

# Nazi Propaganda in Germany: 1920-1945

The Nazis utilized propaganda as a political tool from their inception. Joseph Goebbels, Reich Propaganda Minister, developed bright, simply-interpreted imagery to impact the opinions of the German electorate prior to 1933, and then to sensitize them to the Nazi racial message after 1933. This exercise helps students to evaluate that propaganda for message and effectiveness.

## Lesson Plan:

Materials needed:

- Photocopies of Student Worksheet
- Propaganda Notes for Teachers
- Internet access or color printing (to display propaganda in class)

## Instructions for Classroom Exercise:

1. Students should be met at the beginning of the class with the following focus question:

**How did the Nazis utilize propaganda to promote their political agendas?**

At the teacher's discretion, the class can either journal on this idea quietly or discuss and brainstorm responses as a class.

2. Allow students time (or assign as homework) to thoroughly review the following websites, completing the student worksheet as they study.
  - **Pre-1933 Nazi Posters** (<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/posters1.htm>)
  - **Nazi Posters, 1933-1945** (<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/posters2.htm>)
3. As a class, revisit the focus question and worksheet.

## Enhancement Activities for classroom use:

1. Analyze the Nuremberg Laws. What were the objectives of the Nazis' legal assault on the German Jews? What effects did this have on the German Jewish community? What made this assault racially-based as opposed to religiously-based? (<http://www.mchekc.org/PrimarySourceDocuments.htm>)
2. Analyze the propaganda surrounding the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. Full lesson plans and a link to the online exhibition available at <http://www.mchekc.org/OlympicsLessons.htm>.

## Special Notes for Teachers:

1. This exercise is designed to meet state standards for using primary source documents, discerning bias and point-of-view, and utilizing and evaluating a variety of sources.
2. If internet access is unavailable and you prefer not to assign this as homework, an effective alternative is to choose specific pieces of propaganda, print them in color, and display them around the room. Students can then work individually or in small groups to "tour" the exhibition and complete their analysis.
3. When utilizing propaganda in the classroom, teachers should be careful to clarify whose message is being portrayed and take care to deconstruct the imagery in historical context so that students are not swayed by the message.