

Name _____

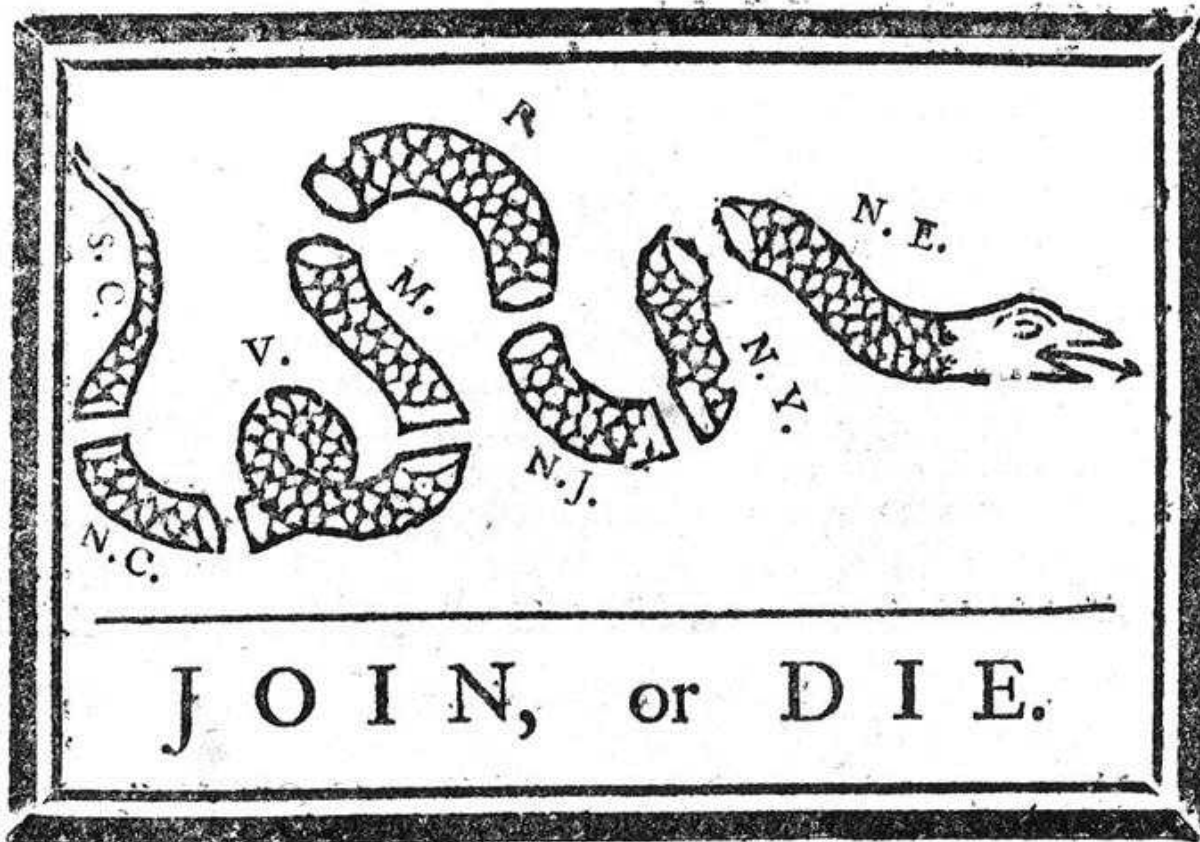
Analyzing Political Cartoons

A political cartoon expresses opinions about public issues and public individuals. It uses some or all of five elements to express a point of view: symbols, exaggeration, labeling or captions, analogy, and irony. To fully understand a political cartoon, the reader must apply critical thinking skills to decipher the meaning and point of view of the cartoon.

By the year 1776, political cartoons began appearing in American newspapers, criticizing the British government. The increase in newspapers and magazine circulation in the 1800s also provided a rich environment for the rise of political cartoons.

Political cartoons quickly became popular because people with even minimal reading abilities could understand and relate to the ideas presented in a powerful, humorous format. Pictures and symbols can convey meanings that are sometimes more powerful than words. Today, they cover all aspects of our lives, from pop-culture to environmental concerns, to mistakes made by politicians, and are often created to persuade people to favor one point of view over another.

The first widely distributed American political cartoon was drawn by Ben Franklin.



