Deceptions occur when we debate issues, talk about others, or write articles. Some are associated with “yellow journalism”. They are the misuse of words – intentionally or unintentionally – and we reach faulty conclusions.

Used in council meetings and “us versus them” meetings, they deceive, maximize differences, make “our” side feel good, or turn people away from “the other side”. They motivate people to change, convert, or beat down “the other side”. They incite antagonism, persecution, and hatred against members of various religious groups, politicians, and individuals – at great cost to society, property and persons, and even causing riots and wars. (On the radio: “the Serb media who brainwashed readers against ‘enemy’ should be tried for war crimes.”)

Card stacking
This is about selecting facts or falsehoods, illustrations and logical or illogical statements in a way that gives the best or worst possible case for an idea, program, person, or product. It’s about not presenting both sides fairly.

Putting it out of context
- Quoting statements separately from their context, so listeners get a different meaning than what was meant.
- Describing actions separately from their context, so listeners get a different feeling or image of what the scene was.
- Omitting vital elements of perspective, forcing one to accept one of two extreme viewpoints. Slanting the story in one’s own favor by withholding information.

Using double standard
- Acting as if any error at all on the opponent’s part is absolute proof that his cause is false. Yet, accepting errors, maybe the same errors, in one’s own ranks or one’s self. The same criteria may prove one’s own cause or self wrong.
- Interpreting evidence one way when it pertains to the opponent, but differently when it pertains to one’s own cause. A non-level playing field, in that respect.

Falsifying opponent’s viewpoint
- Citing inaccurate, biased, and defamatory comments about an individual, disproportionately emphasizing his misdeeds and imperfections, and excluding positive information.
- Inventing statements, or drawing them from other sources, and misrepresenting them as being the words of the opponent or an authoritative source cited against the opponent.
- Making false or improper assertions in conversation or media to which an individual or group doesn’t get a chance to respond to, or to clarify.

Ignoring contrary information
- Sidestepping irrefutable evidence by refusing to acknowledge that it exists. Criticizing other issues, or the way the evidence is given, without confronting the evidence itself.
- Telling only a portion of the truth, while intentionally withholding other information to cause one to see things in the wrong perspective.
- Refusing to accept the obvious conclusion any fair observer would draw from strong, unimpeachable evidence. Accepting other conclusions, without evidence, rather than accept indisputable facts which would prove oneself wrong.
- This may be done by controlling the conversation so that “the other side” is on the defensive, and if he/she tries to introduce another side of the story, this is called interruption or contention.

Name Calling - Stereotyping - Labels
Giving a person, idea, or organization a bad label makes us reject and condemn it without examining the evidence.
- All people of a large group are alike; if one person says something, everyone in the same group believes the same.
- A specific person, experience, or situation is typical of all of those associated.
- On the other hand, giving something a “virtue word” makes us accept and approve it without examining the evidence.

Questionable standards - Transfer - Bandwagon
- Having some respected or hated person say that a given idea, program, product or person is good or bad. Then we accept it or reject it without examining real evidence ourselves.
- Stating personal opinion stated as if it were fact. Then criticizing as if this opinion were fact.
- Citing as unimpeachable authority a theory or source which lacks factual validity. Then, evaluating the opponent using that as a standard.
- Stating that “everyone” believes something; the implication is that the widely held belief must be true. (The world is flat.)
- “Everybody is doing it”. (If we don’t, we will be odd.)

Fueling with Inflammatory suggestion
- Using names, titles or headlines that negatively influence the listener or readers’ perception or understanding of the subject reported.
- Using trigger words that stimulate negative feelings about the “other side”. Just for instance: abuse, bigot.
- Using an exaggerated or sensationalized report of an unimportant item, trying to build a significant issue and use it as a valid reason for criticism and contention.
- Using the “red face” twist: creating or showing an embarrassing situation the other side is in.

Distorting meaning
- Giving an interpreted, uncomplimentary view of what is supposed to be the thoughts, motives and innermost feelings of opponents, even though the opponent made no actual statement that supports that view. Misrepresenting motives.
- Portraying a faked and easily defeated issue as being a major position of the opponent, then attacking the “straw man,” giving the impression a real issue is being attacked.
- Quoting or paraphrasing statements made by opponents, but altering the meaning or intensity of those statements, so they will be improperly understood by others. Adding descriptive words about the intensity or manner of statement.
- Inserting flippant comments or negative words with quotations.