

Doublespeak
and
Understatement

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Doublespeak is language that deliberately obscures, disguises, distorts, or reverses the meaning of words. Doublespeak may take the form of euphemisms, in which case it is primarily meant to make the truth sound more palatable. It may also refer to intentional ambiguity in language or to actual inversions of meaning.



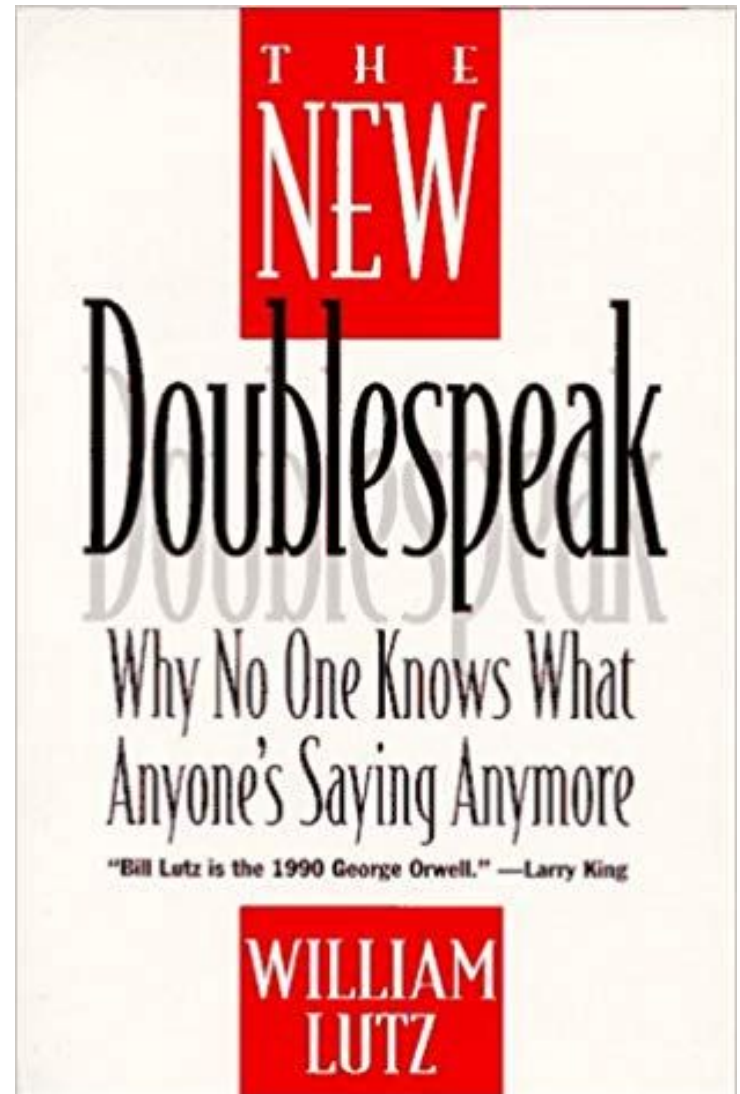
Examples:

- "Reducing costs" instead of "cutting your salary"
- "Violent extremism" instead of "abject terrorism"
- "Gently used" instead of "used and horribly beaten up"
- "Extrajudicial killing" instead of "assassination»

Forms of Doublespeak

- **Euphemism:** words that attempt to soften, hide, or distort reality by putting the thing described into a better light, making the object it describes sound less frightening, less threatening, or less offensive
- **Jargon:** specialized language used by a particular professional, trade, or hobby group; this specialized language used in discourse with lay audiences; overly-complex terms used to impress others
- **Gobbledygook:** many long, sophisticated words (think "*gobs* of words") used in long, convoluted sentences to confuse the audience and hide the real issue of the discourse
- **Inflated language:** puffed-up, important-sounding words used to give commonplace things and events an

- In the reading, “Doubts about **Doublespeak**”, **William Lutz** explains how the government and society is trying to alter the way people react to words or phrases through a new way of re-phrasing called **doublespeak**



Understatement

- the presentation of something as being smaller or less good or important than it really is.



Common Understatement Examples

- “Deserts are sometimes hot, dry, and sandy.” – Describing deserts of the world.
- “He is not too thin.” – Describing an obese person.
- “It rained a bit more than usual.” – Describing an area being flooded by heavy rainfall.
- “It was O.K.” – Said by the student who got the highest score on the test.
- “It is a bit nippy today.” – Describing the temperature, which is 5 degrees below freezing.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzCrhAyx8-8>