Propaganda: How America “Sold” WWI

The American government relied on propaganda to encourage citizens to support the war. The Four Minute Men program was one of the most successful propaganda programs of World War I. In merely 18 months, 75,000 people delivered 1.5 million speeches to millions of people across the country.

These speeches covered all aspects of the war, encouraging people to conserve food, buy Liberty Bonds (war bonds issued by the government to help pay for the war), enlist for military service, and give their support to the war effort. They could be delivered in any public place, such as movie theaters, street corners, county fairs, and even churches and synagogues.

The Committee on Public Information (CPI) provided guidelines on how to write these speeches. The following is an adapted example on how to encourage the purchase of Liberty Bonds:

1. **Have an opening** to grab the attention and interest of the audience.
2. **Write a body** to present facts that will appeal to the rationality of the audience.
3. **Have an emotional appeal** to stir sentiment and make the audience want to act and to buy Bonds.
4. **Have an ending that summarizes** your closing appeal.

**DIRECTIONS** Choose an issue or cause of today and write your own Four Minute Men speech. Follow the guidelines of the CPI to write your speech. For more information and guidelines, check out bit.ly/GreatWarFourMinuteMen.