

Who is to Blame? Analyzing Points of View in Gas Price Editorial
Cartoons from the 1970s and 2000s
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American History Content Statements: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Social-Studies>

- 4. Historians analyze cause, effect, sequence, and correlation in historical events, including multiple causation and long- and short-term causal relations
- 13. An improved standard of living for many, combined with technological innovations in communication, transportation and industry, resulted in social and cultural changes and tensions.
- 26. Political debates focused on the extent of the role of government in the economy, environmental protection, social welfare and national security.
- 28. The United States faced new political, national security and economic challenges in the post-Cold War world and following the attacks on September 11, 2001.

Estimate duration of lesson: One class period

Learning objectives: Students will be able to analyze and compare points of view regarding who or what editorial cartoonists are blaming (or not blaming) for gas prices.

Summary of the lesson: Is the artist of a gas price cartoon providing the reader a direction of blame or is it undirected? If there is a direction of blame, what does the artist convey is involved in determining gas prices? Students will analyze editorial cartoons in mixed ability groups, and for each editorial cartoon discuss 1) if there is a direction of blame for gas prices and 2) if there is a direction of blame, what does the artist believe contributes to gas prices. Students then take turns reporting their group's thoughts on each cartoon to the whole class.

Pre-assessment/diagnostic: If desired, this could be done by having students establish the direction of blame, if any, for all snake related or

Uncle Sam related cartoons. Scoring could be based upon student written explanations of directionality of blame by the artist.

Instructional steps:

The teacher leads a discussion with students about the influences on gas prices, including supply and demand. Using a gas price line graph (see Energy Information Administration at www.eia.gov), discuss major events which have preceded changes in gas prices, including the OPEC oil embargo in the early 1970s, the Iranian Revolution in the late 1970s, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, September 11th, oil spills, hurricanes hitting oil refineries, global economic contraction/recession, and any other times of oil supply uncertainty you choose to include.

Next show Matt Davies 2011 "Energy Habits" cartoon and have students silently write down their own interpretation of this cartoon. Discuss with students how editorial cartoonists have their own point of view or bias. Editorial cartoonists also want to sell their cartoons, and this can influence how they choose to reveal or hide their point of view. In creating cartoons about gas prices, they may choose to blame someone or something for gas prices, or they may choose to avoid directing blame, perhaps trying to find humor in a gas price increase or express people's anger or frustration about it. Does the Davies cartoon "Energy Habits" have direction of blame? Is the finger pointing at the consumer because the gas nozzle is pointing at the consumer? If the cartoon is not blaming the consumer, is there any specific direction of blame? Discuss with students how editorial cartoons are often open to interpretation, and that it is okay to disagree about their meaning as long as we use examples to support why we think something and respect other people's right to have a different interpretation than our own. Use OSU's Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum's Editorial Cartoon Analysis Worksheet if you have not taught with editorial cartoons before.

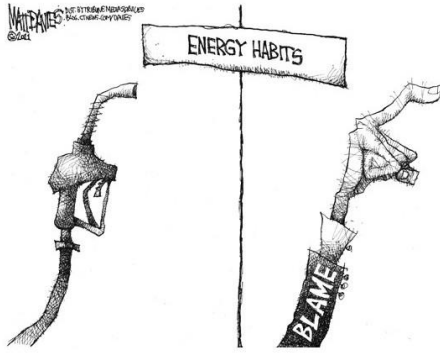
Divide the class into pre-determined mixed ability groups of four. Each group of four will discuss each cartoon, and establish if their group thinks there is a direction of blame or not, and who or what the artist is