Elements of a Political Cartoon

Use this guide to identify the persuasive techniques used in political cartoons.

Symbolism	<p>Cartoonists use simple objects, or symbols, to stand for larger concepts or ideas.</p> <p>After you identify the symbols in a cartoon, think about what the cartoonist intends each symbol to stand for.</p>
Exaggeration	<p>Sometimes cartoonists overdo, or exaggerate, the physical characteristics of people or things in order to make a point.</p> <p>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.</p>
Labeling	<p>Cartoonists often label objects or people to make it clear exactly what they stand for.</p> <p>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?</p>
Analogy	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Irony	<p>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.</p> <p>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?</p>

Create a Political Cartoon

Your task: after analyzing several political cartoons, it is now time to create your own! You are a newspaper cartoonist in the year 1796. Despite George Washington's warning, political parties are now an important part of the election process. Create a political cartoon that supports either the Federalist or Republican point of view about government.

1. Decide what party are you interested in representing: FEDERALIST or REPUBLICAN
2. Choose one of the key issues of that political party as the topic for your cartoon.

You may choose:

- The personality of the leader of the party
 - The party's view of human nature
 - The party's ideal form of government
 - The party's ideal economy
 - The party's relationship with Britain or France.
3. **Decide:** What is your point of view going to be? You can approach the cartoon from the perspective of supporting the party, or making fun of the ideas of the party you chose.
 4. **Review the elements of a political cartoon.** You must use at least **three elements** in your cartoon. Decide which elements would work best: is there something you could draw that would be symbolic of something else? Can you exaggerate features to support your point of view? Are labels important to the understanding of your cartoon?
 5. **Create a rough draft** sketch of your cartoon
 6. **Create a final copy** of your cartoon that is neat, makes full use of a sheet of 8 ½ X 11 piece of paper, and clearly demonstrates a point of view of one particular political party.
 7. Answer the **reflection questions** and submit them with your cartoon.
 8. You will need to submit your cartoon stapled in the following order:

On top: Rubric, with name and block

Final Copy of cartoon

Creating a Political cartoon Reflection

On bottom: Rough Sketch of your cartoon

Explain where your cartoon uses each element you circled:

Element: _____

Where it is shown in my cartoon: _____

Element: _____

Where it is shown in my cartoon: _____

Element: _____

Where it is shown in my cartoon: _____

Why do you think political cartoons are successful at reaching people on so many levels? _____

Did this exercise give you a greater appreciation for political cartoons? Explain why or why not:

Creating a Political Cartoon Rubric

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Content/ knowledge of topic	topic is focused, clear and authentically and creatively achieves the purpose, shows a deeper level of understanding of the political concept/issue	topic is focused and authentically achieves the purpose, shows understanding of political concept/issue	states the purpose but does not effectively achieve it, shows some understanding of political concept/issue	lacks clarity and purpose; little attempt made to achieve the purpose, Shows no understanding of political concept/issue
Point of View	All of the artwork is specific, relevant and it is evident how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Most of the artwork is specific, relevant and it is evident how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	At least one piece of the artwork supports the author's position.	Artwork is irrelevant and or does not show the author's point of view
Elements of a Political Cartoon	At least three elements are used creatively and enhance the reader's understanding of the concept/issue	At least three elements are used effectively.	Two elements are used and enhance the reader's understanding of the concept/issue	Fewer than two elements of a politician cartoon are used effectively
Required Elements	Final work includes Rubric, Final copy in required format, Rough draft sketch, and a thoughtful, well-written reflection on the creative process submitted in order.	Final work includes all elements, one element may have been out of order and/or reflection is adequate.	Final work is missing one element, is submitted out of order, and/or reflection is poorly presented	Final work is missing more than 1 element, and/or reflection is poorly presented.
Attractiveness & Organization	The brochure has exceptionally attractive formatting and well-organized information.	The brochure has attractive formatting and well-organized information.	The brochure has well-organized information.	The brochure's formatting and organization of material are confusing to the reader.
Cartoon Quality	Drawing is expressive and detailed. Shapes, shading and/or texture and color are used to add interest to the cartoon. Effort is apparent.	Drawing is expressive and somewhat detailed. Little use has been made of shading, and/or texture and color.	Drawing has few details. Effort is lacking.	The drawing lacks almost all detail OR it is unclear what the drawing is intended to be.

