



# Teaching Social Studies through Political Cartoons

## Resources and Strategies for the GED® Teacher

2019 GED® Annual Conference

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## The Tools of the Cartoonist

Cartoonists use five main elements to convey their point of view.

- **symbolism** - using an object to stand for an idea
- **captioning and labels** - used for clarity and emphasis
- **analogy** - a comparison between two unlike things that share some characteristics
- **irony** - the difference between the way things are and the way things should be or the way things are expected to be
- **exaggeration** - overstating or magnifying a problem or a physical feature or habit: big nose, bushy eyebrows, large ears, baldness



## Common Symbols Used in Political Cartoons

<b>Olive Branch</b>	<b>Peace, forgiveness</b>
<b>Vulture</b>	<b>Preying on others, death</b>
<b>Elephant</b>	<b>Republican Party</b>
<b>Donkey</b>	<b>Democratic Party</b>
<b>Phoenix</b>	<b>Something new and powerful arising from</b>
<b>Uncle Sam</b>	<b>U.S. Government, American people</b>
<b>Sphinx</b>	<b>A great king with absolute power</b>
<b>Tortoise</b>	<b>Someone who moves slowly, a winner</b>
<b>Hare</b>	<b>Someone who moves quickly, a loser</b>
<b>Capitol Building Dome</b>	<b>Congress</b>
<b>White House</b>	<b>The President</b>
<b>Scales, a balance</b>	<b>Supreme Court, justice, fairness</b>
<b>Eagle</b>	<b>American Government, the Constitution</b>
<b>Laurel Wreath</b>	<b>Victory</b>
<b>Statue of Liberty</b>	<b>Freedom</b>
<b>Liberty Bell</b>	<b>Freedom</b>
<b>Key</b>	<b>Immortality or dependence</b>
<b>Ocean</b>	<b>Strength</b>
<b>Money bags</b>	<b>Wealth</b>

