

Topic: Current Events and Political Cartoons

Course: American History

Unit: U.S. Elections

Lesson Objectives:

- 1.) Students will demonstrate their understanding of a current event by creating a political cartoon representing the event in symbolic form.
- 2.) Students will demonstrate their ability to work in groups by respectfully working with another student to construct a political cartoon.

EALRs:

History 4.3 – Understands that there are multiple perspectives and interpretations of historical events.

Social Studies Skills 5.4 – Creates a product that uses social studies content to support a thesis and presents the product in an appropriate manner to a meaningful audience.

Agenda:

Deconstruct Political Cartoons

Generate list of Perennial Issues

Work in groups to create a political Cartoon

Share work

Activities:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Initiation/ Hook</u>	
8 min.	Hook: Put 3 different political cartoons on the overhead and ask students to comment on what they see.	
<u>Time</u>	<u>Teachers Activity</u>	<u>Student's Activity</u>
10 min.	-Introduce topic for the day. -Create List of Perennial Issues: (Ex. Environment, Human Rights, Social Problems.)	-Students listen as teacher introduces topic and helps generate list of Perennial Issues.
15 min. max.	-Have students get in groups of two. -Pass out 1 article for each group. -Ask students to read through article and highlight any ideas or content they feel is important and a Perennial Issue.	-Skim through article in groups of two. -Discuss the important information about the article.
25 min.	-Together create a political cartoon that represents this current event in symbolic or pictorial form. Each item should symbolize a real- world item. e.g., donkeys for Democrats, Uncle Sam for the United States Gov.	-Generate a Political Cartoon that represents the current event in symbolic terms and represents a Perennial Issue.
<u>Time</u>	<u>Closing</u>	
15 min.	Have students share their cartoons with class and explain their concept or issue they were depicting. Ask if there are any remaining questions. No homework today	
<u>Assessment Tools:</u>		
-Working in small groups / staying on task. Professional Points will be taken. -Selecting appropriate issues to depict in cartoons.		
<u>Pre-Planning:</u>		
-Gather several good political cartoons to interpret with class. -Provide articles of current events for students to use for cartoons.		

Symbolism Cartoonists use simple objects, or **symbols**, to stand for larger concepts or ideas.

After you identify the symbols in a cartoon, think about what the cartoonist intends each symbol to stand for.

Exaggeration Sometimes cartoonists overdo, or **exaggerate**, the physical characteristics of people or things in order to make a point.

When you study a cartoon, look for any characteristics that seem overdone or overblown. (Facial characteristics and clothing are some of the most commonly exaggerated characteristics.) Then, try to decide what point the cartoonist was trying to make through exaggeration.

Labeling Cartoonists often **label** objects or people to make it clear exactly what they stand for.

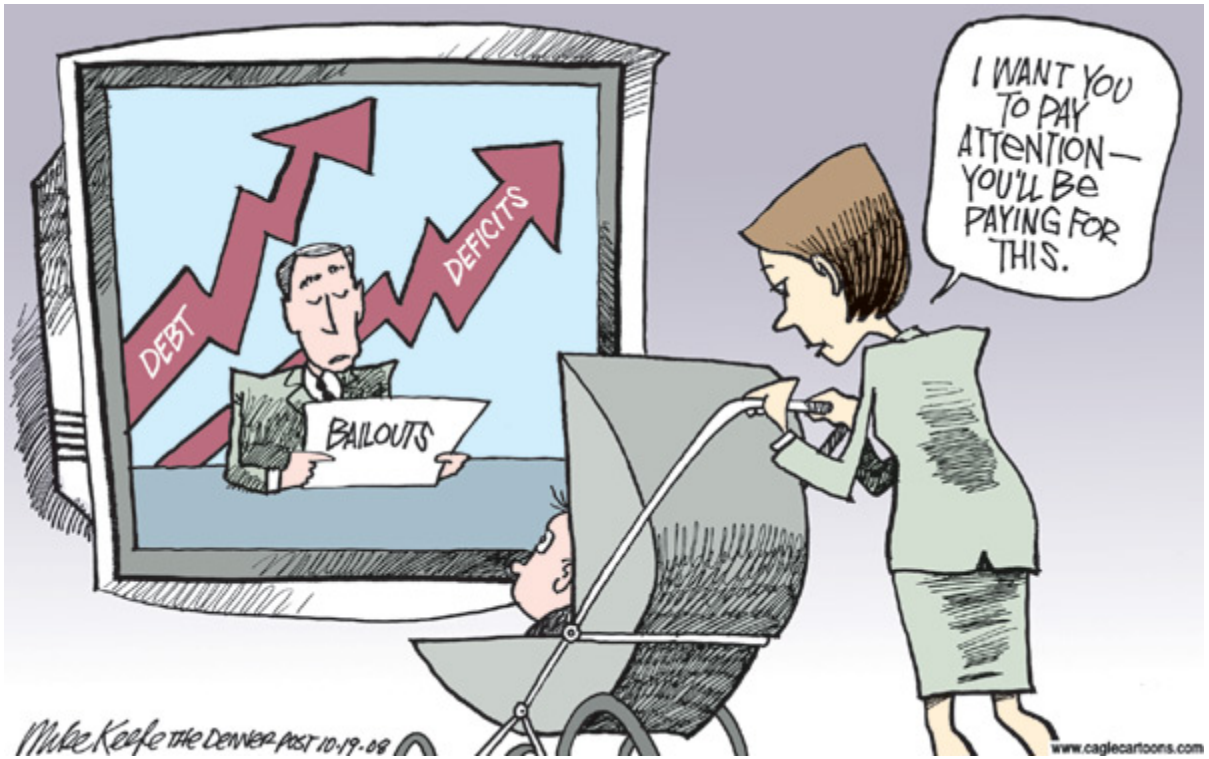
Watch out for the different labels that appear in a cartoon, and ask yourself why the cartoonist chose to label that particular person or object. Does the label make the meaning of the object more clear?

