### Professional Political Cartoon Examination and Original Political Cartoon Construction

#### Lesson Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overview:</th>
<th>Students examine political cartoons with focuses including but not limited to encoded messages, evident political statements, and symbolism. They will speculate – in writing – about the cartoonists’ original intent, research obscure names and symbols, revisit original interpretations, and present findings to the class. They will then construct original political cartoons on a current event or historical topic using the professional cartoonists’ tools.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade Range:</td>
<td>6-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective:</td>
<td>Students will:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Historicize primary source documents.</td>
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<td>2. Examine primary source documents for encoded messages, evident political statements, and symbolism.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Speculate about cartoonists’ original intent; research obscure names and symbols; revisit original interpretations; and present speculative interpretations to the class.</td>
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<td>4. Create an original political cartoon using conventional cartoonists’ tools.</td>
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<td>Time Required:</td>
<td>Three class periods of 50 minutes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discipline/Subject:</td>
<td>Social Studies, Language Arts, Current Events</td>
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<td>Topic/Subject:</td>
<td>War, Military</td>
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<td>Era:</td>
<td>Postwar United States, 1945-1968</td>
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</table>

#### Standards

**Illinois Learning Standards:**

*Social Studies:*

16.A.5a-Analyze historical and contemporary developments using methods of historical inquiry.  
16.A.5b-Describe how modern political positions are affected by differences in ideologies and viewpoints that have developed over time.  
16.B.5b-Analyze how United States political history has been influenced by the nation’s economic, social and environmental history.  
16.B.5b-Describe how tensions in the modern world are affected by different political ideologies including democracy and totalitarianism.

#### Materials

| Handouts: | Copies of political cartoons |
| Analysis Tools: | Cartoon Analysis |
| PowerPoint Slides: | |
But How to Let Go—Gracefully

Published in the Chicago American, 1965. Ink brush, crayon, and opaque white over graphite underdrawing with overlays and paste-ons. Art Wood Collection of Cartoon and Caricature Prints and Photographs Division LC-DIG-ppmsca-09125 (13)

President Lyndon Johnson clings grimly to the tail of a giant tiger (labeled “Vietnam”), that lunges wildly through a nocturnal universe in this cartoon by Vaughn Shoemaker (1902-1991). This drawing of 1965 addresses how America would extricate itself from the war in Vietnam. U.S. troops did pull out in 1973. A two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, Shoemaker studied at the Chicago Academy for Fine Arts, drew editorial cartoons at the Chicago Daily News for nearly thirty years, and taught at his alma mater. His artful, gestural style became looser and more painterly in the 1960s.

http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/cartoonamerica/images/ca013-09125v.jpg
The other ascent into the unknown

June 10, 1965 Ink, graphite, and opaque white over graphite underdrawing on layered paper
Published in the Washington Post (61) LC-USZ62-127068

During the presidential campaign of 1964, President Lyndon Johnson suggested that Republican candidate Barry Goldwater could not to be trusted to keep the U.S. out of war. But not long after his election, Johnson increased American involvement in the Vietnam war and moved ultimately to take over the war itself. In the same week that NASA sent the Gemini 4 space capsule into orbit, setting new records for a two-man flight, the State Department announced that Johnson had authorized a potential role for direct American military involvement in Vietnam if requested by the South Vietnamese authorities. Herb Block was prescient in his view that this constituted a major step in the involvement of U.S. forces in Indochina.

http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/swann/herblock/images/s03463u.jpg
"Our position hasn't changed at all"

June 17, 1965 Ink, graphite, and opaque white over graphite underdrawing on layered paper Published in the
Washington Post (62) LC-USZ62-127071

After the State Department announced the possibility of a direct American combat role in Vietnam, the White House
issued "clarifications," insisting that there had been no change in policy. On June 16, 1965, the Defense Department
announced that 21,000 additional soldiers including 8,000 combat troops would go to Vietnam, bringing the total U.S.
presence to more than 70,000 men. President Lyndon Johnson continued to obscure the extent of American
involvement, contributing to a widespread perception of political untrustworthiness. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution,
based on a never-verified report of an attempted attack on an American ship, passed the Senate with only two
dissenting votes, and gave Johnson all the authority he felt he needed to proceed with the escalation.
http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/swann/herblock/images/s03465u.jpg
"You see, the reason we're in Indochina is to protect us boys in Indochina"

