

Analyzing Propaganda Posters Lesson Plan

Description: In this lesson, students discuss and develop an understanding of the techniques used to create effective propaganda. Using this knowledge, students work in groups of three or four to analyze posters from the First World War. Groups present their findings to the class.

Recommended Grade Range

All provinces and territories except Quebec: Grades 10 to 12

Quebec: Secondary 4 and 5

Prerequisites: This lesson should follow previous discussions and lessons on the First World War.

Objectives:

- Students will develop an understanding of the techniques and goals of propaganda;
- Students will learn how propaganda was used in Canada during the First World War;
- Students will learn to analyze propaganda.

Estimated Time: 2-3 class periods

Materials Required:

- Overhead transparency of a Canadian poster from the resources section (if you have access to the required technology, project the image directly from the Web site), or copies to hand out to students (preferably in colour), downloaded from the resources section;
- Projector (if not using copies);
- Copies of posters from the Web site for groups of 3-4 students (a different poster for each group);
- Copies of the Poster Analysis Worksheet.

Lesson:

Write the word 'propaganda' on the blackboard, and engage students in a discussion of its meaning. Make note of their suggested definitions on chart paper or the blackboard. Use these suggestions to create a working definition of propaganda that includes its purposes and use, or provide them with a pre-existing definition.

Propaganda is the organized dissemination of information to influence thoughts, beliefs,

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feelings, and actions.

Project or hand out the poster you've selected from the gallery. Ask students to describe the poster. Prompt them for responses, using questions such as the following:

- Who created this poster?
- Who is the target audience?
- What is the message of this poster?
- What propaganda techniques are used?
- How is this message conveyed?
- What purpose did the poster serve for the Canadian war effort during the First World War?
- What is the effect of this poster?

Repeat the analysis process with another poster if you are unsure of whether the class is comfortable with the concepts presented.

Next, organize students in groups of three or four. Hand out a copy of a different poster to each group. Have the groups analyze the posters using the Poster Analysis Worksheet while you circulate, providing encouragement and feedback. Keep the class definition of propaganda on display for students to refer to as they work.

Groups should present their findings to the class.

Assessment:

Ask groups to turn in their worksheets. Base marks on the group work, presentation and the worksheet. Look for their:

- understanding of the concept of propaganda;
- ability to relate these concepts to the images and text in their poster;
- ability to situate the poster and its messages within the context of the First World War.

Also check for the:

- clarity with which the argument is presented;
- ability of the group to cite specific examples to support their analysis;
- active participation of all group members.

Extension Activities:

- Have students make propaganda posters about contemporary issues such as drinking and driving, smoking, or environmental concerns. Put the posters on display and have



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- students vote on which poster is most effective.
- Ask students to consider where they see materials that they would consider propaganda in their daily lives. Ask students to bring examples to class for discussion and analysis.