

Identifying Bias, Stereotyping, and Propaganda

What is it? **Bias** is a one-sided or slanted view. A **stereotype** is an oversimplified image of a group or an idea. **Propaganda** means the spreading of one-sided views to influence people's opinions or actions. To evaluate historical evidence, you must be able to recognize bias, stereotyping, and propaganda.

How to do it. To identify bias, look for exaggerations and emotionally charged images or words. Are opinions stated as if they were facts? What information is left out? In what way does the piece focus on one side of an issue?

To recognize a stereotype, look for exaggerations and for overly negative or positive statements or images.

To recognize propaganda, ask yourself: Does the piece present only one side of the story? Does the piece appeal to people's desire to belong or be part of a group? Does it connect the cause to a respected group or symbol?

Try it. In World War I, the British were at war with the Germans. This poster was created during that war. Answer the questions below.

1. What is the bias of this poster? What emotionally charged words and images does it use?
2. What stereotype of the Germans does this poster present?
3. What stereotype of the British does this poster present?
4. What is the propaganda message of this poster?

