



PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES IN HISTORY AND TODAY

RELATED EXHIBIT: HOLOCAUST

learn from the past engage the present shape the future

LESSON: PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES IN HISTORY AND TODAY

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OVERVIEW

This lesson explores the definition and prevalence of propaganda and looks at how the Nazis recruited young people through the use of harmful and ominous propaganda techniques. The propaganda techniques that will be reviewed are repetition, testimonials, bandwagon appeal, transfers of one quality to another, and highly synthesized music and imagery.

OBJECTIVES

- Given the article *Indoctrinating Youth*, the student will be able to identify propaganda techniques the Nazis used to induct youth into Nazism.
- Given three Nazi propaganda posters, the student will be able to identify the elements of bandwagon appeal, transfers of one quality to another, and highly synthesized visual imagery.
- Students will be able to identify the use of propaganda today.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING(S)

Students will take away some of the following enduring understandings:

- Words and images have powerful sway over people.
- Propaganda techniques have always been a part of history and their use continues today.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S)

- What are ways that the Nazis persuaded Germans to join their movement?
- What are the techniques typically used in propaganda?
- How and where is propaganda used today?



KEY ISSUES/CONCEPTS

- The Power of Words and images

For definitions related to this lesson see *Glossary of Terms, Places, and Personalities* at <https://www.museumoftolerance.com/assets/documents/glossary-of-terms.pdf>

SUBJECT AREA/CONTENT AREA CONNECTIONS

Social Studies, U. S. History, World History, Civics, Government, Politics, Global Studies, English

TIME/MATERIALS

- One class period
- A copy of the *Indoctrinating Youth* article for each student (can be copied on a one-page front-and-back)
- Hitler poster propaganda images on a PowerPoint (these – or images like them – can be found with a simple Google Image search of “Nazi Youth Posters”)

PROCESS

Step 1: Introduce propaganda

Introduce this quote by Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s Propaganda Minister in Nazi Germany: “Tell a lie often enough and everyone will believe you.” Ask students what they think it means. Can they give an example of an often-told lie that many people believe? Ask them if they think lying is a form of propaganda (it most definitely is a form of propaganda!). Use this discussion as the introduction to this lesson.

“Propaganda is truly a terrible weapon in the hands of an expert.” Adolph Hitler, 1924

Propaganda has many definitions, but generally speaking it is about the power of persuasion. Surely, some propaganda is not harmful, like some propaganda used in advertisements. This lesson plan, though, looks at the propaganda that is definitely ominous and harmful. Go over the Classic Propaganda Techniques Handout – repetition, testimonials, bandwagon appeal, transfers of one quality to another, and highly synthesized music and imagery. These are some of the techniques that the Nazis used to recruit young people into Nazism. Explain these propaganda techniques to students and then have them read the Indoctrinating Youth Handout. Follow up the reading with these discussion questions:

- How many years of Nazi indoctrination did children get?
- What do you think is a main aim of instruction for Hitler Youth? What was the number one thing that the Nazis wanted the youth to “get”?
- What was the role of teachers? Were they compliant or did they rail against Nazi ideology?
- What are some strategies they used to increase the idolization of Hitler?
- Were the roles of boys and girls different? How so?
- All education – both schooling and youth organizations – had the same goals. What were they?

Show the three propaganda posters and review them with students in regards to the propaganda techniques of bandwagon appeal, transfers of one quality to another, and highly synthesized imagery.

Summarize with students the main propaganda techniques used by the Nazis: repetition, testimonials, bandwagon appeal, transfers of one quality to another, and highly synthesized music and imagery.

STEP 2: PROPAGANDA IS EVERYWHERE HOMEWORK

After students show comprehension of the propaganda techniques of repetition, bandwagon appeal, transfers of one quality to another, and highly synthesized music and imagery, students are asked to identify the propaganda techniques in everyday situations. Give each student a copy of the ***Propaganda is Everywhere Handout*** and go over it with them, having them identify examples they know in their everyday lives. They are to take this handout home with them and watch the news, shows, listen to music, look at advertisements, view their social media platforms and identify one example of a propaganda technique and how it was used.

