# Louisiana State Museum

## Political Cartoons

Lesson linked to the common core and state standards

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### PERFORMANCE TASKS:

Students will identify and analyze political cartoons.

Students will identify and analyze ethnic stereotypes.

Students will use various sources to find political cartoons.

Students will compare and contrast different depictions of Native Americans.

Students will identify characteristics of Native American groups indigenous to Louisiana.

Students will use their newly acquired knowledge to create their own political cartoons.

### STUDENT LEARNING:

-work independently

-work collaboratively

- compare and contrast

-perform research

-interpret political cartoons

-describe ethnic groups

### STANDARDS:

**Social Studies – RH.6-12.2, RH.6-8.2, RH.6-12.9**

**Writing – W.6-8.2, W.6-12.4, W.6-12.8**

**Speaking and Listening – SL.6-12.1, SL.6-12.4,**

**Language – L.6-12.1, L.6-12.2,**

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### PERFORMANCE TASKS:

**Writing – write an informative/explanatory narrative in the form of a short fiction story**

**Speaking and Listening – present a story orally and listen to other stories**

**Language – demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar**

**Reading – identify key ideas and details**

**Science – Describe objects by their physical properties and explore the physical world using five senses**

### GRADING
**Teachers should grade their students based on the following:**
- **Ability to identify and analyze political cartoons**
- **Ability to express thoughts both verbally and in a written manner**

### MATERIALS
**Make sure you have a wide variety of examples of political cartoons. Additionally, provide students with access to various research mediums.**

# LEARNING MODULE:

**Pre-Visit Activities** prepare your students for a rewarding Museum visit. Before your visit, introduce your students to the concept of political cartoons.  You may follow the guidelines below.

1. Have a political cartoon on the board and address the following questions:

    - What are they?
    - Where can we find them?
    - What is their purpose?
    - How do they perpetuate stereotypes?
    - How can they be considered propaganda?

**Make sure you discuss "Father of the American Cartoon" Thomas Nast.**

2. As a whole group, show students various illustrations and have them decide if they are in fact political cartoons.  Make sure they explain why or why not.

3. Next, introduce students to the elements of a political cartoon.  When introducing each element be sure to have a visual representation on the board.

    - Captions
    - Titles
    - Spoken Words
    - Labels
    - Objects
    - People
    - Actions

4. Now show students a political cartoon that depicts Native Americans in a stereotypical light.  As a group identify if this is a political cartoon using the characteristics and elements of political cartoons.  Have students identify how the representation of the Native American is stereotypical.  Ask students if that is what they normally visualize when they think of Native Americans?  Why or why not?  How do these depictions impact society?

5. Teach students how to analyze political cartoons.

Teacher Notes: These websites are great resources for teaching political cartoons: **www.cartoonstock.com**, **http://www.eastconn.org/tah/1011SM1_NativeAmericanGeneralizationsStereotypelesson.pdf**, **http://aistm.org/cartoons3.htm**

# Activity 1:  Political Cartoon or Not?

Materials Required: Various examples of political cartoons mixed in with images that are not.

Activity Procedure

- Give students access to various illustrations either on the board or in a handout.
- Have them identify which are political cartoons and which are not.
- Have students explain why they think an illustration is a political cartoon.
- Instruct students to provide an analysis of each political cartoon.

**Definition:  Political Cartoon**

*An editorial cartoon that relates to current events.*

**Definition:  Thomas Nast**

*Known as "the father of the American cartoon".*

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# Activity 2:  Researching Political Cartoons

Materials:  Elements of political cartoons handout, access to various resources for research (internet, magazines, newspapers, pictures you have provided, textbooks, etc.

Activity Procedure
- Have students work independently to do research to find a political cartoon depicting Native Americans in a stereotypical way.
- Students should then break down the elements of their cartoons using the chart provided.
- Instruct students to write an analysis of the cartoons they find.
- Students should then present their information to the class.  (Whole or small group)

**Definition: Stereotype**

*To believe that all members of a group with a similar characteristic are exactly the same.*

**Definition:  Native Americans**

*Members of the original tribes found in the United States.*

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## Museum Visit

1. Teacher will show students a stereotypical picture of a Native American and ask the following questions.

- What is this a picture of?
- Is this what many of you visualize when you think of Native Americans?  Why?

2. Students will fill in a chart to describe this representation of a Native American.

(Title, clothing, hairstyle, body decoration, jewelry, weapons.)  Museum facilitator will lead a group discussion on the characteristics of this picture.

3. Teacher will provide students with the following information.

- "Today you will enter the first floor exhibit and look at our depictions of Native Americans.  I want you to compare these representations of Native Americans to those you would normally see in a political cartoon.  You must find three illustrations of Native Americans in the exhibit.  For each you will use your charts to write a description of how the people look.  Title of image, Describe their clothing, hairstyles, if they have any decoration on their bodies (paint/tattoos), jewelry, and weapons.

4. Students will now tour the first floor exhibit to complete their charts.

5. Students will answer the following questions once they have completed their charts.

- Do you think these are accurate or inaccurate representations of Native Americans?
- Why do you think museum depictions of Natives are different than those you see in the cartoons?
- Are these illustrations found in the exhibit political cartoons?  Why or Why not?
- Why would a museum choose to represent Native Americans in this way?

## Post-Visit

**1.** Put students in groups and have them brainstorm areas where they have seen misrepresentations of Native Americans.  (sports, old movies, cartoons, etc.)

2. Have students answer and discuss the following question with their group.

- How did these representations affect how you picture Native Americans?

3.  Have students create their own political cartoons in which Native Americans are portrayed accurately, while another group is portrayed in an exaggerated manner.  Make sure they include all of the elements of a political cartoon.  Allow them to use the internet, books, illustrations you provide, etc. to research how to properly depict a Native American.

## Supplemental Materials

The next three pages include the handouts necessary for this unit.  Please print the handouts for the museum activity and bring them with you to on the day of your visit.  Thank you.

**Name**_____

**Classroom Activity**

| Research to find a political cartoon depicting Native Americans. Use the chart to identify the elements of the cartoon. | In the space below write an analysis of your political cartoon. |
|---|---|
| **ELEMENTS OF A POLITICAL CARTOON** | |

| <u>Words</u> | <u>Images</u> | |
|---|---|---|
| **Captions** | **Objects** | |
| **Titles** | **People** | |
| **Spoken Words** | **Actions** | |
| **Labels** | | |

**Name**_____
**Museum Activity**

| Title | Clothing | Hairstyles | Body Decoration | Jewelry | Weapons |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Picture #1 | | | | | |
| Picture #2 | | | | | |
| Picture #3 | | | | | |

When you have completed your chart answer the following questions.

1. Do you think these are accurate or inaccurate representations of Native Americans? Why?

2. Why do you think museum depictions of Natives are different than what you see in the cartoons?

3. Are the illustrations found in the exhibit political cartoons? Defend your answer.

4. Why would a museum choose to represent Native Americans in this way?