Propaganda Techniques

Used in Political Ads
Testimonial

• Having a celebrity or famous expert support you
• Similar to why Nike and Gatorade have celebrities in their ads
• The opinion of celebrities is very powerful: “If Obama is good enough for Oprah, he is good enough for me!”
Bandwagon

- Showing a bunch of people supporting your candidate
- Similar to “Testimonial” except it relies on large numbers of “everyday people” as opposed to a single celebrity
- Effective because people would rather not vote for the loser: “If everyone else is voting for Obama, I probably should too”
Plain Folks

• Having the candidate meet with the “common man” to show how easily he/she relates to the “average person”

• Examples include having candidate tour an auto plant and meeting the workers, as well as footage of the candidate talking with people at a local diner

• This is important because many candidates are wealthy and ivy league educated and have to make a conscious effort to not be seen as “elitist” or “out of touch”
Transfer

• Using patriotic, feel-good imagery in the hopes that people will associate those images with the candidate

• Examples- an American flag or amber waves of grain in the background as the candidate talks
Spin

- Explaining a statistic or event in such a way as to benefit your candidate
- Example- “The fact that Obama made a comment about ‘spreading the wealth’ is proof that he is a Socialist who wants to redistribute all income”
Card-stacking

• Only talking about the positive accomplishments of a candidate and conveniently avoiding the negative

• Sort of like a positive version of “Spin”
Labeling

• Calling the opponent something negative in the hopes that the label sticks
• Ex- Obama always talked about the “Bush-McCain” policies in the hopes that people would associate McCain with Bush (who was unpopular at the time),
• Other labels include “Soft on crime”, “Un-American”, or “Flip-flopper”
Glittering Generalities

This technique always shows the subject of the message in a positive light, but provides little or no information. **Glittering generalities** use simple, clever slogans that appeal to peoples’ emotions. These general statements are easy to remember but hard to verify because they offer no facts.
Name-Calling

- **Name-calling** is exactly what it sounds like: using negative words and bad names to create fear and dislike for people, ideas, or institutions. Name-calling can be verbal or visual. When done visually, it shows a person or thing in an unflattering way. You can find both kinds of this technique in political cartoons, political attack ads, and on news talk shows.
Answers

Just because a technique isn’t one of the answers doesn’t mean it wasn’t used (any answer is right as long as it makes sense)
• 2008 “Fundamentals”  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6reQLzgywzk

• 2008 “Original Mavericks”  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVlaqCjvLpU

• 2008 “Country I Love”  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aSfW4-YHs8
• 2004 “Windsurfing”
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbdzMLk9wHQ

• 1988 “Willie Horton (Weekend Passes)”
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Io9KMSSEZ0Y

• 1984 “Prouder, Stronger, Better”
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kO9jpo-WOg0
• 1964 “Peace Little Girl (Daisy)"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eekJPO1V4Vk
2008 “Fundamentals”

1. **Spin** because they take a single general statement McCain made and spin it to make it appear he has no understanding of economics at all.

2. **Labeling** because they showed McCain arm in arm with Bush at the end, implying that McCain was a “Bush Republican”
2008 “Original Mavericks”

- Cardstacking because it only mentions the good things McCain and Palin have done
- Labeling, though in a positive sense, as they labeled themselves “Mavericks” in the hopes that people will view them as being willing to change Washington for the better
2008 “Country I Love”

- **Plain Folks** because he gave up a job on Wall Street to help struggling people, and he was shown talking to average folks around a kitchen table and talking to a soldier
2004 “Windsurfing”

- **Labeling** because they imply Kerry is a “Flip-flopper” who changes the way he votes based upon public opinion polls
1988 “Willie Horton (Weekend Passes)"

- **Labeling** - It was implied that Dukakis was “soft on crime” because he allowed Willie Horton passes out of prison.
1984 “Prouder, Stronger, Better”

• **Cardstacking** because talked about all the good Reagan’s first term had led to

• **Transfer** because it had a ton of American flags and other wholesome images (like weddings and folks moving into houses) that people can associate with Reagan
1980 “President Ford”

• Testimonial because you have former president Gerald Ford publicly supporting Ronald Reagan
1964 “Peace Little Girl (Daisy)"

- Labeling because it implies that Goldwater is soft on national security (so much so that it could lead to a nuclear attack!)
1952 “Ike for President”

• **Bandwagon** because it shows several people (and a variety of people at that) support Eisenhower