

CARTOONS AND COMIC STRIPS

A cartoon is usually a humorous, drawn picture of a situation. Cartoons can be used to express ideas or to draw attention to a situation or a well-known personality. They often highlight a current social or political issue. A clever cartoon can sum up the content of a long article.

Comic strips are stories shown in pictures about characters, such as *Madam and Eve*, or *Garfield*.

UNDERSTANDING THE TECHNIQUES USED IN CARTOONS AND COMIC STRIPS

- Cartoons provide enjoyment but may also be vehicles for serious and even biting messages.
- Political cartoons have to be seen in context against their particular background.
- Dialogue is used to reveal the author's thoughts and feelings.
- Each drawing is placed in a frame and may be presented as a single drawing or as a sequence of drawings.
- Humour may take the form of satire to draw attention to a particular issue. *Satire is a technique employed by writers to expose and criticize foolishness and corruption of an individual or a society, by using humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule. It intends to improve humanity by criticizing its follies (foolishness) and foibles (a minor weakness or eccentricity in someone's character).*
- A technique called caricature is used in cartoons to make fun of important public figures. These drawings are not realistic. They exaggerate certain features of the people being drawn, so that we recognize the people, but find them funny.



Taylor Swift

- A caption is the writing that explains the message of a cartoon. Sometimes the picture is so clear that a caption is unnecessary.



“Don’t slice the pizza. My diet says I’m only allowed to eat one piece!”

Caption

- Speech bubbles may be used for the words spoken by the cartoon characters.
- Straight or wavy lines are used to show movement.
- Symbols are also used, which are pictures that represent abstract qualities. For example, a picture of a heart can be used to symbolize love. Symbols such as @#\$% are used to show swearing.
- The meaning of words in a cartoon may be ambiguous, which means that the words can be interpreted in more than one way.

WHEN YOU ANALYSE A CARTOON OR COMIC STRIP, ASK YOURSELF

- What point is the cartoonist making?
- Is the humour literal or figurative?
- Does the cartoonist use irony (the opposite of what you expect to happen), satire, a pun or some other language device to create humour?
- Is the humour in the picture, in the words or both?
- What is the body language of the characters?
- What characteristics of the character or characters in the cartoon have been exaggerated? Why?
- What mood do the pictures and colours chosen create?

WHEN STUDYING CARTOONS AND COMIC STRIPS, LOOK AT:

The characters

- Are they figures in their own rights or do they represent stereotypes?
- Are they depicted normally or as caricatures of themselves?
- Note facial expressions, body language and relationships between characters.

Background and setting

- Where and when is the scene taking place?
- Is the cartoon based on fact or fiction?

Language and Punctuation

- Diction – does it make use of slang, jargon and or colloquialism?
- Structure – does it use single words, phrases or sentences?
- How does the punctuation affect the mood and tone?

Very important

All answers should be substantiated with close reference to the text in question.