



**SUPPLY
LINE**

Analyzing Propaganda Posters

Overview

Using a selection of posters from the Second World War, students will analyze the components of propaganda and apply key concepts to the contemporary use of propaganda.

Grade Levels

Recommended for Grades 7 to 12, Secondary 1 to 5 in Quebec

Estimated Time

1 class period

Curriculum Connections

English (media studies, language), social studies (history), arts (media arts, visual arts)

Historical Thinking Concepts

- **Evaluating Evidence:** What can we tell about how people lived by examining the clues they left behind? What questions remain?
- **Historical Significance:** How do we decide which and whose stories to tell? What evidence do we use? What evidence do we leave out?

Objectives

- Develop an understanding of the techniques and goals of propaganda
- Learn how propaganda was used in Canada during the Second World War
- Learn to analyze propaganda

Materials Required

- Propaganda posters from the Second World War Discovery Box
- Photocopies of propaganda posters from the appendix or a projector for displaying the posters in the classroom
- Photocopies of the worksheet (Analyzing Propaganda Posters)
- Plain sheets of paper
- Art materials – coloured pencils, coloured markers, paint, etc.

Handling the Objects

Some of the objects in the Second World War Discovery Box were made or used during the war, more than 75 years ago. Others are reproductions made recently, based on actual items from that time.

You and your students are free to touch and examine all the objects and try on the clothing. Remember, however, that the objects, whether authentic artifacts or reproductions, are valuable and breakable. **Please handle them with care.**

Part A: Define Propaganda and Establish Its Context

Write the word “propaganda” on the board. Ask students to define the word for you. Either combine student suggestions into a working definition or provide them with a pre-existing definition.

Propaganda is the organized spread of information to influence thoughts, beliefs, feelings and actions.

The aim of propaganda is to influence people’s opinions actively, rather than merely communicating facts.

Consider the context in which the posters in the Discovery Box were created.

- Methods of mass communication were very different during the 1930s and 1940s.
- Canadians relied on newspapers, newsreels in movie theatres and, increasingly, radio to obtain information.
- Reaction to, and understanding of, mass media were also very different than they are today.

Propaganda often tries to encourage strong emotions. It:

- offers only one point of view
- is not objective
- does not educate people in a neutral fashion
- is deliberately persuasive

Examples of propaganda techniques:

- Appeals to fear, taps into worry, building support for a position by encouraging anxiety, and even panic.
- Appeals to authority, cites prominent figures to support a position, an idea, an argument or a course of action.
- Repetition involves repeating symbols and slogans to make them memorable. This could mean a jingle or an image placed on nearly everything.
- Bandwagon propaganda encourages people to do what “everyone else is doing”.
- Direct-order propaganda tries to simplify decision making with images and words telling people exactly what to do, eliminating other possible choices.
- Transfer or association involves projecting the positive or negative qualities of a person, group, object or value onto something, to either discredit it or make it more acceptable.
- Oversimplification and vague generalities in propaganda offer simple answers to complex social, political, economic and military problems.

Part B: Analyzing Propaganda Posters

Display one of the propaganda posters or hand out copies of it. You may use a physical poster from the Discovery Box or select a poster from the appendix to print or display.

Briefly discuss the poster as a class, including:

- its overall message (what it wants people to do)
- any emotions it plays upon
- the effect it would likely have had on people at the time

Ask students to help you with a more detailed analysis of the poster. Provide guidance, if necessary, by asking them to describe how the overall message is conveyed through:

- symbols and images
- words
- the arrangement of the images and words
- colours

Divide the class into small groups and distribute copies of the worksheet (Analyzing Propaganda Posters). Have students analyze propaganda posters on their own. Use a selection of posters from the appendix.

Suggestions for Assessment

Did students demonstrate an understanding of the concept of propaganda?
Did they express their ideas clearly, backed up by evidence?

Extension Activities

Explore Modern Propaganda

- Have students make propaganda posters about contemporary issues such as drinking and driving, smoking or environmental concerns.
- Ask students to think about their daily lives and where they see material that might be considered propaganda. Ask them to bring examples to class for discussion and analysis.

Worksheet

Analyzing Propaganda Posters

Appendix

Propaganda Posters from the Second World War

LP5.0-4

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Analyzing Propaganda Posters

Name:

1. Can you tell who created this poster? If so, list the organization, government or individual. If not, provide suggestions as to who might have created it.

2. What is the overall message of this poster?

3. How is that message shared (in language, colours, symbols, shapes, etc.)?

4. Who is the target audience for this poster?

Analyzing Propaganda Posters - Continued . . .

5. What kinds of emotions are expressed in the poster?

6. Which propaganda techniques are used? Be sure to identify specific evidence from your poster.

7. What does the poster's message tell you about Canadian values and beliefs during the Second World War?

8. Does the poster convey its message effectively to you? Why or why not?

9. Do you think this poster would have been effective during the Second World War? Why or why not?

LP5.1-2

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Appendix: Propaganda Posters from the Second World War

Display the posters or distribute copies of them to the students.

