



Lesson 9: Propaganda

**by Josephine Cripps, Teacher, Summit K-12 School, Seattle
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Objective: Students will deepen their understanding of the power of propaganda.

Activity:

The teacher shows *Propaganda*, a Power Point presentation available through the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center. *Propaganda* was created by secondary teacher Julie Scott, of Spokane, Washington.

The teacher distributes the students' Holocaust journals. Then she begins with a definition of terms:

Propaganda is slanted information. It is information that is biased.

The teacher provides some background:

Hitler was an ignorant and bigoted man. He mistakenly believed that Judaism was a race. We know that's wrong. Judaism is a religion and Jews practice it. Jews can be of any race and any nationality, and in our world, members of all races and nations have been Jewish.

In his ignorance, Hitler did not know this. He believed that Jews were all members of a race, an inferior race.

*Hitler also believed that Germans were descendants of a race he called **Aryans**. Hitler believed that Aryans were a kind of super-race that had once ruled Europe and Asia. Hitler believed that modern Germans were stronger and smarter than other everyone else because their blood was Aryan.*

So, Hitler was not only putting Jews down. He was building up the so-called German or Aryan race.

He did this through **Promotional Propaganda**. *Promotional Propaganda promotes a certain group; it elevates a certain group.*

*Hitler's Minister of Propaganda was a Nazi named **Joseph Goebbels**. Goebbels was in charge of creating propaganda for the Nazis. His office created and distributed anti-Semitic propaganda. They also created Promotional Propaganda. This propaganda depicted the Germans as superior.*

*As we look at the Power Point, please use your **historical imagination**. That means, Try to think like a German child in 1939. How would this propaganda have affected you?*

As the students watch *Propaganda*, they will have many questions and comments.

The teacher encourages discussion throughout *Propaganda*.

When the students have finished the Power Point, the teacher asks them to abandon their historical imagination and consider modern propaganda—biased information that have seen.

This may be difficult for the students: today's propaganda is often invisible to them. The teacher may have to guide the students toward an understanding of modern propaganda.

She may have to provide the students with examples of modern propaganda (these should be prepared beforehand):*

- Song lyrics
- Cartoons
- Print advertisements
- YouTube selections
- Tattoos
- Grafitti
- Neo-Nazi websites

She closes with a statement and a question for students to answer in their Holocaust journals:

Some people say, "Propaganda may exist but it doesn't affect me." What is your response to this statement? Do you believe that some people are immune to the effects of propaganda? Explain.

The students write in their Holocaust journals.

Students also add new vocabulary to the word lists on their journals:

- Propaganda

- Goebbels
- Aryan
- Promotional Propaganda

Class ends. The teacher thanks everyone for their deep thought and hard work.

***Note: Prior to this lesson, the teacher will need to collect contemporary propaganda materials that are most relevant for her students. For instance, my students love music, so in advance of this lesson, I always ask a few students to investigate Resistance Records. Resistance Records produces heavy metal and rock music with hate lyrics. It enjoys a highly visible web presence and demonstrates how popular musical forms are easily co-opted by hate groups.**

I also ask a few students to visit the Anti-Defamation league at www.adl.org and share information about anti-Semitic tattoos, graffiti, and signage.

In other words, get your students to do this work and then share their knowledge. That's much more effective than your researching and teaching.

Materials:

- *Propaganda*, the Power Point by Julie Scott (can be obtained by contacting the Holocaust Center at info@wsherc.org or 206-441-5747).
- Holocaust Journals, blue pens or pencils
- Assorted propaganda items, gathered by the teacher or students