Gerrymandering: Political Cartoons

Introduction: After new population data emerges from the census every ten years, Congressional boundaries must be redrawn to reflect shifts in population. How this process is done is often highly politicized and some critics have argued that it undermines democracy. This issue inspires political cartoonists to offer interpretations and express opinions about gerrymandering.

Cartoonists use a variety of **techniques** to convey their ideas. These include:

Labels: Cartoonists often identify or name certain things in their cartoons with words so that it is apparent what they represent.

Symbolism: Cartoonists may use simple objects to represent larger ideas or concepts.

Analogy: Cartoonists may compare a simple image or concept to a more complex situation in order to help the viewer understand the situation in a different way.

Irony: Cartoonists may express an opinion on a topic by highlighting the difference between the way things are and the way things should, or are expected, to be.
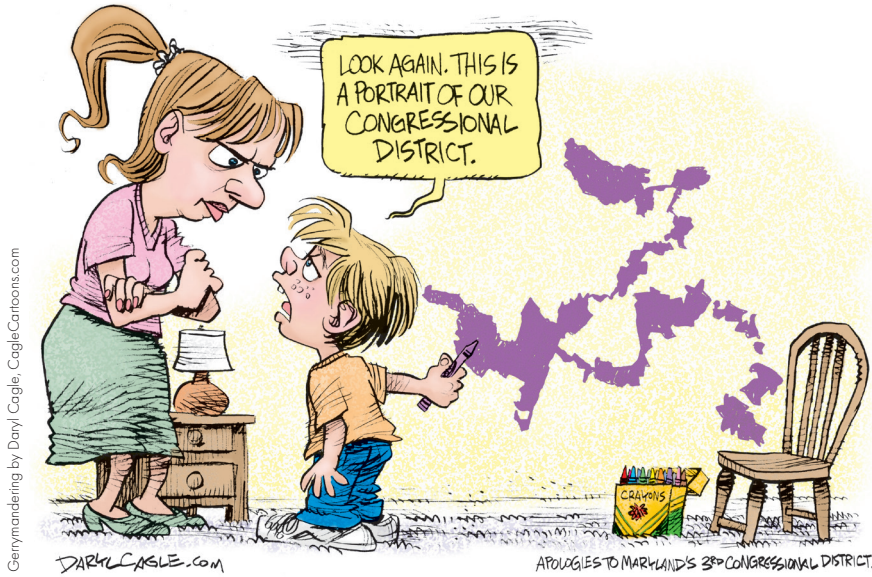
Exaggeration: Cartoonists may exaggerate objects, people, or ideas to make a point.

Stereotype: Cartoonists may use a stereotype or generalization about a group of people (even though it is not true about everyone in that group).

Instructions: Work with your group to analyze cartoons your teacher has assigned to you. You will be asked to identify the techniques each cartoonist used. The following questions will help guide your thinking.

• If the cartoonist used **labels**, what things in the cartoon are labeled? Why do you think the cartoonist chose to label those things?

• If the cartoonist used **symbolism**, what things in the cartoon are symbols? What do they stand for?

• If the cartoonist used an **analogy**, what two ideas or situations are compared? How does this comparison help the viewer see the complex situation in a different way?

• If the cartoonist used **irony**, what does the cartoonist show about the way things are? How does the cartoonist think things should be?

• If the cartoonist used **exaggeration**, what objects, people, or ideas are exaggerated? What point is made by exaggerating/ distorting them?

• If the cartoonist used **stereotypes**, what stereotypes are presented? How do these add to the message of the cartoon?

Cartoon 1

Gerrymandering by Daryl Cagle, CagleCartoons.com

1. Observation

Describe the objects or people in the cartoon.

Describe the action taking place in the cartoon.

2. Identify at least two techniques that the cartoonist used and explain what ideas are conveyed through each technique.

a.

b.

3. What is the message of the cartoon?

Cartoon 2

LOCAL PA Gerrymander jitters by John Cole, The Scranton Times-Tribune, PA

1. Observation

Describe the objects or people in the cartoon.

Describe the action taking place in the cartoon.

2. Identify at least two techniques that the cartoonist used and explain what ideas are conveyed through each technique.

   a.

   b.

3. What is the message of the cartoon?

Cartoon 3

1. Observation

Describe the objects or people in the cartoon.

Describe the action taking place in the cartoon.

