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| **Analyzing Editorial / Political Cartoons** |

**Start with cartoons or topics students are familiar with to introduce analyzing and creating political cartoons.**

Form teams of 3 – 4 and give each team a current cartoon. Ask each team to analyze the cartoon by completing the questions:

**Introductory questions**

1) List the people and objects in the cartoon.

Are there any real people in the cartoon? If yes, who is portrayed?

2) List any symbols in the cartoon. What do they represent?

3) What is the event or issue that inspired the cartoon?

4) What is the cartoonist’s opinion about the topic portrayed in the cartoon? How do you know?

5) Do you agree or disagree with the cartoonist’s opinion? Why?

You may also ask students to :
a) pick the one cartoon they agree with the most or explain why
b) pick the one cartoon they this is the most effective and why

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| **Interpreting Editorial / Political Cartoons** |

**In order to interpret a cartoon, you have to use tools of an historian:**

a) background knowledge of the event, people and or issues from a particular time period

b) understand the different elements in the cartoon based on interpretations from the time period

c) speculate or find out the cartoonist’s motives and point of view

**Steps in an analysis of an historical cartoon:**

Some historical cartoon include stereotypes and caricatures that are blatantly racist, sexist, and extremely offensive by today’s

standards. 19th century U.S. cartoons of immigrants, African American, Chinese American and Native Americans provide an

opportunity to understand some attitudes and values that led to U.S. policies and laws.

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--What is your initial reaction to the cartoon?

--Is it offensive and if so why?

--How can we use the cartoon to understand the issue, events or values of the time period?

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1. Determine the date of time period. What is the location of the cartoon? (city? country?)

Brainstorm a list of issues / events associated with the time period in the particular location.

2. List what is in the cartoon – objects, people, key words. What action is taking place?

What is the focal point of the cartoon? If you don’t recognize the people, what do they represent? (soldier, politician, worker, etc.)

3. Find out who drew the cartoon. What do you know about the cartoonist? What or who might have

influenced his (her) opinions at the time?

4. Based on what you’ve learned about the cartoon, what is the message of the cartoon?

5. How does the cartoon help us understand an opinion about an event, person or issue of that time period?

How might people have responded to the cartoon? How might the cartoon have influenced public opinion and legislation?

(Remind students what images were available during the time period versus the many sources of images we have today.)

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| **Assignment for Student Created Cartoons** |

Select a topic or theme for study. At the end of the unit, assign a political cartoon(s) which requires the student to demonstrate his/her

knowledge and analysis of a topic. Political cartoons also require the student to take a position and portray their position in the cartoon.

(I do not include any evaluation of the student’s artistic skills – a clear political cartoon may be drawn with shapes or stick figures.)

**Drawing political cartoons**

1. must have a single, clear idea (focus) or point of view on an issue

2. must demonstrate understanding of the issue or topic

3. should “visually tease” the viewer with an idea or image which forces the viewer to use his or her imagination – versus literal statement

4. should be able to explain how and why cartoon elements are included and the intended viewers reaction

**Assignment and Evaluation options:**

Select one CURRENT issue related to (topic / theme). You will design a political cartoon which clearly states your position on the issue.

a. Topic of the cartoon is : (5 points)

b. My position on the issue / event is: (should be clear in the cartoon) (10 pts)

c. Which of the following did you include in the cartoon? Explain why and how you used the element. (at least 3 – 15 pts each)
symbol, analogy, humor, irony, caricature, stereotypes, captions and other words
exaggeration, understatement , historical (or literary) reference

d. The cartoon demonstrates my knowledge of the topic or theme by: (10 points)

e. On a separate piece of paper, write complete answers about your process of creating the cartoon. (1) What steps did you take to develop your topic and point of view? (2) What steps did you take to select the images and language in the cartoon? (3) What do you think is the strength of your cartoon? What would you like to continue to work on to improve the cartoon? (4) What influenced your position on the topic? (5) What advise do you have for other cartoonists? (5 points each – 25 points total)

f. The viewer should appreciate the following about the drawing / design of the cartoon: (5 points)

 **Rubric option:**

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| Category | 4 - Exceeds Expectations | 3 - Meets Expectations | 2 - Below Expectations | 1 - Incomplete / Didn't follow directions |
| Appropriate topic for time period / event/ issue | topic specific and shows insight about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | topic specifically about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | topic too general or not specific to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | Not on topic |
| Elements of the cartoon | containes 3+ clear and identifiable elements: exaggeration, understatement, humor, irony, caricature, stereotype, captions, key words/ phrases, historical or literary reference; *all apsects enhance the message of the cartoon* | containes 3+ clear an identifiable elements : exaggeration, understatement, humor, irony, caricature, stereotype, captions, key words/ phrases, historical or literary reference | only two clear and identifiable optional elements of a cartoon  | only one clear and identifiable optional elements of a cartoon |
| historical (literary) information | clear, accurate, clever or unique use of the information / reference | clear and accurate use of the information / reference  | not all of the information / reference is clear | inacurrate information |
| appearance | neat, legible, and proudly presented | neat and legible | sloppy but legible | sloppy and illegible |
| explanation paragraph \*\* | explains the 3 or more elements and viewers reaction in a thorough, clear, concise and convincing manner | explains the 3 or more elements and viewers reaction in a thorough and clear manner | incomplete explanation or the 3 elements; includes the intended viewers reaction but not clear | incomplete explanation and viewers reaction |

Total: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ x 2.5 = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ / 50

Explanation paragraph: Write the 3 or more elements of a cartoon you included. Why and how did you include the elements? How do you want

the viewers to react to your cartoon? Why?

http://www.learningbycartooning.org/teacherpagecartoons.htm