blaming if there is a direction of blame. Students should agree who will share their group's ideas with the class for each cartoon. In a group of 4 students, each student would present on 6 cartoons if all 25 cartoons are to be analyzed. Encourage them to write something down to help them remember. Students will probably need around one minute of discussion per cartoon. If you choose to use all cartoons, then 15 to 20 minutes total is probably all they will need to analyze the 25 cartoons, as they will hopefully get better and faster at analyzing with experience and practice. After all groups are finished or the time allotted has passed, start with the first group and go around the room having the presenter for each group of that cartoon state whether or not their group believed the artist was attributing blame or not, if so, to whom or what, and why their group thought that, using evidence from the cartoon itself and prior knowledge. On the next cartoon, start with the second group and go round the room, and so on, so that no group always has to present first. At the end, discuss whether more cartoons were blaming something for gas prices, or if more cartoon artists were not directing blame anything in particular to explain higher gas prices. What were the most frequent targets blamed? (American Consumers? American Government Policy? Oil Companies? OPEC? etc.) Why do students think that is the case? (My ideas of artists directing blame are included, so do not photocopy that part for students). **Post-assessment:** This could be accomplished by having students establish the direction of blame, if any, for all snake related or Uncle Sam related cartoons, whichever was not used in the pre-assessment. Scoring based upon student verbal or written explanations of directionality of blame by the artist.

Materials needed by teachers: Photocopy enough sets of cartoons for every group to have one. If available, use SmartBoard or computer projector to show each cartoon being discussed during presentations.

Materials needed by students: paper and writing utensil

Extension activities: Possibly challenge students to find a different gas price editorial cartoon, or even to create their own.



Matt Davies Copyright 2011 Tribune Media Services

Creator: Matt Davies

Title: Energy Habits

Publication: Tribune Media Services

Publication Date: 2011

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: gas nozzle and finger pointing "BLAME"

Source: <http://theweek.com>

Blame Direction: Self? Consumers?



Collection: Cartoon Research Digital Library

Short Link: <https://cartoonimages.osu.edu/9vQemtUb>

Digital Image Number: d_3050

Finding Number: E839.5 B48 1974

Collection Code: CGA

Format: mechanical reproduction

Genre: editorial cartoon

Creator: Powell, Dwane, 1944-

Title: Arab Oil

Publication: Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year

Volume: 1974 Edition

Date: 1973

Period: 1970s (1970-1979)

Media: ink

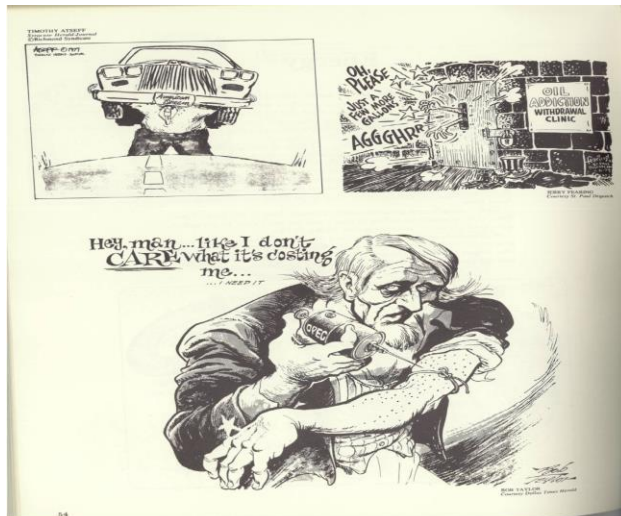
Size: 14 x 19 cm

Note: copy 3, Oppen Project: Energy Crisis

Credit Line: OSUCCA - The Ohio State University Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum

File Size: 106 MB

Blame Direction: American Consumers? American Government Policy? No blame?



E839.5B48 Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year 1980 p.57 Bob Taylor Dallas Times Herald

Bottom Cartoon Creator: Bob Taylor

Title: "Hey, man...like I don't CARE what it's costing me..."

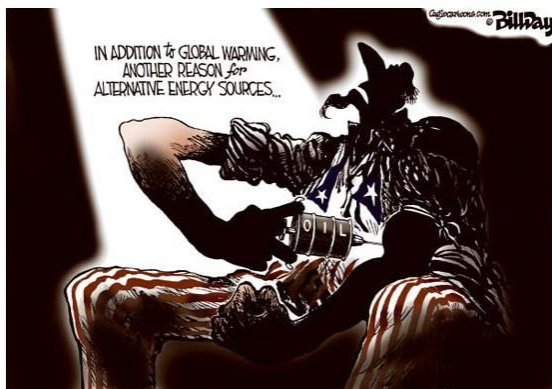
Publication: Dallas Times Herald

Publication Date: 1980

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: Uncle Sam shooting up drug of OPEC oil

Source: Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year 1980

Blame Direction: American Consumers? American Government Policy?



