

# Lesson Title: Using Political Cartoons to Create a Conversation

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**Subject/Grade Level:** Jr/Sr class. AP Government, U.S. History, American Studies, We the People

**Essential Question/s:** Can political cartoons be used to start a conversation about topics that are relevant to news issues and current events?

**Objective:** Political cartoons are quite often used to identify an issue in our contemporary culture that people can have opinions on.

**Time Needed:** standard class of 50 minutes or standard block class of 90 minutes. It also depends on how many cartoons you want to show.

**Introduction/Hook:** Show some historically important/relevant political cartoons and explain how cartoons have always been used to get a conversation started in America. The cartoon can be thought provoking, creative, funny, outrageous, shocking, ironic or sad. The point of it is for the reader to reflect on it and give it consideration.

## Procedures:

- 1.) Show Cartoons on PPT slide that has/had historical relevance. Explain the importance of cartoons.
- 2.) Tell them you are going to show some modern cartoons that may be thought provoking, creative, funny, outrageous, shocking, ironic or sad.
- 2.) Have students write by themselves ('cave moment') the answers to the following questions (appendix 1)
- 3.) Have them then break up in small groups of 3 or 4 ('water cooler moment') and talk about their findings.
- 4.) Have all groups come together in full class ('camp fire moment') and share answers.
- 5.) Discuss what their initial perception of the cartoon was. Did it change when they went to the water cooler moment? Did it change when they went to the camp fire moment?
- 6.) Is the cartoon valid? If so, what makes it valid?

**Accommodations/modifications:** You may have the students start by using small groups rather than the 'cave moment'. You may also limit the questions in the appendix 1 that need to be answered to fit your needs.

**Assessment:** You may choose to copy and paste a political cartoon or cartoons on a quiz and have students answer related questions, or you may include a political cartoon inside a broader quiz with questions. You may also have students find a political cartoon individually or in a group and present it to the class, while answering some of the questions from the appendix 1 sheet.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Questions students should answer:**

- 1.) What is a political cartoon?
- 2.) Why is understanding a political cartoon important?
- 3.) What is the topic of this cartoon?
- 4.) What are some of the important symbols, and their meanings, in this image?
- 5.) What components of this cartoon are exaggerated? Why?
- 6.) What information do you need to know in order to understand this cartoon?
- 7.) What is the author trying to get across to the reader or viewer?