May 5, 1970 Ink, graphite, and opaque white over graphite underdrawing on layered paper
Published in the Washington Post (70) LC-USZ62-126931

Despite Richard Nixon's election campaign promises to end the Vietnam War, each new step widened rather than reduced American involvement.
http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/swann/herblock/images/s03466u.jpg
Library of Congress Items:
Title of Source: But How to Let Go--Gracefully
Creator of Source: Shoemaker, Vaughn
Date of Creation: 1965
URL of Source: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2005685893/

Title of Source: The other ascent into the unknown
Creator of Source: Block, Herbert
Date of Creation: 1965 June 10
URL of Source: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/00652227/

Title of Source: Our position hasn’t changed at all
Creator of Source: Block, Herbert
Date of Creation: 1965 June 17
URL of Source: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/00652228/

Title of Source: You see, the reason we’re in Indochina is to protect us boys in Indochina
Creator of Source: Block, Herbert
Date of Creation: 1970 May 5
URL of Source: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/00652236/

Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure Step #</th>
<th>Resource or Material Used</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day One:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>LOC Items Analysis Tools</td>
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<td></td>
<td>PowerPoint</td>
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<tr>
<td>The teacher will randomly divide primary sources among students and present powerpoint. Each individual student will get one political cartoon to historicize through observations and inferences. In doing so, the student will use “first glance” section of political cartoon analysis.</td>
<td>LOCArticles Analysis Tools PowerPoint</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Analysis Tools</td>
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<td>The students as a large class will share their general observations and inferences. The teacher will lead this discussion.</td>
<td>AnalysisTools</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Analysis Tools</td>
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<td>The student will individually examine the primary source for encoded messages, evident political statements, and symbolism. The student will speculate about cartoonists’ original intent. In doing so, they will use the “taking a closer look” section of the political cartoon analysis.</td>
<td>Analysis Tools</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Analysis Tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will organize into groups based on who has the same political cartoon. They will share their individual interpretations, hear others’ interpretations, and brainstorm confusing names, symbols and messages.</td>
<td>AnalysisTools</td>
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<td><strong>Day Two:</strong></td>
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<td>1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will individually research obscure names and symbols.</td>
<td>AnalysisTool</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will reorganize into groups based on political cartoons and revisit original interpretations. They will, as a group, fill out “cartoon purpose” section of political cartoon analysis.</td>
<td>Analysis Tool</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>Students, as a group, will present speculative interpretations to the class.</td>
<td>Analysis Tool</td>
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<td><strong>Day Three:</strong></td>
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<td>1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students, individually, will create an original political cartoon using conventional cartoonists’ tools and describe the tools employed to construct the cartoon.</td>
<td>Analysis Tool</td>
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</table>

Evaluation

The teacher will examine students’ original political cartoons and note the use of professional cartoonist’s tools. They will also read the student’s reflective descriptions of the employed methods and see how accurate they were.

Extension

Considering that this lesson is taught within a social studies education methods class context, I think the most logical extension would be to teach youngsters in a similar way.
Author Credits:
J. Bickford
Eastern Illinois University
College of Education & Professional Studies
Early Childhood, Elementary and Middle Level Education Dept.
CARTOON ANALYSIS

First glance…

Look at the cartoon you were given or selected and list any of the following you see:

Title:

Objects/People:

Words/Phrases:

Dates/Numbers:

Sensory Qualities

Are lines bold, fussy, light, hard or soft?

Taking a closer look…

Images

Which objects are used as symbols?

Why were the symbols used and what do they represent?

Is anything exaggerated? How?

Is the cartoon realistic or abstract?

List adjectives that describe emotions visible in the cartoon.

Words

Which words or phrases appear to be important? Why?

Cartoon Purpose

Describe action taking place in the cartoon.

Explain how the words in the cartoon explain the symbols.

What is the message of the cartoon?

Who are the people who might agree with the cartoon? What might be the public’s reaction to this cartoon?
BUT HOW TO LET GO—GRACEFULLY

VIETNAM
THE OTHER ASCENT INTO THE UNKNOWN

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THE WASHINGTON POST

VIET-NAM
"Our position hasn't changed at all"
"You see, the reason we're in Indochina is to protect us boys in Indochina."