- *To Victory*
- *Attack on all fronts*
- *Get your teeth into the job*
- *Give The Canadian Red Cross*
- *Save waste bones*
- *It's our war*
- *If you don't need it don't buy it*
- *Dig in and dig out the scrap*
- *Wanted scrap metal*
- *Buy Victory Bonds*
- *The life-line is firm thanks to the Merchant Navy*



Poster – To Victory!
Canadian War Museum 20070104-083



Poster – *Attack on all fronts*
Canadian War Museum 19730004-030



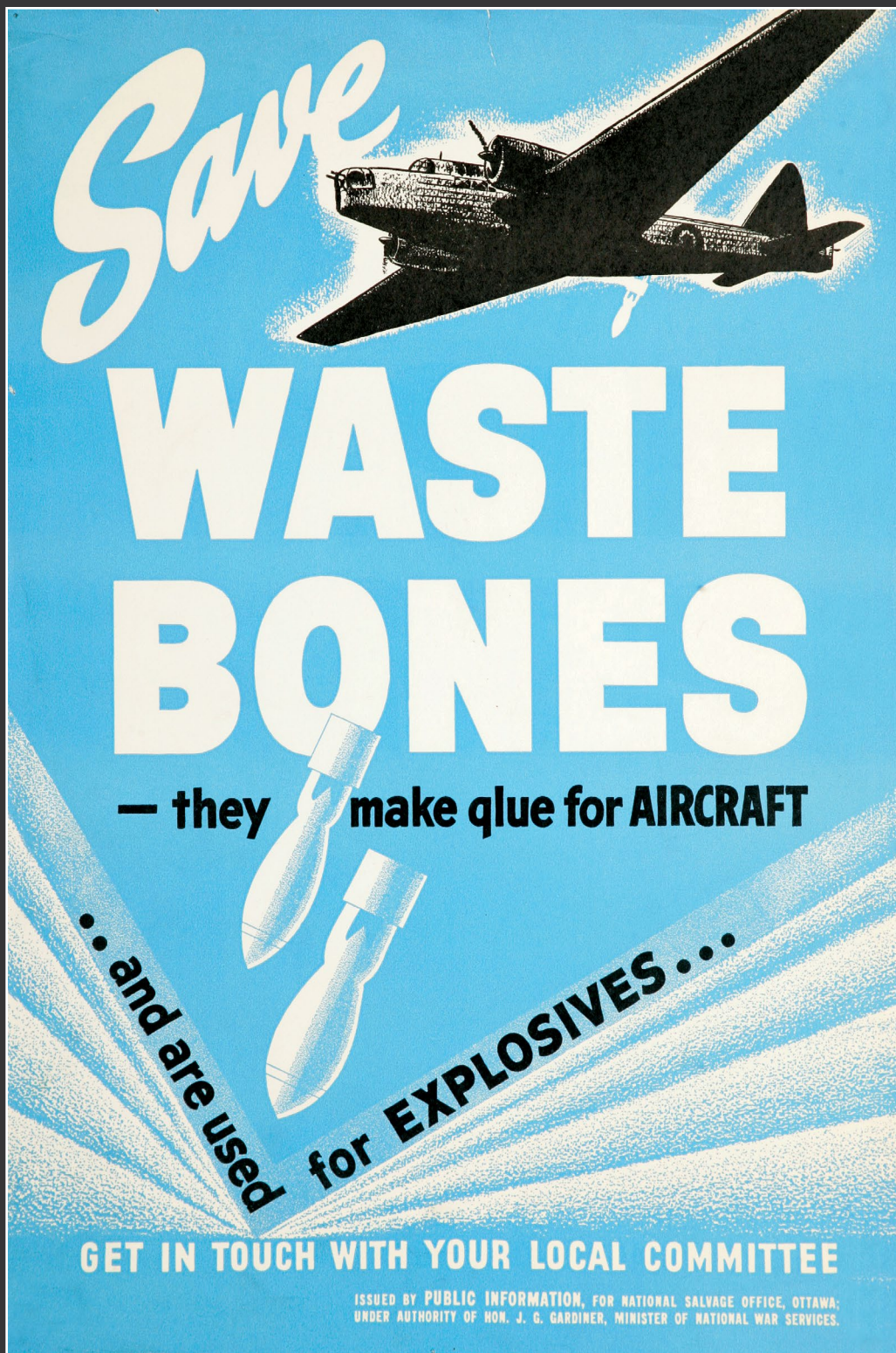
Poster – *Get your teeth into the job*
Canadian War Museum 19790385-109

