

Cartoons for the Classroom

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



Seasonal symbols

In a series of drawings for Harper's weekly magazine between 1863 and 1886, cartoonist Thomas Nast introduced our present-day image of Santa Claus. Nast portrayed Santa working in his shop, driving a sleigh pulled by reindeer, or placing toys in stockings hung over a fireplace. It's our familiarity with this character that makes him so useful as a symbol for cartoonists. Take an issue and just ask: What would Santa do?



Courtesy Mike Thompson /The Detroit Free Press



Courtesy Larry Wright / The Detroit News

Talking points

1. In the cartoon above, Santa has moved his operations to India to save money. What hot-button political issue is Mike Thompson targeting? Is the cartoon a criticism or a commentary?
2. At left Santa has a power problem. But what's a hybrid? Are hybrids really underpowered?
3. What other holidays have characters that cartoonists can use to get their points across?

Additional resources

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

More by Larry Wright
<http://info.detnews.com/wrightoon/>

More by Mike Thompson
<http://freep.com/index/thompson.htm>

Get out your newspaper

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