



The Power of Stories: Persuasion, Propaganda & Bias

A single lesson, cross-curriculum Curiosity Pack for Year 9

At a Glance

Topic: Persuasion, Propaganda & Bias

Age Level: Year 9

Session Length: 45–60 minutes

Pathfinders will:

- investigate how stories influence people
- explore persuasion, propaganda, and bias
- examine real-world media examples
- compare different messages and perspectives
- identify techniques used to influence audiences
- create a Persuasion Analysis Project

Lesson Overview

This Curiosity Pack introduces Pathfinders to the ways stories are used to influence thinking, behaviour, and beliefs.

Learners investigate how messages are constructed in media, advertising, campaigns, and everyday communication. They explore how language, images, data, and design can shape the way people understand information and make decisions.

Pathfinders examine examples of persuasion, propaganda, and bias, and consider how different audiences may respond to the same message in different ways.

The lesson combines English, Humanities, Media Arts, Civics & Citizenship, Critical and Creative Thinking, and Digital Technologies through investigation, analysis, comparison, and creative response.

This learning experience supports:

- critical thinking
- media literacy
- communication skills
- analysis and interpretation
- perspective-taking



- ethical thinking
- visual literacy

The lesson is designed using inclusive learning principles, supporting diverse learning needs through:

- self-paced learning
- visual supports
- flexible activity choices
- hands-on exploration
- multiple ways to show learning

Session Length

Total learning time: 45–60 minutes

Pathfinders may:

- ✓ complete the lesson in one session
- ✓ pause and return later
- ✓ spend longer on favourite activities
- ✓ simplify or extend the task

Learning Focus

This Curiosity Pack explores:

- persuasion
- propaganda
- bias
- media influence
- communication techniques
- audience and perspective
- critical thinking

Learners will:

- ✓ investigate persuasive messages
- ✓ identify techniques used to influence audiences
- ✓ compare different perspectives
- ✓ explain how stories shape beliefs and decisions
- ✓ organise ideas visually
- ✓ communicate discoveries through writing, discussion, drawing, or design
- ✓ create a Persuasion Analysis Project

Success Looks Like

Success may look different for each Pathfinder.



Examples may include:

- ✓ identifying persuasive techniques
- ✓ recognising examples of bias
- ✓ comparing different messages
- ✓ explaining how a story influences an audience
- ✓ creating a labelled analysis
- ✓ sharing discoveries in a way that works for them

Exploring, noticing, investigating, and creating are all part of success.

Materials

You may want:

- paper or workbook
- pencils and coloured pencils
- highlighters
- newspaper, magazine, or online articles
- advertisements or campaign examples
- sticky notes or index cards
- ruler

Optional:

- tablet or computer
- internet access
- printer
- poster paper
- digital presentation tools

Suggested Learning Resources

Behind the News (BTN)

<https://www.abc.net.au/btn>

Student-friendly current events and media stories.

TED-Ed

<https://ed.ted.com>

Videos exploring persuasion, bias, and communication.





BBC News

<https://www.bbc.com/news>

Compare how different stories are reported.

Online Safety Reminder

When exploring online, remember:

-  Ask an adult first
 -  Use trusted learning websites
 -  Keep personal information private
 -  Tell an adult if something feels wrong
- Stay curious and stay safe.



Media literacy and digital citizenship resources.

Universal Design for Learning Supports

This Curiosity Pack supports different ways of learning by providing flexible choices for engagement, learning, and expression.

Multiple ways to engage

Learners can:

- choose which media example to investigate
- focus on advertising, news, social media, or campaigns
- take movement or sensory breaks
- work independently or with support
- connect ideas to topics they care about

Multiple ways to learn

Learners can:

- read articles
- watch videos
- analyse advertisements
- compare examples
- discuss ideas
- explore visual and written texts

Multiple ways to show learning

Learners can:

- write notes
- create diagrams
- make comparison charts
- design a poster
- explain ideas verbally
- create digitally





The Power of Stories: Persuasion, Propaganda & Bias

Pathfinder Guide






Welcome Pathfinder!

Stories can influence what people think, believe, and do.






Advertisements, news reports, social media posts, campaigns, speeches, and videos often use storytelling techniques to persuade audiences. Sometimes these messages are balanced and informative. Sometimes they are designed to strongly influence opinions or behaviour.

Learning to recognise persuasion, propaganda, and bias can help Pathfinders become more thoughtful consumers of information.


During this Pathfinder Journey, Pathfinders may:

-  explore persuasive stories
-  investigate influence and bias
-  analyse media messages
-  compare different perspectives
-  create a Persuasion Analysis Project

Ideas may be shown in many ways:

-  drawing
-  writing notes
-  creating charts
-  designing
-  creating digitally



 explaining ideas aloud

Activities may be completed in order or Pathfinders may begin with the part that feels most interesting.

Taking breaks, noticing patterns, asking questions, and making discoveries are all part of the Pathfinder Journey.

Pathfinder Investigation

Pathfinders sometimes notice that stories are designed for a purpose.

Some stories try to inform.

Some try to persuade.

Some encourage people to buy something, support an idea, or think about an issue in a particular way.


Persuasive messages appear in many places.


Examples include:

 advertisements


 news stories

 social media posts


 political campaigns

 videos and documentaries

 public awareness campaigns

 Some Pathfinders investigate by:

- examining an advertisement
- reading a news article
- analysing a social media post
- comparing two different messages
- watching a short video
- discussing audience reactions

 Pathfinders may investigate:

- What is the message?
- Who is the audience?
- What does the creator want people to think or do?
- What persuasive techniques are being used?
- Is there evidence of bias?
- How might different people respond?

Things Pathfinders may notice:

 emotional appeals



★ expert endorsements

🔄 repetition

🖼️ visual influence

📄 loaded language

⚖️ one-sided information

👥 assumptions or stereotypes

✍️ When Pathfinders investigate, they sometimes keep track of what they discover.

Ideas may be recorded by:

- writing notes
- annotating examples
- highlighting persuasive language
- making comparison charts
- recording interesting observations

Looking closely at persuasive techniques, bias, and different perspectives can help Pathfinders understand how stories influence opinions, beliefs, and decisions.

🎨 Pathfinder Studio

Pathfinders now bring their discoveries together.

Media analysts, journalists, and researchers often examine how messages influence audiences.

In this activity, Pathfinders may create a Persuasion Analysis Project.

📅 Before creating, Pathfinders may think about:

- Which example was most interesting?
- What persuasive techniques were used?
- Who was the intended audience?
- Was the message effective?
- Was there evidence of bias?
- How can I show my thinking clearly?

You may create:

📄 a fact page

📊 a comparison chart

🎨 an annotated advertisement

📰 a media analysis page

💻 a digital presentation

🎥 a short video explanation

📖 a mini booklet


You may include:

📄 notes




 persuasive techniques

 comparisons

 audience analysis

 examples of bias

 personal reflections


As you create, you may notice new ideas about how stories influence people.

There is no single correct way to create.


Different Pathfinders may choose different ways to share their discoveries.


Reflection

How did this Curiosity Pack feel?

 Loved it

 Interesting

 Okay

 Challenging

Pathfinders may think about:

- What persuasive technique surprised you the most?
- Did you notice examples of bias?
- Which media example was most interesting?
- What did you learn about influence?
- How might this change the way you view media?
- What would you like to learn more about?

You may reflect by:

- talking
- drawing
- writing
- creating a diagram
- recording a short explanation
- discussing your ideas with someone else

