

MIND OVER MEDIA: ANALYZING CONTEMPORARY PROPAGANDA

These activities accompany the interactive user-generated content website at
www.mindovermedia.tv

Overview: Why Teaching about Propaganda Matters

Lesson Plan 1

Defining Propaganda

Students examine different definitions of propaganda and explore how to find propaganda in news, advertising, public relations, entertainment, advocacy and education.

Lesson Plan 2

Propaganda Techniques

Students identify four different techniques of propaganda found in advocacy and entertainment by analyzing the “KONY 2012” and “The Interview” cases.

Lesson Plan 3

Propaganda in Context

Students learn about Voice of America’s global video news releases and use role-playing and research activities to explore the importance of context in critically analyzing contemporary propaganda.

Lesson Plan 4

Understanding Viral Media

Students learn about viral media and marketing and consider how audiences participate in the marketing process by deciding what to share through social media.

Lesson Plan 5

Sponsored Content as Propaganda

Students learn about sponsored content, the highly differentiated and customized online content that blurs the line between entertainment, information and persuasion, considering whether sponsored content is fundamentally fair or a form of deceptive propaganda.

Lesson Plan 6

The Ethics of Propaganda

Students examine the ethics of propaganda through analysis of case studies of controversial advertising and Hollywood entertainment, considering the potential short and long-term consequences from the point of view of creators, the audiences, and the society.

Alignment with National Standards

Learn More

Credits and Acknowledgements

Overview

Why Teaching About Propaganda Matters

Critical thinking about propaganda and understanding propaganda's intent are crucial responsibilities of citizenship. During the 20th century, there was plenty of public discourse about propaganda. Unfortunately, in recent years, the study of propaganda has diminished in many educational settings. At the same time, we are more dependent on digital media and technology than ever, with near-constant exposure to social networks, advertising, the 24-hour news cycle, and an ever-expanding array of entertainment media, including music, TV shows, movies, video games, apps and more.

Online, new forms of propaganda, including sponsored content and native advertising, challenge us to keep pace with the changing media ecosystem. Because we now create and actively contribute to the volume of messages in our daily lives through our own use of digital media, new forms of propaganda can sometimes be difficult to recognize.

Also, people may feel overwhelmed or overloaded by all the media in our lives, which can lead to a "tuning-out" phenomenon where we are exposed to propaganda but do not actively recognize how it is influencing our emotions, attitudes, knowledge and behavior.

[MIND OVER MEDIA](http://www.mindovermedia.tv) is an educational website which provides an opportunity for educators and students to explore the subject of propaganda. It's a gallery of contemporary propaganda that has been uploaded by users.

Users can browse examples of propaganda and rate them as beneficial or harmful. They can upload their own examples and comment on the examples shared by others.

Entering into a discussion about contemporary propaganda invites us to think about the power of communication and our responsibilities as authors and audiences. It raises questions about the uses and potential impact of new media and technologies. This learning experience encourages dialogue, intellectual curiosity, active engagement, message interpretation and analysis.

Learning Outcomes

When learners explore and contribute to the [MIND OVER MEDIA](http://www.mindovermedia.tv) website, they will

- Learn to recognize new forms of propaganda in everyday life
- Practice skills of interpretation and critical analysis
- Consider how context shapes the way messages are understood
- Reflect on diverse interpretations of media messages in ways that promote understanding of and respect for others' perspectives
- Shift from passive receivers to critically engaged participants in global public discourse



The essential question asks: What responsibilities do producers and consumers of propaganda bear for its consequences?

The [MIND OVER MEDIA](#) website can be used flexibly as a single lesson or, with the lesson plans, as a longer unit of study. Educators are encouraged to review the lesson plans to advance their own learning and to optimize the educational value of the website.

About the Website

[MIND OVER MEDIA](#) enables users to upload, examine and discuss examples of propaganda from our own daily lives. Users examine propaganda and rate its potential impact, then find and upload examples of contemporary propaganda, and share their interpretations with others. By sharing interpretations and commenting on the ideas of others, critical thinking skills are strengthened.

Classroom Gallery

Teachers can create a customized Classroom Gallery with a unique URL and select specific content from the website that will be appropriate for learners. Students can be invited by email to participate in a Classroom Gallery and upload and share content on the customized Classroom Gallery.

About the Lesson Plans

Use the [MIND OVER MEDIA](#) lesson plans below to help students define and recognize new forms of contemporary propaganda and to assess its impact on individuals and society. The lesson plans engage learners to:

- Discuss definitions of propaganda and identify common propaganda techniques
- Read and respond to writing about historic and contemporary propaganda
- Learn about and analyze new forms of contemporary propaganda
- Share and discuss interpretations of media messages to consider their potentially beneficial, benign or harmful impact on individuals and society
- Evaluate the context of propaganda - the conditions of its making and its use
- Reflect on the social responsibilities of those who create and consume propaganda.

Target Audience

MIND OVER MEDIA activities are suitable for learners ages 13 to adults in both formal and informal learning environments. Because users can upload their own examples, they help to create a robust, fresh dialogue about contemporary propaganda. Because propaganda addresses all aspects of culture, MIND OVER MEDIA provides opportunities for authentic inquiry about a variety of topics, including business and the economy, health care, global issues, science and technology, politics and government, crime and law enforcement, education, the environment, and issues of faith and values.

High Tech and Low Tech Classrooms

Each [MIND OVER MEDIA](#) lesson is designed for one classroom period and multiple options are presented for educators who are working in Low Tech classrooms where only an Internet-enabled computer and projector is available. In High Tech classrooms, students can access the learning materials directly from their mobile devices, tablets or laptops and their computers are equipped with microphones and webcams so that they can create screencasts to share their ideas using image, language, sound and multimedia.

Feedback and Evaluation

We value your feedback on MIND OVER MEDIA. [Share your opinions with us.](#)