

# Propaganda

## Definition of Propaganda

Propaganda is the spreading of rumors, false or correct information, or an idea, in order to influence the opinion of society. It may advance an idea or bring into disrepute an opposite idea. In literature, writers use propaganda as a literary technique to manipulate public opinion for or against one idea or another. In history, we can search a plethora of literary works used as propaganda to shape public perceptions, and direct their behavior to get a response. Generally, propaganda is a technique for convincing people, but which is misleading in nature, or promotes a false viewpoint.

## Popular Examples of Propaganda

The U.S. dropped leaflets in a propaganda campaign in Iraq, to let the people know that Saddam Hussein was the real culprit they were looking for.

People use name-calling as propaganda, such as “*My enemy* is a drug addict.”

During the McCarthy era, mass media attempted to persuade the public, through propaganda, that Communists had become very powerful, and that they would take over the U.S.

Slogans or catchphrases can work as propaganda, when they are repeated over and over. Eventually, the public starts believing them. Selling happiness has become popular concept in ads, and serves as propaganda such as famous celebrities explain to the public why they need to purchase the product because it would solve their problems.

## Examples of Propaganda in Literature

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### Example #1: *Animal Farm* (By George Orwell)

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Propaganda played a very important role in the Russian Revolution. George Orwell wrote his novel *Animal Farm* after this revolution, and used anti-

communist propaganda as its major [theme](#). The author manipulated the speech of the [character](#) Squealer, which is a pig portrayed as Napoleon's spokesperson.

One example of Squealer's propaganda is to get the support of other animals. He uses manipulated speech to disapprove of Snowball's part in the uprising revolt after his banishment from the farm. He uses the stupidity of animals for his benefit, and plays with their minds by describing a different side of events in the Battle of the Cowshed.

We can see another example of propaganda in this novel, when pigs twist the rules and the Seven Commandments for their own advantage. The original rule reads:

"No animal shall be killed by any other animal."

They change this to:

"No animal shall be killed by any other animal without cause."

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### **Example #2: *The Orphan Master's Son* (By Adam Johnson)**

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Adam Johnson's novel *The Orphan Master's Son* deals with the themes of identity, state power, and propaganda in North Korea. The story is about two men from North Korea who revolted against the tyrannical government of their country. Through their story, readers get the impression that the North Korean leaders are selfish, as they kidnap their people, steal their money, and cheat them.

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### **Example #3: *Richard III* (By W. H. Auden)**

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Many critics consider some historical plays of Shakespeare as Tudor propagandas, as they depict civil war dangers, and commemorate the Tudor dynasty's founders. Similarly, in his play *Richard III*, Shakespeare uses propaganda, when we see Richard shapes the readers' perceptions. He gains the sympathies of other characters in the play when he declares his

use of deformity as propaganda, and controls, injures, and manipulates other people for his personal gain.

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#### **Example #4: *Lord of the Flies* (By William Golding)**

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In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, the author introduces the concept of a beast, using propaganda by his character Jack, who plans to take control of a totalitarian government. He uses propaganda by manipulating the cognition of the young boys, frightening them about the existence of the beast in that area. He accuses Ralph, who does not carry out his duty to provide protection to the children, and consequently takes charge of a new tribe that would follow his tyrannical rules.

#### **Function of Propaganda**

We can easily find the use of propaganda technique in mass media advertising, politics, and literature. It is a very popular technique in academic commentary, and is taken as an interchangeable form of communication. The primary function of propaganda is to persuade the [audience](#), and to mold their perceptions about a particular cause.

Often, propaganda assists in promoting policies. In addition, it aims at getting a response of the audience taking a certain action. This is because merely securing a commitment or assent would not be enough for making this technique successful, and securing its purpose. Besides, propaganda serves as an effective weapon to rouse people by making them realize their vulnerabilities and frailties, instead of comforting them with illusions.