person actually an expert about this product or idea? Does the product or idea have value without the testimony or endorsement?

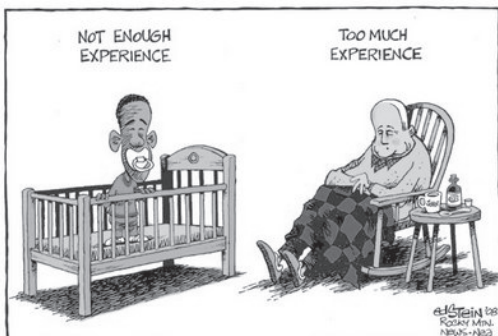
Bandwagon

"Jumping on the bandwagon" describes people choosing to go along with the rest of the crowd. **Bandwagon** propaganda creates the impression that there is widespread support for a thing or idea. People tend to want to be on the winning team and try to avoid being the odd one out. These messages create a sense of peer pressure to join in.

Ask yourself: Does the message provide reasons for joining the group? Is there any evidence for or against joining in?



It must be good if billions have been served!



A 2008 political cartoon showing the presidential candidates too young or too old.

Name-Calling

Name-calling is exactly what it sounds like: using negative words and bad names to create fear and dislike for people, ideas, or institutions. Name-calling can be verbal or visual. When done visually, it shows a person or thing in an unflattering way. You can find both kinds of this technique in political cartoons, political attack ads, and on news talk shows.

Ask yourself: Who is being called what? Is there a real connection between the names and the person/idea being attacked?

What's the Message?

Name: _____

Glittering Generalities

This technique always shows the subject of the message in a positive light, but provides little or no information. **Glittering generalities** use simple, clever slogans that appeal to peoples' emotions. These general statements are easy to remember but hard to verify because they offer no facts.

Ask yourself: What do these slogans or catchphrases really mean?



Slogans and posters from the 2008 presidential election.



TAPE IS OUT.	OPTICAL IS IN
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tape is slow• No random access• Five-year shelf life (Avg.)• Too many different formats• Reliable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recordable CD is fast• Random access• One hundred-year shelf life• CD-ROM standard format• Very reliable

Card Stacking

Card stacking uses facts and figures to show one side as positive and the other side as negative. The message shows only positive information about the person, product, or idea being promoted, and it shows only damaging information about the opposition or competition. This technique is designed to make you think you are hearing both sides. In reality, you are actually hearing only one perspective.

Ask yourself: Are facts being changed or left out? What other pieces of information do I need to make an informed decision?

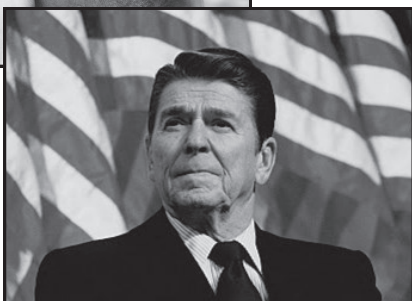
Plain Folks

The **plain folks** technique is designed to send the message that a product or person is "just like you." An advertiser will show an ordinary-looking person who vouches for how well a product works. Politicians have their picture taken visiting coffee shops, riding on tractors, and doing other things that everyday people do. The goal is to gain your trust by showing that people just like you use the product or support the person.

Ask yourself: Can I trust the person who is speaking or acting? What are the person's motives for visiting this place? Is this person really just like me?



Rudy Giuliani visits a small town diner during his 2007 presidential campaign.



Transfer

The **transfer** technique uses your feelings about one thing to get you to feel the same way about something else. Transfer can use a positive image to persuade you to like something or a negative image to persuade you to dislike something. The images might be **symbolic**, such as a flag standing for patriotism. They might be cute and lovable, such as a baby penguin. The images could be repulsive, such as diseased skin in an anti-smoking campaign, or they could be hateful, such as comparing a politician to Adolf Hitler. However they are presented, the images act as wordless messages that most people can identify with.

Ask yourself: What is the image trying to get me to feel? Is there an actual connection between the image and the person or product?

What's the Message?

Name: _____

Station One: Name Calling

Image 1. Explain how the drawing portrays German soldiers:

Does the soldier look human?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No, he looks like:
What is on the soldier's arms?	
What is the soldier trying to do?	
Is this a positive or negative image?	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative

Image 2. What name does this ad want you to connect with the politician?

A) The ad is saying that Patty Murray is

_____.

B) The ad shows Patty Murray as

happy unhappy.

C) The advertiser wants people to

like dislike this politician.

