“We all love a good political cartoon. Whether we agree with the underlying sentiment or not, the biting wit and the sharp insight of a well-crafted caricature and its punch line are always deeply satisfying.

In the hands of a great cartoonist, a simple line drawing has extraordinary power to slice through political spin and rhetoric; to clearly illuminate an otherwise hidden truth.”

Excerpt from the Behind the Lines 2015 Foreward by Peter Greste
How to use this resource

Welcome to the Museum of Australian Democracy’s resource Hidden Meaning Revealed. This resource is designed to help students from years 5-12 explore the wonderful world of political cartoons — what they are, what they show and why they’re an important part of our Australian democracy.

The resource covers 8 topics/themes on political cartooning. Teachers and students are welcome to unpack all 8 topics in the order presented or alternatively, each topic independently. Each topic includes relevant political cartoon examples from our previous Behind the Lines exhibitions. Questions are provided to help guide students through an understanding of the chosen topic/theme. These questions can be simplified or extended by teachers as required.

Additional relevant resources are also available on our Political Cartooning website. These include:

**PowerPoint**
PowerPoint presentations and teacher notes/questions covering the following topics:
1) What is a Political Cartoon?
2) How to Analyse a Political Cartoon
3) Humour and Caricature
4) Time to Draw a Caricature! — 4 Politicians, step by step instructions by cartoonist Andrew Hore

These PowerPoints are also available on the website in:
* slide-share format for ease of display in the classroom, either on an interactive whiteboard or individual student devices
* pdf format with additional teacher notes to aid differentiation of classroom discussion.

**Video**
To accompany the caricature instructions by Andrew Hore, there is a 7 minute video of Andrew discussing the role of political cartooning in our democracy and what students can learn about our freedom of speech and freedom of expression through analysing them.

Selection of political cartoons
We have selected a range of political cartoons from previous years Behind the Lines exhibitions and arranged them under a number of themes that are relevant to the Australian Curriculum. This selection will assist students and teachers find additional cartoons of relevance to their curriculum area.

We hope you enjoy exploring these resources — more information can be found at the following MoAD Learning websites:


MoAD Learning, 2016
Questions

1) Look at the title of the cartoon and the date of publication. Consider what world events were occurring at the time and how they were affecting Australia.

2) Which politician is the ‘farmer’ meant to be in this cartoon?

3) Focus your attention on the stature and physicality of the man — consider how the cartoonist has depicted his mood in the cartoon and what this is telling us about the ‘farmer’s’ objectives.

4) What is he doing and why. Examine the symbols evident on the rabbits and consider what the rabbits are meant to represent. Look at the environment they are in and what has happened to it. Why has the cartoonist chosen to use the rabbits as a symbol here and what is it saying about their effect?

5) Focus your attention on the written sign in the cartoon. Consider what further information this can tell you about the political party the politician is a member of and what their viewpoint was of the issue being discussed.

6) Do you believe a cartoon like this would be printed in the Australia in the 21st Century. Why/why not? Discuss.

Want to know more?

To find out more about how other people were responding during this period of history:

The Petrov Affair - webquest

Art is a Weapon

Political Cartooning — MoAD Learning

John Frith – online collection
It is important to consider the social context in which a political cartoon has been created. Understanding social changes across time and place can help one be able to analyse the meaning of cartoons — through them you can view values.

Cartoons might depict values that are being challenged, debated or contested in society.

Questions

1) What can the above cartoons tell you about the social values that may have existed at the time of publication?

2) What are the apparent values within the cartoons?

3) Are these values portrayed positively or negatively?

4) What do you suspect are the values of the cartoonists on the issues being explored?

Want to know more?

Find out more how Australian societies values have changed in regards to Indigenous issues:

- Marnti Warajanga — website resource Marnti Warajanga — A Walk Together, resource pack
- Political Cartooning — MoAD Learning

Values are another good way to identify the bias of the cartoonists or why situations and people are portrayed a particular way.
Looking funny – the point of caricature

In cartooning, caricature refers to the drawing of an individual that contains certain personal features that are exaggerated to ‘look funny’.

Questions

1) Which two politicians are being depicted in the cartoon above?

2) For each individual, examine which personal features are being caricatured.

3) Why has the cartoonist used the ‘evolution’ reference in this cartoon? What comment could they be making about the two individuals?

Want to know more?

Find out more about the characteristics of Australian Prime Ministers:

Australian Prime Ministers — Fact Sheets

Australian Prime Ministers Website

Political Cartooning — MoAD Learning

The evolution of Tony Abbott, Rocco Fazzari, 2013
Our Democratic Process

Hidden Meaning Revealed
Analysing Political Cartoons

Questions

1) Who is the speaker or individual meant to represent?

