

# Types of Propaganda

**BANDWAGON:** The basic idea behind the bandwagon approach is just that, "getting on the bandwagon." The propagandist puts forth the idea that everyone is doing this, or everyone supports this person/cause, so should you. The bandwagon approach appeals to the conformist in all of us: No one wants to be left out of what is perceived to be a popular trend.

**EXAMPLE:** Everyone in Lemmingtown is behind Jim Duffie for Mayor. Shouldn't you be part of this winning team?

**TESTIMONIAL:** This is the endorsement of a philosophy, movement or candidate by an individual or group that is popular, famous, respected, or powerful. In advertising, for example, athletes are often paid millions of dollars to promote sports shoes, equipment and fast food. In political circles, movie stars, television stars, rock stars and athletes lend a great deal of credibility and power to a political cause or candidate. Other times doctors endorse medicine or a professional organization endorses a candidate.

**EXAMPLE:** "Sam Slugger", a baseball Hall of Famer who led the pros in hitting for years, appears in a television ad supporting Mike Politico for U.S. Senate. Since Sam is well known and respected in his home state and nationally, he will likely gain Mr. Politico many votes just by his appearance with the candidate.

**PLAIN FOLKS:** Here the candidate or cause is identified with common people from everyday walks of life. The idea is to make the candidate/cause come off as grassroots and all-American.

**EXAMPLE:** After a morning speech to wealthy Democratic donors, Bill Clinton stops by McDonald's for a burger, fries, and photo-op.

**TRANSFER:** Transfer employs the use of symbols, quotes or the images of famous people to convey a message not necessarily associated with them. In the use of transfer, the candidate/speaker attempts to persuade us through the indirect use of something we respect, such as a patriotic or religious image, to promote his/her ideas. Religious and patriotic images may be the most commonly used in this propaganda technique but they are not alone. Sometimes even science becomes the means to transfer the message.

**EXAMPLE:** The environmentalist group PEOPLE PROMOTING PLANTS, in its attempt to prevent a highway from destroying the natural habitat of thousands of plant species, produces a television ad with a "scientist" in a white lab coat explaining the dramatic consequences of altering the food chain by destroying this habitat.

**FEAR:** This technique is very popular among political parties and PACs (Political Action Committees) in the U.S. The idea is to present a dreaded circumstance and usually follow it up with the kind of behavior needed to avoid that horrible event.

**EXAMPLE:** The Citizens for Retired Rights present a magazine ad showing an elderly couple living in poverty because their social security benefits have been drastically cut by the Republicans in Congress. The solution? The CRR urges you to vote for Democrats.

**LOGICAL FALLACIES:** Applying logic, one can usually draw a conclusion from one or more established premises. In the type of propaganda known as the logical fallacy, however, the premises may be accurate but the conclusion is not.

**EXAMPLE:**

Premise 1: Bill Clinton supports gun control.

Premise 2: Communist regimes have always supported gun control.

Conclusion: Bill Clinton is a communist.

We can see in this example that the Conclusion is created by a twisting of logic, and is therefore a fallacy.

**GLITTERING GENERALITIES:** This approach is closely related to what is happening in TRANSFER (see above). Here, a generally accepted virtue is usually employed to stir up favorable emotions. The problem is that these words mean different things to different people and are often manipulated for the propagandists' use. The important thing to remember is that in this technique the propagandist uses these words in a positive sense. They often include words like: democracy, family values (when used positively), rights, civilization, even the word "American."

**EXAMPLE:** An ad by a cigarette manufacturer proclaims to smokers: Don't let them take your rights away! ("Rights" is a powerful word, something that stirs the emotions of many, but few on either side would agree on exactly what the 'rights' of smokers are.)

**NAME-CALLING:** This is the opposite of the GLITTERING GENERALITIES approach. Name-calling ties a person or cause to a largely perceived negative image.

**EXAMPLE:** In a campaign speech to a logging company, the Congressman referred to his environmentally conscious opponent as a "tree hugger."