

Cartoons for the Classroom

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



Visual clichés

Avoid them like the plague

Canadian cartoonist Graeme MacKay has compiled this list of overused metaphors, clichés, images and repetitive editorial cartoon gags. Unfortunately, most should ring a bell with you.

- Dead celebrity arriving at the Pearly Gates.

- Hear no evil. See no evil. Speak no evil.

- Loon on a Canadian dollar drowning/choking/splashing during currency fluctuations.

- Puzzle with a missing piece(s).

- Painting oneself in a corner.

- Walking the plank.

- Large fish eating the medium-sized fish eating the small fish.

- Things proceeding as slow as a snail/turtle.

- Image of a beaver representing Canada.

- Image of Uncle Sam representing United States.

- Donkey and Elephant representing U.S. political parties.

- Sinking Ship cartoon.

- Combination of two unrelated current events.

- Ostrich head buried in the sand.

- Taxpayer being held upside-down with money falling out

- Blind justice statue editorial cartoon.

- Incorporating popular cartoon characters like Homer Simpson, Mr. McGoo, Peanut's characters, etc. in an editorial cartoon.

- Adding irony/humor to illustrations of famous photograph.

- Dividing a continent/country up and pointing to different regions with satirical names.

- Naughty pupil writing lines on a chalkboard.

- "Kick me" sign on the backside of a politician.



Courtesy Graeme MacKay / The Hamilton Spectator

Talking points

1. The advantage of using a cliché is that everybody will know what you're talking about. What's the downside?
2. This list of clichés is just the tip of the iceberg. Adding more of your own should be as easy as pie.

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 determine the point of view of the artist. Gather news stories about those issues and evaluate the cartoonists' opinions.

Additional resources

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

More by Graeme MacKay
<http://www.mackaycartoons.net/>