

Cartoons for the Classroom

Presented by NIEonline.com and the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC)



MR. POLITICALLY CORRECT QUIZ QUESTION:



Cartoon Courtesy Mike Lester / The Rome News-Tribune

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www.caglecartoons.com

A racist tirade spotlights the N-word

Between the lines

The N-word exploded into public discussion last week after comedian Michael Richards made headlines by launching a racist tirade against two black members of the audience at a Los Angeles comedy club. The former "Seinfeld" star repeatedly screamed the racial epithet at two African-American men who heckled him during his stand-up routine.

Get out your newspaper

Gather a collection of political cartoons from your newspaper. Using the Cartoon Evaluation Worksheet (available online at the NIE Website) analyze each cartoon and explain the issues addressed.

Additional resources

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

More by Mike Lester
<http://www.cagle.com/politicalcartoons/PCcartoons/lester.asp>

Talking points

1. This cartoon by Mike Lester does not equate Michael Richards' racist rant with a song lyric -- in fact this cartoon actually appeared months before Richards' ugly public meltdown. But the question it poses became a topic for discussion in some reactions to the incident. In addition to berating Richards' disgusting outburst, some pundits lashed out at hip-hop artists and rappers for their continued use of the inflammatory slur. How can a word, depending on who says it, be at once a term of endearment and another time a hate phrase?
2. Reaction to the N-word is so strong, most U.S. newspapers wouldn't print it in their reports on the incident this week, using euphemisms instead. But most British newspapers did print the word. Why the difference?
3. Is this a Freedom of Speech issue? Do you think the Constitution gives you the right to say anything you want? What are some of the limits to free speech? Should the N-word be banned -- for everyone -- by law?