

**Jennifer Richards**, Assistant Professor, 4-H Youth Development  
**James Swart**, Extension Graduate Assistant, 4-H Youth Development



## ***Political Cartoons: It's No Laughing Matter***

### *Examining Political Cartoons from American History*

#### **Skill Level**

Advanced

#### **Learner Outcomes**

*The learner will be able to:*

- Explain what a political cartoon is.
- Analyze the meaning behind a political cartoon.

#### **Educational Standard(s) Supported**

GC.33

#### **Success Indicator**

*Learners will be successful if they:*

- Gather information from a historical political cartoon about an event
- Portray a current event in the form of a political cartoon

#### **Time Needed**

1 Hour

#### **Materials List**

- Projector and political cartoon PowerPoint.
- Copies of the student handout.
- Flipchart paper.
- Markers.
- Pencils.
- Crayons.

#### **Introduction to Content**

This lesson looks at the role political cartoons have played in American history. Students will analyze political cartoons to gain insight to historical events and time periods and see how opinions were expressed using these types of cartoons. Political cartoons come from a variety of time periods ranging from the 1700's to modern times.

#### **Introduction to Methodology**

This lesson begins by having students observe several political cartoons and make guesses as to what event is being depicted. Students then receive instruction on the history of political cartoons and work as part of a group to create their own political cartoons about a current event.

#### **Author**

Richards, Jennifer. Curriculum Specialist,  
Tennessee 4-H Youth Development



## Terms and Concepts Introduction

- Political Cartoon — Illustrations or comic strips containing a political or social message that usually relates to current events or personalities.

## Setting the Stage and Opening Questions

Start by sharing the following with the students, **“Today, we’re going to be taking a look at the more comical side of history by examining some political cartoons. To get started we’re going to take a quick survey to see how much you know about political cartoons.”** Using the poll anywhere tool of a PowerPoint presentation, show five to eight political cartoons and have students take a guess at what event each cartoon is depicting. Share the correct answer with the group following each cartoon. This should take approximately 5 minutes. Then give the following instructions to the students, **“Now that you’ve had a chance to see some political cartoons, we are going to break into groups and visit each of the stations set up around the room to learn more about political cartoons. Each group will be assigned a cartoon to analyze, and then you’ll have a chance to create your own cartoon. Instructions for what to look for in your cartoon are posted at each station.”** Distribute cartoons to each group and tell them they will have 4 minutes at each station.

## Experience

As the groups rotate through the stations, they will be observing the following topic areas: persuasion techniques, symbolism, analogies and irony. At each station, students will read about what that station represents, and then record information about how that topic plays into their cartoon. After visiting each station, the students will share with the other groups what they found out about their political cartoon for each of the topics. In total, this should take approximately 25 minutes.

After sharing, the students will return to their groups and begin designing and drawing their own political cartoon. Each group should focus on a different current event and tastefully depict that event in their cartoon. Give the students 20 minutes to draw their cartoon. Use the remaining time to share each group’s cartoon and lead the students in a quick debrief using the questions on the next page.

## Tips for Engagement

Throughout the class, ensure that students remain engaged and active. If you notice students beginning to lose focus, consider giving the group a brain break where they have 1 minute to stand up and move around.

## Share

Ask students the following questions:

- “What was one interesting thing you learned today about political cartoons?”

## Process

- “In what ways can political cartoons portray the wrong ideas about certain topics?”

## Generalize

- “Think back to a political cartoon that you have seen in the past, do you think it gave a fair depiction of the situation? Why or why not?”

## Apply

- “What skills that you learned today will be helpful in analyzing other sources of news in the future?”

## Life Skill(s)

### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

Judge the value of information for a given purpose. (Head thinking)

Develop strategies for compromising and problem-solving within a group. (Heart relating)

Interact effectively with others. (Heart relating)

Accurately interpret nonverbal communication such as body language. (Heart relating)

Be able to accept expressions of concern from others. (Heart caring)

Demonstrate respect in response to duties, rights, and privileges as a member of a community or country. (Hands giving)

Demonstrate the ability to learn, reason, think creatively, make decisions, and problem solve. (Hands Working)

Show skill in managing one's own emotions and those of others when interacting. (Health being)

### 10<sup>th</sup> Grade

Examine your reaction--How did I really feel about what is being said or done? (Head thinking)

Engage in meaningful conversation with others. (Heart relating)

Facilitate group interactions. (Hands giving)

Involve other people in group decisions in meaningful ways. (Hands giving)

### 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

Consider alternative responses and opposing viewpoints: based on what I know, is the statement true? (Head thinking)

Mediate to resolve or settle issues between two parties. (Heart relating)

Experience another's emotional state without pity or judgment. (Heart caring)

Demonstrate the ability to learn, reason, think creatively, make decisions, and problem solve. (Hands working)

Acquire, communicate, organize, use, and evaluate information. (Hands working)

Adhere to a code of values or ethical principles. (Health being)

### 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

Use information to make a determination, decision, or judgement. (Head managing)

Disagree appropriately; seek to resolve conflict nonviolently. (Heart relating)

Welcome and participate in the opportunities that diversity offers. (Heart relating)

Demonstrate the ability to learn, reason, think creatively, make decisions, and problem solve. (Hands working)

Acquire, communicate, organize, use and evaluate information. (Hands working)

Adhere to a code of values or ethical principles. (Health being)

## ***Supplemental Information***

### ***Educational Standards Addressed***

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GC.33 Describe the role of the media as a means of communicating information and how it influences the importance of issues and public opinion.

**Ask yourself these questions related to the persuasion technique used in your cartoon:**

What is the issue of this political cartoon?

What do you think is the cartoonist's opinion on this issue?

What other opinion can you imagine another person having on this issue?

Did you find this cartoon persuasive? Why or why not?

What other persuasive techniques could the cartoonist have used in this cartoon?

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As you visit each station, record information related to your political cartoon from each topic. Some topics may not apply to all cartoons.

Brief Description of Cartoon

Persuasion Techniques

Symbolism

Analogies

Irony