

Worksheet for Analysis of a Broadside or Leaflet

Prepare a written report on your assigned item by answering these questions about it.

Broadsides are large sheets of paper with text printed on one side only, so that they can be tacked to buildings, trees, or light poles, or handed out on the street. Leaflets (also called brochures, circulars, flyers, or pamphlets) may be folded and were also intended for free distribution. Both have traditionally been used to advertise a product, promote a political or religious point of view, or announce a gathering. They are quickly and cheaply printed in large numbers in order to be widely distributed. Both types of items can provide valuable information about the past.

A. VISUAL ASPECTS

- What is the first element on the page that catches your attention? Is the message immediately clear, or do you need to read more closely in order to understand it?
- What colors of ink are used? Is it simple or fancy? Explain why.
- Are any images or shapes used in the design? (Have the primary elements been arranged into rough shapes – for example, diamonds and triangles are common artistic elements.)
- Does the artist use symbols of any sort in the design or language of the item? If a symbol is present, be sure to state whether it is
 - clear and easy to interpret;
 - subtle or obscure;
 - memorable or dramatic

B. VERBAL ASPECTS

- What information is immediately conveyed? What is the writer's intention?
- Is there one word or phrase that is visually dominant? Discuss the effectiveness of the choice. Does it demonstrate bias of any sort? Does it encourage action?
- If the hand-out includes dates, times, and addresses, is its information clear?
- Analyze the use of language: how much text is present? is there too much writing or information? how large is the writing? is the font legible? which is the more dominant aspect of this particular poster, the writing or the images? is the use of language effective?
- The most effective graphic designs are generally eye-catching, simple, and direct. Does this item meet those criteria?

C. OVERALL EFFECT

- Who would you say is the intended audience or client for this item?
- What do you believe the sponsor wants that audience to do?
- Do you feel the sponsor's intent is clearly communicated?
- What political purpose is served by this item?
- What modern means of communication can be compared to this one?
- What is your overall evaluation of the effectiveness of this item
 - as a means of communication?
 - as a social or political statement?
 - as an effort to influence public opinion?