Analogy An **analogy** is a comparison between two unlike things that share some characteristics. By comparing a complex issue or situation with a more familiar one, cartoonists can help their readers see it in a different light.

After you've studied a cartoon for a while, try to decide what the cartoon's main analogy is. What two situations does the cartoon compare? Once you understand the main analogy, decide if this comparison makes the cartoonist's point more clear to you.

Irony **Irony** is the difference between the ways things are and the way things should be, or the way things are expected to be. Cartoonists often use irony to express their opinion on an issue.

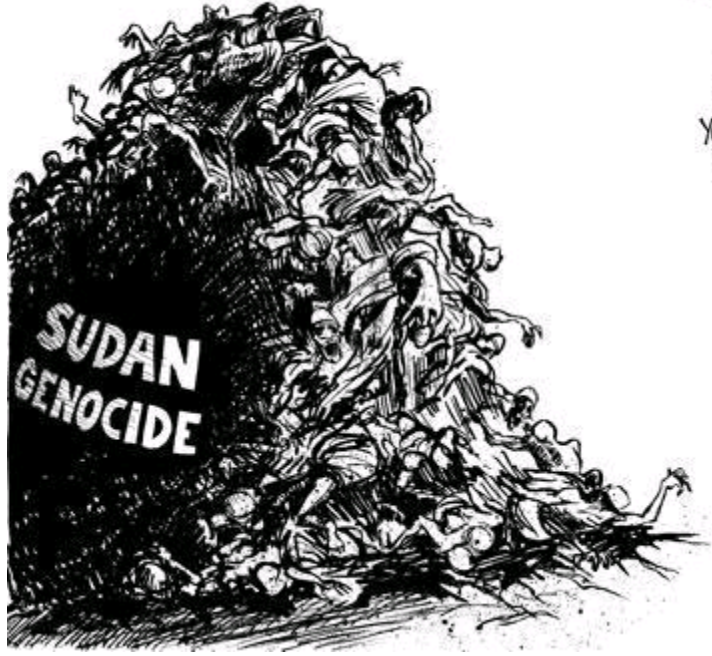
When you look at a cartoon, see if you can find any irony in the situation the cartoon depicts. If you can, think about what point the irony might be intended to emphasize. Does the irony help the cartoonist express his or her opinion more effectively?





Bush is still sticking to his guns, declaring al-Qaeda behind the uprising in Iraq, and reasoning that it's not a 'Civil War' between Sunni and Shiite, but a wave of 'Sectarian Violence' that is washing over the country.

In the meantime, he'll meet with top Shiite politician Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim this week to figure out what 'Sectarian' means.