**GIVE
DONNONS**



**THE CANADIAN RED CROSS
LA CROIX ROUGE CANADIENNE**

Poster – Give The Canadian Red Cross
Canadian War Museum 19720114-023

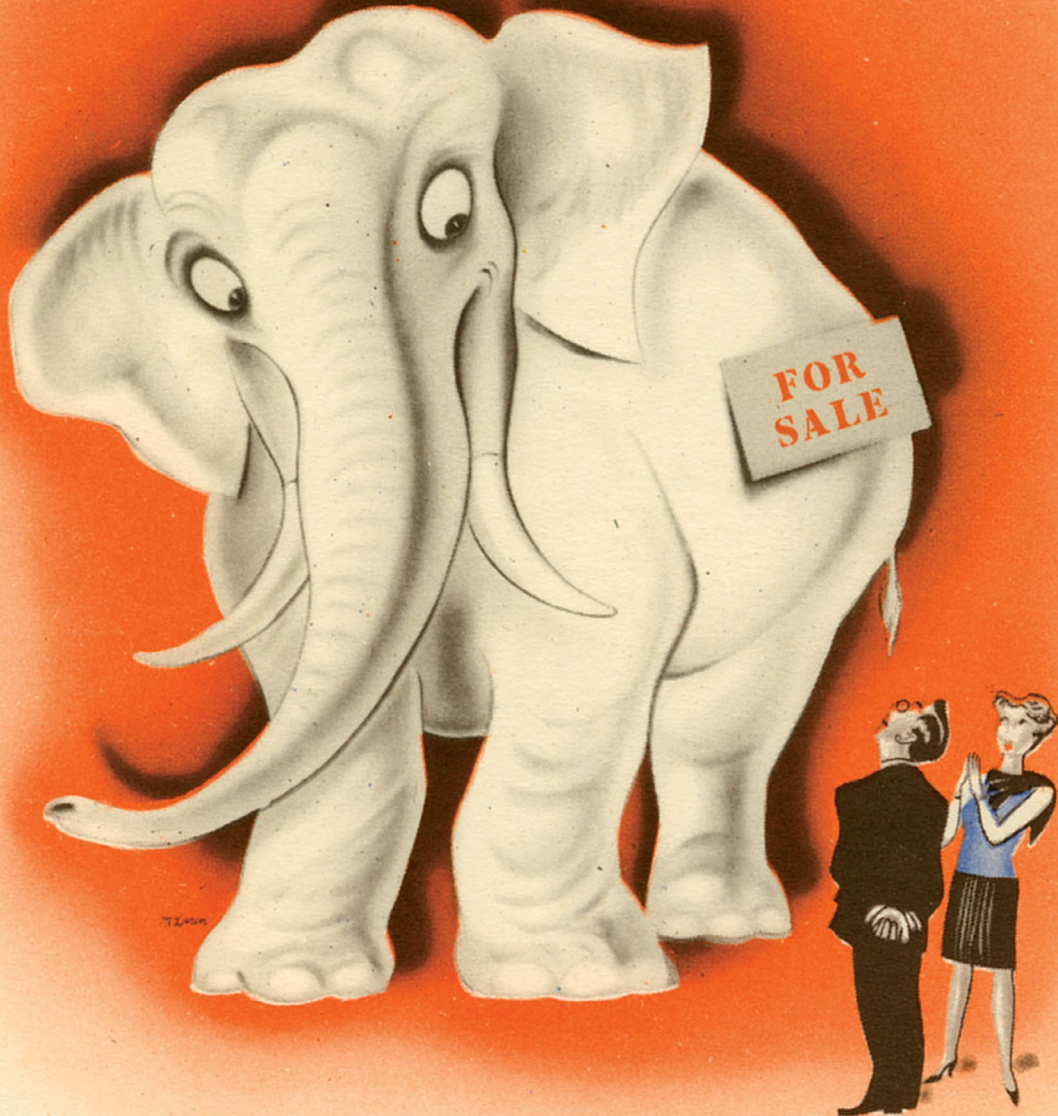


Poster – Save waste bones
Canadian War Museum 19920196-007



Poster – *It's our war*
Canadian War Museum 19750317-241

If you don't need it...



DON'T BUY IT



ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC INFORMATION, UNDER AUTHORITY OF HON. J. T. THORSON, MINISTER OF NATIONAL WAR SERVICES, OTTAWA

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EC-1

Poster – *If you don't need it don't buy it*
Canadian War Museum 20020045-2356

DIG IN *and* **DIG OUT** *the* **SCRAP**



Save

METALS **RAGS** **PAPER** **BONES** **RUBBER** **GLASS**

THEY ARE VITAL WAR NEEDS
GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR LOCAL COMMITTEE

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Poster – *Dig in and dig out the scrap*
Canadian War Museum 19890086-523



Poster – Buy Victory Bonds
Canadian War Museum 19680122-043



Poster – *The life-line is firm thanks to the Merchant Navy*
Canadian War Museum 19920142-001

