

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT
Lesson Title –Jacksonian Democracy via Political Cartoons

Grade –7

Length of class period – Three to four 42 minute periods

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

- Is a political cartoon an effective vehicle for voicing one’s opinion?
- Was the Jackson era a time in which democracy grew or declined?

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

- Students will analyze political cartoons from the Jackson era to identify the message of the cartoons.
- Students will recognize that political cartoonists use symbols, caricature, irony and humor to convey a message.
- Students will consider the historical conflicts they have studied via the cartoonists’ perspectives.
- Students will create a cartoon expressing their own views on the Jackson era.

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

Political Cartoons (available in lesson materials)

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

1. Display Ben Franklin’s political cartoon, “Join, or Die,” on a Smartboard or on an overhead projector as an introduction to analyzing political cartoons. Discuss the message of the cartoon as a group.
2. Review the Jackson era; include the changes in voting requirements and voter perception, the spoils system, the nullification crisis, and Jackson’s conflicts with the Bank of the United States and with Native Americans.
3. Display political cartoons “King Andrew the First,” “Great Father to the Indians,” and “General Jackson Slaying the Many-Headed Monster” on a Smartboard or overhead projector. Divide the students into groups of 2-3 and provide them with photocopies of the cartoons. In a “Think-Pair-Share” activity ask students to try to identify use of symbolism, caricature, irony, and humor in the cartoons as well as the overall message of each cartoon. Groups will then share their conclusions with the class. Ask students to consider the overall effectiveness of each cartoon.

4. Students will return to their groups to brainstorm ideas for their own political cartoons based on the Jackson era. Students will create the cartoons in the following 1-2 classes and complete a worksheet on the cartoon. Groups will present their cartoons to the class. The unit will conclude with a discussion of whether students perceive the Jackson era as a period in which democracy grew or a time in which Jackson strengthened the power of the presidency at the expense of various groups and individuals.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

Monitor the group work and assess the final cartoon, worksheet, and presentation.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

- Interpret data in historical maps, photographs, art works and other artifacts.
- Examine data to determine the adequacy and sufficiency of evidence, point of view, historical context, bias, distortion and propaganda, and to distinguish fact from opinion.
- Analyze data in order to see persons and events in their historical context, understand causal factors and appreciate change over time.
- Explain reasons for conflict and the ways conflicts have been resolved.