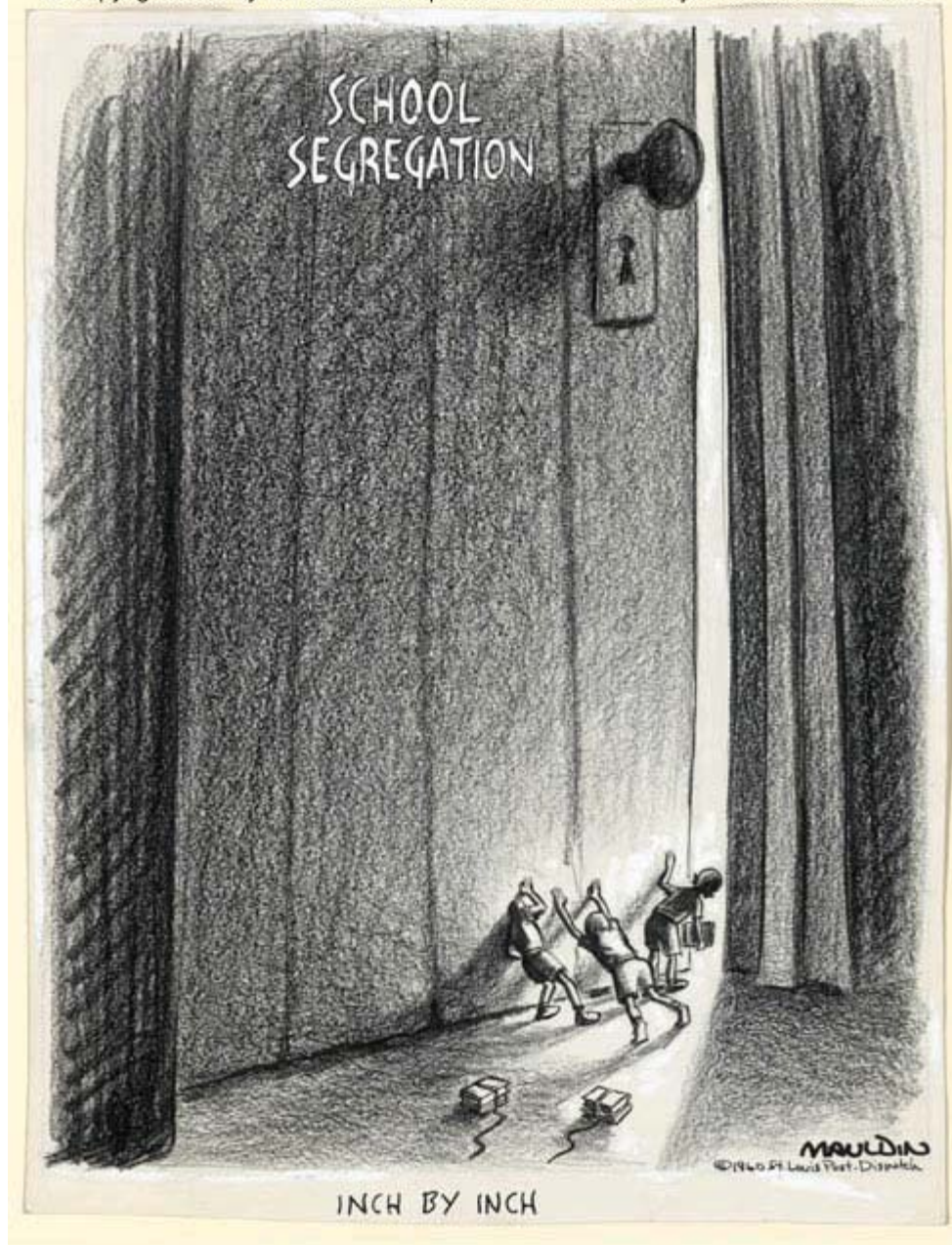
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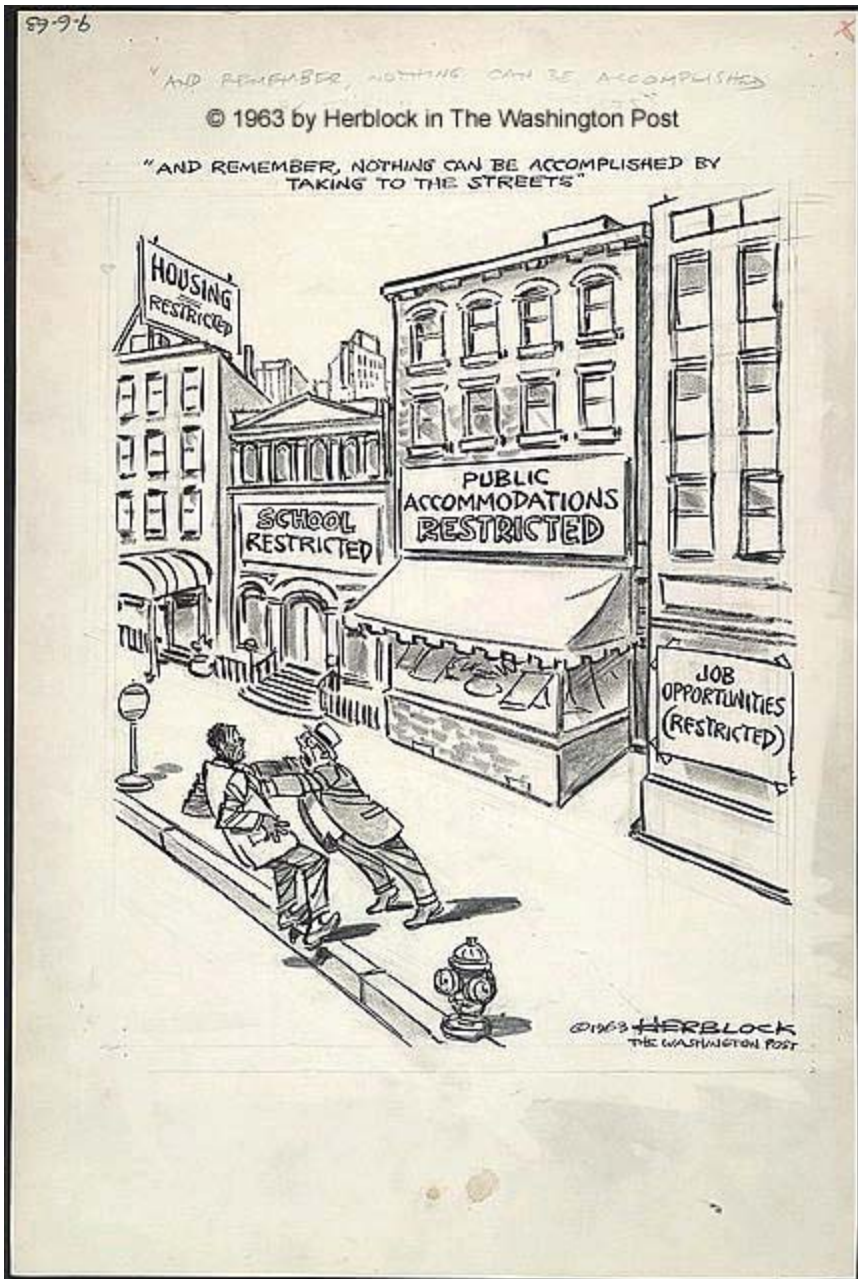


