

# **The Equal Rights Amendment: Viewing Women's Issues Through Political Cartoons**

By Joyce Poore-Williams

**Grades 9-10**

**Ohio Content Standards**

**Topic: *Social Transformations in the United States (1945-1994)***

A period of post-war prosperity allowed the United States to undergo fundamental social change.

**Content Statements:**

23. Following World War II, the United States experienced a struggle for racial and gender equality and the extension of civil rights.

**Topic: *Historical Thinking and Skills***

Students apply skills by utilizing a variety of resources to construct theses and support or refute contentions made by others.

**Content Statements:**

2. The use of primary and secondary sources of information includes an examination of the credibility of each source.

**Duration of Lesson:** One to two class periods (80-90 minutes)

**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the Equal Rights Amendment and gender stereotypes by viewing political cartoons that existed in American society during the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of feminism to current day.
- Students will analyze primary source material to develop positions about current women's issues.

**Summary:** Students use editorial cartoons dealing with women's issues and the Equal Rights Amendment in order to determine some of the major aspects of this social movement. They will discuss political cartoons in groups to identify stereotypes, symbols and text, determine their effectiveness, and then present their findings to the class.

**Materials:**

- Packet of editorial cartoons 1-6 (copies of each for groups to view):
- Cartoon #1: *Happy Father's Day* by McCarty published in *Best Editorial Cartoons of 1972*. editor, Charles Brooks (F 839.5B48 1972 C.3 pg. 115)
- Cartoon #2: *I didn't realize....* By Whitney Darrow published in *The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.* 1970 (Topic File)

- Cartoon#3:*Evolution of Man...* by Mike Peters published in *Pork Roasts*,250 Feminist Cartoons by Avis Lang Rosenberg (NC 1763.w8 1981)
- Cartoon#4: *Doris K. Elston...*by R Chast published in *Funny Ladies: The New Yorkers Greatest Women Cartoonists*, pg. 133, by Lisa Donnelly (NC 1428.N47 D66 2005)
- Cartoon#5:*Corporate Ladders...* by Adam Zyglis, published in the Buffalo News ([www.caglecartoons.com](http://www.caglecartoons.com) )
- Cartoon#6:*The best reason for school....*by Gary Markstein, Copley News Service, ([www.caglecartoons.com](http://www.caglecartoons.com) )
- Symbol worksheet
- **Cartoon analysis worksheet**

**Pre-Assessment:** Students will answer the following questions (either verbally or in written form): What is a stereotype? How would you define an editorial cartoon? What is the Equal Rights Amendment? What are current issues that affect women?

### **Instructional Steps:**

1. Complete pre-assessment activity.
2. Preview stereotypes in editorial cartoons.
3. Use symbols worksheet on Smart board or overhead with class.
4. Break students into groups of 4-5.
5. Distribute to student groups copies of cartoons 1-6, and a copy of the Proposed 27<sup>th</sup> Amendment (Equal Rights Amendment) and Cartoon Analysis Worksheet.
6. Assign each group a cartoon to analyze (each student should have a copy of the cartoon). Students will view and discuss the intended message of the artist and his/her ability to effectively portray this message and read the Equal Rights Amendment.
7. Groups will present their cartoons and analysis worksheets to the class. Students will also discuss whether their cartoon helps/hurts stereotypes of women. Class will debate the importance of the Equal Rights Amendment in our society today.
8. Post-Assessment.
9. Extension Activities

**Post-Assessment:** Use the following questions (either verbally or in written form) to determine if students learned the desired content for this lesson:

- What are stereotypes? Do they exist for women today?
- Define the elements of an effective political cartoon.
- What is the Equal Rights Amendment, and is it still a topic that is important today? Why/why not.

**Extension Activities:**

Students can bring in current editorial cartoons depicting women and compare/contrast cartoons with those from the 1970s-1990s and discuss stereotypes.

Students can create their own cartoons using symbols to communicate their opinions about the future of the Equal Rights Amendment.



**Adam Zyglis**, Buffalo, NY, The Buffalo News

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