

# **Propaganda: The Definitive Guide**

**by  
Brother Neal Golden**

**Second Edition 2019**

**Last update: July 2021 (Section F)**

## Preface to the Second Edition (July 2019)

*Propaganda* is an endlessly fascinating game that is needed now more than ever in the education of young people. On the one hand, Professor Moulds's categories and definitions of the techniques have held up amazingly well.

When the first edition of the *Guide* was written in 2006, a panel was formed to review the examples that various authors submitted for tournaments. The three members of the panel – all former coaches – “play” each round and submit their answers for each example. The panel usually agrees unanimously on most of the examples, especially in Elementary/Middle. For those examples where one or more panelists disagree, the editor gives feedback to the panelists, revealing the author's opinion and the dissenting answers. The *Guide* is quoted to justify the author's opinion. More often than not, the dissenter sees the error of his ways and agrees with the majority. In other cases, an example is revised to remove any tinge of another technique or, if the panel still cannot agree unanimously, the example is replaced. The goal is to be able to justify the panel's opinion from the explanations in the *Guide*.

This process has raised questions that have forced decisions to be made. For example:

- Does alliteration constitute Repetition?
- Should Manner apply to animals like dogs and cats?
- If the speaker gives reasons for making a distinction, is it No Technique rather than Drawing the Line?
- If a person quotes an adage but gives valid reasons for an opinion, is that No Technique rather than Sophistical Formula?
- Can the name of a product be considered Technical Jargon?

The answers to questions like these are incorporated into this edition of the *Guide*. Also, many examples from the First Edition have been replaced or supplemented by examples that better illustrate the nuances of each technique.

Brother Neal Golden

July 22, 2019

## Preface to the First Edition (October 2006)

December 2006 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Propaganda tournament. It was held during the Christmas holidays at Mount Carmel Academy in New Orleans LA, and I was there. Robert Allen, co-author of *Propaganda* (with the actor Lorne Greene), and Larry Liss, Bob's assistant at the National Academic Games Project, came to New Orleans to conduct a tournament in the game of *Equations*, which students from Mount Carmel had taught to students from other Catholic high schools in the city. In addition, Bob and Larry chose to teach us the brand-new game of *Propaganda* and have a competition in it as well. The rest, as they say, is history. The game has undergone some significant changes (primarily the introduction of the Bold/Cautious choices for answers). However, the six sections remain the same after 40 years.

I had the idea for this *Guide* in the spring of 2005. The "Author's Opinion" for tournament examples was often disputed. The manual in the *Propaganda* game kit gives skimpy information about many techniques and cannot settle some questions. So I resolved to write a guide for *authors* of questions so that they would gain more consistency in constructing examples. The guide will also help *panelists* who review examples before they are included in tournament sets.

However, the *Guide* was never intended to be a private document for authors and panelists. It is available to all coaches so that they can use it to (a) deepen their own understanding of the techniques and (b) improve their teaching of the techniques.

Even with 40 years experience with *Propaganda*, writing this *Guide* has deepened my understanding of some techniques and revised my perception of others. One reason for this gain in depth and breadth was access to *Thinking Straighter*, the 1966 textbook by George Henry Moulds that formed the basis for the game. The text revealed nuances about several techniques that were not covered in the Game Manual. I am thankful to Jim Davis for loaning me his copy of the book.

As with all publications dealing with academic games, this is a work in progress. *Propaganda* is too rich a game to be captured in any document (despite the word *Definitive* in the title). Guidelines will be revised and expanded year-by-year as they are used and further questions arise. Consequently, your questions and suggestions are welcome.

The author has many people to thank. First of all, thanks to Larry Liss, AGLOA Executive Director and friend for 40 years. Larry was a major contributor to the *Propaganda* game and an excellent sounding board who made numerous positive suggestions.

Diana Wieberg made many helpful suggestions for Elementary Division. Thanks also to Kelly Zeltmann, an excellent example writer who gave her opinions on interpretations of numerous techniques. John Aloï, another fine question contributor, also proofread the document.

