

# Cartoon Compassion

8th Grade ELA and Visual Arts

Adapted by Paige Satcher

## CORE SUBJECT AREA

ELA

## ART FORM + ELEMENTS

Visual Arts, Theme, Drawing, Space, Emphasis

## DURATION

2 Class periods

## OBJECTIVES

TSW identify and analyze political bias between news sources while differentiating fact from opinion. TSW illustrate differences in news sources and how they cover stories through political cartoons.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

Computer with projector and screen  
Supplies for drawing political cartoons (pencils, paper, colored pencils, etc.)  
Copies of news articles

## MSCCR STANDARDS

RI .8.7

RI.8.8

RI.8.9

## MSCCR CREATIVE ARTS STANDARDS

VA: Cr2.3.8a.

VA: Re7.1.8a.

VA: Re7.2.8a.

VA: Re8.1.8a.

VA: Cn11.1.8

## VOCABULARY

ELA Vocabulary: bias, fact, opinion, relevant evidence, irrelevant evidence, conflicting information. Visual Art Vocabulary: political cartoon, symbol

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Side by side comparisons of news topics from multiple media outlets:

<http://graphics.wsj.com/blue-feed-red-feed/#/president-trump>

Budget Cuts Article 1::

<https://www.hannity.com/media-room/congress-moves-house-passestrumps-plan-to-slash-15-billion-from-budget/>

Budget Cuts Article 2:

<https://truthout.org/articles/after-tax-cuts-for-richest-house-gop-unveils5-4-trillion-attack-on-nations-safety-net/>

Word Document with political cartoons and discussion questions attached.

## LESSON SEQUENCE

TSW view the first political cartoon provided in the Word document. TTW ask follow up questions after students have had time to analyze the cartoon.

1. What do the elephant and donkey represent? (Once the symbols of the political parties are explained, move on to the next question.)

2. Why are both animals (political parties) throwing out the food that the other made?
3. What does this say about our political system? Encourage discussion about the partisan division of issues regarding our government. Use this time to gauge basic student knowledge about how our political system works. Provide explanation if necessary.

TTW explain that there is a division of ideas within our country about how the government should be run. This division is even evident within newspapers, television news, internet sites, and political cartoons.

Note: It is important to be clear with students before beginning the lesson that we will be viewing articles from both political sides equally. The purpose of the lesson is not to sway students' political opinions but to present the concept of media bias, so students can easily differentiate fact from opinion within the news.

TTW present the objectives for the lesson.

Part 1: Class Discussion TT and TSW discuss the two political cartoons provided in the Word document. Both political cartoons illustrate the budget crisis; however, each is politically slanted. Use the Word document provided to facilitate discussion.

Part 2: News Articles: As a class, TT and TSW compare the two budget cut articles. What parts of the articles are fact? What parts of the articles are opinions? Although the articles deal with the same topic, how does the language of the article slant the reader's opinion one way or the other? Identify these biased words and phrases within the articles with students. Encourage a candid discussion about the importance of impartial news.

Part 3: Creating Political Cartoons: To illustrate the political slant of each of the news articles, TSW create two political cartoons side by side. One political cartoon must reflect the views of the first article; the other must reflect the views of the second article. Encourage the use of political symbols within the cartoons. Note: This may be assigned as a group project if you wish.

Part 4: Drawing Conclusions: Use these questions to facilitate discussion about the lesson.

1. Were both articles based on the same topic?
2. Did the articles differ in matters of fact or interpretation?
3. Was all of the information in the article relevant?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of reading the articles and looking at political cartoons?
5. How did the political cartoons students created reflect the bias of each of the articles?

## EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Home Connection: Challenge students to watch major national news networks at home. What similarities and differences do they see between them? Are the national news networks politically slanted or neutral?

## SOURCES

Original lesson by Paige Satcher

## TIPS + FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When giving students drawing paper, encourage them to use the entire space of the paper. If they draw too small, it will be difficult to read the images.

Over time, the news stories used may be changed for a more up-to-date lesson. However, in a tough political climate, the teacher may want to focus on news stories that are not hot-button controversial issues in the eyes of students.