FRAME

FORENSIC RESEARCH ARCHIVE
OF MANIPULATION & EXPLOITATION

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Propaganda techniques

28 named techniques in four families, from the 1937 Institute for Propaganda Analysis devices to the methods of automated influence campaigns. Each page gives a definition, the tell to look for, and what it is not.

PRINT EDITION

Techniques, the Learn shelf, and the history and technique maps.
https://propagandaarchive.org/

Contents

How this edition is built 3
Classical 4
Rhetorical 9
Operational 12
Computational 17
Why the techniques work 20
How we rate the evidence 21
Cognitive biases and heuristics 22
Group identity 24
Emotion and fear 26
Also on the Learn shelf 28
Countering propaganda 30
The history map 32
Regimes 39
Which techniques travel together 44
About this print 46

How this edition is built

What counts as propaganda here

Communication designed to shape belief or behavior by bypassing or overwhelming reasoned evaluation, through emotion, identity, repetition, omission, authority, or volume, rather than by making a claim that can survive open scrutiny.

Every object and brief here is tagged with the techniques it uses. A technique is a technique regardless of who uses it.

28 named techniques in four families, from the 1937 Institute for Propaganda Analysis devices to the methods of automated influence campaigns. Each page gives a definition, the tell to look for, and what it is not.

- **Classical.** Institute for Propaganda Analysis (1937) seven devices and close descendants. Work on emotion, identity, and selective evidence.
- **Rhetorical.** Argument-form tricks that survive even when the speaker is named.
- **Operational.** Campaign architecture: how a message is staged, sourced, or made to look like consensus.
- **Computational.** Volume, automation, synthetic production, or poisoning of ranking and retrieval systems.

Each technique card uses the taxonomy's name, definition, tell and "not this" line. The examples are titles already in the archive, at most 4 per technique: objects named on the technique page first, then other tagged collection objects, then a case study or a watch brief when the page names fewer than two objects. Counts on a card are a count of collection objects and watch briefs tagged with that technique.

The psychology pages are the Learn shelf's own index, evidence ratings, area introductions and one-line openers, plus the short answers on the shelf's historical primers and the countering index. Nothing in those sections is a new summary of the research.

Classical

Institute for Propaganda Analysis (1937) seven devices and close descendants. Work on emotion, identity, and selective evidence.

CLASSICAL · IPA 1937

Name-calling

Also called Ad hominem labeling, Loaded label

Attach a loaded label so the audience rejects the target without checking the claim.

THE TELL

The insult does the work; evidence is optional or arrives later as decoration.

NOT THIS

Accurate naming of a documented crime or office.

481 objects · 25 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

All the Ear-Marks of a Sneaky Jap! — Collection object · 1943 · U.S. wartime plant-security poster (an RCA 'E' flag appears in the scene), held in the poster file of the Office of War Information, Bureau of Special Services; artist signed Alexander

Сдал австриец русским Львов (The Austrian Surrendered Lvov to the Russians) — Collection object · 1914 · Segodniashnii Lubok publishers, Moscow; Aristarkh Lentulov (image), Vladimir Mayakovsky (verse)

Beat Back the Hun with Liberty Bonds — Collection object · 1918 · U.S. Treasury Department (Liberty Loan campaign)

Cold-Blooded Murder! Remember Germany's Crowning Infamy — Collection object · 1915 · Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (United Kingdom), poster no. 97; printed by Roberts & Leete Ltd., London

CLASSICAL · IPA 1937

Glittering generalities

Also called Virtue words, Purr words

Virtue words (freedom, security, the people, science) used as substitutes for a testable claim.

THE TELL

Swap the virtue word for a concrete metric and the sentence collapses.

NOT THIS

A defined principle applied to a named case.

365 objects · 20 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Die Fahnen flattern hoch im Wind! (The Flags Flutter High in the Wind!) — Collection object · 1917 · Imperial German home-front campaign (sponsor not named on the poster); Anton Hoffmann, Munich

Helft uns siegen! Zeichnet die Kriegsanleihe (Help Us Win! Subscribe to the War Loan) — Collection object · 1917 · Imperial German government war-bond campaign; artist Fritz Erler

Vaterland, Familie, Zukunft: 8. Kriegsanleihe (Fatherland, Family, Future: 8th War Loan) — Collection object · 1918 · Oesterreichischer Phönix life-insurance company, Vienna (Austrian war-loan campaign); artist Walter Ditz

Das ist der Weg zum Frieden, die Feinde wollen es so! Darum zeichne Kriegsanleihe! (That Is the Way to Peace, the Enemies Want It So! Therefore Subscribe to the War Loan!) — Collection object · 1917 · Imperial German war-loan campaign; artist Lucian Bernhard

CLASSICAL · IPA 1937

Transfer

Also called Borrowed authority, Symbol transfer

Borrow prestige or stigma from a respected or hated symbol and paste it onto the message.

THE TELL

Flags, clergy, science-looking charts, or enemy uniforms doing rhetorical work the argument cannot.

NOT THIS

Relevant institutional affiliation stated as a fact.

628 objects · 63 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Americans All! Victory Liberty Loan — Collection object · 1919 · U.S. Treasury Department (Victory Liberty Loan); Howard Chandler Christy (artist)

Bulgaren-Held (Bulgarian Hero) — Collection object · 1915 · Zigarettenfabrik Menes, Wiesbaden (commercial advertiser); artist Ludwig Hohlwein

Destroy This Mad Brute — Enlist — Collection object · 1917 · U.S. Army (recruitment); artist Harry Ryle Hopps

Die Fahnen flattern hoch im Wind! (The Flags Flutter High in the Wind!) — Collection object · 1917 · Imperial German home-front campaign (sponsor not named on the poster); Anton Hoffmann, Munich

CLASSICAL · IPA 1937

Testimonial

Also called Appeal to authority, Celebrity endorsement

A named person or institution vouches; the vouch is meant to end checking.

THE TELL

Celebrity, clergy, or 'experts say' without the underlying data.

NOT THIS

A primary witness describing what they saw.

100 objects · 12 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Wer Kriegsanleihe zeichnet, macht mir die schönste Geburtstagsgabe! (Whoever Subscribes to the War Loan Gives Me the Finest Birthday Present!) — Collection object · 1917 · Imperial German war-loan campaign; artist Louis Oppenheim (text signed by Paul von Hindenburg)

Behistun (Bisotun) rock relief and trilingual inscription of Darius I: the king, two attendants and the bound rebel leaders beneath the winged figure of Ahuramazda — Collection object · Great King Darius I of Persia (Achaemenid royal court)

Seated limestone statue of Hatshepsut as king, with feminine royal titles on the throne, reassembled from fragments broken up at Deir el-Bahri — Collection object · Hatshepsut and her court at Thebes; the statue was later broken up and dumped, under Thutmose III

Tomb of Darius I at Naqsh-e Rustam: the king in relief beside his inscription DNa, c. 490 BCE — Collection object · Great King Darius I of Persia (Achaemenid royal court)

CLASSICAL · IPA 1937

Plain folks

Also called Common touch, Just like you

The speaker performs ordinary-person identity to make the message feel homegrown.

THE TELL

Costume, dialect, or 'as a mom/veteran/worker' as the warrant.

NOT THIS

A person who actually is that thing, speaking in their own register.

51 objects · 26 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Trois Tetes sous l'meme bonnet (three heads under the same cap) — Collection object · 1789 · Anonymous French print publisher (no name on the sheet)

'This log cabin was the first building erected on the North Bend', Whig print by T. Sinclair, 1840 — Collection object · 1840 · Whig campaign for William Henry Harrison; lithographed and published by Thomas Sinclair, Philadelphia

Treeing Coons (pro-Polk cartoon), 1844 — Collection object · 1844 · Drawn by H. Bucholzer; published by A. Purdy, New York

Zachary Taylor, People's Candidate for President (Currier banner), 1848 — Collection object · 1848 · N. Currier, New York (lithographer-publisher), for the Whig ticket of Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore

CLASSICAL · IPA 1937

Card stacking

Also called Selective omission, Cherry-picking

Select, omit, or order facts so the remaining pile can only be read one way.

THE TELL

Missing denominator, missing counterexample, missing dates.

NOT THIS

A short item that flags its own limits.

230 objects · 135 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Die beste Sparkasse: Kriegsanleihe! (The Best Savings Bank: War Loan!) — Collection object · 1917 · Imperial German war-loan campaign; artist Louis Oppenheim

Cold-Blooded Murder! Remember Germany's Crowning Infamy — Collection object · 1915 · Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (United Kingdom), poster no. 97; printed by Roberts & Leete Ltd., London

Homeland Security Advisory System threat-level chart — Collection object · 2002 · U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Loose Lips Might Sink Ships — Collection object · 1942 · U.S. government home-front security campaign

CLASSICAL · IPA 1937

Bandwagon

Also called Everyone's doing it, Social proof

Treat popularity, momentum, or 'everyone knows' as proof.

THE TELL

Polls, view-counts, or 'the tide' offered in place of the claim's merits.

NOT THIS

Reporting a real majority as a political fact.

159 objects · 3 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Americans All! Victory Liberty Loan — Collection object · 1919 · U.S. Treasury Department (Victory Liberty Loan); Howard Chandler Christy (artist)

Consult of the doctors on the grave illness of the Grand Sultan (Consult vande medicijnen inde swaere siekte vanden grooten Sultaen) — Collection object · 1683 · Philibert Bouttats II, engraver and publisher, Antwerp

"Jackson ticket" with Hickory tree motto, Baltimore (1828) — Collection object · 1828 · Jackson (Democratic) campaign, Maryland ticket for John V. L. McMahon and George H. Steuart

"Political race course - Union Track - fall races 1836" — Collection object · 1836 · H. R. Robinson, New York (print publisher; LOC attributes the artwork to Edward Williams Clay)

CLASSICAL · ARISTOTLE PATHOS; WARTIME POSTER TRADITION

Fear appeal

Also called Scare tactic, Threat messaging

Imminent harm is staged so the audience accepts the offered protection without comparing base rates or alternatives.

THE TELL

Catastrophe language plus a single prescribed remedy; no time for tradeoffs.

NOT THIS

A dated, sourced warning with magnitude and uncertainty.

266 objects · 25 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Cold-Blooded Murder! Remember Germany's Crowning Infamy — Collection object · 1915 · Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (United Kingdom), poster no. 97; printed by Roberts & Leete Ltd., London

Daddy, what did YOU do in the Great War? — Collection object · 1915 · Parliamentary Recruiting Committee (United Kingdom); artist Savile Lumley

Peace, Little Girl ("Daisy") — Collection object · 1964-09-07 · Lyndon B. Johnson presidential campaign (Democratic); agency Doyle Dane Bernbach with Tony Schwartz

Destroy This Mad Brute — Enlist — Collection object · 1917 · U.S. Army (recruitment); artist Harry Ryle Hopps

CLASSICAL · BURKE; GIRARD; WARTIME OUT-GROUP POSTERS

Scapegoating

Also called Blame displacement, Villain compression

Park blame for a complex harm on a bounded out-group so the in-group stays clean.

