**Cartoon Analysis Guide**

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| **Symbolism** | Cartoonists use simple objects, or **symbols**, to stand for larger  concepts or ideas.  After you identify the symbols in a cartoon, think about what the  cartoonist means each symbol to stand for. |
| **Exaggeration** | Sometimes cartoonists overdo, or **exaggerate**, the physical  characteristics of people or things in order to make a point.  When you study a cartoon, look for any characteristics that seem  overdone or overblown. (Facial characteristics and clothing are  some of the most commonly exaggerated characteristics.) Then,  try to decide what point the cartoonist was trying to make by  **exaggerating** them. |
| **Labeling** | Cartoonists often **label** objects or people to make it clear exactly  what they stand for.  Watch out for the different labels that appear in a cartoon, and ask  yourself why the cartoonist chose to **label** that particular person or  object. Does the label make the meaning of the object more clear? |
| **Analogy** | An **analogy** is a comparison between two unlike things. By  comparing a complex issue or situation with a more familiar one,  cartoonists can help their readers see it in a different light.  After you’ve studied a cartoon for a while, try to decide what the  cartoon’s main analogy is. What two situations does the cartoon  compare? Once you understand the main **analogy**, decide if this  comparison makes the cartoonist’s point more clear to you. |
| **Irony** | **Irony** is the difference between the ways things are and the way  things should be, or the way things are expected to be. Cartoonists  often use **irony** to express their opinion on an issue.  When you look at a cartoon, see if you can find any irony in the  situation the cartoon depicts. If you can, think about what point the  **irony** might be intended to emphasize. Does the irony help the  cartoonist express his or her opinion more effectively? |
| **Historical Context** | Knowledge of the time period represented in the political cartoon and the events coinciding with that same time period in order to apply **historical context** to interpret the artist’s perspective on the event or person(s) being depicted in the cartoon. |

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/activities/political-cartoon/lm_cart_analysis_guide.pdf>