

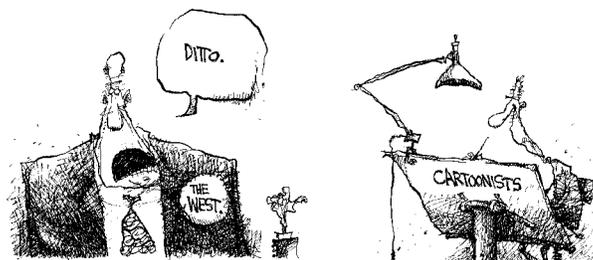
# Cartoons for the Classroom



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

## Free speech vs. respect for religion

Violent demonstrations swept through Muslim countries after a Danish newspaper published 12 cartoons depicting Muhammad in direct defiance of the Islamic tradition that any depiction of the prophet is sacrilegious. Muhammad plays a central role in the faith of more than 1.3 billion Muslims worldwide. For western nations, the issue centers on the concept of Free Speech: The right to publish material — even offensive material — without fear of retribution. Matt Davies' cartoons illustrate this clash of cultures.



Cartoons courtesy Matt Davies / The Journal News

### Additional resources

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

More by Matt Davies  
<http://www.thejournalnews.com/cartoons/davies/>

### Talking points

*Freedom of the press and freedom of speech, by definition, include the freedom to offend. But the freedom to offend has to be used carefully if it is to retain real power.*

— Brian Gable, Editorial cartoonist for The Globe and Mail.

1. The founding fathers considered the concept of Free Speech so important they made it part of the First Amendment hundreds of years ago. But the U.S. is the only Western nation to put that freedom into writing as part of its constitution. Why haven't other countries done so?
2. Do American newspapers have the right to reprint the offensive cartoons? Should they exercise that right? Is there a duty to reprint them? Or to NOT reprint them?
3. There are limits to free speech. Can you yell fire in a crowded theater? Isn't child pornography a crime? Should there be a restriction on religious references in cartoons?

### Get out your newspaper

Gather a collection of political cartoons from your newspaper. Using the Cartoon Evaluation Worksheet (available online at the NIE Website) analyze each cartoon and explain the issues addressed. Which cartoon could be deemed offensive to a specific audience? Explain why.