THE TELL

One villain class for many causes; the in-group's agency disappears.

NOT THIS

Attributing a specific act to a named perpetrator with evidence.

116 objects · 11 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

All the Ear-Marks of a Sneaky Jap! — Collection object · 1943 · U.S. wartime plant-security poster (an RCA 'E' flag appears in the scene), held in the poster file of the Office of War Information, Bureau of Special Services; artist signed Alexander

Destroy This Mad Brute — Enlist — Collection object · 1917 · U.S. Army (recruitment); artist Harry Ryle Hopps

He's Watching You — Collection object · 1942 · U.S. government home-front security campaign; artist Glenn Grohe

"Negro Rule" vampire cartoon with sworn affidavit — Collection object · 1900-07-04 · The News & Observer (Raleigh, N.C.), Democratic Party white-supremacy and disfranchisement campaigns; cartoonist Norman E. Jennett

Rhetorical

Argument-form tricks that survive even when the speaker is named.

RHETORICAL · SOVIET 'AND YOU ARE LYNCHING NEGROES'

Whataboutism

Also called Tu quoque, And-you-are-lynching-Negroes

Answer an accusation with a different accusation so the original claim is never tried.

THE TELL

The reply cannot be true or false about the first claim; it only changes the subject.

NOT THIS

A relevant comparison that uses the same standard on both sides.

7 objects · 3 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Sind wir die Barbaren? (Are We the Barbarians?) — Collection object · 1916 · Imperial German government counter-propaganda; artist Louis Oppenheim

Berliner Tageblatt, evening edition, front page (Berlin, 22 September 1914): "Der Brand der Kathedrale von Reims" — Collection object · 1914-09-22 · Berliner Tageblatt und Handels-Zeitung (Rudolf Mosse, Berlin; editor-in-chief Theodor Wolff)

"Women are too sentimental for jury duty" -- Anti-Suffrage argument (Puck cartoon) — Collection object · 1915-01-23 · Puck (Puck Publishing Corporation, New York); cartoonist Kenneth Russell Chamberlain

The Woman's Dreadnought, 15 May 1915, p. 246: "Let Us Not Be Cowards" and "Whose Fiendish Devices?" — Collection object · 1915-05-15 · The Woman's Dreadnought, East London Federation of the Suffragettes (editor Sylvia Pankhurst), Bow, London

RHETORICAL · KORZYBSKI / ORWELL; CONTESTED DEFINITIONS (GENOCIDE, DEMOCRACY, DISINFORMATION)

Semantic hijacking

Also called Semantic hijacking, Definitional capture

Capture a high-prestige or high-stigma word and stretch it until it covers the speaker's preferred set.

THE TELL

The word's legal or technical definition is quietly swapped mid-argument.

NOT THIS

Arguing, in the open, that a definition should change.

18 objects · 27 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Punch, 'The Jamaica Question' (Tenniel), 23 December 1865 — Collection object · 1865-12-23 · Punch, or the London Charivari (London weekly); cartoon by John Tenniel (monogram)

Re-construction, or 'a white man's government' — Collection object · 1868 · Currier & Ives

True democracy is safe! (Puck) — Collection object · 1896-09-30 · Puck (Keppler & Schwarzmann), artist C. J. Taylor

Mr. John Dillon, M.P., on recruiting in Ireland. Join an Irish regiment to-day — Collection object · 1915 · Recruiting campaign in Ireland, United Kingdom (issuing committee not printed on the sheet); printed by Alex. Thom & Co., Ltd., Dublin

RHETORICAL · SHACKEL 2005

Motte and bailey

Also called Bait and retreat, Equivocation defense

Advance a bold claim; when pressed, retreat to a modest claim; then reoccupy the bold one.

THE TELL

The slogan and the footnote do not describe the same object.

NOT THIS

Clarifying a claim you actually hold.

IN THE ARCHIVE

McCarthy's numbers: 205, 57, 81 and the move from 'card-carrying Communists' to 'security risks' (1950-54) — Case study · 1950-02-09 · Senator Joseph R. McCarthy (R-Wisconsin) and his staff

The MMR scare: from a 1998 press conference to Vaxxed, and its 1802 ancestors — Case study · 1998-02-26 · Andrew Wakefield and the Royal Free press conference; UK national and regional newspapers (2001-2002); US celebrity advocates (2007-2009); the makers of Vaxxed (2016). Historical comparisons: 1800s anti-vaccination leagues and pro-vaccination satirists; the 1976 US swine-flu programme

Follow the science, Plandemic: COVID-19 messaging from officials and contrarians, 2020-2022 — Case study · 2020 · U.S. federal officials and agencies (Surgeon General, CDC, FDA, the White House under two presidents), organisers and signatories of the February 2020 Lancet statement, platforms (Facebook/Meta, YouTube, Twitter), the Center for Countering Digital Hate; contrarian producers (Plandemic, America's Frontline Doctors, Died Suddenly), anti-5G activists; Wuhan police and municipal health authorities

RHETORICAL · FALSE BALANCE; JOURNALISTIC 'HE SAID / SHE SAID'

Bothsidesism

Also called False balance, He-said-she-said

Force symmetry between unequal evidence piles so the audience treats the question as a tie.

THE TELL

Equal airtime for a documented record and a rumor, sold as fairness.

NOT THIS

Steel-manning a real opposing argument.

2 objects · 2 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

"The Right Man for the Right Place" (Currier, 1856) — Collection object · 1856 · Nathaniel Currier, New York (publisher)

A Frank Statement to Cigarette Smokers — Collection object · 1954-01-04 · Tobacco Industry Research Committee (U.S. tobacco manufacturers and growers' associations)

RHETORICAL · ORWELL; NCTE DOUBLESPEAK AWARD

Euphemism / doublespeak

Also called Doublespeak, Sanitizing language

Replace a concrete harm or act with a sanitizing or inflating phrase so evaluation never meets the thing.

THE TELL

The operational word (kill, censor, pay, lie) is missing; a gerund or acronym sits in its place.

NOT THIS

Technical terms used with a glossary.

18 objects · 13 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

詔書 (Imperial Rescript on the Annexation of Korea), Korean translation, Official Gazette of the Government-General of Korea no. 1, p. 17 — Collection object · 1910-08-29 · Government of Japan (Emperor Meiji's rescript, countersigned by the cabinet), printed in the Official Gazette of the Government-General of Korea

Suomen Kansalle! (To the Finnish People!): German commander von der Goltz says German troops come as friends — Collection object · 1918-03 · Major General Count Rüdiger von der Goltz, commander of the German troops in Finland (Baltic Sea Division)

Deutsche Zeitung, Nr. 120, morning edition, front page (Berlin, 13 March 1920): "Ein angeblicher Militärputsch" (An alleged military putsch) — Collection object · 1920-03-13 · Deutsche Zeitung (Berlin), nationalist daily ("unabhängiges Tageblatt für nationale Politik")

"Sous le soleil équatorial" (Le Petit Journal illustré, 6 July 1924) — Collection object · 1924-07-06 · Le Petit Journal illustré (Paris weekly supplement); illustration signed RM

RHETORICAL · SWANN ET AL.; ELLUL INTEGRATION PROPAGANDA

Identity fusion

Also called Tribal gatekeeping, Loyalty test

Collapse checking the claim into betraying the tribe, so method-critique feels like treason.

THE TELL

'People like us don't ask that' or 'that's what they would say.'

NOT THIS

Shared identity offered as context, not as a gag on evidence.

45 objects · 9 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Our job is to beat the Hun. Vote Union Government (Canada, 1917 election) — Collection object · 1917 · Union Government Publicity Bureau, Ottawa (printed by the Ottawa Printing Company, Limited)

Julistus (Proclamation): Red Guard committee denies rumours and orders rumour-spreaders arrested — Collection object · 1918 · Leading committee of a Red Guard (Punakaarti) unit in Helsinki, signed 'Jokinen' and 'H. Oiva'

Salzburg 20-Kronen "Anschluss" voucher (1921) — Collection object · 1921 · Landesregierung Salzburg (provincial government of Salzburg); printed by Zaunrith'sche Buchdruckerei

The Bombay Chronicle, article on a foreign-cloth bonfire (1921-07-30) — Collection object · 1921-07-30 · The Bombay Chronicle; Indian National Congress (Non-Cooperation movement)

Operational

Campaign architecture: how a message is staged, sourced, or made to look like consensus.

OPERATIONAL · BANNON COINAGE; RELATED TO FIREHOSING BUT ABOUT OCCUPYING ATTENTION, NOT NECESSARILY FALSEHOOD

Flooding the zone

Also called Flood the zone, Attention saturation

Saturate the available attention so a preferred frame, or chaos itself, crowds out slower checking.

THE TELL

Many items, one window; the checker cannot finish one before the next arrives.

NOT THIS

A single well-sourced dump of primary documents.

1 object · 25 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Loading a leaflet bomb at the Far East Command printing plant, Yokohama — Collection object · 1951 · U.S. Army, Far East Command psychological warfare

The Agitprop Department: the Communist Party's standing propaganda apparatus, 1920-1991 — Case study · 1920-08 · The Agitation and Propaganda Department (Agitprop) of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's Central Committee, renamed and re-subordinated across seven decades (Agitation, Propaganda and Press Department, 1928; Culture and Propaganda Department, 1930; Propaganda and Agitation Department, from the late 1940s; Ideological Department, from the early 1960s and again from 1988); the CPSU's chief ideology secretaries (Zhdanov, Suslov, Yakovlev, Medvedev); regional obkom and district raikom propaganda departments; the All-Union Znanie Society (1947-); every workplace primary party organization's agitation-and-propaganda sector

Zhongxuanbu: the Central Propaganda Department as the ruling party's standing ministry of message, 1949-2026 — Case study · 1949-10-01 · The Chinese Communist Party's Central Propaganda Department (中共中央宣传部, Zhongxuanbu; officially translated 'Publicity Department' since the 1990s-2000s), an organ of the CCP Central Committee, with its chain of provincial, city and county propaganda departments and the 'party groups' (dangzu) it places inside nominally state bodies; since 2018 also operating under the nameplates of the National Press and Publication Administration and the China Film Administration

The Alar campaign: an advocacy report, a TV exclusive and a planned echo — Case study · 1989-02-26 · Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), with the public relations firm Fenton Communications; Mothers and Others for Pesticide Limits (chaired by Meryl Streep)

OPERATIONAL · INTELLIGENCE CUTOUTS; THINK-TANK AND NGO FRONTS

Narrative laundering

Also called Cutout publishing, Think-tank front

Pass a state or factional message through a more legitimate-looking surface so origin is hard to see.