Thanks to the entire AGLOA Board of Directors who gave encouragement and authorization for this project. I trust they are pleased with the final product.

I hope this *Guide* enhances the understanding of *Propaganda* in leagues across the country. I don't expect it to remove all controversies and would be disappointed if it did. At least we have a document to refer to when example answers are questioned.

Brother Neal Golden

New Orleans LA

## Introduction to the *Guide*

### Format of Each Technique Discussion

The discussion of each technique in this *Guide* generally has this framework

1. **Game Book Definition:** Quotation from the explanation of the technique in the booklet in the Propaganda game. These explanations are invariably taken from *Thinking Straighter* by George Henry Moulds.
2. **From *Thinking Straighter*:** Additional quotations from *Thinking Straighter* that elucidate the technique.
3. **Expanded Definition:** More comments to explain the technique further.
4. One or more examples of the technique.
5. Discussion of various forms of the technique with examples of each variation.
6. Comparison and contrast of the technique with other techniques of this section (or occasionally other sections), along with examples sharpening the distinctions between the techniques.
7. Criteria that make an example No Technique rather than the technique under discussion – with examples.
8. Each technique begins on a new page. This creates “white space” where you can write your own notes or additional examples.

### Some General Principles

1. **No Technique means that the example does not exemplify any technique of the section being played or any other section.** In other words, each “No Technique” example will illustrate sound thinking or will come from poetry, Scripture, or other sources where techniques are acceptable.
2. If an example involves multiple techniques from the same section, it will be used only in Junior/Senior Divisions. Likewise, if an example uses a technique from one section and a technique from a different section, the example may be used in Junior/Senior twice, once in each of the two sections.
3. I do not recommend you give this document as is to new players in any division or even to younger veteran players. Instead, you should distribute notes that provide an introduction to each technique without delving into all the nuances that this *Guide* covers. The *Propaganda Guide* CD includes sets of notes for distribution to players. Since the notes are *Word* documents, you can tailor them to fit your students.

### **SECTION A: Techniques of Self-Deception**

- 1 Prejudice
- 2 Academic Detachment
- 3 Drawing the Line
- 4 Not Drawing the Line
- 5 Conservatism, Radicalism, Moderatism
- 6 Rationalization
- 7 Wishful Thinking
- 8 Tabloid Thinking
- 9 Causal Oversimplification
- 10 Inconceivability

### **SECTION B: Techniques of Language**

- 1 Emotional Terms
- 2 Metaphor and Simile
- 3 Emphasis
- 4 Quotation Out of Context
- 5 Abstract Terms
- 6 Vagueness
- 7 Ambiguity
- 8 Shift of Meaning

### **SECTION C: Techniques of Irrelevance**

- 1 Appearance
- 2 Manner
- 3 Degrees and Titles
- 4 Numbers
- 5 Status
- 6 Repetition
- 7 Slogans
- 8 Technical Jargon
- 9 Sophistical Formula

### **SECTION D: Techniques of Exploitation**

- 1 Appeal to Pity
- 2 Appeal to Flattery
- 3 Appeal to Ridicule
- 4 Appeal to Prestige
- 5 Appeal to Prejudice
- 6 Bargain Appeal
- 7 Folksy Appeal
- 8 Join the Bandwagon Appeal
- 9 Appeal to Practical Consequences
- 10 Passing from the Acceptable to the Dubious

### **SECTION E: Techniques of Form**

- 1 Concurrency
- 2 Post Hoc
- 3 Selected Instances
- 4 Hasty Generalization
- 5 Faulty Analogy
- 6 Composition
- 7 Division
- 8 Non Sequitur

### **SECTION F: Techniques of Maneuver**

- 1 Diversion
- 2 Disproving a Minor Point
- 3 Ad Hominem
- 4 Appeal to Ignorance
- 5 Leading Question
- 6 Complex Question
- 7 Inconsequent Argument
- 8 Attacking a Straw Man
- 9 Victory by Definition
- 10 Begging the Question