Bill Day Copyright 2011 Cagle Cartoons

Creator: Bill Day

Title: "In addition to global warming, another reason for alternative energy sources."

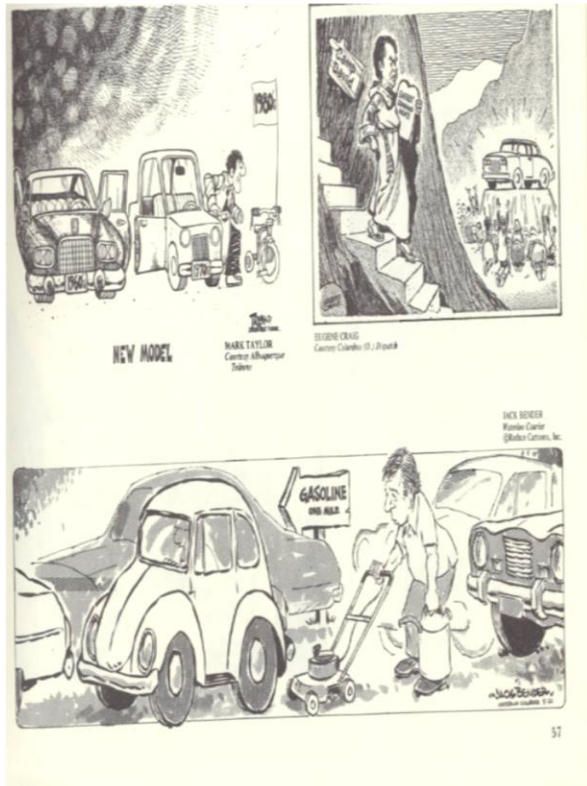
Publication: Cagle Cartoons

Publication Date: 2011

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: Uncle Sam shooting drug oil into his arm

Source: Cagle Cartoons

Blame Direction: American Consumers? American Government Policy?



E839.5B48 Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year 1980 p.57
 Mark Taylor Albuquerque Tribune; Eugene Craig
 Columbus Dispatch; Jack Bender Waterloo Courier

Top Left Cartoon Creator: Mark Taylor

Title: New Model

Publication: Albuquerque Tribune

Publication Date: 1980

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: Big
 1960s car, smaller 1970s car, 1980s tricycle

Source: Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year 1980

Blame Direction: No blame?

Top Right Cartoon Creator: Eugene Craig

Title: Carter's Energy Commandments

Publication: Columbus Dispatch

Publication Date: 1980

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: Carter returns from the mount bearing new
 Energy Commandments, to find Americans worshipping the large car

Source: Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year 1980

Blame Direction: American Consumers worshipping the false idol of the large car?
 Carter's unrealistic energy policy?

Bottom Cartoon Creator: Jack Bender

Title: Gasoline One Mile

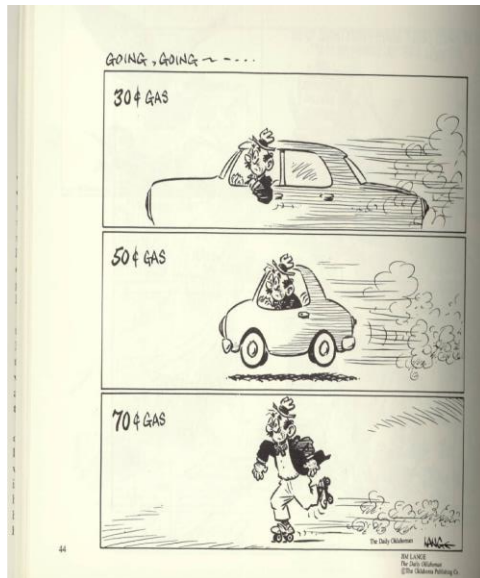
Publication: Waterloo Courier

Publication Date: 1980

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: many cars waiting in line for gasoline,
 including a lawn mower

Source: Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year 1980

Blame Direction: No blame? (There are similar photos from 1970s gas lines).



E839.5B48 Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year 1976 p.44 Jim Lange Daily Oklahoman

Creator: Jim Lange

Title: Going, Going, ...