THE TELL

New institute, borrowed academic form, contractor chain, or 'research' with no scholars.

NOT THIS

A disclosed advocacy shop making an argument in its own name.

9 objects · 98 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Forged Winterhilfswerk stamp booklet (British black propaganda for Germany) — Collection object · 1943 · UK Political Warfare Executive (black propaganda forgery)

Himmler-head forgery of the 6-pfennig Deutsches Reich stamp — Collection object · 1943 · UK Political Warfare Executive (black propaganda forgery)

Freedom-Gram: Help Truth Fight Communism — Collection object · 1952 · Crusade for Freedom / National Committee for a Free Europe (covertly funded by the CIA)

Invest a "Truth Dollar" in Radio Free Europe — Collection object · 1954 · Crusade for Freedom / National Committee for a Free Europe (covertly funded by the CIA)

OPERATIONAL · HERMAN & CHOMSKY (PARTIAL); ASTROTURF + VOLUME; CITATION CARTELS

Manufactured consensus

Also called Citation cartel, Astroturfed agreement

Create the appearance that independent voices independently arrived at the same conclusion.

THE TELL

Many outlets, one talking point, one origin; or many 'studies' from one shop.

NOT THIS

Independent replication of a finding.

9 objects · 86 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Persepolis, Apadana staircase relief: a figure with an animal from a procession of delegations, early fifth century BCE — Collection object · Achaemenid royal court (building programme of Darius I, completed under Xerxes I)

"100% unserer Belegschaft sind gegen Remilitarisierung": factory gate boards, Werk Fortschritt II, Berlin — Collection object · 1950-12-22 · Workforce and management of Werk Fortschritt II, Greifswalder Straße, Berlin (sponsor of the boards not named); photographer Gustav Köhler for Illus

"Grenzgänger zu bedienen ist unter unserer Würde": shop poster, Königs Wusterhausen district — Collection object · 1961-08-04 · Sponsor not named on the poster; photographed and captioned by ADN-Zentralbild (GDR state news agency); posted in shops of Kreis Königs Wusterhausen

"Am 13. August gab's roten Pfeffer": house-community banner, Bitterfeld — Collection object · 1961-08-29 · ADN-Zentralbild (GDR state news agency), photographer 'Nosk'; banner signed by a house community (Hausgemeinschaft), Bitterfeld

OPERATIONAL · MACKINAC / JOSEPH OVERTON

Overton window shifting

Also called Overton window shifting, Trial balloon

Move a previously unsayable position into the window of the discussable by repetition, extremes, or institutional blessing.

THE TELL

Today's trial balloon is tomorrow's 'everyone is already saying.'

NOT THIS

A genuine change in public evidence that moves opinion.

12 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Better babies, fitter families: eugenics campaigns in the US, Sweden and Germany — Case study · 1920 · Openly identified in all three countries: the American Eugenics Society, the Eugenics Record Office, state fair boards and health departments, the Human Betterment Foundation and U.S. state legislatures and courts; the Swedish State Institute for Racial Biology, government committees and the Riksdag; the NSDAP Office of Racial Policy (Rassenpolitisches Amt) and the Reich government. The German killing programme that followed ran under cover names.

Scar literature: China's state-permitted reckoning with the Cultural Revolution, 1977-1981 — Case study · 1977 · The Chinese Communist Party's post-Mao leadership under Deng Xiaoping (the Central Propaganda Department, the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and the Chinese Writers' Association it oversees, and official journals and newspapers including People's Literature and Wenhuibao); individual writers publishing under this reopened space, including Liu Xinwu, Lu Xinhua, Ba Jin, Feng Jicai, Wang Meng, Cong Weixi, Zhang Jie and Zhang Xianliang

Glasnost: the controlled opening that outran the Soviet state (1985-1989) — Case study · 1986-02-25 · Soviet government under General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev: the CPSU Politburo and Central Committee, Gosteleradio, and the editors of Pravda, Izvestia, Novy Mir and other state publications and broadcasters

The Justice Department's FARA release and public demonstrations — Case study · 2026-09-16 · U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs and National Security Division (@DOJNatSec)

OPERATIONAL · INTELLIGENCE TRADECRAFT (HELMS / WATERGATE-ERA USAGE)

Limited hangout

Also called Partial confession, Controlled disclosure

Release a partial, survivable truth to block a larger one.

THE TELL

Confession of the small thing; silence on the load-bearing thing; timing that pre-empts a leak.

NOT THIS

A complete primary-document dump.

2 objects · 2 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Nixon with the edited White House tape transcripts — Collection object · 1974-04-29 · U.S. government (President Richard Nixon)

Radio Moscow World Service on the Chernobyl accident and U.S. reports, FBIS Daily Report, 1 May 1986 — Collection object · 1986-05-01 · Radio Moscow World Service in English (Soviet state broadcasting), commentary by Viktor Ilichev; FBIS (U.S.) translation/transcript

OPERATIONAL · FARA FOOTNOTES; BURIED 'ABOUT' PAGES; 'FUNDED BY' IN GRAY TYPE

Disclosure theater

Also called Buried disclosure, Fine-print compliance

A technically present disclosure that does not travel with the content the audience actually sees.

THE TELL

Label on the website, absent on the social clip, the chatbot citation, or the meme.

NOT THIS

A prominent, persistent, machine-readable provenance tag.

56 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Selling the Gulag: the "re-forging" of the White Sea-Baltic Canal, 1930-1937 — Case study · 1930-04-25 · The OGPU (from July 1934, the NKVD) camp administration, the Gulag, under Genrikh Yagoda; the White Sea-Baltic Canal camp administration (Belbaltlag), whose chief Semyon Firin co-edited the project's book; the OGPU-organized 120-writer brigade led by Maxim Gorky

The Pentagon's retired military analyst outreach programme (2002-2008) — Case study · 2008-04-20 · U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (under Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, then Secretary Robert Gates)

Israel's Strategic Affairs Ministry paid for news content, and a later ministry's STOIC campaign aimed at U.S. lawmakers — Case study · 2017 · Israel's Ministry of Strategic Affairs (paid content in Israeli media, 2017-2019); Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs via the Tel Aviv firm STOIC, as reported by the New York Times (2023-2024)

The Hanover Institute: reports written for chatbots to cite — Case study · 2026-08 · Israel Government Advertising Agency (LaPam), via Havas Media Germany and Piro, Inc. (FARA 7732)

OPERATIONAL · RTLMC / RWANDA STUDIES; 'MIRROR PROPAGANDA'

Accusation in a mirror

Also called Mirror propaganda, Projection accusation

Accuse the target of the method or crime you are preparing or running, so their warning sounds like a confession.

THE TELL

The charge is a near-copy of the speaker's own documented playbook.

NOT THIS

A documented, symmetric finding against both sides.

1 object · 15 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

"Negro Rule" vampire cartoon with sworn affidavit — Collection object · 1900-07-04 · The News & Observer (Raleigh, N.C.), Democratic Party white-supremacy and disfranchisement campaigns; cartoonist Norman E. Jennett

The SA in the street: uniforms, a martyr and staged disorder as proof only the NSDAP could 'restore order' (1921-1933) — Case study · 1921-08 · The NSDAP's Sturmabteilung (SA), under Emil Maurice and Hermann Göring, then Franz Pfeffer von Salomon (Oberster SA-Führer, 1926-1930) and Ernst Röhm (from January 1931); Joseph Goebbels's Berlin Gau propaganda apparatus and his paper Der Angriff

Nazi propaganda before and during the Holocaust, 1933-1945 — Case study · 1933-03-13 · The Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda under Joseph Goebbels (from 13 March 1933) and the Reich Chamber of Culture (from September 1933); Julius Streicher's newspaper Der Stürmer; the NSDAP and state ministries; Adolf Hitler's own speeches

The Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, 1933-1945 — Case study · 1933-03-13 · Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda (Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, RMVP), under Joseph Goebbels; with the NSDAP Reich Propaganda Directorate and the Wehrmacht propaganda troops

Computational

Volume, automation, synthetic production, or poisoning of ranking and retrieval systems.

COMPUTATIONAL · RAND 'FIREHOSE OF FALSEHOOD' (PAUL & MATTHEWS 2016)

Firehosing

Also called Firehose of falsehood, Flood with falsehood

High-volume, high-velocity, multi-channel output that does not care about internal consistency; the goal is exhaustion, not persuasion of one claim.

THE TELL

Contradictory stories in the same week; volume is the message.

NOT THIS

A newsroom publishing many true items quickly.

1 object · 11 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Russian Defence Ministry satellite image, MH17 briefing — Collection object · 2014-07-21 · Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation

Matryoshka's midterm clips: borrowed faces and a borrowed logo — Case study · 2026-09-11 · Russia-aligned Matryoshka / Operation Overload / Storm-1679 network

COMPUTATIONAL · 1990S US COINAGE; INAUTHENTIC COORDINATED BEHAVIOR

Astroturfing

Also called Astroturfing, Fake grassroots

Fake or rented grassroots: personas, pages, or crowds that are not what they claim.

THE TELL

New accounts, shared infrastructure, identical phrasing, proxy geolocation, or paid 'local' voices.

NOT THIS

A real membership organization that discloses funding.

4 objects · 83 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

SSPL Membership Card (Chứng minh thư), Sacred Sword of the Patriots League Southern Committee — Collection object · 1971 · MACV-SOG, in the name of the notional Sacred Sword of the Patriots League Southern Committee

'Russian Ads on Facebook' (House Intelligence Committee exhibit) — Collection object · 2016 · Internet Research Agency (St Petersburg), via fake U.S. community pages

'Miners for Trump' rally poster (Internet Research Agency) — Collection object · 2016-10 · Internet Research Agency (St Petersburg), via fake U.S. activist accounts

'Gennady Rakitin,' an invented pro-war poet — Collection object · 2023 · A group of anti-war Russian exiles (revealed June 2024)

COMPUTATIONAL · DEEPFAKES; GENERATIVE TEXT/IMAGE/VIDEO AS A PRODUCTION LINE

Synthetic media

Also called Deepfakes, AI-generated propaganda, Machine-made content

Machine-made or machine-rewritten content presented as human witness, journalism, or research.

THE TELL

Volume no newsroom could staff; residual prompts; AI-anchor video; no named author who will pick up a phone.

NOT THIS

Disclosed AI assistance on a bylined piece.

3 objects · 103 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

'Gennady Rakitin,' an invented pro-war poet — Collection object · 2023 · A group of anti-war Russian exiles (revealed June 2024)

AI-generated image of Donald Trump being arrested — Collection object · 2023-03-20 · Eliot Higgins (founder of Bellingcat), posting on Twitter; recirculated by others

AI-generated image of the Hollywood sign on fire — Collection object · 2025-01-09 · Unknown (circulated on X and other platforms)

COMPUTATIONAL · SEO; LLM RETRIEVAL/TRAINING CONTAMINATION; 2025–26 'AI STORY OPTIMIZATION'

Corpus poisoning

Also called AI story optimization, Retrieval poisoning, SEO propaganda

Seed search indices, encyclopedias, or model-facing text so downstream systems repeat the frame as if it were independent research.