STEP 3: DISCUSS WHAT THEY FOUND LAST NIGHT

Have students share out the kinds of propaganda techniques they found, where they found them, and how they were used (in news, in advertisements, in politics, or personally on social media platforms). If examples are leaning, say, towards political use, then ask for some from the other areas mentioned above. Help students see that knowing these propaganda techniques helps them be savvier and more critical of the world they live in and less easily persuaded and manipulated by others. Lead students in having a more nuanced conversation about the good and bad sides of propaganda. Ask some of the following questions to help them nuance more:

- Are some kinds of propaganda worse than others? Why or why not?
- Is all propaganda bad? Why or why not?
- Do some kinds of advertisement cross a line and make it more hateful? How so?
- What would make an advertisement extreme or hateful?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS CORRELATION

The content provided in this lesson supports the goals and objectives of the Common Core State Standards across multiple content areas. Since *Propaganda Techniques In History And Today* is written for middle and high school students, we provide CCSS that span 6th-grade to 12th-grade.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS-READING

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; 7.1; 8.1; 9-10.1; 11-12.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2; 7.2; 8.2; 9-10.2; 11-12.2

Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3; 7.3; 8.3; 9-10.3; 11-12.3

Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

HISTORY

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2; 9-10.2; 11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6; 9-10.6; 11-12.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

HANDOUT / INDOCTRINATING YOUTH

“These boys and girls enter our organizations at ten years of age, and often for the first time get a little fresh air; after four years of the Young Folk they go on to the Hitler Youth, where we have them for another four years... And even if they are still not complete National Socialists, they go to Labor Services and are smoothed out there for another six or seven months... And whatever class consciousness or social status might still be left... the Wehrmacht (German armed forces) will take care of that.” – Adolf Hitler (1938)

From the 1920s onwards, the Nazi Party targeted German youth as a special audience for its propaganda messages. These messages emphasized that the Party was a movement of youth: dynamic, resilient, forward-looking, and hopeful. Millions of German young people were won over to Nazism in the classroom and through extracurricular activities. In January 1933, the Hitler Youth had about 50,000 members, but by the end of the year this figure had increased to more than 2 million. By 1936 membership in the Hitler Youth increased to 5.4 million before it became mandatory in 1939. The German authorities then prohibited or dissolved competing youth organizations.

EDUCATION IN THE NAZI STATE

Education in the Third Reich served to indoctrinate students with the National Socialist world view. Nazi scholars and educators glorified Nordic and other “Aryan” races, while denigrating Jews and other so-called inferior peoples as parasitic “bastard races” incapable of creating culture or civilization. After 1933, the Nazi regime purged the public school system of teachers deemed to be Jews or to be “politically unreliable.” Most educators, however, remained in their posts and joined the National Socialist Teachers League. 9% of all public school teachers, some 300,000 persons, had joined the League by 1936. In fact, teachers joined the Nazi Party in greater numbers than any other profession.

In the classroom and in the Hitler Youth, instruction aimed to produce race-conscious, obedient, self-sacrificing Germans who would be willing to die for Führer and Fatherland. Devotion to Adolf Hitler was a key component of Hitler Youth training. German young people celebrated his birthday (April 20) – a national holiday – for membership inductions. German adolescents swore allegiance to Hitler and pledged to serve the nation and its leader as future soldiers.

Schools played an important role in spreading Nazi ideas to German youth. While censors removed some books from the classroom, German educators introduced new textbooks that taught students love for Hitler, obedience to state authority, militarism, racism, and anti-Semitism.

From their first days in school, German children were imbued with the cult of Adolf Hitler. His portrait was a standard fixture in classrooms. Textbooks frequently described the thrill of a child seeing the German leader for the first time.

Board games and toys for children served as another way to spread racial and political propaganda to German youth. Toys were also used as propaganda vehicles to indoctrinate children into militarism.

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

The Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls were the primary tools that the Nazis used to shape the beliefs, thinking and actions of German youth. Youth leaders used tightly controlled group activities and staged propaganda events such as mass rallies full of ritual and spectacle to create the illusion of one national community reaching across class and religious divisions that characterized Germany before 1933.