Introduce to students the idea that change causes both conflict and growth and that this cartoon suggests possible problems and areas of growth if and when women got the right to vote. Women did not get this right in every state in the United States until the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920. Think about how we can tell if change is good or bad?

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Despite the legal mandate to integrate, school districts were slow to accommodate African American children, as Bill Mauldin metaphorically shows here with three young students working hard to open the door of "School segregation" a mere crack. At its annual meeting in 1960, the National Education Association rejected proposals to support the Supreme Court decision, instead opting for a watered-down resolution describing integration as "an evolving process." Because of school boards' reluctance to follow either the letter or the spirit of the law, segregation remained in effect well into the 1960s.



Herb Block applauds the growing activism of the Civil Rights Movement in this cartoon. He shows an African American practically pushed into the street by a white man, while signs on all the buildings that line the street speak of restrictions on blacks. Block's cartoon reflects events of its time. In efforts to compel school districts to end *de facto* segregation in the North and to reduce school overcrowding, African American parents in Chicago, New York, New Jersey, and other areas publically demonstrated. President Kennedy, in a speech given on August 28, 1963, urged Americans to "accelerate our effort to achieve equal rights for all our citizens."



The Cold War revived the anti-communist hysteria that had gripped the United States after World War I. In 1947 Congress revived the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), opposed by Herb Block since its inception in the 1930s and declared by President Truman to be itself the most un-American activity. Herb Block comments: "The FBI, under J. Edgar Hoover, helped provide the committee with material from its aptly named 'raw files'. Some producers, directors and screen writers refused to testify or to play the 'name game' in which the committee demanded the names of associates, who could then be called on to name others thus providing an ever-expanding list of suspects to be summoned." ["It's okay - We're hunting Communists."](#) October 31, 1947

Political Cartoons

- Read through your article to understand the topic being addressed. Write down any information you think is important.
- Generate a list of any important information you wish to depict in your political cartoon.
- Decide what you believe the Current Event is in your article. Examples might include:
 - Presidential Elections
 - Natural Disasters
 - Iraq War.....
- Decide on the Perennial Issue this event represents.
- Together, create a political cartoon to symbolically depict this current event. (Don't stress about artistic ability, stick figures are just fine.)
- Be prepared to share your cartoon with class.

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