

CREATING POLITICAL CARTOONS

Political or editorial cartoons are a different and unique way to present an idea. Not only do they express a person's opinion about an issue, but also they often provoke thought and debate.

To create a good political cartoon, even one that is simple, requires the application of several elements. A cartoon uses words to express ideas and it also incorporates symbolism and allusions that the reader must interpret in order to grasp the meaning of the message.

Creating a good cartoon requires considering the following steps:

1. A political cartoon's goal is to make a point about some issue. It is important that the cartoon clearly represents the point to be made. You must think through your ideas and the issue at hand before you begin to draw.
2. The main point or idea needs to summarize all of the characteristics or elements of your cartoon. Your cartoon should draw the reader in and force him/her to make decisions about what is being said.
3. A political cartoon is not literal. It should express an idea through the use of analogies, symbols, or metaphors.
4. A political cartoon can use humor, exaggeration, and/or irony. Humor often provides an absurd perspective for the reader. The use of irony promotes some disharmony and requires the reader to look deeper for the meaning.
5. Exaggeration is used to deliver the "punch" in a political cartoon. It captures the reader's attention and often drives home the point or issue.
6. Caricatures are used in political cartooning to help identify a recognizable figure quickly. Most often they are not flattering or kind to the person being depicted. The goals of the cartoonist are to draw out strengths and weaknesses of the character and to stir up debate and emotions about the depiction.
7. A stereotype is a commonly held or accepted belief about a person, place, or thing. Stereotyping is another element that can be employed in cartooning. Stereotypes obscure the obvious and draw attention away from the unique elements of the issues. Sometimes they blend the issue to obscure what is really being presented.
8. In terms of drawing the elements of a cartoon, keep it simple. Don't clutter the cartoon by using too many elements. All of the words and visual elements in the cartoon should come together to make one comment or point.
9. Visual elements are the most important components of the cartoon. However, words and images work together. The visuals give the words their power.