Publication: Daily Oklahoman

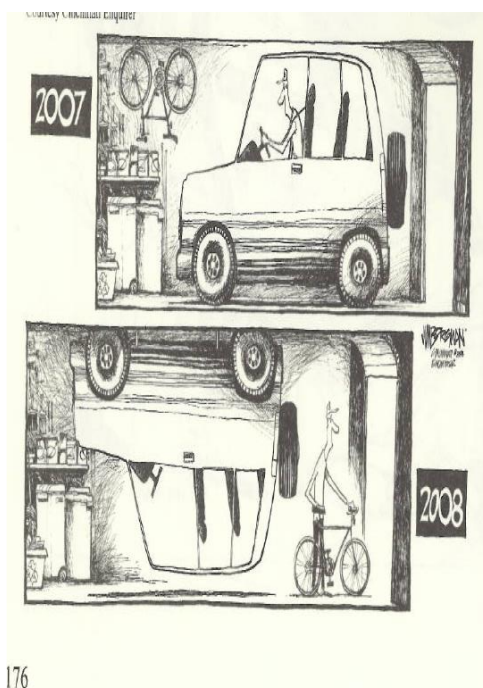
Publication Date: 1976

Summary/Description of cartoon: \$.30 per gallon gas big car, \$.50 small car, \$.70 skates

Source: Best Editorial

Cartoons of the Year 1976

Blame Direction: No blame?



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E839.5 B48 Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year 2009 p.176 Borgman Cincinnati Inquirer

Creator: Jim Borgman

Title: 2007/2008 Car/Bike contrast

Publication: Cincinnati Inquirer

Publication Date: 2009

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: 2007 bike hanging in garage. 2008 car hanging up

Source: Best Editorial Cartoons of the Year 2009

Blame Direction: No blame?



By Jimmy Margulies, The Record of Hackensack, NJ - 5/11/2011

Creator: Jimmy Margulies

Title: Big Oil Tax Breaks

Publication: The Record of Hackensack, NJ

Publication Date: 5/11/2011

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: Revolutionary War/Tea Party flag modified

Source: <http://theweek.com>

Blame Direction: American Government Policy of tax breaks for big oil companies?



By Brian Fairrington, Cagle Cartoons - 1/28/2011

Creator: Brian Fairrington

Title: Middle Class Snake Bite

Publication: Cagle Cartoons

Publication Date: 1/28/2011

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: gas pump nozzle as snake having bitten a

consumer

Source: www.cagle.com

Blame Direction: No blame?



John Darkow Copyright 2011 Cagle Cartoons

Creator: John Darkow

Title: Tar Pit

Publication: Cagle Cartoons

Publication Date: 2011

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: Dinosaurs warn of the trap of this oily stuff

Source: www.caglecartoons.com

Blame Direction: No blame?



Mike Keefe Copyright 2011 Cagle Cartoons

Creator: Mike Keefe

Title: You're ours

Publication: Denver Post

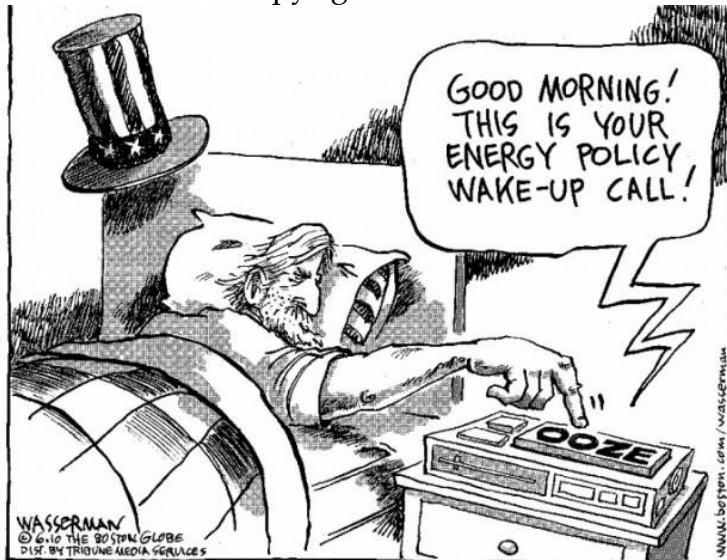
Publication Date: 7-3-11

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: Big Foreign Oil dangling Uncle Sam wrapped in gas pump hose

Source: www.cagle.com

Blame Direction: Arab Oil Company Executives? American Consumers? American Government Policy?

