

Common Assignment 2

Political Cartoon Analysis

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HS History Task 2: Cartoon Analysis—Teacher Instructions


Standards

- Common Core: RH.11-12.1
- Colorado: SS.HS.1.1.a

Performance Outcome

Students can analyze political cartoons to accurately identify the cartoonist's point of view and how the historical context of the cartoon impacts that perspective.

Teacher Instructions

1. Introduce analysis tools: Begin by passing out and going over the Cartoon Analysis Worksheet and Checklist.
 - a. You might use a modern-day cartoon that deals with a topic familiar to your students to help you introduce these tools.
2. Practice analysis:
 - a. You can use
 - i. "Fire!" as an intro to the process with your class as a whole
 - ii. Additional cartoons from the early Cold War for additional practice. Find more cartoons here: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/herblocks-history/fire.html> .
 - b. Make it clear to students that the paragraph at the end of the analysis document is the key part of the task that will be scored. Remind them that they should use evidence from the cartoon in that paragraph (and that evidence is what they've found in the parts of the worksheet that precede the paragraph). One way to help students persist to the paragraph and complete it more fully is to do the analysis questions in pairs and the final paragraph individually.
3. Have students complete the Cartoon Analysis Worksheet for the cartoon "It's okay—we're hunting communists."
4. Grade using the Cartoon Analysis Rubric.

The cartoons are accessible through the PowerPoint or links provided with each one and can be enlarged. Additional information about the cartoons is also available at the same link.

What Caused McCarthyism?: Common Assignment 2

Cartoon Analysis Rubric

OUTCOME

Student can analyze primary and secondary accounts to form an evidence-based interpretation of a historical or contemporary topic/issue.

Standard: Student can evaluate a political cartoon for point of view using context.	
3	Student can evaluate the historical context and provide evidence to accurately identify the perspective of the artist.
2	Student can identify the perspective of the artist but includes minimal historical context and evidence.
1	Student attempts to identify the perspective of the artist and address the historical context or supporting evidence.
0	Student does not identify the perspective of the artist and needs to include historical context and evidence.



Name: _____

Cartoon Analysis Worksheet: “It’s okay—we’re hunting communists”

Source		Occasion
1a. Who is the person who <i>produced</i> this work?	2a. What is the time and place of the cartoon?	
1b. Who <i>published</i> this work?	2b. Why is the time and place of the cartoon important? (Historical context)	
Subject		
3. What is the general topic of this cartoon?		
Symbols/Metaphors/Distortion		
4a. Identify any symbols and what they mean.	4b. Identify distortions, stereotypes, and caricatures within the cartoon and what they represent.	4c. List clues (words, places, numbers) used in the cartoon.
Purpose		
5. Using the evidence from the cartoon, a. Identify the perspective of the artist; and b. Evaluate the impact of the historical context on that perspective.		



The Cartoon Analysis Checklist

<p>VISUAL SYMBOLS AND METAPHORS</p> <p>A visual symbol in a cartoon is any image that stands for some other thing, event, person, abstract idea or trend in the news. For example, a dollar sign may stand for the entire economy. An octopus may stand for a powerful corporation with “tentacles” controlling many other institutions. Metaphors are like symbols in that they describe one thing as something else entirely. Shakespeare used a metaphor when he wrote “All the world’s a stage.” (A cartoon would simply show the world as a stage.)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Begin any cartoon analysis by describing all the details in it that are symbols and metaphors.</p>
<p>VISUAL DISTORTION</p> <p>Changes or exaggerations in size, shape, emotions or gestures often add extra meaning to the symbols the cartoon includes. For example, a dragon is often used as a symbol for China. But a huge, snorting dragon will make a different point about China from a tired, limping, meek dragon. Every detail in a cartoon, especially one that is distorted in some way, is likely to be a part of the cartoon’s meaning.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Identify the cartoon’s symbols and notice how they are drawn.</p>
<p>IRONY IN WORDS AND IMAGES</p> <p>Irony is a form of humor in which something is said in a way that undercuts or mocks its own apparent meaning. In other words, what is said seems to mean one thing, but it will be taken to mean the opposite. Irony is well suited to political cartoons, which often seek to mock something and show how false, unfair or dangerous it is. Irony always entails a contradiction. Often, an amusing image undercuts and reverses the meaning of the words in a caption. Sometimes, however, the image alone conveys the double meaning.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Consider whether irony is used and if so, how?</p>
<p>STEREOTYPES AND CARICATURE</p> <p>A stereotype is a vastly oversimplified view of some group. Stereotypes are often insulting. Yet they may give cartoons a shorthand way to make a complex point quickly. They also reveal broad cultural attitudes. Caricature is the opposite of a stereotype. It is an exaggerated or distorted drawing of an individual highlighting what the artist sees as most unique about that individual. You should be critical of cartoon stereotyping, yet also notice how it contributes to making a point dramatically and forcefully. If there are stereotypes in the cartoon you are analyzing, how would you evaluate them?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Identify any stereotypes and caricatures and consider what they communicate.</p>
<p>AN ARGUMENT NOT A SLOGAN</p> <p>Slogans merely assert something. “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.” A good editorial cartoon is more than a slogan. Though blunt and opinionated, it actually invites you to consider its argument or its reasoning. At its best, a cartoon offers visual and written features that together “make its case.” In other words, it presents reasons to support its view, or at least it hints at or suggests those reasons. So even though it is biased, the cartoon gives you grounds for responding and even arguing back.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Consider what features of the cartoon help present its argument or make its case.</p>
<p>THE USES AND MISUSES OF POLITICAL CARTOONS</p> <p>Editorial cartoons may be funny, outrageous, even insulting. Yet above all, their aim is to provoke thought about some issue in the news. They cannot be taken as simple reflections of “the way things were.” Yet that is a common misuse of them. They reveal cultural assumptions, prevailing moods, even real insights about events and trends. They can be used as evidence of all these things.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Political cartoons always represent points of view that can be challenged.</p>

Source: <http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/21733>



Cartoon 1 for Practice/Introduction



"Fire!"

