

Worksheet for Analysis of a Political Cartoon

Prepare a written report on your assigned cartoon by answering these questions about it.

A. VISUAL ASPECTS OF THE CARTOON

- Is the cartoon dated?
- What is the event or issue that inspired the cartoon? How do you know?
- Are there any real people or places in the cartoon? If not, what images are portrayed?
- Does the writer label anyone or anything in the cartoon? If so, why?
- Identify the specific artistic techniques used in the cartoon (e.g., symbolism, analogy, exaggeration, labeling, and irony). What is the artist trying to show the reader by using these techniques?
- How can an understanding of the artistic techniques used to create political cartoons help you to understand the author's message?
- Are there aspects of the cartoon (e.g., clothing styles, animals, or activities) that serve as symbols (metaphors) that represent the cartoonist's point of view?
- What action is taking place in the cartoon?
- How is the action significant to the interpretation of the cartoon?

B. VERBAL ASPECTS OF THE CARTOON (*if present – not all cartoons use words*)

- Does the cartoon have a caption or title? Is its message immediately clear?
- Are there labels on people or objects that help identify them or what they represent?
- Do the words in this cartoon help explain the symbols?
- Are there numbers in the cartoon – dates, financial data, or other figures? Is it clear what the numbers represent?
- Are the numbers an important part of the message?
- Evaluate the ways in which an artist uses artistic forms of figurative language (e.g., irony, symbolism, exaggeration) to persuade or manipulate the viewer.

C. OVERALL EFFECT OF THE CARTOON

- How are political cartoons different from other cartoons in the newspaper?
- How are these cartoons different from news articles?
- What is the cartoonist's point of view about the subject portrayed in this cartoon? What evidence in the cartoon supports your interpretation?
- Some cartoonists create their intended effects through shock value. Is that true of this particular cartoon? How does it produce its effect?
- Do you believe the cartoonist intends to produce a particular emotional response?
- Are there people who would be angered or distressed by this cartoon? Why?
- Are there people who would think it is wonderful? Explain the difference.
- Do you believe this cartoon is successful in producing the effect the artist intended? Explain why or why not.
- Do you feel this cartoon is persuasive? Why or why not?
- What other techniques could the artist have used to make this cartoon more persuasive?
- State the premise of this cartoon in one sentence (no more than ten words).