The Technique. Based on what you see in these examples, what three things can be done to make someone or something look bad?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Station Two: Testimonial

Image 1. Explain the message in this magazine ad:

Who is the celebrity in this ad?	
What product is she endorsing?	
What does she claim this product has done?	
What message are YOU supposed to take away from this ad?	

Image 2. Analyze the testimonial in this ad:

A) Who is endorsing whom in this ad?

_____ is endorsing

B) The testimonial is being given by:

- A celebrity
- Knowledgeable group of people
- An ordinary person

C) What is the ad trying to persuade you to do?

The Technique. Which of the following testimonials would convince YOU?

A football quarterback endorsing toothpaste.

A mom endorsing a healthy snack for kids.

Your favorite movie star endorsing broccoli.

Your favorite singer endorsing a brand of shoes.

What's the Message?

Name: _____

Station Three: Transfer

Image 1. Explain the message in this public service announcement:

What two things are pictured in this image?	1) _____	2) _____
Which one is supposed to be scary?		
How does the scary image impact the other image?		
What is this ad trying to tell you?		

Image 2. Setting the stage:

A) What are the 2 symbols of patriotism you see in this image?

1. _____
2. _____

B) What are these symbols supposed to make you believe about the candidate?

- He is from New York.
- His favorite color is red.
- He loves America.

The Technique. Think about whether the transfer messages in these images are accurate:

A) Is there an actual connection between car wrecks and alcoholic beverages?

- Yes No Need more information to decide

B) Is there an actual connection between this politician and the symbols in the picture?

- Yes No Need more information to decide

Station Four: Glittering Generalities

Image 1. Explain the message in this soda ad:

What does this ad tell you about Coca-Cola?	
How much information is provided in the ad?	<input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> Some <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> None
How much do you already know about Coca-Cola ?	<input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> Some <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> None
How is this message supposed to make you feel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Negative

Image 2. Match each question below with the piece of campaign propaganda that it challenges.

- _____ What specific leadership qualifications does he have?
- _____ What does this future hold?
- _____ What, specifically, should Americans hope for?
- _____ What, exactly, can we do?
- _____ Why should I like him?
- _____ Can anyone really guarantee peace and prosperity?

The Technique. Describe how glittering generalities tries to persuade people. What tools does it use? Unscramble the words below.

lgsnosa _____

and

cthca esrhasp _____

that are

ispmel & revcel _____

What's the Message?

Name: _____

Station Five: Plain Folks

Image 1. "Plain" President?

A) Do you think this is where the President and Vice President usually eat?

- Yes No

B) Find one detail in this picture that makes it look like the kind of place everyday people might eat:

Image 3. Explain the message in this ad:

A) The woman in the ad looks

- glamorous normal

B) Find one detail in this picture that makes the woman look like a regular person:

Image 2. Campaigning with workers.

A) What message is this photo trying to send?

- Perry wishes he could wear a hard hat too
 Perry wants to invest in this company
 Perry can relate to average people

B) Find one thing in this picture that shows these workers are "plain folks":

C) The politicians in both images still look different from everyone else because they are wearing

_____.

The Technique. Mark the question that would NOT be helpful for analyzing this technique.

- Would the President eat here if there were no cameras photographing him?
 Why is Perry visiting these workers?
 Is the woman with the water a Republican?

Station Six: Bandwagon

Image 1. Explain the message in this ad for laundry detergent:

What difference do you see between the teams?	
What is Tide's slogan?	
Which team are you supposed to prefer?	<input type="checkbox"/> #2 Brand <input type="checkbox"/> Tide
Why are you supposed to want to be on that team?	

Image 2. Analyze this World War II poster:

A) When Rosie says "we," who is she talking to?

- All Americans
 American women
 Factory workers

B) Look at Rosie. Find one characteristic or quality Rosie has that other women might wish for:

The Technique. The bandwagon technique is most like:

- Peer pressure
 Advice
 Getting in trouble

Why? _____

What's the Message?

Name: _____

Station Seven: Card Stacking

Image 1. Explain the message about this cell phone provider ad:

What can you learn about Verizon?	
What do you learn about AT&T?	
Can you tell whether AT&T has any benefits Verizon doesn't have?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Why can't you trust the information in this ad?	

Image 2.

A) Which product is this ad promoting?

- Omega-9 Canola Oil
- Partially Hydrogenated Soybean Oil

B) The ad mentions reducing "Bad Fat." Is it clear what "bad fat" is?

- Yes No

C) Does this ad show any information about the possible benefits of soybean oil?

- Yes No

The Technique. Think about whether you can base a decision on these messages:

Do card stacking messages give you information?