Dan Wasserman copyright 2010 Tribune Media Services



Creator: Dan Wasserman

Title: Energy Policy Wake-up Call

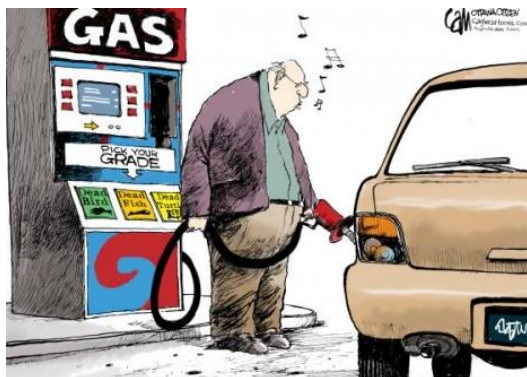
Publication: Tribune Media Services

Publication Date: 2010

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: Uncle Sam hits the “OOZE” button on his alarm clock

Source: www.theweek.com

Blame Direction: Oil Company oil spill? American Government Policy? No blame?



Cam Cardow copyright 2010 Cagle Cartoons

Creator: Cam Cardow

Title: Pick Your Grade

Publication: Cagle Cartoons

Publication Date: 2010

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: Pick your grade of gasoline – dead bird,
dead fish,

dead turtle

Source: Cagle Cartoons

Blame Direction: American Consumers? Oil Company oil spills? American
Government Policy?



Mike Keefe copyright 2010 Cagle Cartoons

Creator: Mike Keefe

Title: We Will Pay, Won't We?

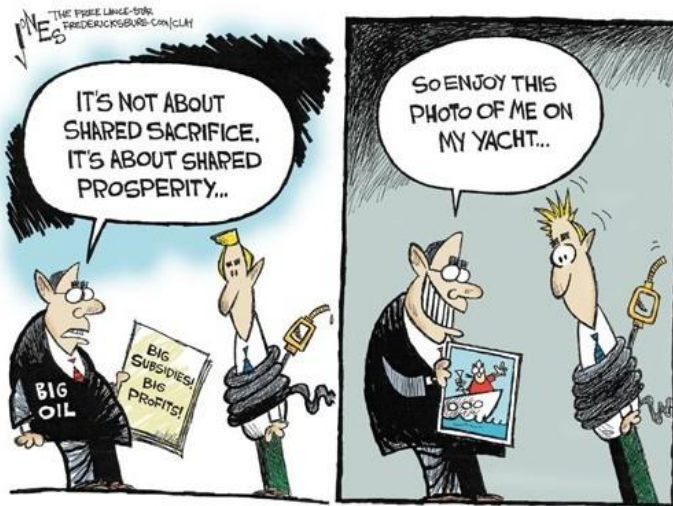
Publication: Denver Post

Publication Date: 05-07-10

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: BP executive passing cost of oil spill clean-
up on to
consumer

Source: www.cagle.com

Blame Direction: British Petroleum? American Consumers? American Government
Policy?



Chuck Jones Copyright 2011 Creators Syndicate

Creator: Chuck Jones

Title: Shared Prosperity

Publication: Creators Syndicate

Publication Date: 2011

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: Big Oil executive sharing picture of himself on his

yacht with a consumer tied up by gas pump hose

Source: www.theweek.com

Blame Direction: Big Oil Companies? American Government Policy?



