

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT – 2009-2012

Lesson Title – Interpreting Political Cartoons – Vietnam Era

Grade - 11 (AP – Level 1 – Level 2 – Level 3)

Length of class period – 48 Minutes

Inquiry – (What essential question are students answering, what problem are they solving, or what decision are they making?)

How have contemporary artists interpreted events and presented them to the American public?

How can the American citizen be influenced by an editorial or political cartoon?

How have contemporary artists affected the interpretation of a historical event or era?

Objectives (What content and skills do you expect students to learn from this lesson?)

Students will better understand the “Vietnam Era” time period in U.S. History by investigating and making connections between cartoons and concurrent people, places and events.

Students will interpret and understand the implied meanings of an artist in regards to society during the 1960s.

Materials (What primary sources or local resources are the basis for this lesson?) – (please attach)

Political Cartoons and analysis questions included with lesson plan.

Activities (What will you and your students do during the lesson to promote learning?)

1. Students will receive a political cartoon and with the assistance of their textbook or notes they will answer several questions that break down the cartoon in regards to the cartoon’s content, the time period at hand and the subject of the cartoon.
2. Following a short introduction to each cartoon and a refresher on the time period in question, students will begin to analyze the cartoons on the worksheets provided.
3. Following the student-centered time, students will share their cartoon with a partner and ask for input from their partner on answering any of the questions.
4. Following the partner share section, students will give a short explanation of the subject of the cartoon and what they believe the cartoonist is trying to convey to the reader.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

During the lesson the teacher will move throughout the classroom and direct students to sections of the textbook where significant information may be found to better understand the subject of the cartoon.

Teacher will also assist in interpreting and re-phrasing questions and providing extension to capable students.

Connecticut Grade Level Expectations-

3.2 Analyze and evaluate human action in historical and/or contemporary contexts from alternative points of view.

3.1 Use evidence to identify, analyze and evaluate historical interpretations.

2.4 Demonstrate an ability to participate in social studies discourse through informed discussion, debate and effective oral presentation.

Political Cartoons of the Vietnam War



"This is proving to be excellent training for civilian life."

New York Times - July 30, 1967

1. Recognition – List five specific things that you see in the cartoon.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

2. Connection – Choose three of your observations and connect them in one sentence that explains the cartoon.

3. Analysis – Connect the information in the cartoon to two pieces of outside information from the Vietnam Era.

4. Conclusion – Explain what the artist is trying to convey or explain in the cartoon.

