

## **How to Address a Political Cartoon for Clearer Interpretation**

**Letter to the Editor, Published November/December 2000 in *Social Education***

### ***Political Cartoons***

I applaud Ray Heitzmann's article [September 2000], which discusses the use of political cartoons in the classroom. I am always in search of good sources and am glad to find a detailed list included in the article. According to Dr. Heitzmann, teachers often find that their students have trouble deciphering political cartoons. In preparation for the new state document-based essay questions, I have devised an easy-to-use format for students to follow:

1. Read the question on the exam pertaining to the political cartoon. This enables students to place themselves in the right frame of mind.
2. Read the political cartoon subtitle. The subtitle often leads the viewers to narrow their focus to comprehend the artist's view.
3. Look at the cartoon. Since the students know the question asked and they have the right point-of-view in which to interpret the cartoon, they can now address or look at the drawing with the right information.

Don't laugh, but once a student misinterpreted a convict's uniform because he confused it with his own striped pajamas!

Keep up the good work, Dr. Heitzmann.

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