



Teaching Social Studies through Political Cartoons

Resources and Strategies for the GED® Teacher

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The Tools of the Cartoonist

Cartoonists use five main elements to convey their point of view.

- **symbolism** - using an object to stand for an idea
- **captioning and labels** - used for clarity and emphasis
- **analogy** - a comparison between two unlike things that share some characteristics
- **irony** - the difference between the way things are and the way things should be or the way things are expected to be
- **exaggeration** - overstating or magnifying a problem or a physical feature or habit: big nose, bushy eyebrows, large ears, baldness



Nitin came to this country, studied and worked hard, then his job was outsourced to India. That's irony.



"We call it the 'don't ask, don't sell' aisle."

Common Symbols Used in Political Cartoons

Olive Branch	Peace, forgiveness
Vulture	Preying on others, death
Elephant	Republican Party
Donkey	Democratic Party
Phoenix	Something new and powerful arising from
Uncle Sam	U.S. Government, American people
Sphinx	A great king with absolute power
Tortoise	Someone who moves slowly, a winner
Hare	Someone who moves quickly, a loser
Capitol Building Dome	Congress
White House	The President
Scales, a balance	Supreme Court, justice, fairness
Eagle	American Government, the Constitution
Laurel Wreath	Victory
Statue of Liberty	Freedom
Liberty Bell	Freedom
Key	Immortality or dependence
Ocean	Strength
Money bags	Wealth

What is the Cartoonist Doing?

Symbolism



Caricature



Exaggeration/Distortion



Humor and Irony



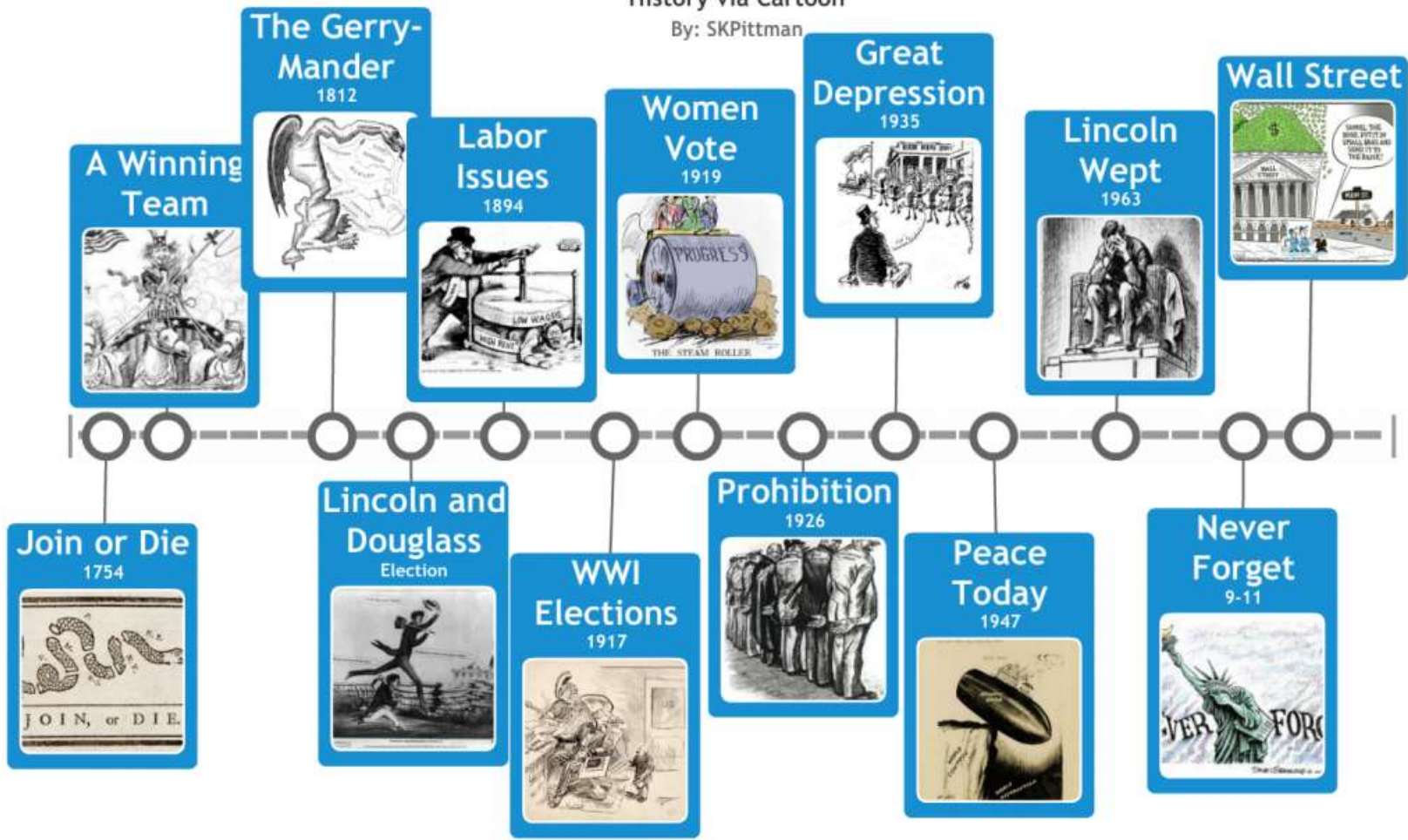
Stereotypes



TIMELINE

History via Cartoon

By: SKPittman



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Analyze a Cartoon (Novice)

Analyze a Cartoon

Meet the cartoon.

What do you see?

Is the cartoon?

BLACK AND WHITE COLOR


Is there a caption?


YES NO


If so, what does the caption tell you?

Observe its parts.

Are there people, symbols, or objects in the cartoon?


PEOPLE


SYMBOLS


OBJECTS

What are the people doing in the cartoon?

What are the objects used for in the cartoon?

Write two words that describe the cartoon.

Try to make sense of it.


Answer as best you can. The caption, if available, may help.

What do the symbols stand for in the cartoon?




Who drew the cartoon?

When do you think this cartoon was drawn?

What is the main idea of the cartoon?
List two parts (words or objects from the cartoon) that support the main idea.



Use it as historical evidence.
Where do you think we could find out more information about the people, symbols, or objects in the cartoon?



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Analyze a Cartoon

Analyze a Cartoon

Meet the cartoon.

Quickly scan the cartoon. What do you notice first?

What is the title or caption?

Observe its parts.

WORDS	VISUALS
<i>Are there labels, descriptions, thoughts, or dialogue?</i>	<i>List the people, objects, and places in the cartoon.</i>
	<i>List the actions or activities.</i>

Try to make sense of it.

WORDS	VISUALS
<i>Which words or phrases are the most significant?</i>	<i>Which of the visuals are symbols?</i>
<i>List adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed.</i>	<i>What do they stand for?</i>

Who drew this cartoon? When is it from?


What was happening at the time in history it was created?

What is the message? List evidence from the cartoon or your knowledge about the cartoonist that led you to your conclusion.

Use it as historical evidence.

What did you find out from this cartoon that you might not learn anywhere else?

What other documents or historical evidence are you going to use to help you understand this event or topic?



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