- Yes No

Do they give you the benefits and drawbacks of both items being compared?

- Yes No

Do they give you enough information to really understand both products?

- Yes No

Station Eight: Challenge Image

Romney/Rock Image. Explain the message in this photo op:

Who is endorsing whom in this photograph?	_____ is endorsing _____ →	
What is hanging in the background?		
Which group of people would most likely be persuaded by this image? (check all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior citizens <input type="checkbox"/> Kids under 18 <input type="checkbox"/> Rock music lovers <input type="checkbox"/> Jazz music fans <input type="checkbox"/> Voters age 18-40 <input type="checkbox"/> Men <input type="checkbox"/> Women	
Which two propaganda techniques are applied in this scene?	Technique #1	Technique #2
How do you know these techniques are being used?		

What's the Message?

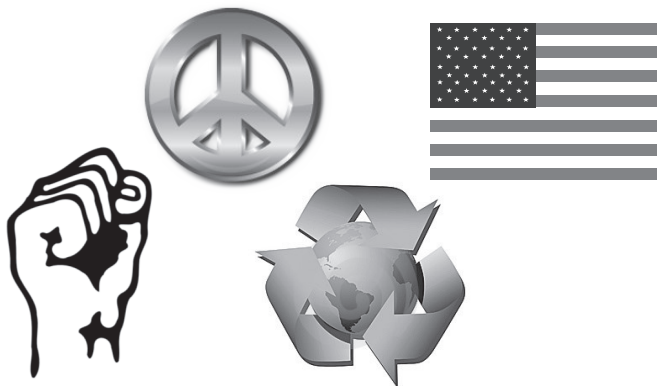
Name: _____

Vocabulary. Match each term with its definition.

___1. Propaganda ___3. Endorse

___2. Bias ___4. Symbol

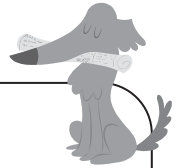
- A. Something that stands for or represents something else
- B. Officially support a product, candidate or idea
- C. Messages that are made to manipulate people's actions and beliefs
- D. Only shows one side of a debate



Symbols. Circle one of the symbols above and answer the questions that follow.

- 5. What IDEA does this symbol stand for?
- 6. If you put this symbol on your backpack, what message would you be sending?
- 7. How could this symbol be used in propaganda?

You're Biased! Read each message and decide if it is biased. Then identify which propaganda technique is used.



Cats v. Dogs

Cats...	Dogs...
-Bathe themselves	-Always getting dirty
-Litter trained	-Has to be walked
-Purr	-Barks a lot

- Is this message biased? Yes No
- If it is, what propaganda technique does it use?
- A. Plain Folks
 - B. Card Stacking



New Video Game

"Thrill a minute!"

"The best game out there!"

"Exciting stuff!"

- Is this message biased? Yes No
- If it is, what propaganda technique does it use?
- A. Glittering Generalities
 - B. Bandwagon



Restaurant Menu

Starters

House Salad	4.50
Mozzarella Sticks	5.50
Calamari	6.00
Garlic Cheese Bread	4.50

- Is this message biased? Yes No
- If it is, what propaganda technique does it use?
- A. Testimonial
 - B. Transfer

What's the Message?

Name: _____

Cartoon Time Follow the steps to create your own piece of propaganda.

Step One: Read each side of the two debates and pick a side for your piece of propaganda.

All students should have the summers off from school.

Or

Students should attend school all year long.

Coke is the best kind of soda.

Or

Pepsi is the best kind of soda.

Step Two: Select the type of propaganda technique you will use in the cartoon.

- Name Calling
- Glittering Generalities
- Transfer
- Testimonial
- Plain Folks
- Card Stacking
- Bandwagon

Step Three: Use the space below to create your propaganda cartoon. Make sure you use what you have learned in this lesson!

What's the Message?

Name: ****TEACHER GUIDE****

Station One: Name Calling

Image 1. Explain how the drawing portrays German soldiers:

Does the soldier look human?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, he looks like: <i>a gorilla or ape, monster, etc.</i>
What is on the soldier's arms?	<i>blood</i>
What is the soldier trying to do?	<i>grab the world, attack Europe, etc.</i>
Is this a positive or negative image?	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Negative

Image 2. What name does this ad want you to connect with the politician?

Reckless

A) The ad is saying that Patty Murray is

Reckless.

B) The ad shows Patty Murray as

happy unhappy.

C) The advertiser wants people to

like dislike this politician.

The Technique. Based on what you see in these examples, what three things can be done to make someone or something look bad?

