

Part 1: Propaganda, the Media and Incitement

Lesson 1: Propaganda, Bias and Stereotype

It is important to begin this unit with definitions of terminology. Depending on the age of the students, the first activity could be brainstorming the following ideas:

- What is propaganda?
- What is bias?
- What is stereotype?

For younger students, you may just want to give them the definitions, then discuss. For older students, have them generate their ideas, then give them the following definitions and discuss further.

- **Propaganda:** the spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause or a person; ideas, facts or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause. (meriam-webster.com)
- **Bias:** a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment (meriam-webster.com)
- **Stereotype:** a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing (encyclopedia.com)

Using these definitions, discuss as a group, or in small groups, what techniques people use to get us to believe something? (Commercials, advertisements, political campaigns, parents, peers, propaganda techniques, such as bandwagon or appeal to reason) Keep a running list to refer to throughout the unit. Ask students to be more aware as you continue this unit and add to the techniques on the list.

Once students have a good sense of the terminology, have them brainstorm:

- What propaganda have they seen?
- When in their lives have they done or purchased something because of propaganda?
- When have they used propaganda to get someone to do, say or buy something?
- What bias have they seen?
- What bias do they have?
- What bias do people have about their age group?

Lesson 2: Hate Speech, The Media and Violence

What is hate speech?

“...speech that attacks a person or group on the basis of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.” (Dictionary.com)

In the US, currently, hate speech is protected under the first amendment and our right to free speech. However, there is growing controversy over whether or not hate speech should be allowed. Discuss hate speech, where they may have heard it, and whether or not they think it should be legal or illegal. If illegal, who decides what is and isn't hate speech?

Next, move into the idea of incitement.

- Can the radio/television/newspaper incite violence with hate speech?
- Just how much influence does the media have on us?
- If the media tells people to do something illegal, who is to blame? The person or the media? Why?

Set up either a debate or a Socratic seminar. Some topics could include:

1. The media has a right to say whatever they want.
OR
 2. The media does not have the right to use hate speech.
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1. Hate speech does cause violence.
OR
 2. Hate speech does not cause violence.
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1. The media can be blamed for violence.
OR
 2. The media cannot be blamed for what people do.