

## Creating an Editorial/Political Cartoon

Create a political cartoon and draft an accompanying explanation.

### **Advice:**

**Submerge yourself in cartoons.** Examine B&W cartoons of old and modern, colorful depictions. Notice the different formats and styles. For techniques and ideas, look at some examples, old and current, with these links:

[Politico's Cartoon Carousel](#)

[USA Today Cartoons](#)

[Library of Congress](#)

[Harper's Week Historical](#)

[Berryman at Archives](#)

[Herb Block Foundation](#)

**Notice the elements.** What symbols or objects did the cartoonist include? What was the cartoonist expressing with those symbols or objects? Does the cartoonist exaggerate anything? A politician's physical features? Any caricatures? What labels has the cartoonist included? Why? Political cartoons are frequently allegorical and sometimes make for a parody of some existing book, song, movie, show, etc. Do you see any such analogies in the examples you examined?

**Peruse news or historical sources for topics.** If you keep up with news stories, you might get an idea for a cartoon by jarring your memory with recent articles. Open two or three news sites and peruse the headlines for a story that interest you. Reading 1 or 2 news articles will give you more insight and provide you more details to illustrate or express in the cartoon. You can find a good list of [News Sources here](#). For a historical cartoon, comb a chapter in a textbook, or read 1 or more basic online entries about an historical event or person.

**Draw a cartoon covering a topic you care about.** Cartoons are more frequently used to criticize, lampoon, and parody government officials, action, or inaction. They also praise accomplishments. They depict conflict and struggles. The more you care about the subject, the easier it will be to create the cartoon.

**Consider using common, easy symbols.** Government buildings, recognizable places, and inanimate objects can easily convey a message, and may be easier to draw/create. The Capitol Building, Oval Office, the Supreme Court, a general courtroom, a gavel, scales of justice, the Constitution, Uncle Sam, and political party mascots are commonly seen in cartoons.

**Be selective with words,** labels, titles, and captions, speech/thought bubbles. You only have so much space to convey the idea(s), so write out some different options before deciding on the final phrase(s)/letters on the page.

**Use the tools you like.** Cartoonists today still use everything from Crayons to computers. Black and white drawings and line art might effectively deemphasize the artwork and more so emphasize the subject/message. If the cartoon is to be placed online, it would almost have to be in color. Remember the human eye tends to flow/read left-to-right.

### **The cartoon must:**

- Be well thought-out and well-designed
- Be your original creation
- Emphasize some government function/event/person/concept
- Show your understanding of government/politics

### **The Explanation Must:**

- Specifically explain the event/concept/person/etc.
- Point to and explain the symbols, components, etc. in your cartoon
- Roughly cite or list sources you used in coming up with the cartoon
- Be typed, 1 page or less