1. using negative words

2. bad names

3. unflattering images

Station Two: Testimonial

Image 1. Explain the message in this magazine ad:

Who is the celebrity in this ad?	<i>Jennifer Hudson, singer and actress</i>
What product is she endorsing?	<i>Weight Watchers weight loss program</i>
What does she claim this product has done?	<i>Helped her lose weight</i>
What message are YOU supposed to take away from this ad?	<i>You can lose weight like she did with Weight Watchers</i>

Image 2. Analyze the testimonial in this ad:

A) Who is endorsing whom in this ad?

The American Federation of Teachers is endorsing

Hilary Clinton

B) The testimonial is being given by:

- A celebrity
 Knowledgeable group of people
 An ordinary person

C) What is the ad trying to persuade you to do?

Support Hilary Clinton

The Technique. Which of the following testimonials would convince YOU?

A football quarterback endorsing toothpaste.

A mom endorsing a healthy snack for kids.

Your favorite movie star endorsing broccoli.

Your favorite singer endorsing a brand of shoes.

What's the Message?

Name: ****TEACHER GUIDE****

Station Three: Transfer

What two things are pictured in this image?	1) <i>alcoholic beverage</i> 2) <i>car crash/wreck</i>
Which one is supposed to be scary?	<i>The car crash</i>
How does the scary image impact the other image?	<i>The car crash makes the drink look less cool</i>
What is this ad trying to tell you?	<i>Drinking and cars do not mix</i>

Image 2. Setting the stage:

A) What are the 2 symbols of patriotism you see in this image?

1. Statue of Liberty
2. American flags

B) What are these symbols supposed to make you believe about the candidate?

- He is from New York.
- His favorite color is red.
- He loves America.

The Technique. Think about whether the transfer messages in these images are accurate:

A) Is there an actual connection between car wrecks and alcoholic beverages?

- Yes No Need more information to decide

B) Is there an actual connection between this politician and the symbols in the picture?

- Yes No Need more information to decide

Station Four: Glittering Generalities

Image 1. Explain the message in this soda ad:

What does this ad tell you about Coca-Cola?	<i>Nothing, it goes well with other things...</i>
How much information is provided in the ad?	<input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> Some <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None
How much do you already know about Coca-Cola ?	<input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> Some <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> None
How is this message supposed to make you feel?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Negative

Image 2. Match each question below with the piece of campaign propaganda that it challenges.

- F What specific leadership qualifications does he have?
- E What does this future hold?
- C What, specifically, should Americans hope for?
- A What, exactly, can we do?
- B Why should I like him?
- D Can anyone really guarantee peace and prosperity?

The Technique. Describe how glittering generalities tries to persuade people. What tools does it use? Unscramble the words below.

lgsnosa slogans

and

cthca esrhasp catch phrases

that are

ispmel & revcel simple and clever

What's the Message?

Name: ****TEACHER GUIDE****

Station Five: Plain Folks

Image 1. "Plain" President?

A) Do you think this is where the President and Vice President usually eat?

- Yes No

B) Find one detail in this picture that makes it look like the kind of place everyday people might eat:

Answers will vary, paper towels, ketchup, etc.

Image 3. Explain the message in this ad:

A) The woman in the ad looks

- glamorous normal

B) Find one detail in this picture that makes the woman look like a regular person:

Answers will vary, at a gym, no makeup, pulled back hair, etc.

Image 2. Campaigning with workers.

A) What message is this photo trying to send?

- Perry wishes he could wear a hard hat too
 Perry wants to invest in this company
 Perry can relate to average people

B) Find one thing in this picture that shows these workers are "plain folks":

Answers will vary, hard hats, working jacket, etc.

C) The politicians in both images still look different from everyone else because they are wearing

suits.

The Technique. Mark the question that would NOT be helpful for analyzing this technique.

- Would the President eat here if there were no cameras photographing him?
 Why is Perry visiting these workers?
 Is the woman with the water a Republican?

Station Six: Bandwagon

Image 1. Explain the message in this ad for laundry detergent:

What difference do you see between the teams?	<i>Sad/happy, clean/dirty, different detergents</i>
What is Tide's slogan?	<i>It's cleaner on the Tide side. or You can trust Tide...</i>
Which team are you supposed to prefer?	<input type="checkbox"/> #2 Brand <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tide
Why are you supposed to want to be on that team?	<i>It is winning and it's cleaner/happier.</i>

Image 2. Analyze this World War II poster:

A) When Rosie says "we," who is she talking to?

- All Americans
 American women
 Factory workers

B) Look at Rosie. Find one characteristic or quality Rosie has that other women might wish for:

Answers will vary: confidence, strength, a job, nice handkerchief...