Created by Herb Block. Published in the *Washington Post* (25) June 17, 1949. Reproduction from original drawing.

Link for enlarged picture: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/herblocks-history/fire.html>

Cartoon 2 for Common Assignment Student Work Sample



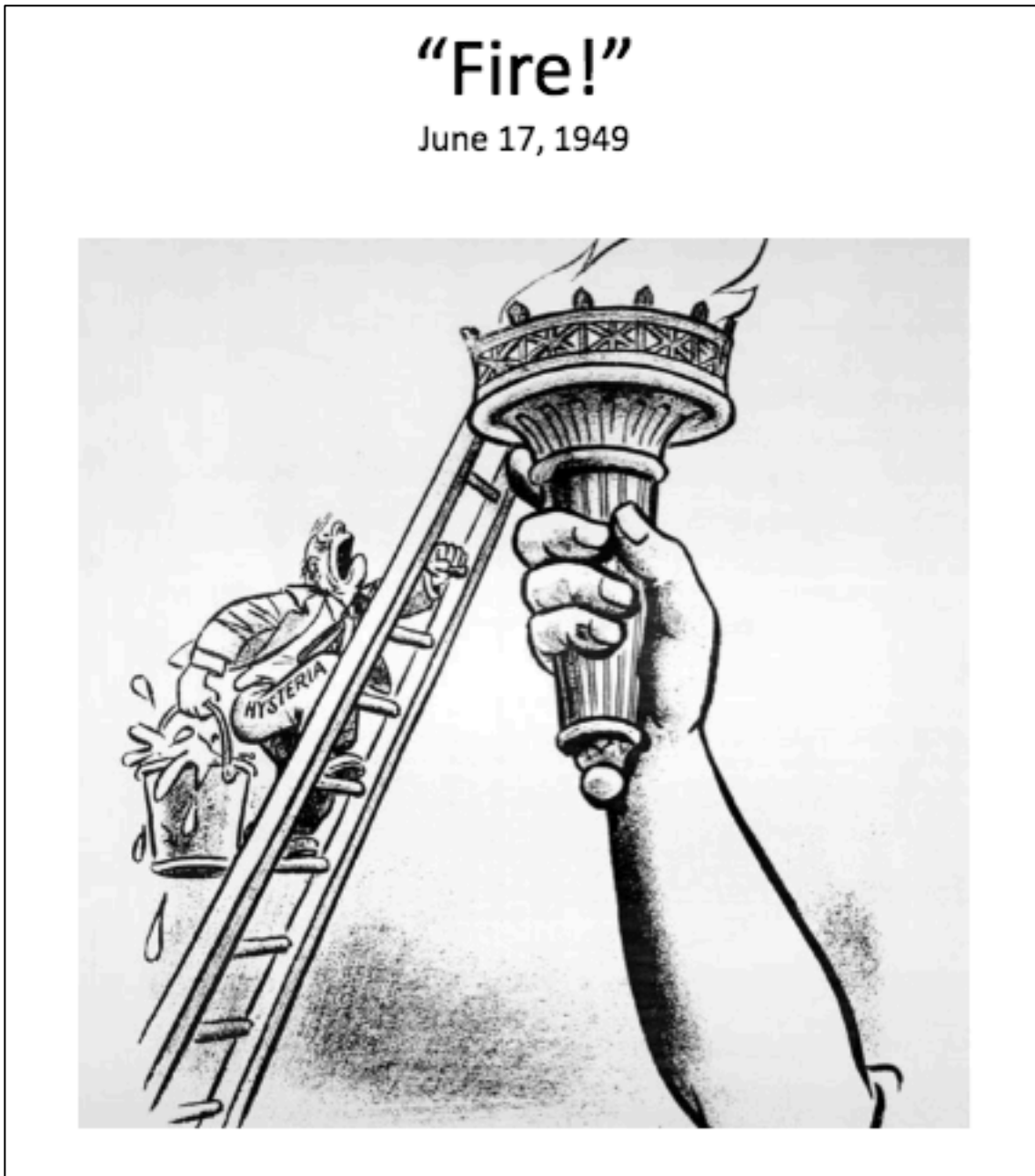
"It's Okay...We're Hunting Communists"

Created by Herb Block. Published in the *Washington Post* (18) October 31, 1947. Ink, graphite, and opaque white over graphite underdrawing on layered paper. [LC-USZ62-127327](https://www.loc.gov/loc/USZ62-127327)

Link for enlarged picture: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/00652190>



“Communism McCarthy Cartoons” PowerPoint



Access the full PowerPoint here: <http://collegeready.gatesfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/HS-History-Cold-War-Communism-McCarthy-Cartoons.pptx> ↗