## What is the Cartoonist Doing?

Symbolism



Caricature



Exaggeration/Distortion



Humor and Irony



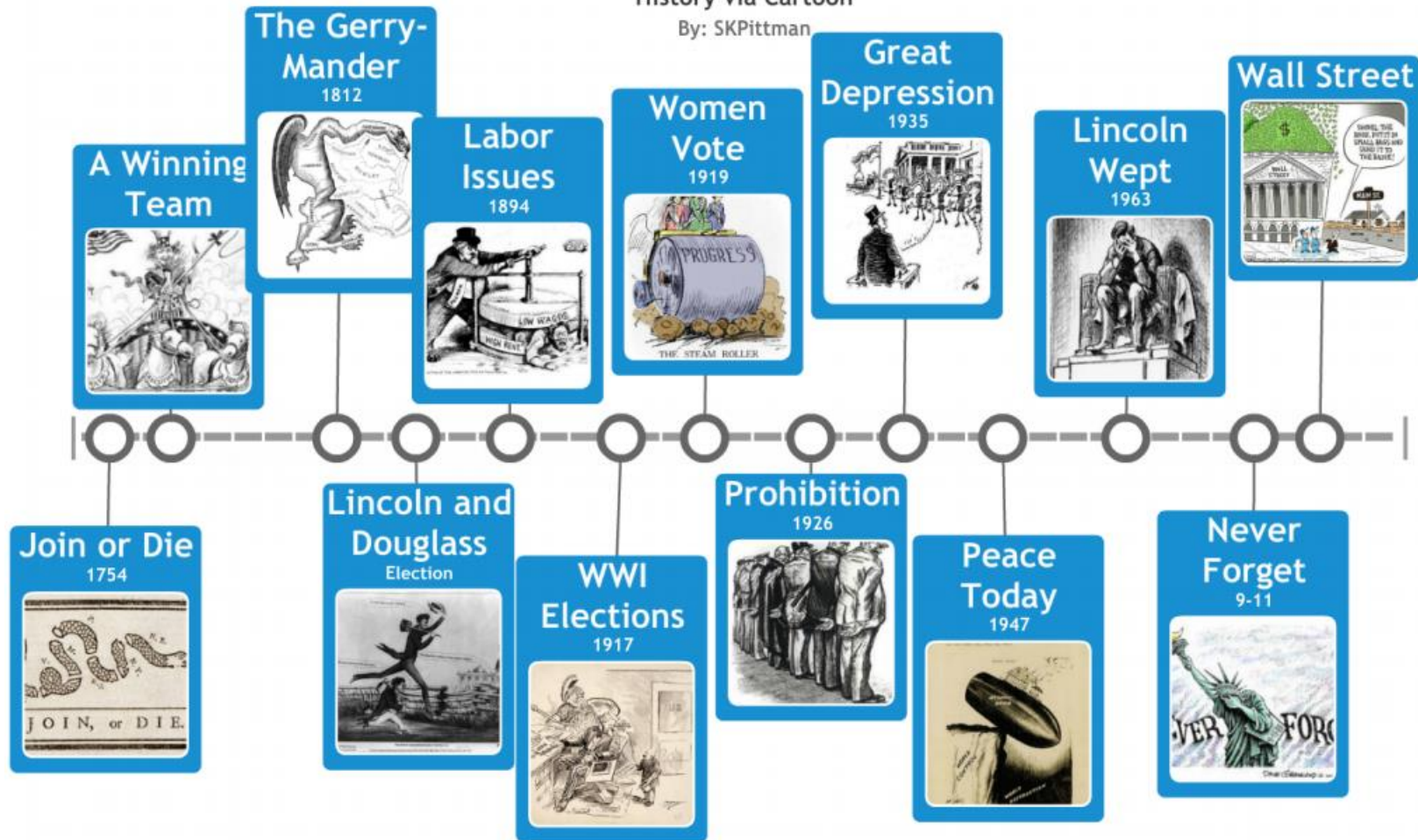
Stereotypes



# TIMELINE

History via Cartoon

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## Analyze a Cartoon (Novice)

### Analyze a Cartoon



#### Meet the cartoon.

What do you see?


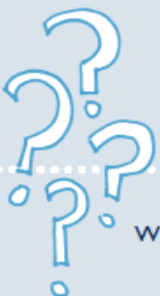
Is the cartoon?

☐ BLACK AND WHITE    ☐ COLOR

Is there a caption?




☐ YES    ☐ NO

If so, what does the caption tell you?



#### Observe its parts.

Are there people, symbols, or objects in the cartoon?



PEOPLE    SYMBOLS    OBJECTS

What are the people doing in the cartoon?

What are the objects used for in the cartoon?

Write two words that describe the cartoon.

#### Try to make sense of it.

Answer as best you can. The caption, if available, may help.



What do the symbols stand for in the cartoon?

Who drew the cartoon?

When do you think this cartoon was drawn?

What is the main idea of the cartoon?

List two parts (words or objects from the cartoon) that support the main idea.



#### Use it as historical evidence.


Where do you think we could find out more information about the people, symbols, or objects in the cartoon?

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# Analyze a Cartoon

Analyze a Cartoon	
<b>Meet the cartoon.</b>	
Quickly scan the cartoon. What do you notice first?	
What is the title or caption?	
<b>Observe its parts.</b>	
<b>WORDS</b>	<b>VISUALS</b>
Are there labels, descriptions, thoughts, or dialogue?	List the people, objects, and places in the cartoon.
	List the actions or activities.
<b>Try to make sense of it.</b>	
<b>WORDS</b>	<b>VISUALS</b>
Which words or phrases are the most significant?	Which of the visuals are symbols?
List adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed.	What do they stand for?
Who drew this cartoon?	When is it from?
What was happening at the time in history it was created?	
What is the message? List evidence from the cartoon or your knowledge about the cartoonist that led you to your conclusion.	
<b>Use it as historical evidence.</b>	
What did you find out from this cartoon that you might not learn anywhere else?	
What other documents or historical evidence are you going to use to help you understand this event or topic?	



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