2. Identify at least two techniques that the cartoonist used and explain what ideas are conveyed through each technique.
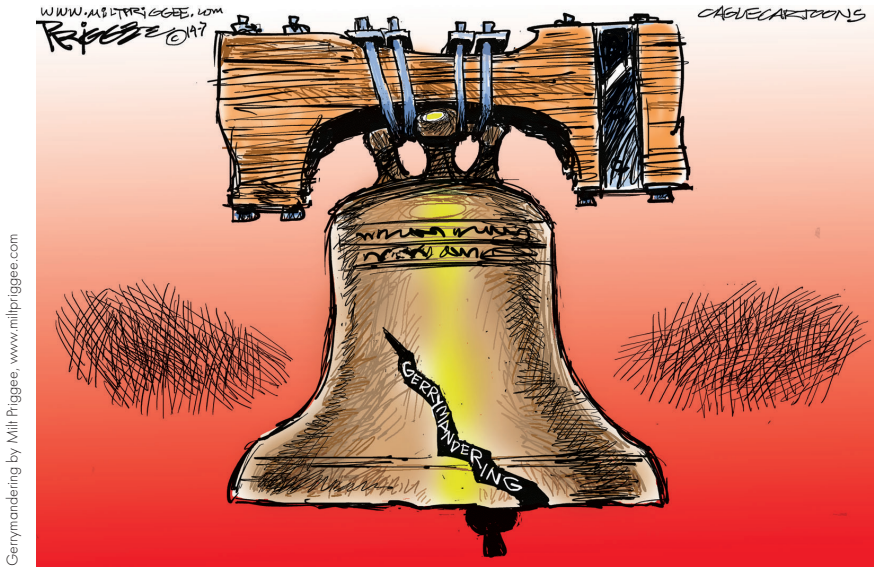
   a.

   b.

3. What is the message of the cartoon?

Cartoon 4

Gerrymandering by Milt Priggee, www.miltpriggee.com

1. Observation

Describe the objects or people in the cartoon.

Describe the action taking place in the cartoon.

2. Identify at least two techniques that the cartoonist used and explain what ideas are conveyed through each technique.

   a.

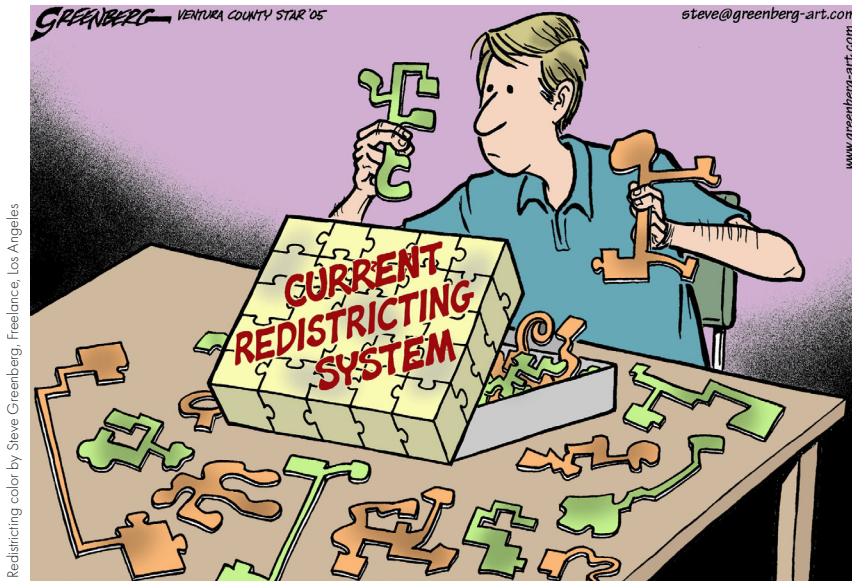   b.

3. What is the message of the cartoon?

Cartoon 5

I DON'T UNDERSTAND — I'M FLOORING THE GAS BUT WE JUST DON'T SEEM TO BE MOVING AS FAST...

USA

GERRY-MANDERING

Gerrymandering by Milt Priggee, www.miltpriggee.com

1. Observation

Describe the objects or people in the cartoon.

Describe the action taking place in the cartoon.

2. Identify at least two techniques that the cartoonist used and explain what ideas are conveyed through each technique.

   a.

   b.

3. What is the message of the cartoon?

Name: _____

Cartoon 6

1. Observation

Describe the objects or people in the cartoon.

Describe the action taking place in the cartoon.

2. Identify at least two techniques that the cartoonist used and explain what ideas are conveyed through each technique.

    a.

    b.

3. What is the message of the cartoon?