


Name: _____

Date: _____



EYE ON ETHICS

Doublespeak

In his book *The New Doublespeak*, William Lutz writes about the unclear and misleading language used in our society. In recent speeches and public statements, politicians have used phrases such as "revenue enhancement," "receipt proposals," and "wage-based premiums" when they mean taxes. Business leaders have referred to "laying off workers" as "work reengineering." Military spokespersons sometimes speak of "neutralizing the opposition" to avoid using the word *killing*, and "improvised explosive device" instead of *bomb*.

Lutz argues that the use of such phrases is unethical because "The clearest possible language is essential for democracy to function, for it is only through clear language that we have any hope of defining, debating, and deciding the issues of public policy that confront us."

Application

Do you agree with Lutz's position, or do you think it is legitimate for speakers to use this kind of language if it helps them achieve their purposes? Can you think of a time when the use of such "doublespeak" would be appropriate? In general, what ethical guidelines should speakers use to govern their choice of language?

Answer in complete sentences.