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STUDENT HANDOUT

RED LEVEL
GO DEEPER

Seeing is Deceiving

Spotting Propaganda

Grades 5–8 • Social Studies

ADMIT ONE

NAME _____

DATE _____

CLASS _____

The weaponization of images. Every major conflict in modern history has been fought with images as well as weapons. Propaganda doesn't just support wars — it makes them possible by dehumanizing enemies and manufacturing consent. Understanding this history is essential for informed citizenship in an age of deepfakes and viral misinformation.

PART 1

O1 Comparative Analysis: Two Sides of History

Examine propaganda from opposing sides of the same conflict (WWI, WWII, Cold War, etc.):

SIDE A: _____

SIDE B: _____

How is the enemy depicted?

What techniques are used?

What emotions are triggered?

What “truth” is claimed?

Analysis: What do both sides have in common? What does this reveal about propaganda's methods?

PART 2

O2 Research Project: Visual History of a Conflict

Choose one historical event and research how BOTH sides used visual propaganda:

Options: WWI recruitment, WWII home front, Cold War, Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam War, any political campaign

Event chosen: _____

Key questions to research:

- What images did each side create? What images did they suppress or alter?
- How did visual propaganda shape public opinion?
- Were there counter-propaganda efforts?
- How do historians view this propaganda today vs. how audiences saw it then?

03 PART 3 Critical Questions

1. Propaganda often contains elements of truth. Does this make it more or less dangerous than outright lies? Explain.

2. Is there a difference between propaganda and persuasion? Where do you draw the line?

3. Social media algorithms show us content we're likely to agree with. Is this a form of propaganda? Why or why not?

MINI MUSEUM DEEP DIVE

Research: How did newspapers expose spirit photography as fraud? Compare their investigative techniques to modern fact-checking of deepfakes. What's similar? What's harder today?

minimuseumproject.org/exhibitions/seeing-is-deceiving

SHARE WITH YOUR FAMILY

Interview Project: Ask older family members about propaganda they remember (wartime, political campaigns, advertising). How did they learn to recognize it? Has their media literacy changed over time?