

The Interim

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Curriculum Supplement For Schools

The *Interim Plus* is a periodical dedicated to educational matters and specifically designed to assist teachers in integrating relevant life issues in their lesson planning.

Editor: Dan Di Rocco

Design & Production: David Bolton

The *Interim Plus* is published Bi-Monthly by

The *Interim* Publishing Company

104 Bond St. Toronto, ON M5B 1X9

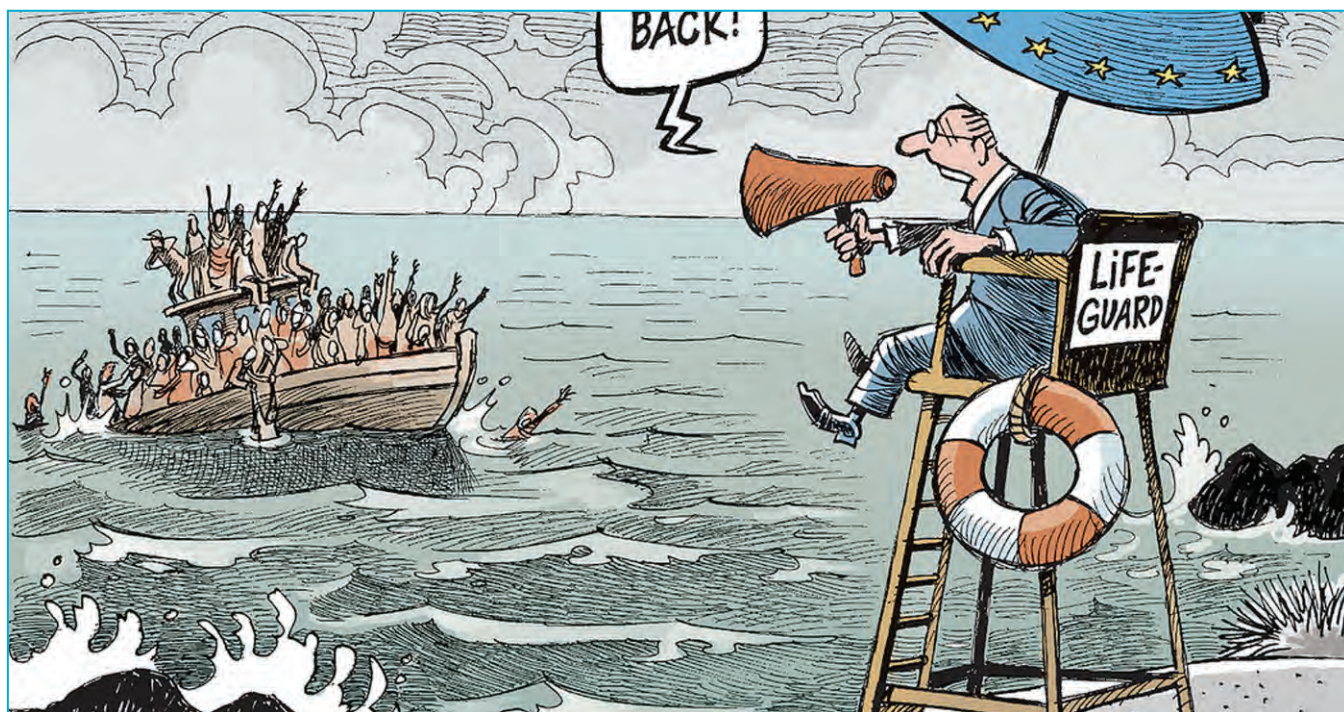
416-204-1687

interimplus@theinterim.com

May/June 2019 Edition: Volume 19 No. 5

Contents:

Climate Change	4	Federal Leaders . . . . .	.8	Petroleum Industry	12
Free Speech . . . . .	.5	Racism . . . . .	.9	Communism	12
Social Media . . . . .	.6	Immigration	10	Brexit	12
Abortion . . . . .	.6	Terrorism	10	Bioethics	13
Provincial Issues . . . . .	.7	Education	11	Technology	13
Euthanasia . . . . .	.8	First World War	11		



The final learning resource for this academic year is devoted to political cartoons, those graphic portrayals that grace the editorial page of newspapers, journals and magazines. This type of art has a long history. It is an excellent way to provoke discussion about current events.

The professional cartoonist with a few deft strokes of the pen or brush can capture a searing truth or move people to tears. They may encourage public debate or help expose corruption, or even hold the powerful accountable, whether that be an individual, a government, a business, or an organization. A sharp cartoon can help build empathy and compassion for a cause. It can also challenge us to see things in a new perspective.

A form of social commentary goes back to caveman days in the form of drawings. Later, in ancient Greece and Rome, people would carve or paint graffiti on walls, monuments and statues, to express their political opinion about rulers or candidates for the various public offices. The modern political cartoon probably started in England after the invention of the printing press.

Since the invention of the printing press in the sixteenth century, newspapers have been an integral part of educating the general public and more specifically that segment of the reading public interested in the social and political affairs of the day. Over time, cartoons have come to occupy an important place on the editorial page of newspapers.

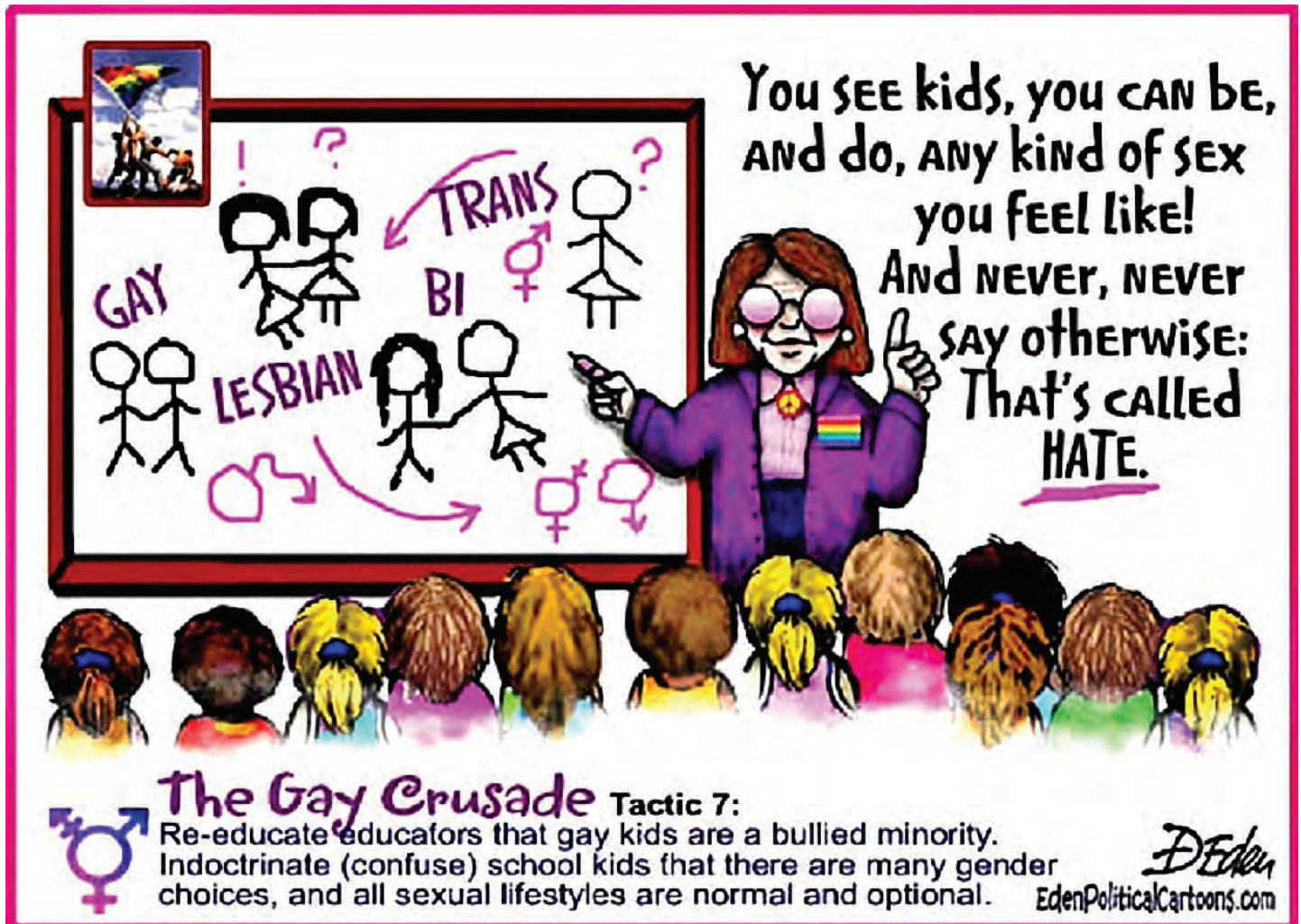
The claim is often made that a free press is essential to building and maintaining a free society. If journalism is a crucial component of a responsible and functioning democracy, students, as future citizens must be encouraged to think critically and thoughtfully about information that appears in newspapers and other print media.

The analyzing of political cartoons is a good exercise for teaching critical thinking. Despite print media's waning influence, people still read newspapers, learn from them and react to what they read. Everyone benefits from being well-informed about social, cultural and political issues. Teens can learn much through

the process of evaluating and understanding political cartoons.

The cartoons chosen are quite diverse as to their themes, locations, and historical periods. Most of them are taken from the current era and they depict a wide spectrum of political issues, controversies and personalities. The class could analyze these particular cartoons, or the teachers may wish to select other cartoons, or perhaps invite the students to make their own choices based on criteria provided by the teacher.

For the sake of covering several topics, teachers could divide the class into groups and assign to each group a different set of cartoons. For example, **Group A** handles climate change, free speech, social media, abortion and issues pertaining to provincial responsibilities in Canada; **Group B** takes on euthanasia, federal leaders, racism, immigration, terrorism, and education; **Group C** delves into World War I, the petroleum industry, communism, Brexit, bioethics, and technology. Topics could be as wide ranging as the teacher or individual student wants to make it.



Learning Outcomes

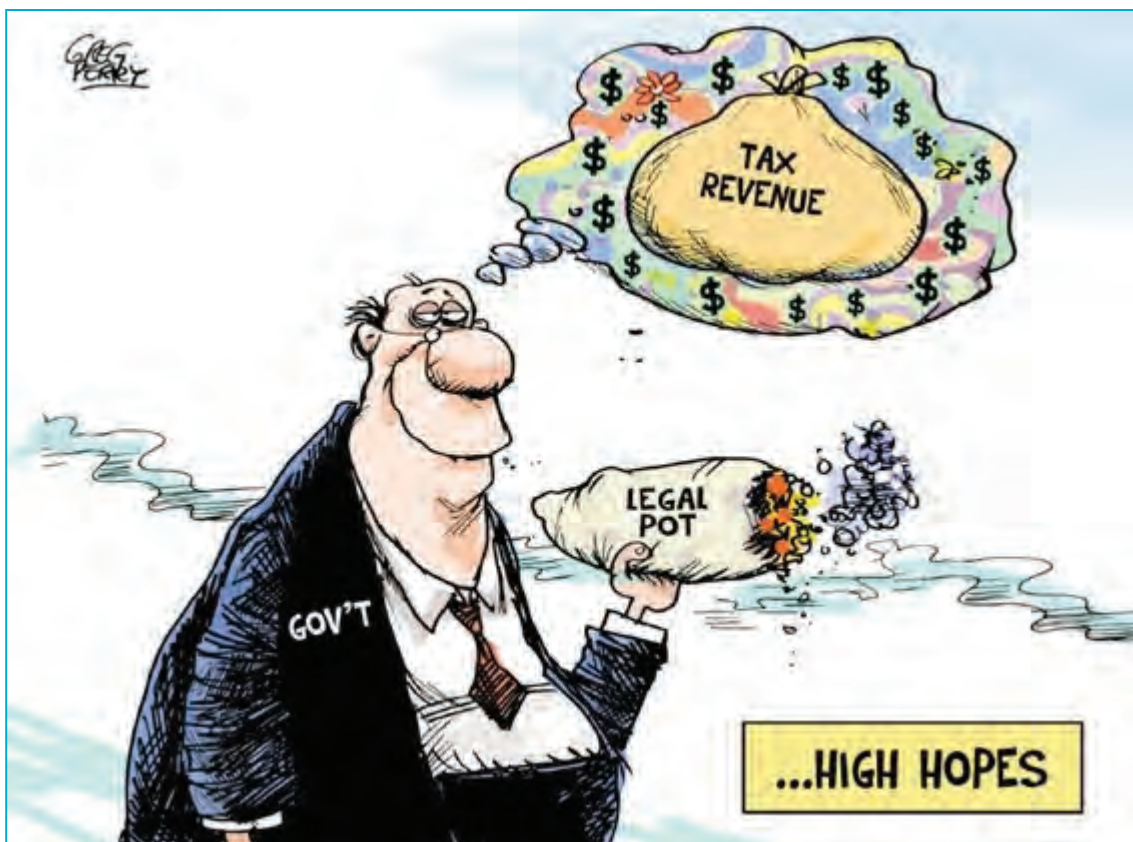
At the conclusion of the lessons the student should be able to:

- define an editorial
- explain the purpose of an editorial cartoon
- research and provide the context of the cartoon's theme
- appreciate the relative merits of the cartoon as an art form
- recognize potential bias in the cartoon
- identify the cartoon's relative effectiveness or weakness as a means of communications
- better appreciate the illustrative art and the medium in which it appears
- appreciate the craft of journalism and its function in a free society

Resources

The sites below offer useful information on teaching about political cartoons as to origins, early practitioners and nature of the art form, plus a couple of sites highlighting the brilliance and meaning of specific cartoonists:

- <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/editorial-cartoons-an-introduction>
- <http://mediasmarts.ca/lessonplan/political-cartoons-lesson>
- <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/activities/political-cartoon/cag.html>
- <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/political-cartoons/procedure.html>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Editorial_cartoon
- <https://www.digitalartsonline.co.uk/features/illustration/political-cartoons-in-2017-chris-riddell-rebecca-hendin-dave-brown-on-what-its-like-create-satirical-art-in-digital-world/>
- https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/xwwaed/dark-political-cartoons-show-how-technology-is-our-new-master
- <http://mentalfloss.com/article/524148/secrets-caricature-artists>
- <https://medium.com/sfg-magazine/clear-at-first-sight-illustrations-by-pawel-kuczynski-and-its-great-meaning-97598e49c9c5>
- https://www.thestar.com/opinion/public_editor/2019/05/02/great-journalism-holds-the-mirror-to-our-souls.html



The group could divide the task of analysing the cartoons and designate the group members who will research, write up, report and comment on the cartoons. Here are some general questions to guide each group in this learning activity. Each group should present a written report answering these questions:

1. Why do artists create editorial cartoons?
2. How do editorial cartoons differ from other art forms?
3. Do cartoons add value to the editorial page of a newspaper, and if so, how?
4. How much information is required to truly appreciate a specific cartoon?
5. Identify the topic or issue portrayed in the cartoon and any recognizable public figures.
6. Is the cartoon tackling a big or serious issue? What determines the relative significance of the cartoon?
7. How has the cartoonist expressed his/her opinion/thesis about the event, issue or public personality? Does a cartoonist have a personal agenda in choosing a topic and in how he/she portrays it?
8. What is the key point that the cartoon is trying to convey? Has the cartoonist hit the mark with the

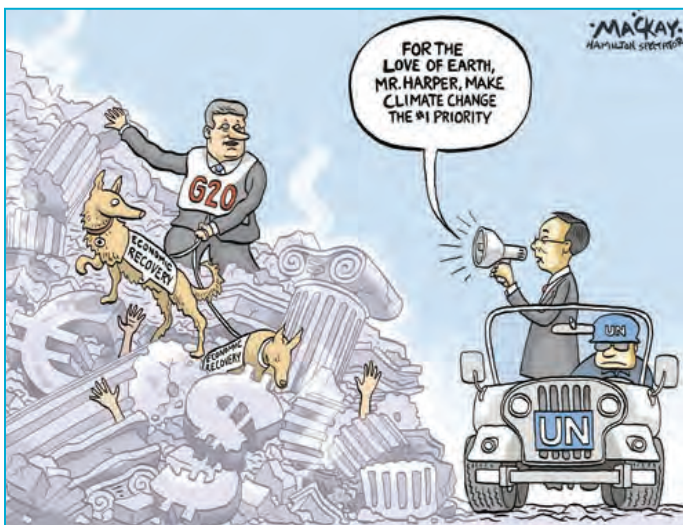
- graphic representation? How has this been done? Through the picture and/or text or caption? (use of symbols, exaggeration of a physical or moral trait, use of analogy, use of irony)
9. What is important to know about the cartoon? What do we learn about the editorial stance of the newspaper in which the cartoon appears?
 10. Is it fair to the people depicted in the cartoon? Does it present a balanced, honest interpretation of the real facts? (Does it depict a realistic viewpoint or is it deceitful? What is untruthful about the cartoon's version of the facts?)
 11. What do you think is the purpose of the cartoon: To persuade? To shock? To satirize? To foment anger? To express disgust, a gut reaction? To garner sympathy?
 12. Does the cartoon engage/appeal to the viewer emotionally or cerebrally?
 13. Can the cartoon be considered dangerous? Outrageous? To whom?
 14. Which of the cartoons were successful or persuasive in your opinion and which were not? Why?
 15. Are any topics sacred or considered off-limits? Should some things be off-limits?
 16. Do some cartoons go too far? Do cartoonists abuse freedom of the press? Why or why not?
 17. Have cartoonists been fired for their cartoons? Have magazines, papers or journals apologized for cartoons that have appeared in their publication? Give examples and explain the reason.

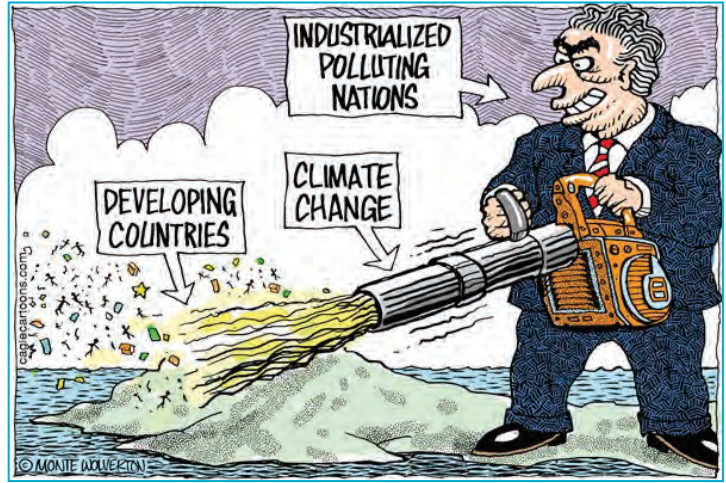
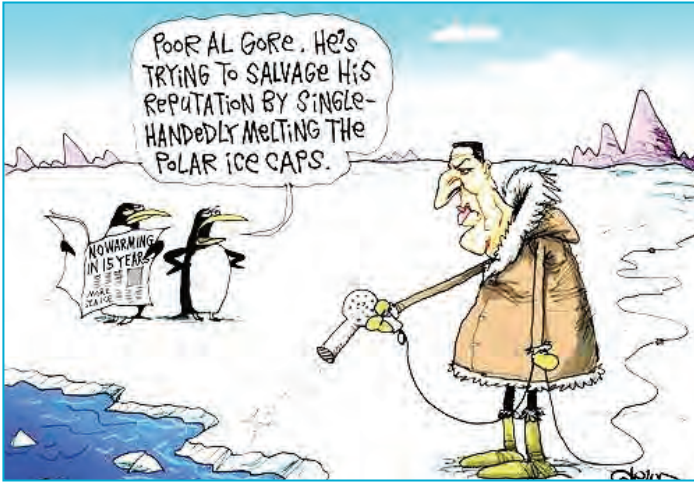
Follow up activities might include these suggestions:

- a) Artistically talented students may wish to create their own cartoons on a current topic in the news. They could then post the cartoon in the classroom and discuss their creation.
- b) Have students compare how editorial cartoons from different countries address the same issue (for example, terrorism)
- c) Have the students collect a series of cartoons during the month preceding the Canadian federal election scheduled for October 21, 2019, and then conduct an analysis along the lines mentioned above.
- d) Try to arrange a visit to a cartoonist's studio, or if that proves impractical, invite a cartoonist to the school to explain his/her craft.

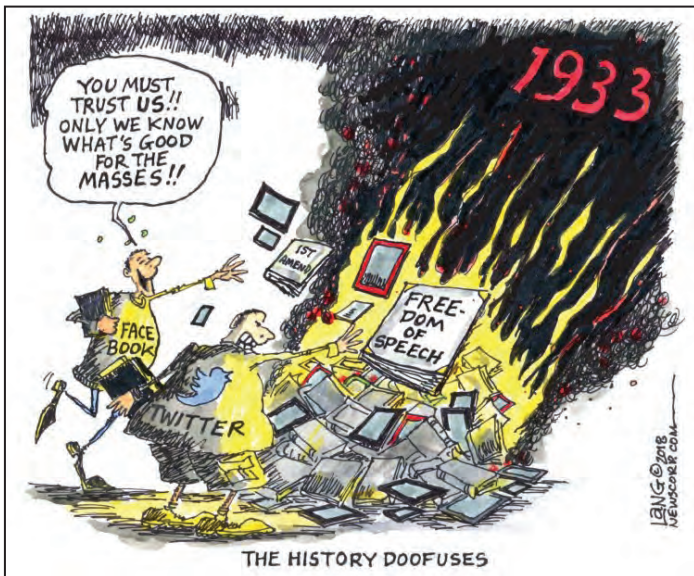
Group A Cartoons

Climate Change

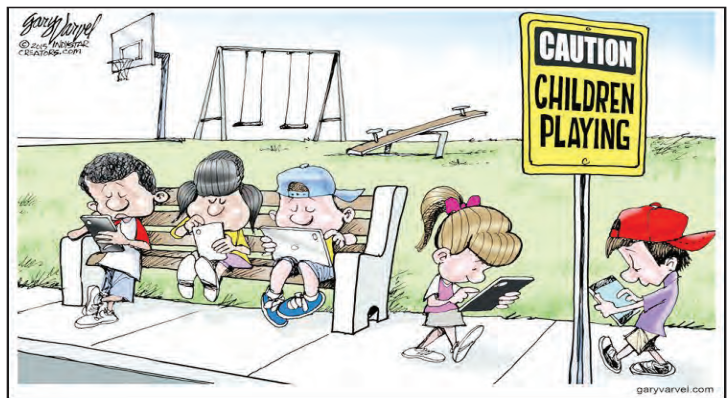
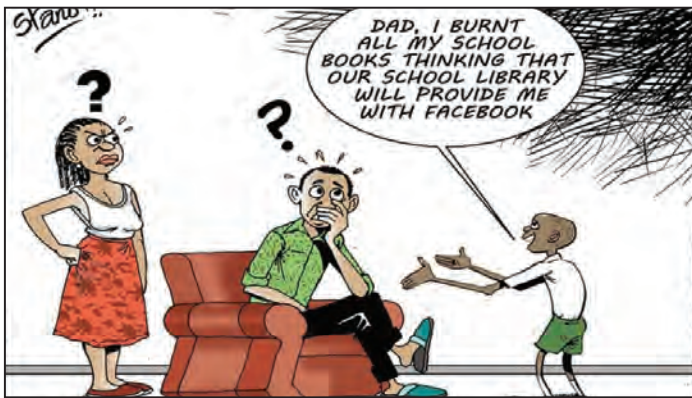




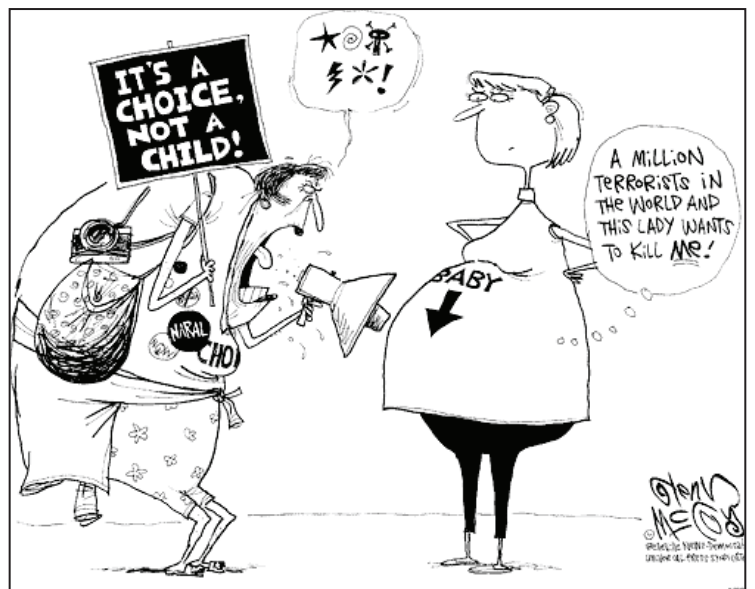
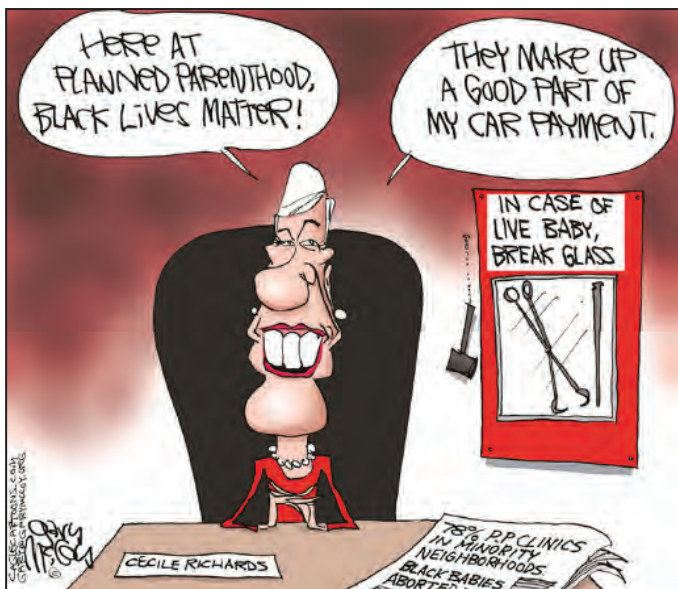
Free Speech



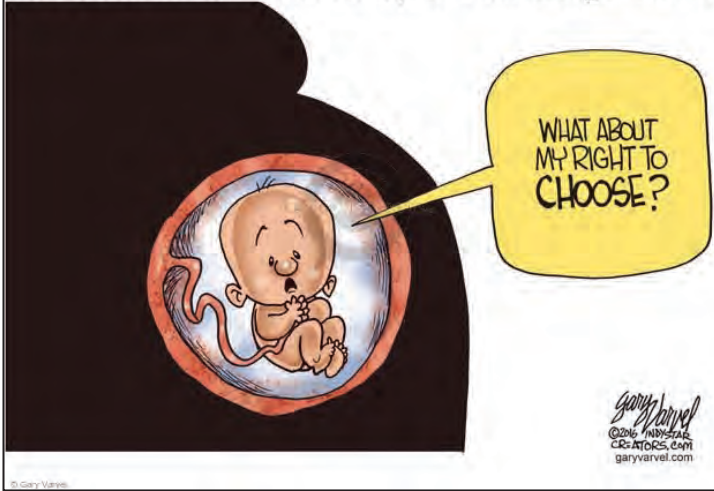
Social Media



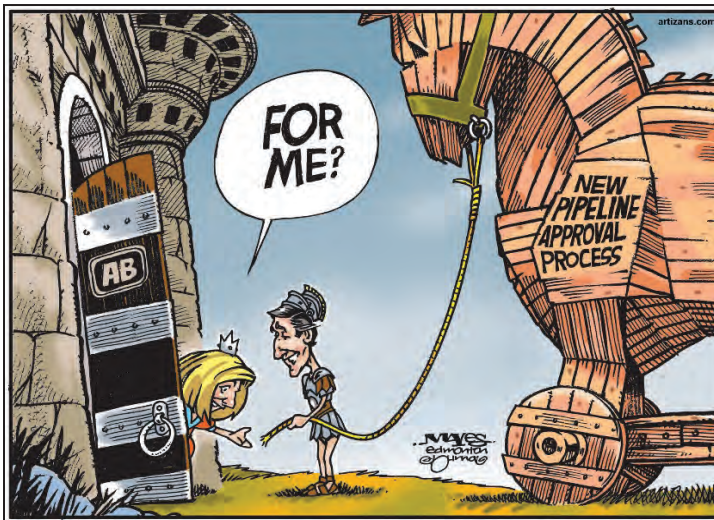
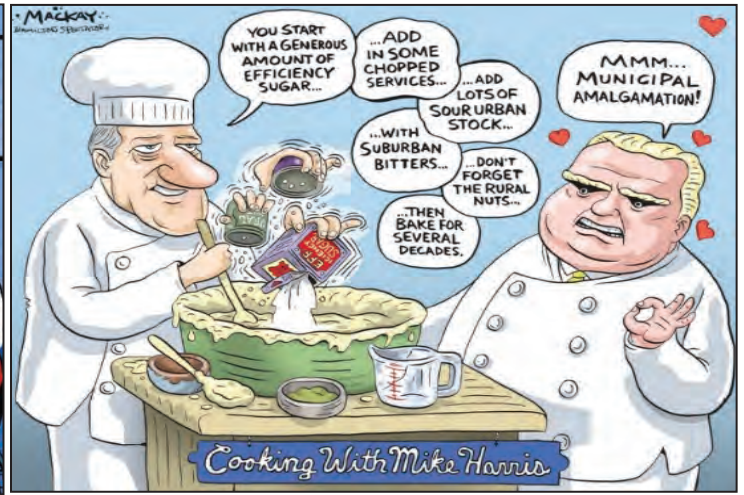
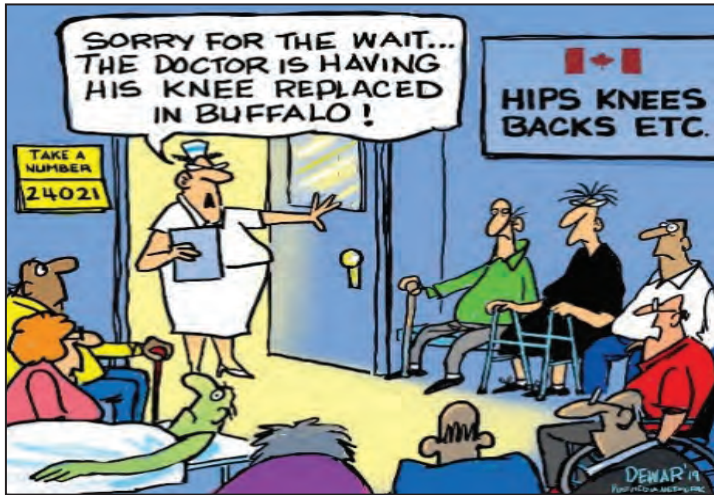
Abortion



NEWS: Planned Parenthood sues Indiana to preserve a woman's right to choose

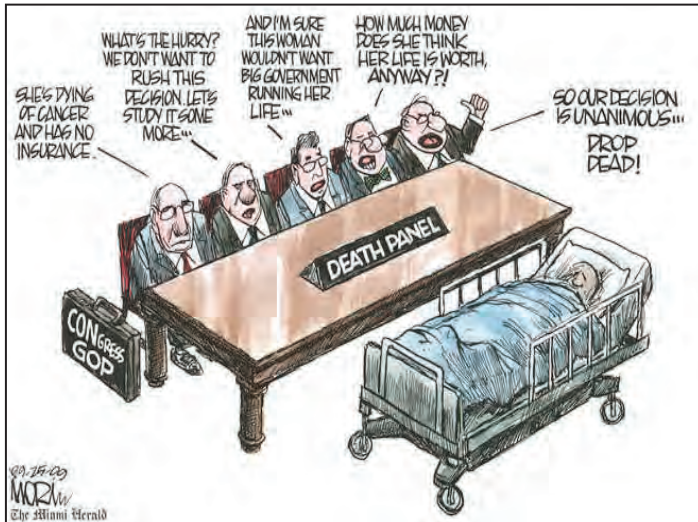


Provincial Issues

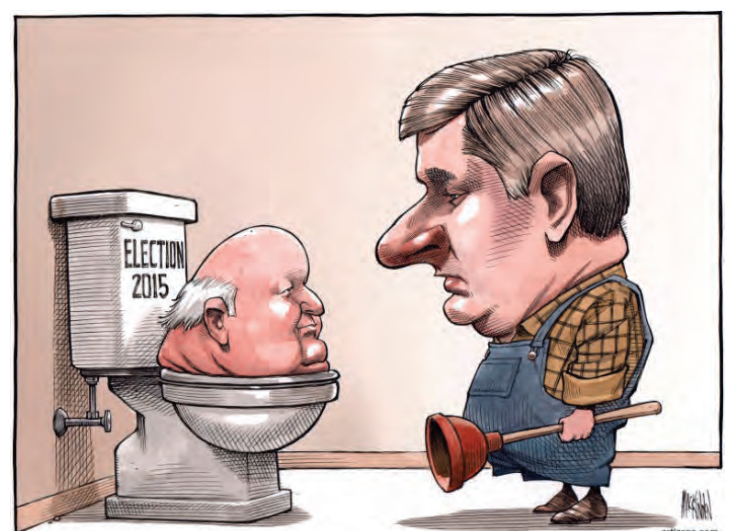


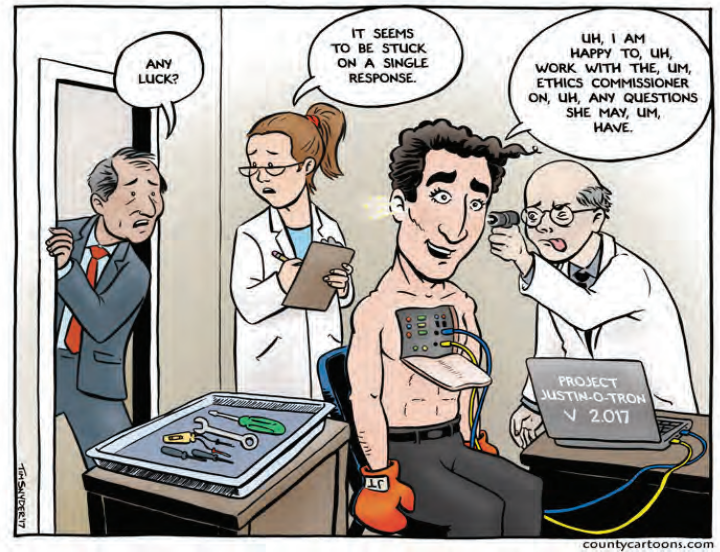
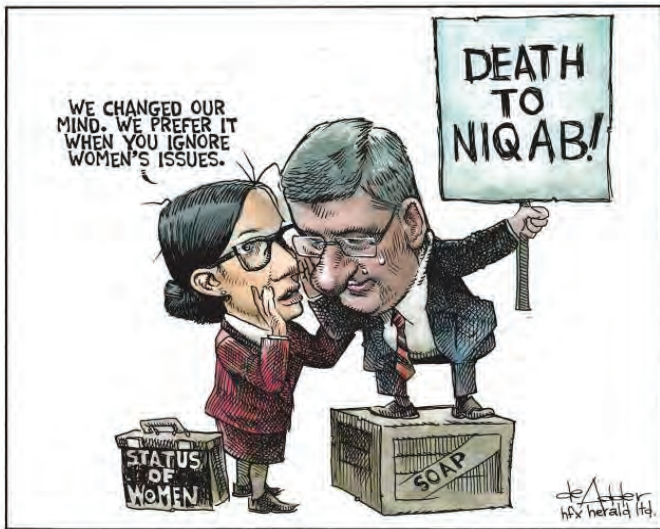
Group B Cartoons

Euthanasia



Federal Leaders





Racism





Immigration

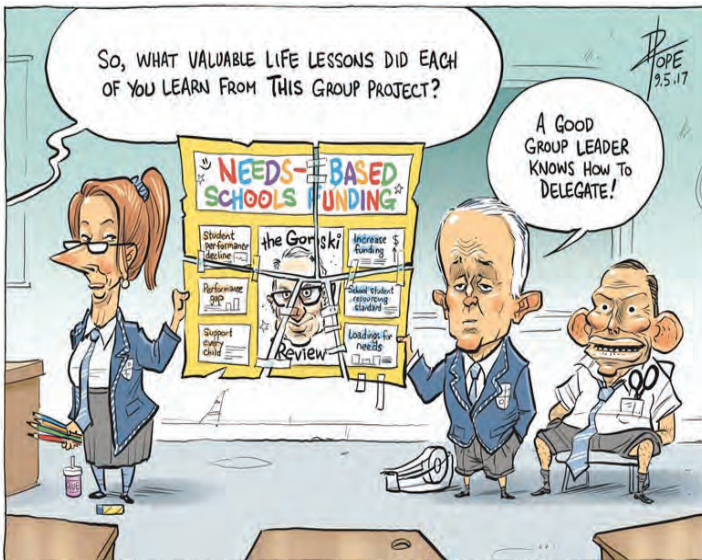


Terrorism





Education



Group C Cartoons

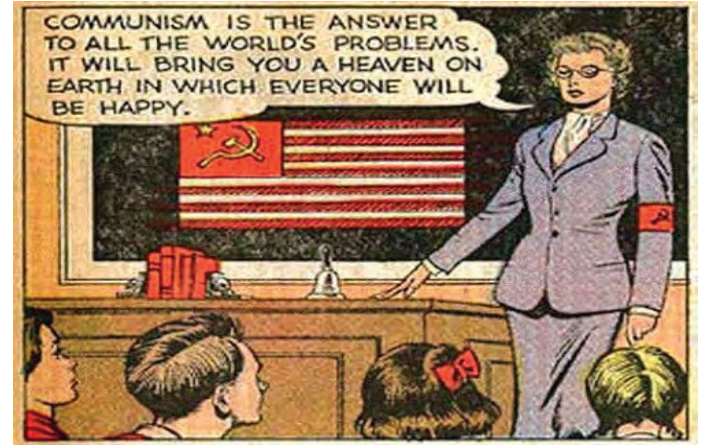
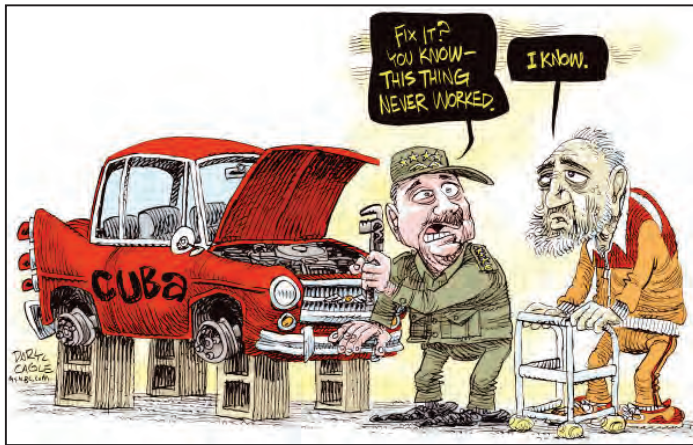
First World War



Petroleum Industry



Communism



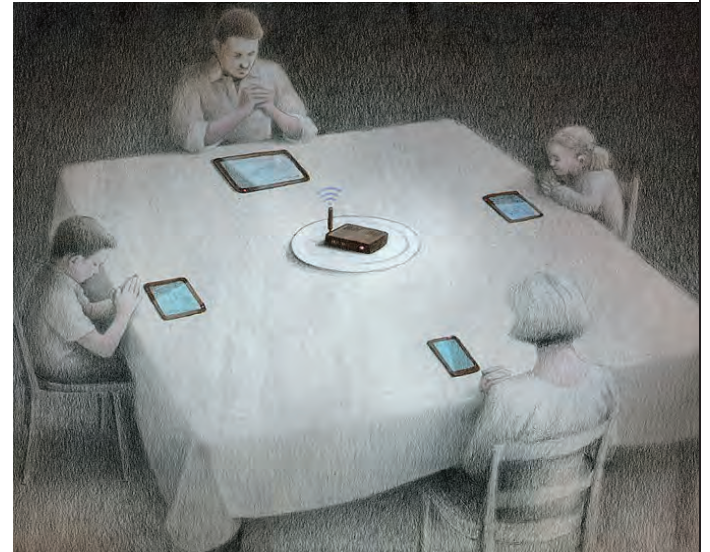
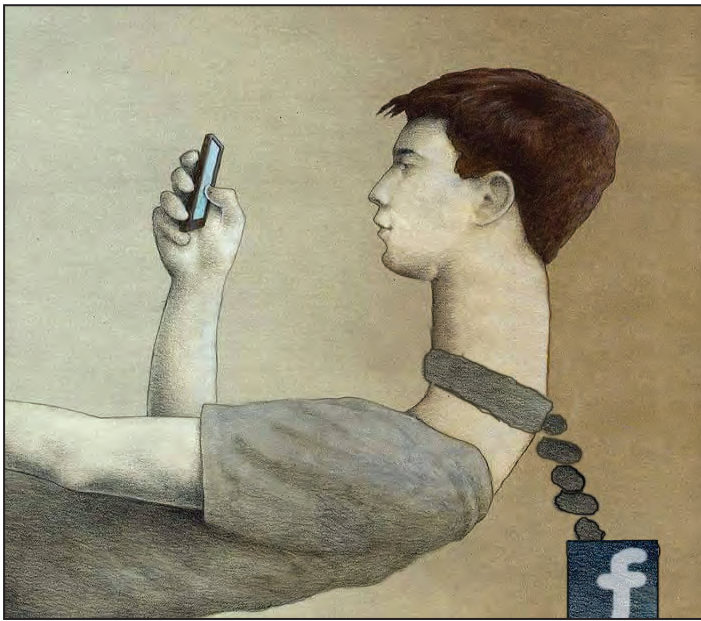
Brexit



Bioethics



Technology



Rubrics for Evaluating the Assignment

It is always challenging to arrive at a justifiable grade for a group assignment that demands a collaborative effort from members of the group. To what extent does the group successfully fulfil its responsibility to analyze its package of cartoons and with what thoroughness does it answer the subquestions posed to help in their analysis.

Generally, the assignment places a premium on research skills, processing of information, reflecting on its meaning and communicating/sharing the results with the rest of the class.

The achievement of the learning outcomes can be partially determined by assessing the quality of the students' answers to the questions and issues raised. The four categories found in the Ontario (or similar assessment documents in other provinces) course outlines can be utilized: Knowledge and Understanding; Thinking; Communication; Application. (K. U. T. C. A.)

The group's work could be assigned a mark out of 50 or a corresponding letter for a range denoting the relative quality of the group's work and final product. This is one suggested approach.

A 45-50

Superior insight, accuracy,

B 37-44

Good insight, accuracy,

C 30-36

Average insight,

D 25-29

Limited insight, accuracy, description, inadequate

A Purpose, function and value of the cartoons (K,U.T.C.A.)

- Why do artists create editorial cartoons?
- How do editorial cartoons differ from other art forms?
- Do cartoons add value to the editorial page of a newspaper, and if so, how?
- What is important to know about the cartoon? What do we learn about the editorial stance of the newspaper in which the cartoon appears?
- How much information is required to truly appreciate a specific cartoon?

B Content of the cartoon (K.U.T.C.A.)

- Identify the topic or issue portrayed in the cartoon and any recognizable public figures.
- Is the cartoon tackling a big or serious issue? What determines the relative significance of the cartoon?
- How has the cartoonist expressed his/her opinion/thesis about the event, issue or public personality? Does a cartoonist have a personal agenda in choosing a topic and in how he/she portrays it?
- What is the key point that the cartoon is trying to convey? Has the cartoonist hit the mark with the graphic representation? How has this been done? Through the picture and/or text or caption? (use of symbols, exaggeration of a physical or moral trait, use of analogy, use of irony)
- Is it fair to the people depicted in the cartoon? Does it present a balanced, honest interpretation of the real facts? Does it depict a realistic viewpoint or is it deceitful? Why and how?

C Effectiveness and impact of the cartoon (K.U.T.C.A.)

- What do you think is the purpose of the cartoon: To persuade? To shock? To satirize? To foment anger? To express disgust, demand a gut reaction? To garner sympathy?
- Does the cartoon engage/appeal to the viewer emotionally or cerebrally?
- Can the cartoon be considered dangerous? Outrageous? If so, to whom?
- Are any topics sacred or considered off-limits? Should some things be off-limits?
- Do some cartoons go too far? Do cartoonists abuse freedom of the press? Why or why not?

- Have cartoonists been fired for their cartoons? Have magazines, papers or journals apologized for cartoons that have appeared in their publication? Give examples and explain the reason.

D Overall impression of the cartoon (K.U.T.C.A.)

- Which of the cartoons were successful or persuasive in your opinion and which were not? Why?

