

**TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES AND THE LOUISIANA DIGITAL LIBRARY****Louisiana Gumbo Lesson Resource**

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**THE POLITICAL CARTOON AS HISTORY**

<b>Subject</b>	Social Studies
<b>Grades</b>	Middle through high school
<b>Time Frame</b>	2-3 days, 50-minute periods

**Lesson Abstract**

Students will use primary source cartoons (political and editorial cartoons and caricatures) to investigate how artists and political commentators use cartoons as social, political and historical commentary. Students will then use a current event situation or individual to produce an original political cartoon. The lesson culminates with students critique peer presentations.

This lesson integrates primary historical documents and artifacts housed in the LOUISiana Digital Library, <http://louisdl.louislibraries.org>, with classroom instruction.

**Lesson Format**

Critical thinking and analysis, technology-based lesson, current events investigation, primary source investigation, peer collaboration.

**Objectives**

Students will

1. use analysis guidelines to evaluate primary source cartoons
2. use technology resources and Internet cartoon collections to research cartoon as historical analysis and interpretation
3. demonstrate their understanding of effective historical and documentary cartoon by producing a cartoon item that illustrates a current event situation

**Louisiana Benchmarks****Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations:**

- H-1A-M2 demonstrating historical perspective through the political, social, and economic context in which an event or idea occurred;
- H-1A-M4 analyzing historical data using primary and secondary sources;
- H-1A-H2 explaining and analyzing events, ideas, and issues within a historical context;
- H-1A-H3 interpreting and evaluating the historical evidence presented in primary and secondary sources;
- H-1A-H4 utilizing knowledge of facts and concepts drawn from history and methods of historical inquiry to analyze historical and contemporary issues;

**Educational Technology Standards:**

- Make informed choices among technology systems, resources, and services.

- Demonstrate knowledge and skills of Internet use and other resources consistent with acceptable use policies including the legal consequences of plagiarism and the need for authenticity in student work through an understanding of copyright issues.
- Refine knowledge and enhance skills in keyboarding, word processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheets, databases, multimedia, and telecommunications in preparing and presenting classroom projects.
- Collaborate (e.g., desktop conferencing, e-mail, on-line discussions) with peers, experts, and others to compile, synthesize, produce and disseminate information, models, and other creative works.
- Use appropriate technology to locate, retrieve, organize, analyze, evaluate, and communicate information for problem solving and decision making.

### Materials

- Copies of current newspapers and/or news-oriented magazines.
- Computers; ratio of 1 computer per 1 student group
- Access to the Internet and the LOUISiana Digital Library Internet site, <http://louisdl.louislibraries.org>.
- The Political Cartoon as History Browsing Guide
- Cartoon Rubric
- Peer Evaluation of Cartoons Chart
- The Political Cartoon as History Student Worksheet

### Pre-lesson Preparation

1. Make 1 copy per student of the Political Cartoon as History Student Worksheet, the Evaluation of Political Cartoon Presentations Guideline Chart and the Cartoon Rubric.
2. Gather copies of newspapers and news magazines. Students will use these to research current issues in the news.
3. Divide the class into groups of 2 or 3 students.
4. As needed, schedule or plan for access to computers. Each group of students will need access to a computer and an Internet connection.

### Lesson Procedures:

1. In a whole class setting, discuss the meaning of *political cartoon*, *caricature* and *bias*. Include other words as needed.
2. Explain that students will work with a partner to complete an activity that will introduce them to political cartoons in history. They will also apply what they learn to create an original political cartoon of an individual or event in current news.
3. Using one of the political cartoons pictured on the Political Cartoons as History Browsing Guide, display a cartoon for the class to view. Ask students to examine the cartoon quietly and write their thoughts on a sheet of paper. Allow 3-4 minutes for students to study the cartoon.
4. Discuss student findings; write student responses on the board.
5. Examine the cartoon together using questions from the Political Cartoon as History Student Worksheet. Compare these responses with the individual responses that were written on the board.

