

Propaganda - Module

Learning Objectives: In this module students will assess various forms of propaganda and how it impacted Japanese American society. Students will understand the influence of history and culture on art and popular culture of the time (FPA4-11.3.A.3, FPA4-11.3.T.1), analyze and find primary sources (SS5-12.6.4, CCRI6-12.1, CCRI6-12.6), and construct essays in which they accurately and concisely convey ideas (CCW6-12.1).

Introduction: The media plays an important role in the spread of information. Sometimes the information shared with the public is not the factual spread of information, but rather propaganda. The express goal of propaganda is to garner support for a specific political leaning. It tends to be heavily biased and paints the opposing side as dangerous. Journalists and media corporations are allowed to have political leanings, but what happens when those political beliefs begin to color the information they share with the public? How are we, as consumers of mass media, meant to decipher true media information from propaganda? What happens when propaganda targets a minority and begins to shape public opinion and government policy?

Activities:

- Fact vs. Fiction (SS5-12.6.4, CCW6-12.1)
 - In this activity students will have the opportunity to analyze several media sources and decide if the information is fact or fiction (propaganda). As students look at the sources, have them complete the Propaganda worksheet. Once students have completed the worksheet have them answer the following discussion questions:
 - What criteria did you use to decide if something was factual or propaganda?
 - Did you have trouble distinguishing between propaganda and factual media?
 - Is there ever a time when propaganda is appropriate?
 - The government also produces propaganda to sway public opinion. Do you think this is fair?
- The Silver Screen and Culture (FPA4-11.3.T.1 and SS5-12.6.4)
 - Hollywood and film play a major role in contemporary society, but what about World War II Era America. During the 1940s film was still an exciting new technology that greatly influenced the general public. This was a well known fact by many Hollywood executives and they used it to their advantage. Films produced during World War II mirror anti-asiatic prejudices and further bolstered xenophobia. Have students view this Superman episode and answer the discussion questions.
 - [Superman- Japoteurs](#) (1942)
 - Discussion Questions
 - What was the title of this Superman episode? (Japoteurs) Is that a play on words? (encourage students to think of saboteurs and how this plays on the fear that Japanese Americans were spying on the US for the Japanese emperor)

- This is Superman, a show for children. Why do you think a children's cartoon contained propaganda? Can you think of other children's shows that are propaganda?
 - Do you think it's appropriate for children to be exposed to this?
 - Is this an example of mainstream complicity in racism towards Japanese Americans?
- Create a Poster (FPA4-11.1.A.1, CCW6-12.4, SS5-12.6.4)
 - Students have reviewed the damages of creating propagandistic materials. Have students create either a political cartoon, poster, or news article countering anti-Japanese propaganda from the period. Encourage students to research propaganda and political cartoons from World War II for more inspiration. Allow students to be as creative as needed to get their point across. After students have completed their own work, have them write 1-2 paragraphs explaining their work.

Video:

- [The Power of Panic](#)
 - Short video explaining the roll of panic and propaganda in the history of Heart Mountain
- Scene from Destination Tokyo discussing Japan's failed attempt at democracy. See if you can find clip online
- Little Tokyo U.S.A. (1942) film

Reading Suggestions: CCRL and CCRI

- [They Called Us Enemy by George Takei](#) (6-9)
- [American inquisition: The Hunt for Japanese American Disloyalty in World War II by Eric L. Muller](#) (11-12)