2) Examining the captions – whose policies (and which policies) is this individual supporting?

3) What comment is the cartoonist making about Australia’s democratic process?

4) How might this cartoon influence people’s opinions of:
   • the individual being represented?
   • a political party?
   • a political issue?

5) Do you believe cartoonists have the power to sway opinion? Discuss your reasoning. If not, why not. If so, is this a good thing?

Want to know more?

Find out more about our democratic process and stories of democracy:

Founding Documents — Australia’s Foundation as a Nation

Exploring Democracy — timeline, trails, people

Australian Prime Ministers Website

Shorten to the point,
Fiona Katauskas, 2015
Stereotypes in cartoons may often appear as either:
- characters,
- clothing,
- attitudes and/or values.

**Questions**

1) Identify the stereotypes being explored in these cartoons.

2) How has the overall message of each cartoon been revealed by portraying the stereotypes in this way. Is it effective? Why/why not?

**Want to know more?**

- The Franklin River Debate 1983 – Classroom Role Play
- Political Cartooning – MoAD Learning
- John Frith – online collection
- Billy Hughes at War
‘Caption, Caption’ — Read all about it

Cartoonists use different techniques to help get their message across.

Some use CAPTIONS to help reinforce their ideas.

Consider: Would you understand the message of the following cartoon without the captions?

Sometimes the TITLE of the cartoon can be enough.

Consider: What does the following title tell us about Julia Gillard?

Questions

1) What is the overall message of this cartoon?

2) What is the benefit of using detailed captions in the cartoon to transfer the cartoonist’s message?

3) Do you believe the cartoon would be as effective without as many captions? Why/why not?

Want to know more?

Political Cartooning – MoAD Learning

Billy Hughes at War
Time to laugh —
or is it?

Humour is an important part of most political cartoons, and is a very effective way for cartoonists to communicate their message to their audience.

Reminder — types of humour:

Irrony - the literal meaning of what is presented is the opposite of what is intended.

Satire - where are artist exposes and denounces vice, folly, abuses to scorn and ridicule.

Sarcasm - praise which is really an insult; sarcasm generally involves malice, the desire to put someone down.

Questions

1) Can you identify the type of humour used in each of these cartoons?

2) Explain how the characters in each cartoon are being used to strengthen the message of the cartoon.

3) Who is the joke about - is this easy to distinguish? What symbols has the cartoonist used to assist the viewer understand the context of each cartoon.

4) Why is humour being used in these cartoons - is it an effective way to deal with the content?

Want to know more?

Political Cartooning — MoAD Learning

John Frith – online collection
“It’s so hot right now” – popular culture

Cartoonists often use references to popular culture to make it easy for people to understand their message. By portraying politicians as characters from a movie or book, cartoonists can easily tell a story in their cartoon — and make a joke.

Questions

1) The cartoons below reference some popular films. What are the films?

2) Make a list of the characteristics and traits of the movie characters — from either your knowledge of the films or from analysing the depiction of the characters in the cartoons. Now consider the more commonly understood characteristics and traits of the real politicians.

3) Why do you think the cartoonist has chosen to portray the politicians as these specific characters? What is the overall comment they are making about the politicians characteristics in terms of how they relate to the topic of each cartoon?

Want to know more?

Political Cartooning – MoAD Learning
HASS
Civics and Citizenship
History
English
Media Arts
Visual Arts

• Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges (ACHASSI094)
• Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present (ACHASSI099)
• Evaluate evidence to draw conclusions (ACHASSI101)

Year 6
• Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges (ACHASSI122)
• Examine different viewpoints on actions, events, issues and phenomena in the past and present (ACHASSI127)
• Evaluate evidence to draw conclusions (ACHASSI129)

Year 7
• Construct significant questions and propositions to guide investigations about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges (ACHASSI152)
• Analyse primary and secondary sources to identify values and perspectives on people, actions, events, issues and phenomena, past and present (ACHASSI157)
• Evaluate and synthesise evidence to draw conclusions (ACHASSI159)
**Civics and Citizenship**

**Year 7**
- Identify, gather and sort information and ideas from a range of sources (ACHCS055)
- Critically analyse information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues (ACHCS056)

**Year 8**
- The freedoms that enable active participation in Australia’s democracy within the bounds of law, including freedom of speech, association, assembly, religion and movement (ACHCK061)
- How citizens can participate in Australia’s democracy, including use of the electoral system, contact with their elected representatives, use of lobby groups, and direct action (ACHCK062)
- Identify, gather and sort information and ideas from a range of sources (ACHCS069)
- Appreciate multiple perspectives and use strategies to mediate differences (ACHCS071)

**Year 9**
- How citizens’ political choices are shaped at election time, including the influence of the media (ACHCK076)
- The influence of a range of media, including social media, in shaping identities and attitudes to diversity (ACHCK080)
- Critically evaluate information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues (ACHCS084)
- Account for different interpretations and points of view (ACHCS085)

**Year 10**
- The Australian Government’s role and responsibilities at a global level, for example provision of foreign aid, peacekeeping, participation in international organisations and the United Nations (ACHCK091)
- The challenges to and ways of sustaining a resilient democracy and cohesive society (ACHCK094)
- Account for different interpretations and points of view (ACHCS098)
- Recognise and consider multiple perspectives and ambiguities, and use strategies to negotiate and resolve contentious issues (ACHCS099)
- Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australian, regional and global contexts (ACHCS102)

**History**

**Year 7**
- Identify a range of questions about the past to inform a historical inquiry (ACHHS207)
- Draw conclusions about the usefulness of sources (ACHHS211)
- Identify the origin and purpose of primary and secondary sources (ACHHS209)

**Year 8**
- Identify a range of questions about the past to inform a historical inquiry (ACHHS150)
- Draw conclusions about the usefulness of sources (ACHHS154)
- Identify the origin and purpose of primary and secondary sources (ACHHS152)
- Identify and describe points of view, attitudes and values in primary and secondary sources (ACHHS155)

**Year 9**
- Identify and select different kinds of questions about the past to inform historical inquiry (ACHHS166)
- Evaluate and enhance these questions (ACHHS167)
- Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources (ACHHS169)
- Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of primary and secondary sources (ACHHS171)
- Identify and analyse different historical interpretations (including their own) (ACHHS173)

**Year 10**
- Identify and select different kinds of questions about the past to inform historical inquiry (ACHHS184)
- Evaluate and enhance these questions (ACHHS185)
- Identify the origin, purpose and context of primary and secondary sources (ACHHS187)
- Evaluate the reliability and usefulness of primary and secondary sources (ACHHS189)
- Identify and analyse different historical interpretations (including their own) (ACHHS191)

**Year 11 and 12**
- Identify links between events to understand the nature and significance of causation, change and continuity over time (ACHAHO01)
- Formulate, test and modify propositions to investigate historical issues (ACHAHO03)
- Frame questions to guide inquiry and develop a coherent research plan for inquiry (ACHMH004)
- Identify the origin, purpose and context of historical sources (ACHAHO07)
• Evaluate the reliability, usefulness and contestability of sources to develop informed judgments that support a historical argument (ACHAH009)
• Analyse and account for the different perspectives of individuals and groups in the past (ACHAH010)
• Evaluate contested views about the past to understand the provisional nature of historical knowledge and to arrive at reasoned and supported conclusions (ACHM1012)

English

Year 5
• Understand that patterns of language interaction vary across social contexts and types of texts and that they help to signal social roles and relationships (ACELA1501)
• Understand how to move beyond making bare assertions and take account of differing perspectives and points of view (ACELA1502)
• Understand how texts vary in purpose, structure and topic as well as the degree of formality (ACELA1504)
• Show how ideas and points of view in texts are conveyed through the use of vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions, objective and subjective language, and that these can change according to context (ACELY1698)

Year 6
• Understand how authors often innovate on text structures and play with language features to achieve particular aesthetic, humorous and persuasive purposes and effects (ACELA1518)
• Understand that cohesive links can be made in texts by omitting or replacing words (ACELA1520)
• Make connections between students’ own experiences and those of characters and events represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1613)
• Identify, describe, and discuss similarities and differences between texts, including those by the same author or illustrator, and evaluate characteristics that define an author’s individual style (ACELT1616)
• Compare texts including media texts that represent ideas and events in different ways, explaining the effects of the different approaches (ACELY1708)
• Analyse how text structures and language features work together to meet the purpose of a text (ACELY1711)

Year 7
• Understand how accents, styles of speech and idioms express and create personal and social identities (ACELA1529)
• Understand how language is used to evaluate texts and how evaluations about a text can be substantiated by reference to the text and other sources (ACELA1782)
• Identify and explore ideas and viewpoints about events, issues and characters represented in texts drawn from different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1619)
• Compare the ways that language and images are used to create character, and to influence emotions and opinions in different types of texts (ACELT1621)
• Analyse and explain the ways text structures and language features shape meaning and vary according to audience and purpose (ACELY1721)
• Use comprehension strategies to interpret, analyse and synthesise ideas and information, critiquing ideas and issues from a variety of textual sources (ACELY1723)