The Technique. The bandwagon technique is most like:

- Peer pressure
 Advice
 Getting in trouble

Why? People want to be on the winning side, or at least not on the losing side.

What's the Message?

Name: ****TEACHER GUIDE****

Station Seven: Card Stacking

Image 1. Explain the message about this cell phone provider ad:

What can you learn about Verizon?	<i>5X more 3G coverage, map is almost filled in</i>
What do you learn about AT&T?	<i>A lot less map coverage, less 3G coverage than AT&T</i>
Can you tell whether AT&T has any benefits Verizon doesn't have?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Why can't you trust the information in this ad?	<i>It does not give enough information</i>

Image 2.

A) Which product is this ad promoting?

- Omega-9 Canola Oil
- Partially Hydrogenated Soybean Oil

B) The ad mentions reducing "Bad Fat." Is it clear what "bad fat" is?

- Yes No

C) Does this ad show any more information about the possible benefits of the soybean oil?

- Yes No

The Technique. Think about whether you can base a decision on these messages:

Do card stacking messages give you information?

- Yes No

Do they give you the benefits and drawbacks of both items being compared?

- Yes No

Do they give you enough information to really understand both products?

- Yes No

Station Eight: Challenge Image

Romney/Rock Image. Explain the message in this photo op:

Who is endorsing whom in this photograph?	<i>Kid Rock</i> is endorsing → <i>Mitt Romney</i>	
What is hanging in the background?	<i>The American Flag</i>	
Which group of people would most likely be persuaded by this image? (check all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior citizens <input type="checkbox"/> Kids under 18 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rock music lovers <input type="checkbox"/> Jazz music fans <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Voters age 18-40 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Men <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Women	
Which two propaganda techniques are applied in this scene?	Technique #1 <i>Transfer</i>	Technique #2 <i>Testimonial/Endorsement</i>
How do you know these techniques are being used?	<i>There is an American flag as the backdrop to the stage. This symbolizes patriotism.</i>	<i>The music star, Kid Rock is publically showing his support for presidential candidate Mitt Romney.</i>

What's the Message?

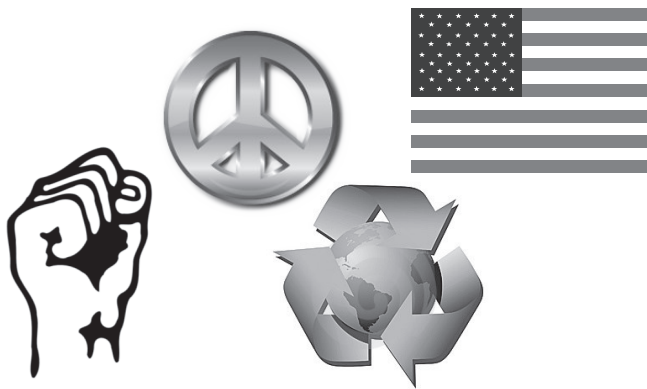
Name: ****TEACHER GUIDE****

Vocabulary. Match each term with its definition.

C 1. Propaganda B 3. Endorse

D 2. Bias A 4. Symbol

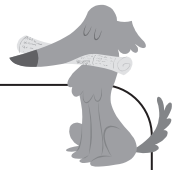
- A. Something that stands for or represents something else
- B. Officially support a product, candidate or idea
- C. Messages that are made to manipulate people's actions and beliefs
- D. Only shows one side of a debate



Symbols. Circle one of the symbols above and answer the questions that follow.

- 5. What IDEA does this symbol stand for?
- 6. If you put this symbol on your backpack, what message would you be sending?
- 7. How could this symbol be used in propaganda?

You're Biased! Read each message and decide if it is biased. Then identify which propaganda technique is used.



Cats v. Dogs

Cats...	Dogs...
-Bathe themselves	-Always getting dirty
-Litter trained	-Has to be walked
-Purr	-Barks a lot

Is this message biased? **Yes** No
 If it is, what propaganda technique does it use?
 A. Plain Folks **B. Card Stacking**



New Video Game

"Thrill a minute!"
 "The best game out there!"
 "Exciting stuff!"

Is this message biased? **Yes** No
 If it is, what propaganda technique does it use?
A. Glittering Generalities B. Bandwagon



Restaurant Menu

Starters

House Salad	4.50
Mozzarella Sticks	5.50
Calamari	6.00
Garlic Cheese Bread	4.50

Is this message biased? Yes **No**
 If it is, what propaganda technique does it use?
 A. Testimonial B. Transfer