Teaching with Primary Sources and the LOUISiana Digital Library

Louisiana Gumbo Lesson Resource

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Political Cartoonists: Meet John Churchill Chase

March is National Humorists are Artists Month

Subject: Social Studies
Grade Level: 8, 11

Overview
This springboard lesson introduces students to Louisiana political humorist/analyst John Churchill Chase and provides a beginning point for student research into the significance of political cartoons as history. Students examine historical cartoons and use contemporary issues to produce original political cartoon art.

Students use visual and textual clues embedded in political cartoons as the basis of further research and discussion into historical and contemporary issues.

Approximate Duration: 1 or2 50-minute period(s)

Content Standards:
- **History: Time, Continuity, and Change**   Students develop a sense of historical time and historical perspective as they study the history of their community, state, nation, and world.

Benchmarks:
- **H-1A-M4**   analyzing historical data using primary and secondary sources;
- **H-1D-M3**   identifying and discussing the major conflicts and issues in Louisiana's past;

Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs):
- **Historical Thinking Skills**
  Grade 8
    67. Analyze given source material to identify opinion, propaganda, or bias (H-1A-M4)

Interdisciplinary Connections:
- **English/Language Arts : Standard 1**   Students read, comprehend, and respond to a range of materials, using a variety of strategies for different purposes.

Educational Technology Standards:
- Determine when technology is useful and select the appropriate tool(s) and technology resources to address a variety of tasks and problems.

Objectives:
Students will
- Use reading comprehension skills and available technology to locate, select, and synthesize information from a political cartoon to acquire and communicate knowledge about events, ideas, and issues;
- Demonstrate historical perspective by participating in a class discussion identifying the historical basis/content of selected cartoons;

- Analyze a political cartoon to identify opinion, propaganda, or bias.

Lesson Materials and Resources:
- John Chase, Political Cartoonist
- Drawing of the shooting of Huey Long
- Political Cartoon Summary Card
- Cartoon Rubric
- Observation Form
- For Lesson Extensions:

  o Oral Presentation Rubric
  o Essay Rubric
  o Cartoon Peer Critique Form

Technology Tools and Materials:
Hardware: Computers, 1 per student or set of partners (Can be executed with 1 classroom presentation computer); Internet access
Software: Browser software
Websites
- **John Chase, Political Cartoonist**

- **Drawing of the shooting of Huey Long**

Background Information

Background of Political Cartoons

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.

Although the history of political cartoons in what is now the United States dates back to the days of Benjamin Franklin, their use as a daily commentary on the news did not begin until the end of the nineteenth century when advances in technology made it possible to reproduce drawings without the laborious and time-consuming process of creating woodblock engravings. Until the 1880s political cartoons were primarily confined to weekly and monthly magazines. Carried out in the pages of Harper's Weekly, Thomas Nast's famous campaign to oust the Tweed Ring relied upon effective caricature and portrayals of long-term problems rather than a day-to-day commentary on its activities.

Background: John Chase

John Churchill Chase (1905 - 1986) was a nationally recognized Louisiana cartoonist and writer. He lived in New Orleans and was known for his editorial cartoons and his works on the history of New Orleans and Louisiana.

Chase attended the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts and worked as assistant cartoonist at the Chicago Tribune on the popular comic strip "Gasoline Alley." In 1927 he returned to New Orleans to become editorial cartoonist for the New Orleans Item, later renamed the "The States-Item".

His most well-known books are Louisiana Purchase: an American Story and Frenchmen, Desire, Good Children and Other Streets of New Orleans. The later relates the history of New Orleans through the naming of its streets.

Chase did editorial cartoons on New Orleans television (WDSU) during the 1960s and a mural depicting the history of New Orleans in cartoons for the main branch of the New Orleans Public Library. He taught New Orleans history at Tulane University and cartooning at the University of New Orleans.

He also did a series of cartoons featuring the Texas Longhorns' mascot "Bevo" for the University of Texas at Austin in the 1950s and 1960s.

Chase, John Churchill. Frenchmen, Desire, Good Children and Other Streets of New Orleans, 1st ed. New Orleans: Crager, 1949.

Lesson Procedures:
Pre-Lesson Procedure

- Make copies of the Political Cartoon Summary Card, 1 per student.
- Students work with a partner; use selection method appropriate to class.
- *Suggestion:* To introduce students to the concept of political cartoons, you might wish to use the LOUISiana Gumbo lesson Cartoon as History as an introductory exercise.

Procedure

1. View a contemporary political cartoon with the class and discuss what makes the cartoon effective or ineffective. Discuss the author/artist's intent, audience, etc.
2. Explain that political cartoons can reveal much about the people and events that occurred during the time in which the cartoons were created. Remind students that artifacts--documents, songs, paintings and political cartoons—were created by someone for a specific reason and usually for a specific audience. Tell students they will view a political cartoon from history and use embedded visual and textual clues to gather information from the cartoon. They will then use that

information to determine the intended audience and reason for the creation of the cartoon and to identify propaganda and/or bias as presented in the cartoon.