Year 8
• Understand how rhetorical devices are used to persuade and how different layers of meaning are developed through the use of metaphor, irony and parody (ACELA1542)
• Analyse how the text structures and language features of persuasive texts, including media texts, vary according to the medium and mode of communication (ACELA1543)
• Understand and explain how combinations of words and images in texts are used to represent particular groups in society, and how texts position readers in relation to those groups (ACELT1628)
• Recognise and explain differing viewpoints about the world, cultures, individual people and concerns represented in texts (ACELT1807)
• Identify and evaluate devices that create tone, for example humour, wordplay, innuendo and parody in poetry, humorous prose, drama or visual texts (ACELT1630)
• Analyse and evaluate the ways that text structures and language features vary according to the purpose of the text and the ways that referenced sources add authority to a text (ACELY1732)
• Explore and explain the ways authors combine different modes and media in creating texts, and the impact of these choices on the viewer/listener (ACELY1735)

Year 9
• Investigate how evaluation can be expressed directly and indirectly using devices, for example allusion, evocative vocabulary and metaphor (ACELA1552)
• Identify how vocabulary choices contribute to specificity, abstraction and stylistic effectiveness (ACELA1561)
• Understand how spelling is used creatively in texts for particular effects, for example characterisation and humour and to represent accents and styles of speech (ACELA1562)
• Explore and reflect on personal understanding of the world and significant human experience gained from interpreting various representations of life matters in texts (ACELT1635)

Year 10
• Understand that Standard Australian English in its spoken and written forms has a history of evolution and change and continues to evolve (ACELA1563)
• Understand how language use can have inclusive and exclusive social effects, and can empower or disempower people (ACELA1564)
• Understand that people’s evaluations of texts are influenced by their value systems, the context and the purpose and mode of communication (ACELA1565)
• Compare the purposes, text structures and language features of traditional and contemporary text in different media (ACELA1566)
• Understand how paragraphs and images can be arranged for different purposes, audiences, perspectives and stylistic effects (ACELA1567)
• Evaluate the impact on audiences of different choices in the representation of still and moving images (ACELA1572)
• Refine vocabulary choices to discriminate between shades of meaning, with deliberate attention to the effect on audiences (ACELA1571)
• Compare and evaluate a range of representations of individuals and groups in different historical, social and cultural contexts (ACELT1639)
• Analyse and explain how text structures, language features and visual features of texts and the context in which texts are experienced may influence audience response (ACELT1641)
• Evaluate the social, moral and ethical positions represented in texts (ACELT1812)
• Analyse and evaluate how people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts are represented in texts, including media texts, through language, structural and/or visual choices (ACELY1749)

Year 11 and 12
• explaining how texts are created in and for different contexts (ACEENO01)
• evaluating the choice of mode and medium in shaping the response of audiences, including digital texts. (ACEENO03)
• evaluating the impact of description and imagery, including figurative language, and still and moving images in digital and multimodal texts. (ACEENO07)
• purpose, taking into account that a text’s purpose is often open to debate (ACEENO08)
• personal, social and cultural context (ACEENO09)
• the use of imaginative, persuasive and interpretive techniques. (ACEENO10)
Media Arts

Years 5 and 6  
- Explore representations, characterisations and points of view of people in their community, including themselves, using settings, ideas, story principles and genre conventions in images, sounds and text (ACAMAM062)

Years 7 and 8  
- Analyse how technical and symbolic elements are used in media artworks to create representations influenced by story, genre, values and points of view of particular audiences (ACAMAR071)

Years 9 and 10  
- Experiment with ideas and stories that manipulate media conventions and genres to construct new and alternative points of view through images, sounds and text (ACAMAM073)  
- Evaluate how technical and symbolic elements are manipulated in media artworks to create and challenge representations framed by media conventions, social beliefs and values for a range of audiences (ACAMAR078)

Visual Arts

Year 5 and 6  
- Explore ideas and practices used by artists, including practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to represent different views, beliefs and opinions (ACAVAM114)  
- Explain how visual arts conventions communicate meaning by comparing artworks from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks (ACAVAR117)

Year 7 and 8  
- Develop ways to enhance their intentions as artists through exploration of how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes (ACAVAM119)  
- Analyse how artists use visual conventions in artworks (ACAVAR123)

Year 9 and 10  
- Present ideas for displaying artworks and evaluate displays of artworks (ACAVAM129)  
- Evaluate how representations communicate artistic intentions in artworks they make and view to inform their future art making (ACAVAR130)