Founded in 1926, the original purpose of the Hitler Youth was to train boys to enter the SA (Storm Troopers), a Nazi Party paramilitary formation. After 1933, however, youth leaders sought to integrate boys into the Nazi national community and to prepare them for service as soldiers in the armed forces or, later in the SS. In 1936, membership in Nazi youth groups became mandatory for all boys and girls between the ages of ten and seventeen. After-school meetings and weekend camping trips sponsored by the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls trained children to become faithful to the Nazi Party and the future leaders of the National Socialist state. By September 1939, over 765,000 young people served in leadership roles in Nazi youth organizations which prepared them for such roles in the military and the German occupation bureaucracy. The Hitler Youth combined sports and outdoor activities with ideology. Similarly, the League of German Girls emphasized collective athletics, such as rhythmic gymnastics, which German health authorities deemed less strenuous to the female body and better geared to preparing them for motherhood. Their public displays of these values encouraged young men and women to abandon their individuality in favor of the goals of the Aryan collective.

MILITARY SERVICE

Upon reaching age eighteen, boys were required to enlist immediately in the armed forces or into the Reich Labor Service, for which their activities in the Hitler Youth had prepared them. Propaganda materials called for ever more fanatic devotion to Nazi ideology, even as the German military suffered from defeat after defeat. In the autumn of 1944, as Allied armies crossed the borders into Germany, the Nazi regime conscripted German youths under sixteen to defend the Reich, alongside seniors over the age of 60, in the units of the “Volkssturm” (People’s Assault). After the unconditional surrender of the German armed forces in May 1945, some German boys continued to fight in guerilla groups known as “Werewolves.” During the following year, Allied occupation authorities required young Germans to undergo a “de-Nazification” process and training in democracy designed to counter the effects of twelve years of Nazi propaganda.

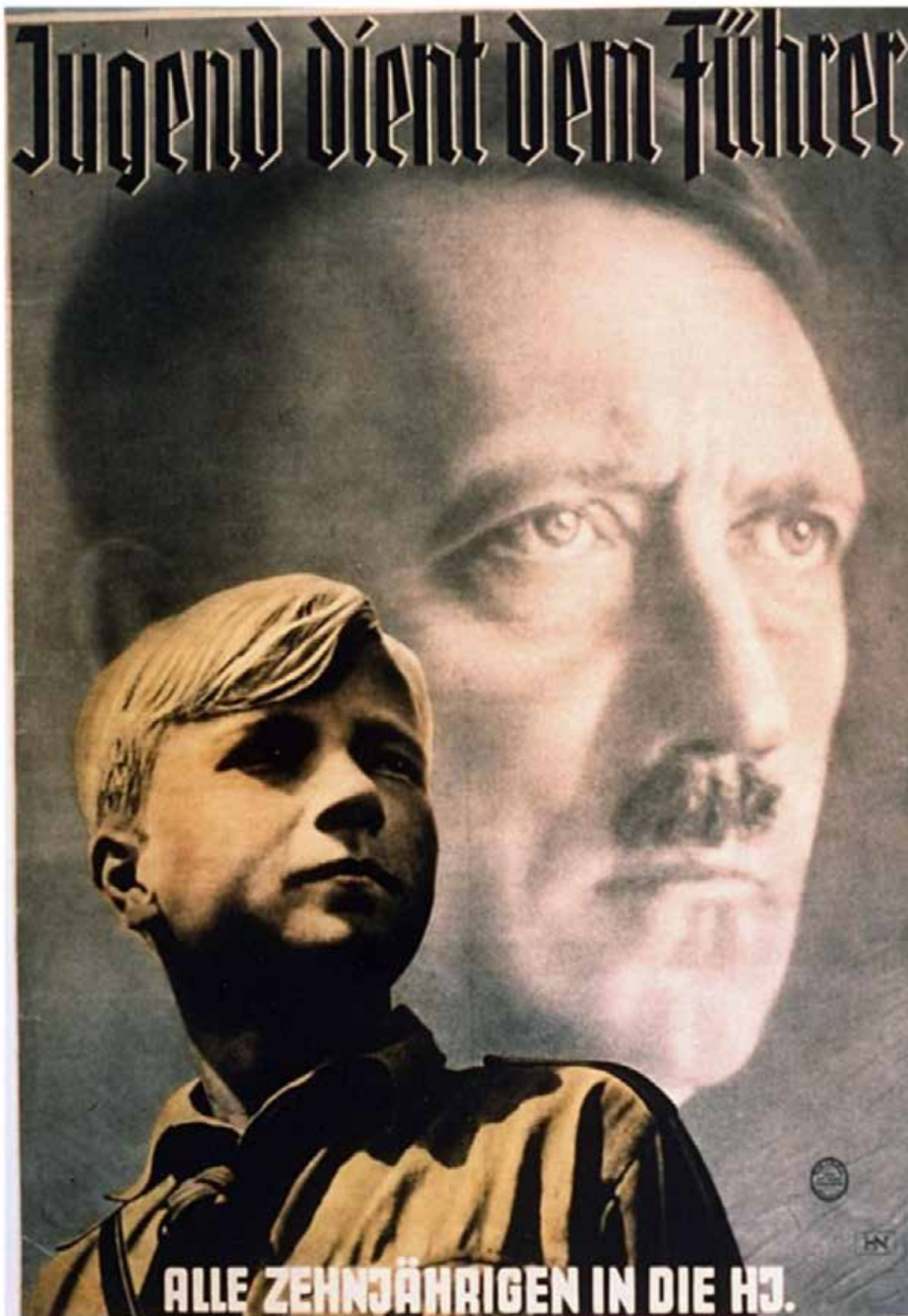
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “Shaping the Future: Indoctrinating Youth.”
Holocaust Encyclopedia. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/indoctrinating-youth>
Accessed on July 31, 2020.



