

1Voice Lesson: Political Cartoons

In this lesson, students interpret a political cartoon to extend their understanding of First Amendment issues and recent controversies. Students explain the events depicted in the cartoon, analyze the techniques the cartoonist has used, and identify the cartoonist's point of view.

Understandings:

- Political cartoonists effectively use symbolism, humor, and caricature as tools to comment on a broad array of issues and personalities in the news, including First Amendment issues and controversies.
- Political cartoons, by engaging the public in discussions of important First Amendment issues, can deepen understanding of the importance of safeguarding these freedoms.

Framing Questions and Learning Activities:

How do political cartoonists provoke discussion on issues important to informed, engaged citizens? How do citizens "read" political cartoons for meaning and point of view?

1. Distribute copies of the editorial cartoons featured on channelonenetwork.com.

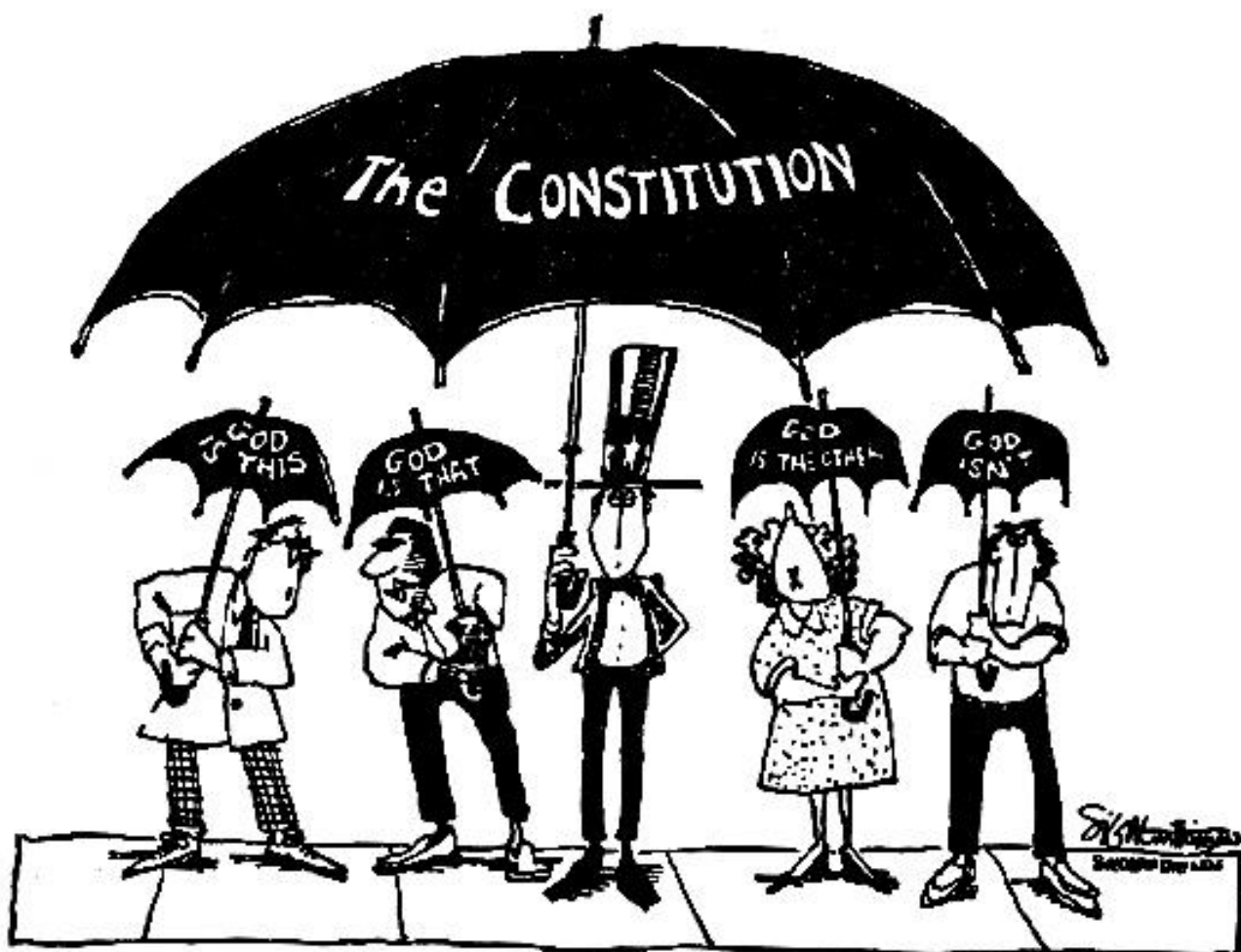
Ask students to apply their prior knowledge of the event or individuals to uncover the cartoon's meaning. Use the *Reading a Political Cartoon* handout to direct student inquiry. Discuss the meaning the students draw from the cartoon. Ask them to think about how they extracted this meaning from the cartoon?

2. Ask students to draw an original political cartoon that can be used to frame discussion of a recent First Amendment issue or controversy. Use the text, a roster of First Amendment Supreme Court cases, or recent headlines to launch a discussion of topics appropriately illustrated. Based on class discussion, students will understand that the original cartoons will illustrate content knowledge of the First Amendment, apply the techniques employed by professional cartoonists, and communicate clearly a point of view. Have students write a paragraph, explaining the issue or controversy depicted, identifying the techniques used, and identifying point of view. Publish student work on the bulletin board, in the halls, or on the school Web site.

Reading a Political Cartoon

Use these questions to structure your thinking about the meaning of a political cartoon.

- What objects or people are drawn?
- Are any words, phrases, dates, or numbers used to identify the objects or people?
- Does the cartoon have a caption?
- What meaning does the caption give to the drawing?
- Has the cartoonist used any symbols to convey meaning?
- What symbols are used and what do they mean?
- Has the cartoonist used wit and caricature to make a point?
- What is the meaning and point of view the cartoonist hopes to communicate?
- Who would agree with the cartoonist's point of view? Why?
- Who would disagree? Why?



Signe Wilkinson *Courtesy The Philadelphia Daily News*

Q. What is the First Amendment?



According to the Supreme Court...



it guarantees freedom of speech and the press...



except in real special cases...



like schools, where it could interfere with...



Kids learning to be good citizens.



WASSERMAN
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...MY PEOPLE DIED
BECAUSE OF THIS
FLAG!..

SO DID
MINE...

WALT
HANDELSMAN
©2000 THE
TIMES-
PICATUNE

Summers Courtesy The Orlando Sentinel

SAWYERS
THE ORLANDO
SENTINEL

THAT'S IT THEN,
THE BILL OF RIGHTS
IS FINISHED, BUT
CAN'T WE EXCLUDE
DISGUSTING RAP
GROUPS AND
CRAZY FLAG
BURNERS?

UNFORTUNATELY,
NO.



THE PILGRIMS CAME
HERE SEEKING FREEDOM
OF YOU KNOW WHAT.
WHEN THEY LANDED
THEY GAVE THANKS
TO YOU KNOW WHO.
BECAUSE OF THEM WE
CAN WORSHIP EACH
SUNDAY YOU KNOW
WHERE!



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