3. Discuss or distribute copies of the Cartoon Rubric guidelines and discuss what elements make a political cartoon effective

4. Use the historical background information and the pictures at the following website to introduce John Chase to students. **John Chase, Political Cartoonist**

    Note: photo metadata (below the photos) contains information about the
    photos and Chase)

5. Explain that students will work with their partner to examine one of Chases' cartoons, **Drawing of the Shooting of Huey Long**, to discover how political cartoons are used to depict/relate historical events. Make certain students understand the meaning of bias before proceeding.

6. NOTE: If students are unfamiliar with the story of Louisiana Governor Huey Long, provide a brief historical overview of Governor Long and the events surrounding his assassination.

7. Distribute one Political Cartoon Summary Card to each student. Ask students to open the website **Drawing of the shooting of Huey Long**

8. Note: Do not discuss the cartoon until students have had an opportunity to examine it. [Note: For a one computer classroom, use the presentation computer to display the computer so that all students may view it.]

9. Ask students to view the cartoon and respond to the questions on their Cartoon Summary Card.

10. Whole class discussion: Discuss the political cartoon using the Political Cartoon Summary Card information. Encourage students to base their statements on visual and/or textual clues provided in the cartoon. Explain how each character's clothes and language can be used to help determine their identity. (Demonstrate how to decode textual and contextual clues in the cartoon.) Determine why each character is present in the cartoon.

11. Ask students to determine for whom the cartoon was created (audience) and the reason for the cartoon.

12. For further exploration: Suggested extensions. Divide students into groups and ask each to investigate one of the following topics. Use **Observation Form** as anecdotal record of peer collaboration process.
    a. The life and background of John Chase Present as a multimedia and/or oral presentation (Links to Oral Presentation Rubric and Multimedia Presentation Rubric are is included in the Materials list of this lesson)
    b. The Gasoline Alley cartoons Present as an oral presentation (Oral Presentation rubric link is included in the Materials list of this lesson)
    c. John Chase's book Louisiana Purchase: an American Story Present as a book report and/or oral presentation (Oral Presentation rubric link is included in the Materials list of this lesson)
    d. John Chase's book Frenchmen, Desire, Good Children and Other Streets of New Orleans. Present as a book report and/or oral presentation (Oral Presentation rubric link is included in the Materials list of this lesson)
    e. Chase's New Orleans-related political cartoons—select one issue/event he depicts, analyze his portrayal of the issue/event, research the issue/event and prepare a short background essay that explains the historical event. Present as a multimedia presentation. Links to rubrics are included in the Materials list of this lesson.

   f.   Chase's Louisiana-related political cartoons—select one issue/event he depicts, analyze
        his portrayal of the issue/event, research the issue/event and prepare a short background
        essay that explains the historical event. Present as a multimedia presentation. Links to
        rubrics are included in the Materials list of this lesson.

Assessment Procedures:

   Original Lesson: This is a critical thinking activity to encourage students to practice gathering facts
   using alternate information sources. Score based on participation as evidenced by the completed
   Observation Form or use the scoring guideline at the bottom of each **Political Cartoon
   Summary Card.**   Assessment instruments for student projects:
   • Cartoon Rubric
   • Observation Form
   • Oral Presentation Rubric
   • Essay Rubric
   • Cartoon Peer Critique Form

Lesson Extensions:
You may ask students to select a contemporary or historical issue and use the Political Cartoon Rubric
to create an original political cartoon. Create a classroom Museum Gallery display using student art.
For a peer critique of the cartoons, use the Cartoon Peer Review Form during gallery viewing.

Accommodations/Modifications:
Accommodations/Modifications Built Into the Lesson
• Cooperative grouping
• Small class segments
• Whole class debriefing sessions
• Pre-teach vocabulary words
• Extensions/Explorations can be modified for individual needs
• Debriefing provides systematic feedback

Reproducible Materials:
   •   Political Cartoon Summary Card
   •   Observation Form

Explorations and Extensions:
   • Search for related Teaching with Primary Sources and the LOUISiana Digital Library lessons:
     Battle of New Orleans: British Intrigue, Art as History: Battle of New Orleans, Teaching with
     Lyrics: The Battle of New Orleans, The Political Cartoon as History
   • Ask students to collect and analyze contemporary political cartoons.

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Political Cartoon Summary Card

Your Name _____   **Date** _____

Name of Political Cartoon _____ **Author/Artist** _____
Instructions: Examine the political cartoon and. Use textual and visual clues to determine the answer for each of the following questions.

Question	Answer	Rationale *Use evidence from the cartoon to support your answer*
Who do you think the characters in the cartoon represent?	*Location in cartoon:* Left: Center: Right:	
What time period does the cartoon depict?		
What event does the cartoon illustrate?		
What is the message of the cartoon?		

Political Cartoon Summary Card Rubric	
10 Points	Summary card complete, logical or reasonable responses made, provides reasoning based on cartoon information,
7 Points	Summary card complete, some information inaccurate but honest effort made, attempts to base reasoning on cartoon evidence
5 Points	Summary card complete, much information is inaccurate, some responses not based on cartoon evidence
1 Point	Summary card lacks some responses, information is inaccurate and/or not based on cartoon evidence.

Score _____ Comments: