

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

Lesson Title – Analyzing Political Cartoons

(This lesson can be used any time you want to use a political cartoon in a unit. It can take as little as 20 minutes to do in class once your students are comfortable with the format. I usually take 30 minutes in order to get plenty of student input. It can also be used as a homework assignment when students have mastered the format.)

Grade – 9-12

Length of class period – 46 minutes

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

1. How are primary sources (political cartoons) analyzed?
2. What do primary sources tell us about the past, specifically the time period from which it came?

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

1. Students will be able to identify the subject and point of view from a political cartoon.
2. Students will be able to interpret examples of symbolism and how they contribute to the overall message of the political cartoon.

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

1. Examples of Political Cartoons from Different Time Periods—**see attached**
2. “Political Cartoon Analysis” template—**see attached**

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

1. Start lesson by putting the selected political cartoon on an overhead or projector allowing the students a minute or two to get some initial ideas about what is going on in the cartoon. You may want students to silently do this or have some students vocalize their initial perspectives.

2. Then hand out the “Political Cartoon Analysis” worksheet. (If this is one of the first few times you have done this activity, I recommend doing this as a classroom activity and not using the point values.)

3. Have students go through this worksheet one category at a time. The technique I use is give them a set amount of time to do the category individually and then have a whole class discussion about them. The recommended time allotments for student work and discussion are:

1. Subject (5 minutes or less)
2. Point of View (5 minutes or less; you may want to skip it and do after #3)
3. 3 Examples of Symbolism (10-15 minutes)

4. Message (5-10 minutes)
5. Title (5 minutes or less)

*If this is the first time doing the lesson, you may want to have an initiation activity (15 minutes max) where you take a political cartoon that the students would be familiar with the subject matter and informally asked questions for each of the 5 categories.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

1. Political Cartoon Analysis worksheet

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

- Evaluate data within the historical, social, political and economic context in which it was created, testing its credibility and evaluating its bias

- Demonstrate an understanding of major events and trends in world history, United States and local history from all historical periods and from all the regions of the world