A cartoon is a type of [visual art](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual_art) that is typically drawn, frequently [animated,](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animation) in   
an [unrealistic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism_(arts)) or semi-realistic style. The specific meaning has evolved, but the modern usage usually refers to either: an image or series of images intended   
for [satire,](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satire) [caricature,](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caricature) or [humor;](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humor) or a motion picture that relies on a sequence of illustrations for its animation. Someone who creates cartoons in the first sense is called a *[cartoonist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cartoonist)*[,](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cartoonist)[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cartoon#cite_note-1) and in the second sense they are usually called an *[animator](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animator)*[.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animator)

The concept originated in the [Middle Ages,](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages) and first described a preparatory drawing for a piece of art, such as a painting, [fresco,](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fresco) [tapestry,](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tapestry) or [stained glass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stained_glass) window. In the 19th century, beginning in *[Punch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punch_(magazine))* magazine in 1843, cartoon came to refer – ironically at first – to humorous artworks in magazines and newspapers. Then it also was used   
for [political cartoons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_cartoon) and [comic strips.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comic_strip) When the medium developed, in the early 20th century, it began to refer to [animated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animated_cartoon) films that resembled print cartoons.