Classroom Ready Resource

Creating a Modern-Day Propaganda Poster

Author: Jayna Boylan Murray Avenue School Huntingdon Valley, PA

About this Lesson

Students will discuss the purpose of propaganda posters in a "think-pair-share," and identify posters they have seen both inside and outside of school. Students will view and respond to images from Philadelphia's National Constitution Center's exhibition Art of the American Soldier.

Grade(s) Level

6, 7, 8

Classroom Time

Two 45 minute periods

or

One 90 minute period.

Handouts

Samples of posters (see "Further Resources" section)

Constitution Connections

Amendment I.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Background

Citizens have used propaganda posters to express their views since the birth of our Nation. Amendment I of the U.S. Constitution restricts the government from prohibiting the freedom of speech and peaceful assembly. Using online digital libraries and archives, explore posters of U.S. wars and conflicts to develop a sense of how individuals and groups have expressed their points of view throughout our history before beginning this lesson.

Objectives

Students will:

- Differentiate between "advertisements" and "propaganda" relative to poster design in history.
- Understand the rights of citizens in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
- Examine the work contained in the *Art of the American Soldier* exhibition at the National Constitution Center, and recognize its personal portrayal of war.
- Identify a modern-day (social, political, personal, etc.) issue/theme to use as inspiration for the poster.
- Create an appropriate composition that illustrates the use of propaganda.
- Express their vision with proper use of mixed media (pencils, rulers, colored pencils, charcoal, watercolor paint & markers).
- Provide self-reflection & critical response to others through the use of a "blog."

Standards

V. INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, & INSTITUTIONS

e. Identify and describe examples of tension between belief systems and government policies and laws.

X. CIVIC IDEALS & PRACTICES

- b. Identify and interpret sources and examples of the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
- c. Locate, access, analyze, organize, and apply information about selected public issues recognizing and explaining multiple points of view.
- e. Explain and analyze various forms of citizen action that influence public policy decisions.

Activity

Warm Up

Students will be asked to sit with a partner and discuss the purpose of posters and freedom of expression.

Questions for partners to consider:

- Where are posters shown?
- What are the basic elements of a poster?
- Identify a poster that you have seen before.
- What is your right of expression and freedom of speech as a U.S. Citizen?

Step 1

Students will then view the artwork in the National Constitution Center's exhibition Art of the American Soldier.

Questions for students to consider:

- What is the relevance of the work throughout history?
- How has the work changed, and what events in history have helped to shape the work?
- How has war changed since WWI; what similarities and difference exist between works created during WWI, WWII, Vietnam, the Gulf War & the Iraq Wars?
- How do you think this work helped the soldiers cope with their situations?
- How do you think making art can help other people in distress?

Step 2

Students will be asked to identify a current, modern-day issue that they feel passionate about. They will sketch/write/brainstorm on large paper any imagery that relates to the issue. Questions for students to consider:

- What imagery comes to mind when you think of this issue?
- What words or phrases do you think of?
- Can you connect a song, poem, person, celebrity, symbol to the issue?
- What colors/lines/shape might be connected to the issue?

Step 3

Students will then be shown "Propaganda Posters" throughout history, specifically those related to war. They will be asked to write on their paper elements that all of the posters have in common. Then students will be asked "What do you think the word PROPAGANDA means?" Short class discussion will follow with teacher-driven insight into the definition of the word. Students will then write how their imagery will portray an element of propaganda.

Students will be given work time to create/construct/design their poster. They will use a variety of mixed-media to complete the work to add color, feeling, unity and emphasis.

Assessment:

Active Participation Techniques:

Students are given *think time* during class discussion and after teacher generated questions. Students will produce a *short written response* during the anticipatory set. Students will produce a large-scale, visual brainstorm. Students will create a product: modern-day propaganda poster.

Closure:

Students will upload their work to a class blog. They will create a self-reflection blog post, as well as a critical response to three other class members' posters. They will also provide three responses to a class member who has commented on their own work.

Further Resources

Art of the American Soldier Online Gallery:

http://constitutioncenter.org/artoftheamericansoldier/website/gallery/timeline.aspx

National Archives Poster Art Digital Library: http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/powers_of_persuasion_home.html

Images of Propaganda Posters related to War:

