

St Andrew's Secondary School
Humanities SBCS Skill – Analysing Political Cartoons

Name:.....(.....) Class:..... TG/CG:..... Date:.....

Learning Objective:

Students will be able to use different areas of analysis to understand any political cartoon.

ANALYSING POLITICAL CARTOONS FOR THE MAIN MESSAGE

1. Some key information

- a) All political cartoons have an underlying purpose/intention by the cartoonist.
- b) It can never be neutral. It is either positive or negative in its portrayal of any issue/topic so as to indicate the personal preference of the cartoonist.
- c) It can never be superficial i.e. what you see is what you get. It is usually what you do not see is what you need to get.

2. Disclaimer

- Not ALL areas listed in this analysis can be used to interpret the cartoon; how many areas of analysis differs cartoon from cartoon.
- How to present an answer for any political cartoon depends on what is the SBQ being asked e.g. inference, comparison or reliability.

3. Analysing Pictorial Source (eg. Cartoons or Photographs)

You may comment or analyse the following areas of the source...

- i) **Topic** - from the provenance or title
- ii) **Setting / Scene / Background**
- iii) - Peaceful or war scene Why this scene?)
- iii) **Characters** -> facial expression e.g. worried vs angry?
 - body language & actions e.g. playing chess using nuclear pieces
 - attire (what do they wear?)
 - size (how are the sizes of each character?)
- iv) **Symbols / Metaphors / Personification** eg. Objects such as a hammer may not represent a tool but violence. Animals such as a dove may not represent an animal but peace.
- v) **Captions / Words**
 - Pun (clever use of language to refer to 2 different meanings of the same word or words with the same sounds at the same time)
 - Any sarcasm/irony involved? (You have a different meaning from what you say)
- vi) **Intention**
 - Why did the author show the topic (person, animal, item, issue) in this perspective (positive or negatively)?
 - Is the author supportive or against the issue?

4. In Summary:

TSCSCI: Topic + Setting + Characters + Symbols + Captions + Intention
= Takashimaya Shopping Centre Should Close Immediately

CHECKLIST FOR ANALYSING POLITICAL CARTOON

Topic - Analyse this from the provenance, title of the cartoon	
Setting - What is the background of the cartoon?	
Character - Number of people? - Facial expression of the people? - Action taken? - Attire worn? - Size of the characters?	
Symbols - Are symbols used? - What do they really represent?	
Captions - What are the words? - Do you know what it means? - Are puns or sarcasm used? - If it is in a foreign language, check out the translation given	
Intention - How did the cartoonist portray the topic? - Is it positively or negatively? - What is the cartoonist's stand on the topic? - Is he against or supportive of the topic?	