THE TELL

Question-formatted reports, brand-new 'institutes,' Wikipedia clones, citation-shaped pages with no staff.

NOT THIS

Ordinary publishing that happens to be indexed.

9 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

The Hanover Institute: reports written for chatbots to cite — Case study · 2026-08 · Israel Government Advertising Agency (LaPam), via Havas Media Germany and Piro, Inc. (FARA 7732)

A 23-site AI web farm seeded chatbots with fake Alberta voters and a wrong referendum date so retrieval systems would repeat the Yes line as local fact. — Watch brief · 2026-09-17

COMPUTATIONAL · ENGAGEMENT-OPTIMIZED DISTRIBUTION; 'SLOPAGANDA'

Outrage bait

Also called Slopaganda, Engagement bait, Ragebait

Craft the item so the profitable reaction is fury, which then does the distribution.

THE TELL

The hook is an insult or desecration; the body is thin; comments are the product.

NOT THIS

Reporting an actually outrageous, documented event.

2 objects · 14 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Japs Execute Doolittle Men. We'll Pay You Back Tojo — Collection object · 1943 · Poster for the Pay Roll Savings Plan (issuer not named on the object); held in the OWI poster file

This Isn't War... It's Murder (U.S. Army Official Poster) — Collection object · 1943 · U.S. Army, Information Service Division (ISD No. 100)

COMPUTATIONAL · HOVLAND / YALE; DISCOUNTING-CUE DECAY

Sleeper effect

Also called Discounting-cue decay, Source amnesia

A discounted source is forgotten faster than the claim, so the claim later feels ownerless and true.

THE TELL

The story outlives the correction or the 'this is a state outlet' label.

NOT THIS

A claim that remains well-sourced over time.

1 object · 2 briefs

IN THE ARCHIVE

Why We Fight: The Battle of Britain (film frame) — Collection object · 1943 · U.S. Army (Frank Capra's 'Why We Fight' series)

Why We Fight: the U.S. Army's orientation films, 1942-1945 — Case study · 1942 · U.S. War Department, at the request of Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall; made by Frank Capra's 834th Signal Service Photographic Detachment

Black Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter: two slogans, their campaigns, and a foreign operation that posed as both — Case study · 2013-07 · Black Lives Matter founders, chapters and the BLM Global Network Foundation; Blue Lives Matter (founded by NYPD officers) and other police-support advocates; the 2020 Trump campaign; Russia's Internet Research Agency, posing as both sides

MAGA and the Resistance: grassroots organising for and against Trump, 2016-2021 — Case study · 2016 · The MAGA movement (Trump supporters, rally-goers, volunteer parades, Stop the Steal organisers, pro-Trump meme pages) and the Resistance (Indivisible, the Women's March, local anti-Trump groups, #Resist social-media accounts)

Why the techniques work

Why the techniques work: the research on attention, memory, emotion, identity and belief, with a plain rating of how well each finding has held up.

The archive shows what propaganda looks like. This library explains why it works. Each page takes one well-studied feature of human thinking, sets out what the research actually found, says plainly how well that finding has held up, and shows how political messaging on every side has used it.

The pages are written for three kinds of reader: someone who wants to recognise manipulation when they meet it, someone studying the history in this archive, and someone writing political material of their own who wants to persuade honestly. They explain mechanisms so they can be understood and spotted. They are not instructions for deceiving people.

How the pages are built

Every page follows the same shape: a short summary, the key studies, a section called "Has it held up?" on replication and open disputes, political examples drawn from across the spectrum and across eras, a checklist for spotting it, a note on where honest persuasion ends and manipulation begins, links to the archive techniques that rely on it, and full citations. Each page carries an evidence rating, explained in How we rate the evidence.

The three areas

The pages below are grouped into three areas: cognitive biases and heuristics, group identity, and emotion and fear. Each area has its own overview page, listed first in its group.

Using it with the archive

Most technique explainers in the archive end with a "The science" list linking to the research behind them, and every page here links to archive techniques that lean on it. Start from a technique such as Fear appeal or Bandwagon and follow its "The science" links, or start here and follow a topic out to the posters, broadcasts and posts that use it.

Take the course. Ten short lessons on the basic techniques, one step at a time: what each one is, how it works, three real examples from different sides and eras, a check question and a spot-the-technique exercise on an archive object.

How we rate the evidence

Part of the Learn library.

Psychology has changed a great deal since the early 2010s. Large, coordinated attempts to repeat well-known experiments found that many published effects were smaller than first reported, and some did not appear at all. In the best-known project, 270 researchers repeated 100 studies from three leading journals; 97 of the originals had reported a significant result, and only 36 of the repeats did, with effects on average about half the original size [1]. Later projects that repeated the same study in dozens of labs at once found a similar picture: some classic effects held up cleanly, others vanished [2][3].

That history matters for an archive about persuasion, because some of the most quoted findings about how people can be influenced are among the ones that did not hold up. So every page in this library carries a rating, and a section called "Has it held up?" that says why.

The ratings

- **Strong.** Replicated many times, by independent teams, often in large multi-lab or pre-registered studies, and supported by meta-analyses (studies that pool many studies). The size of the effect may still vary by setting, and the page says so.
- **Moderate.** Well supported, but with open questions about how large the effect is, how far it generalises beyond the lab or beyond Western student samples, or how it works.
- **Mixed.** Some findings in the area are solid and others are not, or meta-analyses disagree. The page separates the two.
- **Contested.** A famous claim that has failed important replications, or whose standard account has been seriously challenged by later work. The page still explains it, because it is widely cited and sometimes used, but it tells you what the challenge is.

A rating describes the research on the psychological mechanism. It is not a judgement about any political example on the page, and it is not a score of any person, party or cause.

How the pages treat politics

The same definitions apply to every side, party, country and era. Each page draws examples from across the political spectrum and from governments and movements a reader may sympathise with, including the reader's own country and its allies. Where the research itself finds differences between groups (for example, left and right), the page reports what the studies found and how strong that evidence is, including when later studies disagreed.

Sources

1. Open Science Collaboration. (2015). Estimating the reproducibility of psychological science. *Science*, 349(6251), aac4716. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aac4716
2. Klein, R. A., et al. (2014). Investigating variation in replicability: A "Many Labs" replication project. *Social Psychology*, 45(3), 142–152. https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335/a000178
3. Camerer, C. F., et al. (2018). Evaluating the replicability of social science experiments in *Nature* and *Science* between 2010 and 2015. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 2(9), 637–644. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-018-0399-z

Cognitive biases and heuristics

Part of the Learn library. Mental shortcuts everyone uses to judge quickly, and the predictable errors they produce.

Heuristics are rules of thumb: judging how likely something is by how easily examples come to mind, starting from the first number heard, trusting what feels familiar. They usually serve people well, which is why they persist. They also fail in systematic ways, and messages built to trigger those failures can move judgments without adding any evidence. These pages cover the best-studied shortcuts and biases and what happens when political messaging leans on them.

Each page carries an evidence rating explained in How we rate the evidence.

Anchoring EVIDENCE: STRONG

A number met first pulls later estimates toward it, even when arbitrary; multi-lab replications support this strongly for numbers people are asked to consider, while the effect of incidental numbers is smaller and less dependable.

Availability heuristic EVIDENCE: MODERATE

People judge how common something is by how easily examples come to mind, so vivid, recent or heavily covered events feel more frequent; ease of recall is well supported, though one classic demonstration is disputed.

Base-rate neglect EVIDENCE: STRONG

Judging a case by how representative it looks while ignoring how common that kind of case is remains highly reproducible in probability problems, and the format in which numbers are presented changes it considerably.

Confirmation bias EVIDENCE: STRONG

Seeking, noticing and remembering information that fits existing beliefs is well replicated and meta-analyzed at a moderate size, whereas the stronger claim that contrary evidence pushes people further apart has not held up.

Continued influence effect EVIDENCE: STRONG

Corrections reduce but rarely erase the influence of a false claim, a finding that is well replicated; the popular idea that corrections often backfire and strengthen belief has been found to be rare.

Framing effect EVIDENCE: STRONG

How a choice or issue is presented changes judgments even when the facts stay the same, whether through equivalent wording or through emphasis; gain-versus-loss effects replicate widely, while political emphasis frames weaken against competing frames and fade over time.

Illusory truth effect EVIDENCE: STRONG

Hearing a statement before makes people rate it more likely true, because repeated claims are easier to process; the effect is heavily replicated and applies to true and false statements alike, though modest in size.

Motivated reasoning EVIDENCE: MODERATE

Evidence tends to be judged by whether its conclusion is welcome rather than by its quality; partisans do assess identical evidence differently, but how much of that reflects motivation rather than prior beliefs remains disputed.

Negativity bias EVIDENCE: STRONG

Bad news, threats and losses draw more attention and weight than equal-sized good news, a strongly supported asymmetry, though getting noticed is not the same as persuading and any payoff in votes is far less certain.

Priming EVIDENCE: MIXED

The word covers three ideas with different track records: word-level priming is very reliable, many claims that subtle cues change behavior have failed to replicate, and political priming of issue importance falls in between.

Group identity

Part of the Learn library. Loyalty, us-versus-them thinking, conformity and the pull of what others seem to believe.

People are social animals, and much of what they believe arrives through the groups they belong to. Group membership shapes whom people trust, how they read evidence, what they are willing to say aloud and what they will do when an authority asks. These pages cover the research on identity, loyalty, conformity and consensus, and how messages that speak to "us" and "them" draw on it.

Each page carries an evidence rating explained in How we rate the evidence.

Social identity EVIDENCE: STRONG

Even a meaningless group label makes people favor their own side, a finding replicated for half a century; newer claims about identity fusion and the political effects of partisan identity are less settled.

In-group favoritism EVIDENCE: STRONG

People reliably favor their own group, even one created on the spot, by trusting and giving more to insiders; the effect is moderate and is mostly warmth toward insiders rather than hostility toward outsiders.

Out-group homogeneity EVIDENCE: MODERATE

People tend to see other groups as more alike than their own, a small but reliable effect whose size depends on how it is measured and which sometimes reverses.

Conformity EVIDENCE: STRONG

Most answers in Asch's experiments stayed independent, but some people went along with a unanimous, wrong group, and a single ally broke its hold; the effect replicates yet varies with era, culture and setup.

Social proof EVIDENCE: MODERATE

Uncertain people treat what others do as evidence, and messages reporting those norms nudge behavior, usually modestly and best when the others seem similar and nearby; some famous demonstrations replicated only partly.

Obedience to authority EVIDENCE: MODERATE

Most volunteers in Milgram's experiments kept delivering apparent shocks when told to, and similar compliance was later reproduced, but why they complied, whether automatic deference or identification with a cause, is disputed.

Dehumanization EVIDENCE: MODERATE

Seeing or portraying people as less than human predicts support for harsh treatment such as torture and exclusion, and has appeared in propaganda excusing violence in every era, though researchers debate whether it causes cruelty or justifies it.

Group polarization EVIDENCE: STRONG

Like-minded people who discuss an issue together usually end up more extreme in the same direction, a well-replicated lab result; the popular claim that online echo chambers drive polarization is much weaker.

Pluralistic ignorance EVIDENCE: MODERATE

When members each wrongly assume others privately accept a view they themselves reject, an unpopular norm persists; the misperception is well documented and correctable, while the related spiral of silence is weakly supported.

Moral foundations EVIDENCE: MIXED

Moral foundations theory offers a useful vocabulary for how partisans weight concerns like harm, fairness, loyalty, authority and purity differently, but its measurement, causal claims and cross-cultural reach are disputed, and message-tailoring effects are modest.

Emotion and fear

Part of the Learn library. How fear, anger, disgust, hope, nostalgia and stories shape what people accept.

Emotion is not the opposite of judgment; it is part of how people decide what matters and what to do about it. Messages that make audiences afraid, angry, disgusted, hopeful or nostalgic can inform or mislead depending on whether the feeling fits the facts. These pages cover what the research shows about each emotion in persuasion, including where the evidence is thinner than its reputation.

Each page carries an evidence rating explained in How we rate the evidence.

Fear messaging EVIDENCE: STRONG

Messages that show a threat usually change attitudes and behavior, as several large meta-analyses find, and they work best when paired with a believable action; a large threat with no workable remedy tends to be rejected.

Moral outrage EVIDENCE: MIXED

Posts attacking a political out-group are shared far more widely online, and platform rewards train people to express more outrage; the claim that moral-emotional words specifically drive sharing has not held up consistently.

Disgust EVIDENCE: MIXED

Disgust makes people reject what seems contaminating, and propaganda has long cast opponents as vermin or disease; self-reported disgust sensitivity is linked to social conservatism, but several dramatic claims about disgust and politics have not replicated.

Hope appeals EVIDENCE: MIXED

Appeals that show a possible better future and a path toward it are used across the political spectrum, but the research is thinner than for fear, with small studies suggesting hope works mainly when people feel able to act.

Nostalgia EVIDENCE: MODERATE

Nostalgia, a sentimental longing for the past, is mostly comforting for individuals and, when shared by a group, strengthens group identity; national nostalgia is linked to wariness of outsiders, though largely through correlational surveys.

Emotional contagion EVIDENCE: MODERATE

People catch the moods of others by mirroring faces, voices and postures; face-to-face mimicry is well documented, while the effects of emotion spreading online are real but small and may reflect wording more than felt emotion.

Affect heuristic EVIDENCE: MODERATE

A quick good-or-bad feeling about something shapes judgments of both its risks and its benefits, so liked things seem safe and useful; the link is robust, but whether feeling causes the judgment is less settled.

Identifiable victim effect EVIDENCE: MIXED

One named, pictured person in need often draws more giving than large statistics do, but a meta-analysis finds the average effect small and dependent on how the appeal is built, so it is real yet variable.

Narrative transportation EVIDENCE: MODERATE

Becoming absorbed in a story leads readers to hold story-consistent beliefs and argue back less, whether it is labeled fact or fiction; meta-analyses find modest effects, with much of the evidence correlational.

Also on the Learn shelf

Short answers already published on the Learn shelf's historical primers.

Cold War propaganda: US and Soviet posters, radio and leaflets

Cold War propaganda was the persuasion and disinformation that the United States and the Soviet Union, with their allies and clients, aimed at foreign publics, at each other's populations and at their own from about 1947 to 1991. Both sides used radio, print, posters, leaflets, films, cultural programmes and covert operations. They differed in scale, in who controlled domestic information, and in what was concealed and how it later came to light. This archive applies one definition to all of them (What is propaganda? Definition, history and examples). For posters from every period, see propaganda posters.

Propaganda, misinformation and disinformation: the differences

The three words are often used as if they meant the same thing. In the research literature, misinformation and disinformation describe **content** (false or misleading) and differ by **intent**. Propaganda describes a **method** of persuasion and says nothing, on its own, about whether the content is true. For the general concept, see What is propaganda? Definition, history and examples.

	MISINFORMATION	DISINFORMATION	PROPAGANDA (FRAME'S SENSE)
What it is	False or misleading content	False or misleading content	Communication built to bypass or overwhelm checking
Intent	No intent to harm; the sharer may be sincere	Deliberate	Deliberate persuasion
True or false content	False or misleading by definition	False or misleading by definition	True, false or mixed
Usually produced by	Anyone, including officials and newsrooms in error	States, parties, companies, movements, individuals	The same, openly or under concealment

The big lie: where the term comes from and how it is used

> Content note. This page quotes an antisemitic passage from *Mein Kampf* because the term begins there. It is quoted as evidence of what the text says, not endorsed.

"The big lie" is an English rendering of *die große Lüge*. It first appears in print in Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (1925), where Hitler uses it as an **accusation against others**: he says that Jews and Marxists blamed General Erich Ludendorff for Germany's defeat in the First World War by means of a large falsehood that the public would find too big to doubt. The popular later sense, a method that a propagandist adopts on purpose, comes largely from a 1943 U.S. wartime report on Hitler, not from Hitler's own text. A widely repeated quotation credited to Joseph Goebbels has no source that researchers have been able to produce. Since then people of many countries and parties have used it to accuse opponents.

What is propaganda? Definition, history and examples

Propaganda is communication designed to shape what an audience believes or does by working on emotion, identity, authority, repetition or omission, instead of offering a claim that can be checked. The word began as the name of a Catholic missionary office and became a term of abuse in the twentieth century. It names a method, not a political side, and this archive applies one definition to every side.

WWI propaganda posters: who made them and how they worked

> Content note. This page discusses First World War atrocity claims, some later confirmed and some not, and shows posters that use the epithets of the period. They are shown as they were issued, as the evidence under study.

Every major belligerent used posters in the First World War, mostly for three jobs: recruiting soldiers, selling war bonds, and shaping conduct on the home front. The institutions differed. The United States ran a single federal agency, Britain divided the work between a party-led recruiting committee and a secret bureau aimed abroad, and Germany, Austria-Hungary, France and Russia leaned heavily on war-loan campaigns. The same few techniques appear on every side. Posters were one channel among several, and no source used here measures how many enlistments or subscriptions a particular poster produced. For posters from every period, see propaganda posters.

WWII propaganda: posters, radio and film by every side

> Content note. This page quotes antisemitic language from Nazi sources and describes racial imagery used by more than one side. It is quoted and described as the record shows it.

Every major belligerent of 1939 to 1945 ran organised propaganda through posters, newsreels, film, radio and leaflets. The methods overlapped: fear of the enemy, unity slogans, secrecy warnings and appeals to sacrifice. The systems did not: Germany, Italy, Japan and the Soviet Union controlled press and broadcasting through the state, while Britain and the United States ran agencies, some openly labelled and some secret (such as Britain's Political Warfare Executive), inside wartime censorship and a press they did not own. Nazi propaganda also served a genocide, which no other propaganda service here did. This archive applies one definition to all of them: Doctrine (working definition). For posters from every period, see propaganda posters.

Countering propaganda

What has been tried against propaganda and disinformation, who tried it, and what the measured effects were, including null results, backfire findings and the criticism each approach drew from across the spectrum.

The section has two parts:

- **Methods** (this folder): research-led pages on each approach. Each carries an evidence rating that summarises the published record, not FRAME's view of whether the method is good.
- **Cases** (in case studies): the history of specific bodies and programmes, from the 1937 Institute for Propaganda Analysis to the units set up after 2014.

Evidence ratings

RATING	MEANING
strong	Replicated by independent teams, in realistic settings, with effects that last. No method here reaches this yet.
moderate	Replicated by independent teams, but effects are modest or measured mostly in surveys.
mixed	Some replicated positive results alongside null results, fading effects or side effects.
contested	The main claim of effect is disputed in the published record.

Methods

PAGE	EVIDENCE	WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS
Inoculation and prebunking	mixed	People reliably learn to name manipulation techniques in tests; whether that improves telling true from false news, and for how long, is disputed.
Fact-checking and corrections	moderate	Corrections move beliefs toward accuracy on average and rarely backfire, but effects are modest, fade, and did not change views of the politician corrected in the one US test.
Media literacy	mixed	Short-term gains in classroom and survey experiments; some field trials found none, and some studies find extra distrust of true news.
Platform interventions: labels, nudges, notes, friction and takedowns	mixed	Labels, notes, prompts and bans cut sharing or belief somewhat in the studies that exist; several have side effects or nulls, and many figures are the platforms' own.
The debate over counter-disinformation	mixed	The argument over counter-disinformation itself: whether the category is sound, whether it became censorship, whether it empowers states over dissent, or whether it does too little.

Cases

CASE	ACTOR	WHEN
The Institute for Propaganda Analysis (1937-1942)	Institute for Propaganda Analysis (US, private)	1937-1942
World War II rumor clinics and rumor control (1940 to 1947)	US and UK rumor clinics and rumor control	1940-1947

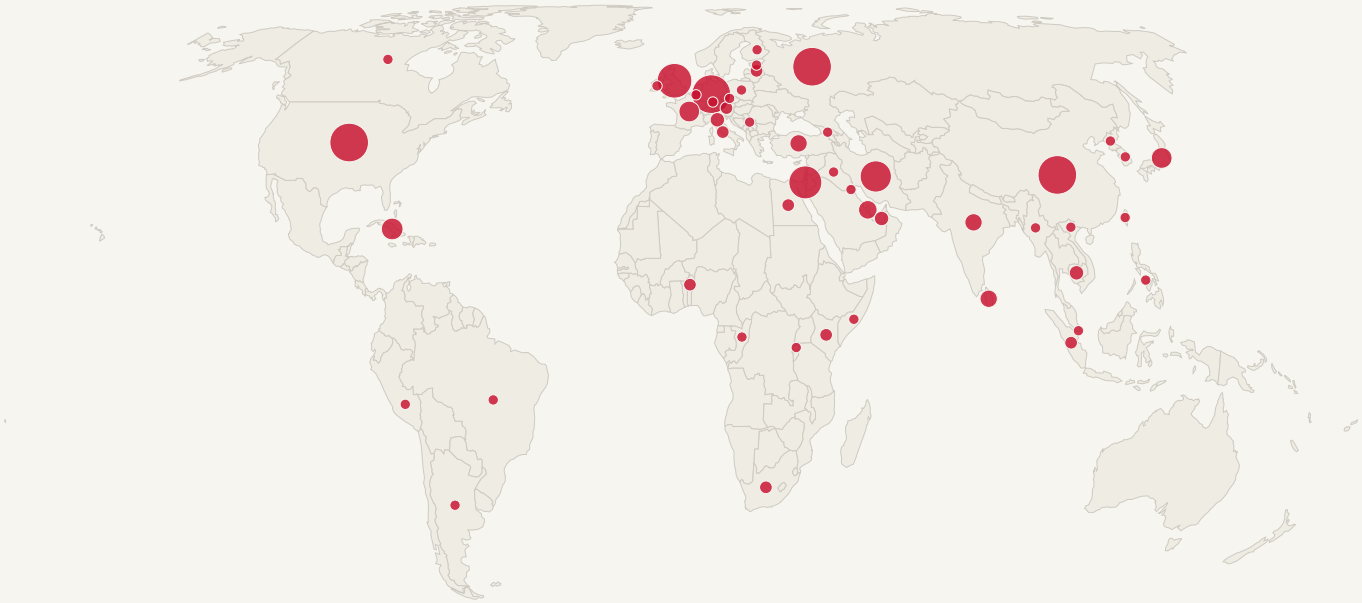
CASE	ACTOR	WHEN
Cold War radio jamming (1948 to 1988)	Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact; UK over Cyprus	1948-1988
The Active Measures Working Group (1981 to 1992)	US interagency working group	1981-1992
Finland's media literacy model	Finnish government and schools	2013 onwards
Baltic counter-disinformation: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania	Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania	2014 onwards
EUvsDisinfo and the EEAS East StratCom Task Force	EU External Action Service	2015 onwards
The State Department's Global Engagement Center (2016 to 2025)	US State Department	2016-2025
Hamilton 68: the Russian-influence dashboard and its secret account list	Alliance for Securing Democracy (US)	2017-2018
Laws against "fake news": Germany, France and Malaysia under one standard	Germany, France and Malaysia	2017-2019
Government fact-check units: Russia, China, India and Ukraine	Russia, China, India and Ukraine	2017 onwards
The UK's Counter Disinformation Unit and its sister units (2019 to 2024)	UK government	2019-2024
The DHS Disinformation Governance Board (2022)	US Department of Homeland Security	2022

Rules for this section

- **Same standard for every side.** A state rebuttal unit, a fact-checker or a platform label is described the same way whichever government, party or company runs it. Every case page has a **same-method test**.
- **Report effects as measured.** Pages give the study design, the sample and the caveats, and include null and backfire results. A company's own figure is marked as such.
- **Criticism from every direction.** Each page records criticism from the right, the left, civil-liberties groups and targeted governments where it exists, and says so when a direction has none on the record.
- **Tag techniques only on evidence.** Most pages here record a counter-measure, not propaganda output, and carry no technique tags.
- **Images.** Openly licensed only. Each image's source and licence are listed on its page.

The history map

Every dated object, brief, campaign and case study in the archive on a world map and a timeline: where and when each piece of propaganda was made.



Static print of the history map. Map: Natural Earth 1:110m Admin 0 - Countries (public domain), naturalearthdata.com, Equal Earth projection. Borders are Natural Earth's default de facto view and show present-day countries for every era; the map takes no position on any disputed border. Places are read from each item's own record: the first country named in who made it, and every country named in who it was aimed at. This print marks origins only. A larger dot means more items recorded at that origin (515 of 519 origin marks fall on a plotted place). The largest origin in this file is United States (165 items). The interactive map draws origins and targets: https://propagandaarchive.org/history-map/. 26 items could not be placed yet.

What the map records

RECORD	ITEMS
Collection object	145
Watch brief	181
Campaign	6
Case study	211
Then and now	18

Origins with the most items

The 12 places named most often as an item’s origin in the history map.

PLACE	ITEMS
United States	165
Russia	80
China	59
Germany	40
United Kingdom	28

PLACE	ITEMS
Israel	25
Iran	22
Cuba	9
France	8
Japan	8
Qatar	6
Turkey	5

Wars and major events

Wars and events are background with a cited source each, not a complete list.

EVENT	WHEN	KIND	ON THE RECORD
Punic Wars	264 BCE to 146 BCE	war	Rome and Carthage fought three wars for control of the western Mediterranean. Rome won, and destroyed Carthage in 146 BCE. Source: Britannica, Punic Wars
Protestant Reformation	1517 (Luther's theses) to 1555 (Peace of Augsburg)	revolution	A religious movement that split Western Christianity. Printed pamphlets and woodcuts were used on the Protestant and Catholic sides alike. Source: Britannica, Reformation
Thirty Years' War	1618 to 1648	war	A series of wars in central Europe between Catholic and Protestant states and the powers backing them. It ended with the Peace of Westphalia. Source: Britannica, Thirty Years' War
American Revolutionary War	1775 to 1783	war	Thirteen British colonies in North America fought Britain for independence, with French and later Spanish and Dutch support. Britain recognised the United States in 1783. Source: Britannica, American Revolution
French Revolution	1789 to 1799	revolution	The French monarchy was overthrown and a republic declared. The period included the Reign of Terror and war with much of Europe, and ended with Napoleon Bonaparte taking power. Source: Britannica, French Revolution
Napoleonic Wars	1803 to 1815	war	France under Napoleon fought shifting coalitions of European powers. France was defeated at Waterloo in 1815. Source: Britannica, Napoleonic Wars
Opium Wars	1839 to 1860	war	Britain, joined by France in the second war, fought Qing China after Chinese authorities moved to suppress the British opium trade, and over wider trade access. China ceded Hong Kong Island and was made to open treaty ports to foreign trade. Source: Britannica, Opium Wars
Crimean War	1853 to 1856	war	Russia fought the Ottoman Empire, Britain, France and Sardinia, mainly in Crimea. Russia was defeated. It was among the first wars covered by newspaper correspondents and photographers. Source: Britannica, Crimean War

EVENT	WHEN	KIND	ON THE RECORD
American Civil War	1861 to 1865	war	The Union fought the Confederacy, formed by 11 slave states that seceded. The Union won, and slavery was abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment. Source: Britannica, American Civil War
Congo Free State	1885 to 1908	mass killing	King Leopold II of Belgium ruled the Congo as his personal possession. Forced labour for rubber, enforced by hostage-taking, mutilation and killing, led to the deaths of a very large number of Congolese; estimates run into the millions and vary widely. International campaigns against the abuses led Belgium to take over the territory in 1908. Source: Britannica, Congo Free State
Spanish-American War	Apr 1898 to Aug 1898	war	The United States fought Spain over Cuba, after a press campaign in U.S. newspapers. Spain ceded Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines to the United States. Source: Britannica, Spanish-American War
South African (Boer) War	1899 to 1902	war	Britain fought the South African Republic and the Orange Free State. Tens of thousands of Boer and Black African civilians died in British concentration camps. Britain won. Source: Britannica, South African War
Herero and Nama genocide	1904 to 1908	genocide	German colonial forces in South West Africa (now Namibia) put down a Herero and Nama uprising with a campaign of killing, expulsion into the desert and concentration camps. Tens of thousands died. In 2021 the German government said it would officially call the events a genocide. Source: Britannica, German-Herero conflict of 1904-07
Mexican Revolution	1910 to 1920	revolution	A decade of armed struggle that ended the long rule of Porfirio Díaz and led to the 1917 constitution. Source: Britannica, Mexican Revolution
World War I	28 Jul 1914 to 11 Nov 1918	war	The Allied Powers (among them France, Britain, Russia, Italy and from 1917 the United States) fought the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria). The Allies won. Both sides ran mass state propaganda on a scale not seen before. Source: Britannica, World War I
Armenian Genocide	1915 to 1916	genocide	Ottoman authorities deported and killed Armenians in large numbers; estimates of the dead range from about 600,000 to 1.5 million. Most genocide scholars and many states call it genocide; Turkey rejects the term. Source: Britannica, Armenian Genocide
Russian Revolution and Civil War	Mar 1917 to 1922	revolution	The tsar abdicated in March 1917 and the Bolsheviks took power in November. They won the civil war that followed against the Whites and other forces, some backed by British, French, U.S. and Japanese troops, and founded the Soviet Union in 1922. Source: Britannica, Russian Revolution of 1917

EVENT	WHEN	KIND	ON THE RECORD
Famine in Soviet Ukraine (Holodomor)	1932 to 1933	genocide	A famine following Soviet collectivisation and grain requisitions killed millions in Ukraine, with further deaths in Kazakhstan and southern Russia. Ukraine and a number of other states recognise it as genocide; Russia rejects the term. Source: Britannica, Holodomor
Spanish Civil War	Jul 1936 to Apr 1939	war	Nationalist forces under Francisco Franco, backed by Germany and Italy, rose against the elected Republican government, which was backed by the Soviet Union and international volunteers. The Nationalists won. Source: Britannica, Spanish Civil War
Second Sino-Japanese War	Jul 1937 to Sep 1945	war	Japan fought China after a clash near Beijing; the war merged into World War II. Japan surrendered in 1945. Source: Britannica, Second Sino-Japanese War
World War II	1 Sep 1939 to 2 Sep 1945	war	The Allies (among them Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States and China) fought the Axis (Germany, Italy and Japan). The Axis was defeated. It was the deadliest war in history, and every major party ran state propaganda agencies. Source: Britannica, World War II
The Holocaust	1941 to 1945 (persecution from 1933)	genocide	Nazi Germany and its collaborators murdered about six million Jews, as well as Roma, disabled people and others, in shootings and death camps. Antisemitic propaganda preceded and accompanied it. Source: Britannica, Holocaust
Chinese Civil War	1945 to 1949 (main phase)	war	The Communist Party fought the Nationalist (Kuomintang) government. The Communists founded the People's Republic of China in 1949, and the Nationalist government moved to Taiwan. Source: Britannica, Chinese Civil War
Cold War	1947 to 26 Dec 1991	era	A rivalry between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its allies, fought through an arms race, proxy wars, espionage and propaganda. It ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Source: Britannica, Cold War
Korean War	25 Jun 1950 to 27 Jul 1953	war	North Korea, backed by China and the Soviet Union, invaded South Korea, backed by a U.S.-led United Nations force. Estimates of the dead run to 2.5 million or more, most of them Korean civilians. It ended in an armistice, with no peace treaty. Source: Britannica, Korean War
Algerian War of Independence	1 Nov 1954 to Jul 1962	war	The National Liberation Front (FLN) fought France for Algeria's independence, which it won in 1962. Both sides used violence against civilians, and French forces used torture. Source: Britannica, Algerian War
Vietnam War	1955 to 30 Apr 1975	war	North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front (Viet Cong), backed by the Soviet Union and China, fought South Vietnam and the United States. Estimates of the dead range from about 1 million to over 3 million, most of them Vietnamese. It ended in 1975 when North Vietnamese forces took Saigon, and the country was reunified. Source: Britannica, Vietnam War

EVENT	WHEN	KIND	ON THE RECORD
Cuban Missile Crisis	16 Oct 1962 to 28 Oct 1962	crisis	A U.S.-Soviet standoff over Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba. The Soviet Union removed them; the United States pledged not to invade Cuba and later removed its missiles from Turkey. Source: Britannica, Cuban missile crisis
Indonesian mass killings	Oct 1965 to 1966	mass killing	After a failed coup attempt blamed on the Communist Party, the Indonesian army and allied militias killed people accused of communist ties, and Suharto rose to power. Estimates of the dead range from 80,000 to more than 1 million; Geoffrey Robinson's history puts the toll at about 500,000 and details the role the United States and Britain played in facilitating the killings. Source: Britannica, September 30th Movement
Cultural Revolution	1966 to 1976	revolution	A mass political campaign launched by Mao Zedong. Persecution, purges and factional violence killed hundreds of thousands to millions of people; estimates vary widely. Source: Britannica, Cultural Revolution
Six-Day War	5 Jun 1967 to 10 Jun 1967	war	After Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping and moved troops into Sinai, Israel struck first and fought Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Israel captured and occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. Source: Britannica, Six-Day War
Nigerian Civil War (Biafra)	Jul 1967 to Jan 1970	war	The Nigerian government fought the secessionist Republic of Biafra. Biafra surrendered; famine during the blockade killed large numbers of civilians. Source: Britannica, Nigerian civil war
Chilean coup and military rule	11 Sep 1973 to Mar 1990	crisis	The armed forces under Augusto Pinochet overthrew the elected government of Salvador Allende, which the U.S. government had worked to undermine. Chile's official commissions have recognised more than 3,000 people killed or disappeared under military rule. Source: Britannica, Chile: the military dictatorship, from 1973
Khmer Rouge rule in Cambodia	Apr 1975 to Jan 1979	genocide	The Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia until Vietnamese forces ousted it. An estimated 1.5 to 2 million people died from execution, forced labour and famine. Source: Britannica, Khmer Rouge
Ogaden War	Jul 1977 to Mar 1978	war	Somalia fought Ethiopia over the Ogaden region. Ethiopia, backed by the Soviet Union and Cuba, won. Source: Britannica, Ogaden
Iranian Revolution	Jan 1978 to Apr 1979	revolution	Mass protests forced the shah into exile, and Iran became an Islamic republic led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Source: Britannica, Iranian Revolution of 1978-79
Soviet-Afghan War	Dec 1979 to Feb 1989	war	Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan to support its communist government and fought mujahideen insurgents backed by the United States, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and others. The Soviet Union withdrew in 1989. Source: Britannica, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

EVENT	WHEN	KIND	ON THE RECORD
Iran-Iraq War	Sep 1980 to Aug 1988	war	Iraq invaded Iran, and the war became a long stalemate with heavy losses, including Iraqi use of chemical weapons. It ended in a UN-brokered ceasefire. Source: Britannica, Iran-Iraq War
Falklands War	2 Apr 1982 to 14 Jun 1982	war	Argentina and the United Kingdom fought over the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) after Argentina landed troops there. Argentina surrendered. Source: Britannica, Falkland Islands War
Tiananmen Square crackdown	3 to 4 Jun 1989	crisis	Chinese troops opened fire on protesters and cleared them from central Beijing. The death toll is disputed, with estimates from several hundred to several thousand. Source: Britannica, Tiananmen Square incident
Gulf War	2 Aug 1990 to 28 Feb 1991	war	Iraq invaded Kuwait; a U.S.-led coalition authorised by the UN drove Iraqi forces out. Source: Britannica, Persian Gulf War
Bosnian War	Apr 1992 to Dec 1995	war	A war among Bosnian Serb, Bosnian Croat and Bosniak forces after Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence from Yugoslavia. International courts ruled the killing of about 8,000 Bosniak men and boys by Bosnian Serb forces at Srebrenica in 1995 a genocide. It ended with the Dayton Agreement. Source: Britannica, Bosnian War
Rwandan genocide	7 Apr 1994 to Jul 1994	genocide	Hutu extremist forces killed an estimated 500,000 to 800,000 people, mostly Tutsi, over about 100 days. Radio broadcasts were used to direct and encourage the killing. Source: Britannica, Rwanda genocide of 1994
September 11 attacks	11 Sep 2001	crisis	Al-Qaeda hijackers flew airliners into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and a fourth plane crashed in Pennsylvania. Nearly 3,000 people were killed. Source: Britannica, September 11 attacks
War in Afghanistan	7 Oct 2001 to 30 Aug 2021	war	A U.S.-led coalition invaded Afghanistan after the September 11 attacks, overthrew the Taliban government and fought a long insurgency, in which tens of thousands of Afghan civilians were killed. The Taliban returned to power as the last U.S. troops left in 2021. Source: Britannica, Afghanistan War
Iraq War	20 Mar 2003 to 18 Dec 2011	war	A U.S.-led coalition invaded Iraq, citing weapons of mass destruction that were not found, and overthrew Saddam Hussein's government. An insurgency and sectarian fighting followed; estimates of Iraqi deaths range from about 100,000 to several hundred thousand. Source: Britannica, Iraq War
Arab Spring	Dec 2010 to 2012	revolution	A wave of protests and uprisings across the Arab world. Rulers fell in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, and war broke out in Syria. Source: Britannica, Arab Spring
Syrian Civil War	Mar 2011 to 8 Dec 2024	war	Protests against Bashar al-Assad's government became a multi-sided war drawing in Russia, Iran, Turkey, the United States and others. Assad's government fell in December 2024. Source: Britannica, Syrian Civil War

EVENT	WHEN	KIND	ON THE RECORD
Russia-Ukraine War	Feb 2014 onward (full-scale invasion from 24 Feb 2022)	war	Russia annexed Crimea in 2014 and backed separatist forces in eastern Ukraine, then launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Source: Britannica, Russia-Ukraine War
COVID-19 pandemic	11 Mar 2020 (WHO pandemic declaration) to 5 May 2023 (end of the WHO emergency)	pandemic	A coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, China, spread worldwide. Its origin remains contested, and governments on every side traded claims about it. False cures and other unsupported claims about it spread as well. Source: World Health Organization, COVID-19 timeline
Israel-Hamas War	7 Oct 2023 onward	war	A Hamas-led attack on southern Israel killed about 1,200 people, by Israeli count, and took about 250 hostages. Israel's air and ground offensive in Gaza followed and has killed tens of thousands of people, by the count of Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry. South Africa has brought a genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice; Israel rejects the charge. Source: Britannica, Israel-Hamas War

Regimes

One page per regime: a short history, the leader, the people who ran the main offices under the leader, and links to every write-up and archive object tagged with the regime. "Regime" is used in the neutral sense of the regime tag on collection objects: whoever held state power at the time, whether a democracy, a monarchy or a dictatorship. A regime page names who held power. It never says who was to blame.

Same standard for every regime

Every page has the same structure, the same headings, the same kinds of facts, in the same neutral register, whether the regime is the Nazi state, the USSR or a sitting democratic government. State differences in scale, intent and context as plainly as similarities. Cite sources; don't editorialise. Offensive material is described as it was, not softened.

How they died

A second series covers how each leader's life ended and how the death was announced, shown or denied: How they died. Each regime page has a short "How it ended" section that links to the leader's page.

REGIME	PERIOD	COUNTRY	IN BRIEF
New Kingdom Egypt	c. 1550 BCE to c. 1070 BCE (18th to 20th Dynasties)	Egypt	The Egyptian kingdom of the 18th to 20th Dynasties, whose rulers (Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, Akhenaten, Ramesses II and others) put their legitimacy, wars and ancestry on temple walls, and whose successors altered, erased and selected those records.
Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires	c. 911 BCE to 539 BCE (Assyria to 609 BCE, Babylon from 626 BCE)	Assyria and Babylonia (modern Iraq and neighbouring lands)	The Assyrian kings from about 911 to 609 BCE and the Babylonian kings from 626 to 539 BCE, whose royal inscriptions, palace reliefs and chronicles are the record of two Mesopotamian empires and the subject of a scholarly dispute over whether to call them propaganda.
Achaemenid Persia	c. 550 BCE to 330 BCE	Persia (modern Iran, with provinces from Egypt and Anatolia to Central Asia)	The Persian monarchy of the Achaemenid royal house, from Cyrus II's conquests of about 550 BCE to the death of Darius III in 330 BCE, whose own royal inscriptions and reliefs (above all Darius I's at Behistun) are the main surviving evidence of how the kings presented their rule; whether those monuments were "propaganda" aimed at an audience is disputed.
Roman Principate and early Empire under Augustus and his successors	27 BCE to 235 CE	Roman Empire	The Roman state ruled by emperors from the settlement of 27 BCE, when Octavian took the name Augustus, to the killing of Severus Alexander in 235 CE, during which the Senate, the magistracies and the formula "Senate and People of Rome" stayed in use while one man held the army and the last word; the page follows Augustus, the Julio-Claudians, the Flavians, Trajan and Marcus Aurelius.

REGIME	PERIOD	COUNTRY	IN BRIEF
The papacy and crusade messaging	1095 to c. 1291	Papacy (Latin Christendom)	The papacy as the institution that issued crusade indulgences and bulls and commissioned preachers, from Urban II's address at Clermont in November 1095 to the fall of Acre in 1291; this page covers the messaging only, not the campaigns, and applies the same definitions used for every state.
Tudor England	1485 to 1603	England	The Tudor monarchy of England from Henry VII's victory at Bosworth on 22 August 1485 to the death of Elizabeth I on 24 March 1603, covering the break with Rome, the Edwardian and Marian reversals and the Elizabethan settlement, each enforced by statute and by an organised flow of printed and spoken official messages.
German Empire under Wilhelm II	1888 to 1918	Germany	The federal, constitutional monarchy of the German Empire under Emperor Wilhelm II from 15 June 1888 until his abdication was announced on 9 November 1918, including four years of war under a military state of siege and army censorship.
Asquith government	1908 to 1916	United Kingdom	The Liberal government of H. H. Asquith, in office from 5 April 1908 and a coalition with the Conservatives from 25 May 1915, until his resignation on 5 December 1916; it took the United Kingdom into the First World War.
Wilson administration	1913 to 1921	United States	The U.S. executive branch under President Woodrow Wilson from 4 March 1913 to 4 March 1921, which took the country into the First World War, created the Committee on Public Information and enforced the Espionage and Sedition Acts.
Fascist Italy under Mussolini	1922 to 1943	Italy	The one-party Italian state governed by Benito Mussolini and the National Fascist Party from 31 October 1922 until his dismissal on 25 July 1943; the Italian Social Republic of 1943 to 1945 appears in the timeline only.
Soviet Union under Stalin	1922 to 1953	Soviet Union	The one-party Soviet state governed under Joseph Stalin as General Secretary of the Communist Party from 3 April 1922 until his death on 5 March 1953.
Estado Novo (Portugal) under Salazar and Caetano	1933 to 1974	Portugal	The single-party corporative Portuguese state governed by António de Oliveira Salazar from the 1933 constitution to September 1968 and by Marcelo Caetano from then until the military coup of 25 April 1974, with prior censorship, a political police and, from 1961, wars in Africa.
Nazi Germany	1933 to 1945	Germany	The one-party German state governed by Adolf Hitler and the NSDAP from 30 January 1933 until the surrender of 8 May 1945.

REGIME	PERIOD	COUNTRY	IN BRIEF
Roosevelt administration	1933 to 1945	United States	The United States executive branch under President Franklin D. Roosevelt from 4 March 1933 until his death on 12 April 1945, covering the New Deal, the Second World War, wartime censorship and information offices, and the exclusion and confinement of Japanese Americans.
Empire of Japan, 1937 to 1945	1937 to 1945	Japan	The Japanese state under Emperor Hirohito from the first Konoe cabinet of June 1937 and the war with China until the surrender of 15 August 1945, governed by cabinets, the Army and the Navy under the 1889 Meiji Constitution.
Francoist Spain under Franco	1939 to 1975	Spain	The one-party Spanish state led by General Francisco Franco, who headed the Nationalist side from 1936 and, after the victory of 1 April 1939, governed as Head of State until his death on 20 November 1975.
Churchill wartime government	1940 to 1945	United Kingdom	The United Kingdom's government under Winston Churchill from 10 May 1940 to 26 July 1945, a coalition of Conservative, Labour and Liberal ministers until 23 May 1945 and then a Conservative caretaker government until the general election result.
Albania under Hoxha and Alia	1944 to 1991	Albania	The one-party Albanian state run by the Party of Labour from the liberation of November 1944 under Enver Hoxha (to his death on 11 April 1985) and then Ramiz Alia, until the end of one-party rule in 1990 to 1991.
North Korea under the Kim family	1948 to present	North Korea	The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, led by Kim Il Sung from 1948 to 1994, Kim Jong Il until 2011 and Kim Jong Un since; this page gives the roster as of 2 October 2026.
German Democratic Republic under the SED	1949 to 1990	East Germany	The one-party state in the Soviet zone of Germany, governed by the Socialist Unity Party (SED) from 7 October 1949 until German unification on 3 October 1990; the collection tags objects here by the head of government (Grotewohl, then Stoph), while Ulbricht and Honecker appear as party leaders.
People's Republic of China under Mao Zedong	1949 to 1976	China	The Chinese Communist Party's rule of the People's Republic of China under Chairman Mao Zedong, from the proclamation of 1 October 1949 to his death on 9 September 1976.

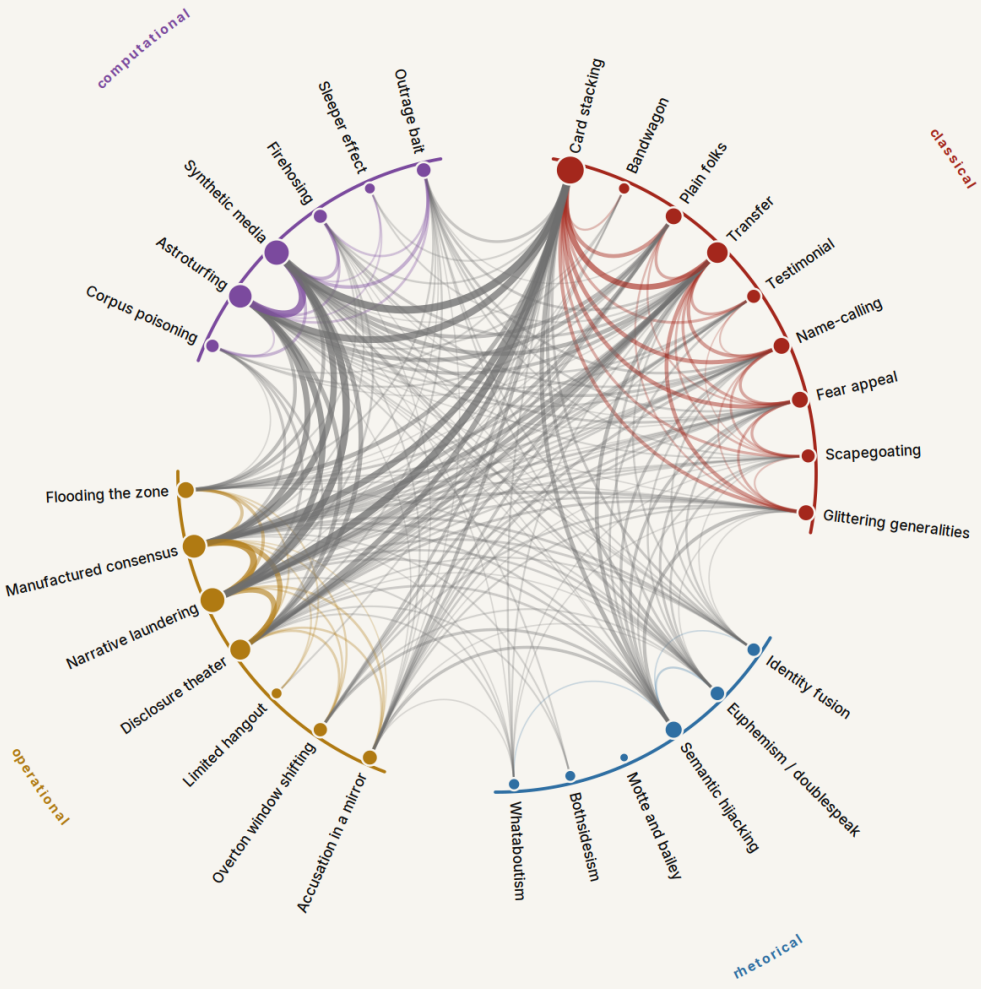
REGIME	PERIOD	COUNTRY	IN BRIEF
Cuba under Fidel and Raúl Castro and their successors	1959 to present	Cuba	The Cuban state governed since 1 January 1959 by Fidel Castro and the movement he led, from 1965 as a one-party state under the Communist Party of Cuba, then under Raúl Castro from 2008 and Miguel Díaz-Canel from 2018; it has not ended, and this page gives the roster as of 2 October 2026 and sets the United States broadcasts to Cuba beside Cuba's own media under the same definitions.
Socialist Republic of Romania under Ceaușescu	1965 to 1989	Romania	The one-party Romanian state led by Nicolae Ceaușescu as head of the Romanian Communist Party from 22 March 1965 and as head of state from 1967 until the events of December 1989 and his execution on 25 December 1989.
Ba'athist Iraq	1968 to 2003, chiefly Saddam Hussein 1979 to 2003	Iraq	The one-party Iraqi state run by the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party through its Revolutionary Command Council from the coup of 17 July 1968, under Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr until 16 July 1979 and under Saddam Hussein until US-led forces took Baghdad on 9 April 2003.
Democratic Kampuchea under Pol Pot	1975 to 1979	Cambodia	The one-party state that the Communist Party of Kampuchea, led by Pol Pot, ran in Cambodia from the capture of Phnom Penh on 17 April 1975 until Vietnamese and Cambodian forces took the capital on 7 January 1979.
People's Republic of China after Mao (1976 to now)	1976 to present	China	The Chinese Communist Party's one-party state from Mao Zedong's death on 9 September 1976 to the present, led by Hua Guofeng, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao and, since 15 November 2012, Xi Jinping, with the Party's Publicity Department and the Cyberspace Administration running the message machinery; the dated facts on this page are as of 2026-10-02.
Islamic Republic of Iran, current government	from 1979	Iran	The state founded in 1979 and headed by a Supreme Leader, a post held since 8 March 2026 by Mojtaba Khamenei; this page gives the roster as of 2 October 2026 and a dated record of Iranian state output about the United States, and of US and Israeli messaging aimed at Iran.
Turkmenistan under Niyazov and the Berdimuhamedovs	1985 to present	Turkmenistan	Turkmenistan as governed since December 1985 by Saparmurat Niyazov (to his death in 2006), Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov (president 2006 to 2022) and, since March 2022, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, with his father chairing the Halk Maslahaty; this page gives the roster as of 2 October 2026.

REGIME	PERIOD	COUNTRY	IN BRIEF
Eritrea under Isaias Afwerki	1991 to present	Eritrea	The Eritrean state led since the liberation army entered Asmara on 24 May 1991 by Isaias Afwerki, first as head of the provisional government and then, from 24 May 1993, as president, with the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) as the only legal party; roster and facts are as of 2 October 2026.
Russian Federation under Vladimir Putin	2000 to present	Russia	The Russian state under Vladimir Putin, president from 2000 to 2008 and from 2012 and prime minister from 2008 to 2012; this page gives the roster as of 29 September 2026.
Saudi Arabia under King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman	2015 to present	Saudi Arabia	The Saudi state under King Salman (since January 2015) and his son Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (crown prince since 2017, prime minister since 2022); this page gives the roster as of 2 October 2026.
Trump administration	January 2017 to January 2021 and January 2025 to present	United States	The Trump administration is the U.S. executive branch under President Donald Trump, who served from January 2017 to January 2021 and again from January 2025; this page gives the roster as of 29 September 2026.
Israel, current government under Benjamin Netanyahu	December 2022 to present	Israel	The 37th government of Israel, formed on 29 December 2022 under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; this page gives the roster as of 2 October 2026, before the Knesset election of 27 October 2026.

Which techniques travel together

Which propaganda techniques turn up together in the same brief, grouped by family: a map of how techniques combine in real operations.

CLASSICAL RHETORICAL OPERATIONAL COMPUTATIONAL



Static print of the technique map. Each line joins two techniques tagged together in the same watch brief; a thicker line means more briefs. The file records 181 briefs. The interactive map is at https://propagandaarchive.org/map/.

Pairs tagged together most often

The 12 pairs with the most shared briefs. The figure above draws every pair in the technique map.

TECHNIQUE	TECHNIQUE	BRIEFS
Card stacking	Narrative laundering	73
Card stacking	Synthetic media	72

TECHNIQUE	TECHNIQUE	BRIEFS
Astroturfing	Synthetic media	67
Narrative laundering	Synthetic media	67
Astroturfing	Card stacking	60
Manufactured consensus	Narrative laundering	57
Card stacking	Manufactured consensus	52
Manufactured consensus	Synthetic media	51
Astroturfing	Narrative laundering	49
Astroturfing	Manufactured consensus	42
Card stacking	Transfer	40
Card stacking	Disclosure theater	35

About this print

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Live pages: techniques, Learn, history map, technique map, regimes.