This is a large campaign poster with a drawing of a smiling mother and her 3 blonde children who have a bright future thanks to Adolf Hitler. (Source: USHMM 2008.342.7)



"The German Student Fights for the Führer and the People"
(Source: <http://spartacus-educational.com/GERyouth.htm>)



"Youth Serves the Leader: All 10-Year-Olds into the Hitler Youth"
(Source: <http://www.ushmm.org/propaganda/archive/poster-hitler-youth/>)

REPETITION:

Repetition is the repeating of a certain symbol or slogan so that the audience remembers it. This could be in the form of an image or a jingle. Propagandists use repetition to link themes to certain ideas. Repetition has the effect of preventing further discussion when convincing members of their group that the opposing side cannot think rationally.

TESTIMONIALS:

If a doctor is on a commercial and talks about how effective a medication is for you, you will take them more seriously than if a random person recommends it. Similarly, if a celebrity with beautiful hair says such-and-such shampoo gave her/him this beautiful hair, then you are more likely to buy it. This is what testimonial propaganda comprises of. Advertisers use the testimonials of influencers, authority figures, or experts to convince you to purchase their product.

BANDWAGON APPEAL:

Did you ever get something just because all of your friends were getting it? Or have you ever agreed that a certain person is awful because everyone else said they were, even though they'd actually been nice to you personally? That is the mentality of bandwagon propaganda. Media knows that people don't like to feel as though they are left out so they try to convince you that everyone else is buying this or doing that so that you will "jump on the bandwagon" too!

TRANSFERS OF ONE QUALITY TO ANOTHER:

Also known as association, this technique projects 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. This type of propaganda often deals with famous people or depicts attractive, happy people. It suggests that if people buy a product or follow a certain idea, they will be happy or successful too.

HIGHLY SYNTHESIZED MUSIC AND IMAGERY:

Specific music and imagery with strong emotional implications are used to influence the audience. The music, for example, can generate happiness and then that happiness is associated with the target-person, item, or idea. Strong emotional things can influence audiences in one way or another.

PROPAGANDA IS EVERYWHERE / HANDOUT

Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.

TYPE OF PROPAGANDA	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Repetition	The repeating of a certain symbol or slogan so that the audience remembers it.	
Testimonials	Using the testimonials of influencers, authority figures, or experts to convince you.	
Bandwagon Appeal	Trying to convince you that everyone else is buying or doing something and you'd better join them or you'll miss out.	
Transfers of 1 Quality to Another	Projecting positive or negative qualities (praise or blame) of a person, entity, object, or value onto another to make the second more acceptable or discredit it.	
Highly Synthesized Music & Imagery	Using music or imagery with strong emotional implications to influence the audience.	

You are to find ONE piece of propaganda to bring to the class discussion. It could be a song, an image, or a statement. State which type of propaganda it is and what it was trying to accomplish.

NOTES: