

Cartoons for the Classroom

Presented in cooperation with the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC)



Courtesy Jack Ohman / Oregonian, 1996

Attacking all those attack ads

Negative advertising works in political campaigns. That's why we see so much of it. Outside groups have poured millions of dollars over the past year into attack ads. Instead of campaign issues people care about, we're debating soft money vs. hard money, 527 groups and outfits with names like Swift Boat Veterans for Truth. Each campaign resorts to this. Because attack ads work.

Talking points:

The most effective propaganda deals in half-truths that play on the fears and prejudices of the audience. It's all in how you tell it. Jack Ohman's attack ad on Abe Lincoln seems silly but . . .

1. If Lincoln did accept money from the rail-splitting lobby (if there was a rail-splitting lobby) how is that bad? Are lobbyists inherently evil?
2. If you're against higher taxes, and big government, wouldn't you be against preserving the Union?
3. How does equating emancipation with affirmative action play on voters' prejudice?
4. Liberal is another buzzword today. Is it bad to be a liberal? Was Lincoln a Democrat or Republican?
5. Explain the point being made in Bruce Plante's cartoon at right. Which issue is more important?

Additional resources

Association of American Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC)
<http://editorialcartoonists.com/>

More by Jack Ohman
http://www.oregonlive.com/news/oregonian/jack_ohman/

Get out your newspaper

Gather a week's worth of political cartoons from your newspaper. Using the Cartoon Evaluation Worksheet (available online at the NIE Website) analyze each cartoon and discuss the campaign issues raised. Are the cartoonists hitting issues we should care about? Explain.



Courtesy Bruce Plante / Chattanooga Times Free Press, 2004