

Think Twice: They're Confusing You (1978), 19 minutes, color.

Make notes during the film on this film guide.

There are four major ways that people may confuse you.

1. **Distortion** - When there is a conflict, information gets changed (distorted). The quoting of opinion poll questions is at times taking information out of its context and giving the information a different meaning.
2. **Oversimplification** - reducing complex to too simple
3. **Concealment** - Facts are stated incorrectly.
4. **Faulty Thinking** - sloppy thinking. Cite the example from the film.
 - a. Post hoc fallacy - because A follows B, then B is the cause of A.
 - b. Generalization - an over-generalization, going beyond the evidence.
 - c. Non sequitur - A is not related to B, no relevance.
 - d. Irrelevance - information is not related to the issue.
 - e. Ambiguity - several possible meanings.
 - f. False deduction - there may be other reasons for the event.
 - g. Ad hominem - attacking the speaker, not the issue.

A proposal is given at the end of the film. Analyze it. To get you started here is part of what will be presented.

This city is like a big apple which has a rotten center which needs to be cut out quickly or the whole apple will be lost. The city has a rotten spot which has crime, the elderly, and the poor. We will solve these problems with our City Center Project. We will put a beautiful commercial center there which is desired by everyone, 97.6 % of the people in the area approve of the project, including the elderly. The elderly can be relocated easily and that is a non-issue. The project has won the National Award which is a good planning award. For our ailing city, this project is the most logical solution. The building will bring in new businesses which means jobs which means paychecks, which means a happy, carefree community we can all be proud of. A lot of people support this speaker and agree we need this project.

WRITE here your analysis of this proposal as you view it on the video.

In what ways can you use what you saw?

Answer Key: Think Twice: They're Confusing You (1978) 19 min. color

Advancing technology, information superhighways, mass media, and other various knowledge sources barrage us daily with new, improved and complicated gadgets, ideas, facts, and products. Our job as the consumer of these ingredients of life is to make informed, educated decisions on the applications they hold for personal lives. However, this is a difficult task to accomplish considering the techniques manufacturers use to sell their **wares**. The film **Think Twice: They're Confusing You** asks in the very beginning: How does one sort out clear, intelligent thinking from the garbage? There are four major ways the "garbage thinking" penetrates our lives.

1. **DISTORTION** occurs when there is a **conflict** (a disagreement). Information becomes changed in ways that will cause confusion and be misleading. How was the question asked? Was the information taken out of context?
 - Ex. Scientists comment on the effects of sodium nitrates: a real threat or scare tactic used by food manufacturers?
 - Ex. Boycott of Grissohn Industries: labor dispute over racism in hiring. Statistics are used to distort.
 - Ex. Student Council Selection of Cheerleaders: current system vs. students' input. Biased question, distorts.
 - Ex. Campaign speeches: lifting quotes out of context distorts meaning.

2. **OVERSIMPLIFICATION** is the omission of the complicated reasons behind ideas and the ignoring of the significance they contain. It is reducing issues to basic terms **while** disregarding complexities.
 - Ex. Career choices: dancer vs. college.
 - Ex. Political debate: gun control: a one sentence conclusion.
 - Ex. Media Ads: proposition W.

3. **CONCEALMENT** obscures the facts and misleads those receiving the information. It involves covering up facts that have a direct impact on whatever action the information necessitates.
 - Ex. Watergate scandal of Nixon' s administration
 - Ex. Military information
 - Ex. Senator Marlboro's statement on offshore drilling

4. **FAULTY THINKING** covers a number of categories of sloppy thinking. Faulty thinking inhibits our ability to make informed, intelligent decisions.
 - a. Post Hoc Fallacy: because A follows B: B causes A.
 - Ex. Student body presidential elections:
 - b. Generalization: going beyond the evidence.
 - c. Non sequitur: A is not related or relevant to B.
 - d. Irrelevance: the information does not relate to the issue.
 - Ex. Breakfast couple conversation:
 - e. Ambiguity: several possible meanings.
 - f. False deduction: assuming there is only one reason for an event; other possible reasons for events are overlooked.
 - g. Ad hominem: attack the **speaker**, not the issue. This focuses attention on the speaker, not on the ideas.