

Understanding Methods of Media and Political Communication - Sample Answers

Directions: While reading you will learn the definitions of terms related to persuasion methods in media and political communication. While you read, mark the text that helps you define each term. After reading, write the definition for each term in the chart below. Write examples for each term in the space provided and determine the impact on public opinion.

Term	Definition
Bias	Bias is a preference, opinion or attitude that favors one way of thinking or feeling over another. Bias affects how people see events and people around them.
<i>Examples:</i> A journalist or politician can choose to select or leave out certain information in order to persuade the reader to favor one opinion over another. If a news story, advertisement or campaign pamphlet contains mainly positive or mainly negative words about a subject, this will persuade the audience to think or feel a certain way. during a campaign speech a candidate may share only positive data about their accomplishments rather than the negative in order to convey positive messages to the reader.	
<i>Impact on Public Opinion:</i> Bias can change the way that people think by excluding information or presenting it in a manner that makes the information different from the facts.	

Term	Definition
Symbolism	Symbolism is the technique of using images or pictures to convey a certain message.
<i>Examples:</i> symbols used in political campaigns are the colors red, white, and blue, stars and stripes, the Statue of Liberty and the Liberty Bell	
<i>Impact on Public Opinion:</i> Symbolism can change the way that people think, either negatively or positively, by adding certain images that mean something to the public.	

Term	Definition
Propaganda	Propaganda is the method of spreading ideas, information or rumors for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person
Bandwagon	bandwagon , an attempt is made to make the viewer feel like everyone is using a product or voting for a particular candidate, so they should too.
Card Stacking	Card stacking is the strategy of showing a product or person's best features and leaving out information about any negative features or potential problems.
Glittering Generalities	When short phrases or few words are used to appeal to particular emotions, it is called glittering generalities
Name Calling	Name calling is used to send a negative message about an opposing product or candidate.
Plain Folks	Plain folks is the strategy of using ordinary language and clothes to convey to the audience that the spokesperson or candidate is just like everyone else.
Testimonial	In a testimonial a celebrity or well-known person speaks on behalf of a product or person as an endorsement.
Transfer	transfer is apparent when symbols are used to convey a message

Impact on Public Opinion:

Propaganda is used to spread ideas and change the way that people think to gain something, like an image. Propaganda can be either positive or negative.

Media and Political Communication - Sample Answers

Introduction

When reading the news, looking at candidate websites or viewing election information, it is important to consider how persuasion techniques might be used to influence the viewer. Bias, symbolism, and propaganda are common techniques used to persuade people to think or feel a certain way.

Bias

Bias is a preference, opinion or attitude that favors one way of thinking or feeling over another. Bias affects how people see events and people around them.

Bias in media or political communication can occur in various ways. A journalist or politician can choose to select or leave out certain information in order to persuade the reader to favor one opinion over another. Bias also occurs through the placement of information. If information is featured in large or bold type or in very small type, the author is sending a message about how the information should be viewed. This technique often occurs through headlines and titles on websites. Another way that bias appears is through word choice and tone. If a news story, advertisement or campaign pamphlet contains mainly positive or mainly negative words about a subject, this will persuade the audience to think or feel a certain way. Finally, bias occurs in the way data and statistics are used. For example, during a campaign speech a candidate may share only positive data about their accomplishments rather than the negative in order to convey positive messages to the reader.

Symbolism

Symbolism is the technique of using images or pictures to convey a certain message. Symbols are commonly used in political communication, especially during campaigns. Symbols are often used to associate candidates with images that represent the United States. Common symbols used in political campaigns are the colors red, white, and blue, stars and stripes, the Statue of Liberty and the Liberty Bell. Symbols are also used in political cartoons to convey positive and negative images. Here are some examples of common symbols:

Symbol	Words or Ideas Represented by the Symbol
Uncle Sam, bald eagle, American flag, Capitol building, White House	U.S. government
red, white, blue, stars and stripes	American flag, patriotism
Statue of Liberty, torch, Liberty Bell	freedom and democracy
U.S. Supreme Court building, scales	Justice
donkey	Democratic Party
elephant	Republican Party
dove, olive branch, peace sign	Peace

Propaganda

Propaganda is another method used in media and political communication to persuade the reader to think or feel a certain way. Propaganda is the method of spreading ideas, information or rumors for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person. Propaganda is similar to bias and symbolism in that they are all used to persuade; however propaganda uses more extreme measures to communicate a certain message. Propaganda relies on appealing to the viewer's emotion rather than reason to convey a message. There are seven commonly used types of propaganda:

Card stacking is the strategy of showing a product or person's best features and leaving out information about any negative features or potential problems.

In a **testimonial** a celebrity or well-known person speaks on behalf of a product or person as an endorsement. In a testimonial a celebrity's message is that if they believe in a candidate, everyone else should too.

When short phrases or few words are used to appeal to particular emotions, it is called **glittering generalities**. Words or phrases such as love of country, home, peace, hope, freedom and honor are used to persuade the viewer to have a positive emotional reaction to the image being described by the word.

The strategy of **transfer** is apparent when symbols are used to convey a message. Political advertisements, websites and campaign materials will often use United States symbols to persuade viewers to believe that a candidate represents America.

Plain folks is the strategy of using ordinary language and clothes to convey to the audience that the spokesperson or candidate is just like everyone else. This strategy is often used in political campaigns. Candidates will take pictures at local restaurants and at ballparks to convey the message that they are an ordinary person, just like you.

In **bandwagon**, an attempt is made to make the viewer feel like everyone is using a product or voting for a particular candidate, so they should too. The viewer should "join the crowd" and not be left out.

Name calling is used to send a negative message about an opposing product or candidate. This technique connects a person or idea to a negative word and convinces the viewer to believe the message without examining the evidence.