6. Distribute copies of the Political Cartoon as History Student Worksheet.
7. Examine the cartoon together using the worksheet questions. Compare the collaborative analysis answers with the individual responses written on the board.
8. Explain that using the guide questions while studying a political cartoon helps students consider all aspects of the visual in determining the author's/artist's intent.
9. Student research phase. Explain the activity directions to the class and allow student groups to begin the activity. Each group of students will need access to a computer with Internet access. Students will use the political cartoon worksheet questions and browsing guide to discover how historians and political commentators use political cartoons. Allow enough time for completion.
10. Whole class debriefing: discuss student worksheets.
11. Allow each set of partners to use the time remaining to search newspapers and news magazines for current event issues or individuals. Partners should make their choice by the beginning of the next class session.
12. Day 2. Student groups/partners will use an event or person from the news to produce an original political cartoon. Research historical event and use MS Publisher or Word to produce an effective representation of their event. Students will use MS PowerPoint, Paint, MS Word or original drawing and scanning equipment to produce an effective cartoon display that illustrates a current event situation or individual. Follow the Cartoon Rubric guidelines.
13. **Cartoon Gallery:** Display student cartons as in a museum gallery. Students use the Cartoon Rubric and the Peer Evaluation of Cartoons chart to view and evaluate peer displays.

### Assessment

- Cartoon Rubric
- Peer Evaluation of Cartoons Chart
- The Political Cartoon as History Student Worksheet

### Accommodations/Modifications Built Into the Lesson

- Cooperative grouping
- Small class segments
- Pre-teach vocabulary words
- Extensions/Explorations can be modified for individual needs
- Debriefing provides systematic feedback

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## Political Cartoons Browsing Guide



### The Cartoon As History

HOW USEFUL  
ARE CARTOONS  
TO AN  
HISTORIAN?



**Cartoons are an amusing primary source,  
but just how useful are they in revealing history?**

Cartoons can provide a contemporary comment on historical events, illustrate mode of dress and use of language, indicate social customs, show us what some people may have thought, and indicate public opinion. However, political cartoons can also project the beliefs of the artist. To assess the reliability and accuracy of history portrayed in political cartoons, one must first examine the elements of the cartoon and its author.

### Activity Instructions

Note: This lesson requires a computer and Internet connection.

1. Complete the political cartoon activity listed below as an introduction to political cartoons in history.
2. Use MS PowerPoint, Paint, MS Word or original drawing and scanning equipment to produce an effective a cartoon item that illustrates a current event situation. Follow the instructions listed below and the guidelines listed on the Cartoon Rubric.

### The Political Cartoon as History Browsing Guide

#### Directions

The political cartoons pictured on this page are located in the LOUISiana Digital Library (<http://louisdl.louislibraries.org>). To view a larger image of each cartoon, select the hyperlink located below each picture.

1. Select one of the following political cartoons to study. Use your computer and the hyperlink provided to view a larger image of the cartoon.
2. Answer the guide questions listed on the Political Cartoons Guide Questions Worksheet as you study your cartoon.
3. Complete your original political cartoon. Begin by selecting a person or event that is in the news. Use the questions on your worksheet and the Cartoon Rubric to help you design the political cartoon.

## Political Cartoons

[Give the axis the V sign, girls!](#)

[Grade I tires](#)

[No duds from here please!](#)

[John Bull before New Orleans](#)

[You hear me](#)

[Washing-Day among the Acadians on the Bayou Lafourche, Louisiana](#)



### Evaluation of Group Cartoons Chart

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Analyze each of the political cartoon displays and supply the following information:

<b>Display Number</b>	<b>Strengths of Cartoon Display; Suggestions for Improvement</b>	<b>Accuracy of Information; Suggestions for Improvement</b>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

### THE POLITICAL CARTOON AS HISTORY CARTOON RUBRIC

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

	Exceptional 5	Strong 4	Average 3	Needs Improvement 2	Weak 1
<b>Basic Information</b> Who produced the cartoon? When was the cartoon produced? Submitted on time					
<b>Graphics</b> Uses <u>colors</u> appropriately to convey a message. Colors do not distract from primary cartoon goal. Uses <u>symbols</u> appropriately. Symbols do not distract from primary cartoon goal. Uses <u>text style</u> and phrasing appropriately. Text style does not distract from primary cartoon goal					
<b>Content</b> Primary goal or purpose is evident. Contains accurate information. Identity of historical period/event is evident Arrangement of the cartoon elements (color, text, symbols, shapes) successfully conveys the intended message. Spelling and grammar appropriate to the message (if unconventional formats are used, the artist provides footnote explanation)					
<b>Totals</b>					

Poster Score \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ pts                      \_\_\_\_\_ %