

Types of Propaganda Techniques

Emotional appeal (e.g. fear): Appealing to the emotions of your audience. For example, when a propagandist warns members of her audience that disaster will result if they do not follow a particular course of action, she is using fear appeal.

Glittering generalities: A glittering generality device seeks to make us approve and accept without examining the evidence; Glittering generalities include phrases such as “We believe in”, “fight for”, and “live by virtue”. They also include words about which we have deep-set ideas, such as civilization, Christianity, good, proper, right, democracy, patriotism, motherhood, fatherhood, science, medicine, health, and love.

Testimonials: Famous people or figures who will appear trustworthy speak to the audience.

Bandwagon: The basic theme of the band wagon appeal is that “everyone else is doing it, and so should you.”

Plain-folks: By using the plain-folks technique, speakers attempt to convince their audience that they, and their ideas, are “of the people.”

Scientific approach: Using scientific jargon (e.g. numbers, statistics, data, etc.) to convince your audience.

Snob appeal: Giving the impression that people of wealth and prestige are on board.

Card stacking: Only presenting one side of the issue/situation.

Transfer: Transfer is a device by which the propagandist carries over the authority, sanction, and prestige of something we respect and revere to something he would have us accept.

Name-calling: The name-calling technique links a person, or idea, to a negative symbol. The propagandist who uses this technique hopes that the audience will reject the person or the idea on the basis of the negative symbol, instead of looking at the available evidence.

Euphemisms: The propagandist attempts to pacify the audience in order to make an unpleasant reality more palatable. This is accomplished by using words that are bland and euphemistic. An example is during war time, since war is particularly unpleasant, military discourse is full of euphemisms. In the 1940's, America changed the name of the War Department to the Department of Defense.