

Persuasive Social Posters

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Abstract: Students will experience the power of persuasion by writing papers, marketing a self created product and finally by creating a propaganda poster.

Essential Questions: How does the media persuade the public? How can students persuade their peers?

Assessment: Using World War II propaganda posters as an influence, students will create propaganda posters to promote and increase positive school climate.

Setting the Purpose: The second quarter of ELA middle school curriculum is dedicated towards persuasion. Students begin the quarter by writing traditional persuasive papers. Students also create a product to sell by writing scripts for commercials to perform in front of their classmates. Students will continue their unit on persuasion by connecting propaganda posters from World War II, to current propaganda campaigns and creating their own campaign. Students' accomplishment will be observing how their power of persuasion and propaganda influences their peers and teachers to improve their school building.

Duration: 1-2 days for propaganda analysis and review. One week to create propaganda posters. Can adjust time depending on how much independent work time is given during a class period.

Procedure:

- Start the class with a warm question on the overhead that asks “What is propaganda?” Discuss with students what they think propaganda is. Write student responses down on the overhead for all to see. Lead discussion to include posters, billboards, commercials, etc. Ask students to name examples of propaganda. Explain to students that propaganda was widely and successfully used during WWII to promote moral and support for the war.
- Using the “Posters of WWI & WWII” book or [alternate website](#), show students examples of propaganda posters. Using the CD-Rom, with a projector, have the posters projected on the classroom screen. Have students guess what each poster is trying to influence the civilian to do. Have students discern who the intended audience is for each poster? If you do not have a projector you can make copies or show each poster from your copy of the book.
- Use the “Propaganda Poster Analysis” worksheet to have students dissect and World War II propaganda posters. Begin by modeling the procedure for the students. Complete a few analyses as a class, while checking for understanding. Have students complete the remainder of the analysis independently or in small groups.
- Discuss the results of the remainder of the worksheet.

Note: Can go further with propaganda by discussing how it is used today. Bill boards, commercials, ad placement in movies and television, sponsorship by celebrities and professional athletes, internet, logo placement, etc. etc. etc.

Part 2

- Review what propaganda is and how it worked to motivate and positively influence WWII. Ask students how propaganda could positively influence their school.
- Ask students to think of issues, policies and actions students are supposed to adhere to, but do not see followed or do not follow themselves(i.e., things they are “lazy about”). List these on butcher paper. On a separate piece of lined paper, ask students to rank what they think are the top 3 issues neglected by students in their school. If there is an item not mentioned they may add that to their list.
- Have students pick the #1 issue they want to address through a propaganda poster. These should not be policies they want to see changed or implemented. They should be policies already in place that they want to see improved and taken ownership of by a group in the school.
- Ask students who they will target their poster towards. Who will be their audience in the school? Teachers, students, boys, girls, custodial staff, office secretaries, administration? Is there an age group, race or socioeconomic group they will target? These are all themes propaganda catered to.
- Using the #1 issue they identified, students create their own propaganda posters.
- Use large construction paper for poster creation. Students could use paint, markers, color pencils, chalk, crayons, magazine and newspaper clippings, etc.
- Students work 1-3 days depending on teacher preference.
- Consider allowing students to work in pairs.
- Have staff or students vote for the best poster.
- Display posters around the school.