Mike Keefe copyright 2010 Cagle Cartoons

Creator: Mike Keefe

Title: Don't Spread On Me

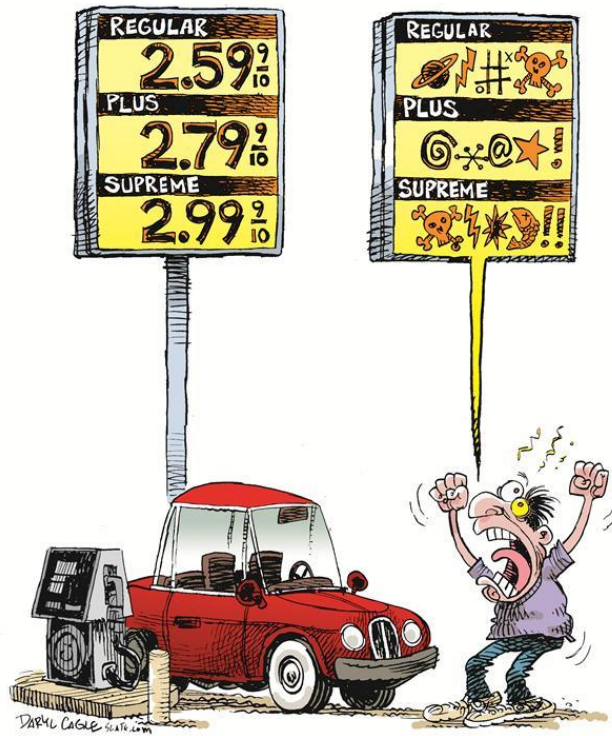
Publication: Denver Post

Publication Date: 2010

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: American Revolutionary War Flag/Tea Party flag "from the angry sea party"

Source: www.cagle.com

Blame Direction: No blame? Oil Company oil spills? American Government Policy?



By [Daryl Cagle](http://www.cagle.com), MSNBC.com - 4/9/2005

Creator: Daryl Cagle

Title: High Gas Prices

Publication: MSNBC.com

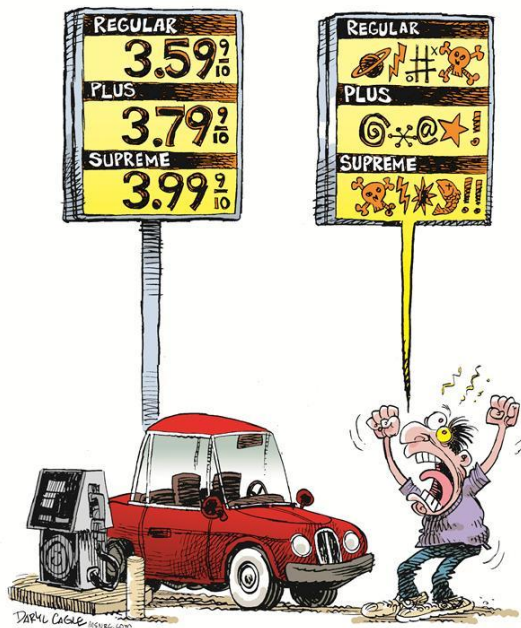
Publication Date: 4/9/2005

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: Cursing "high" gas prices

Source: www.cagle.com

Blame Direction: No blame?

American Consumers?



By [Daryl Cagle](http://www.cagle.com), MSNBC.com - 5/19/2007

Creator: Daryl Cagle

Title: Gas Prices Curse

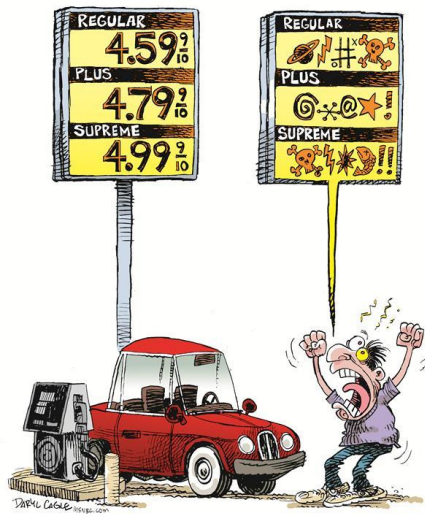
Publication: MSNBC.com

Publication Date: 5/19/2007

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: consumer cursing high gas prices

Source: www.cagle.com

Blame Direction: No blame? American Consumers?



999999999

By [Daryl Cagle](#), MSNBC.com - 6/10/2008

Creator: Daryl Cagle

Title: Summer Gas Prices 2008

Publication: MSNBC.com

Publication Date: 6/10/2008

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: consumer cursing high gas prices again

Source: www.cagle.com

Blame Direction: No blame? American Consumers?



By [Keefe](#), The Denver Post - 4/1/2004

Creator: Mike Keefe

Title: Hooked

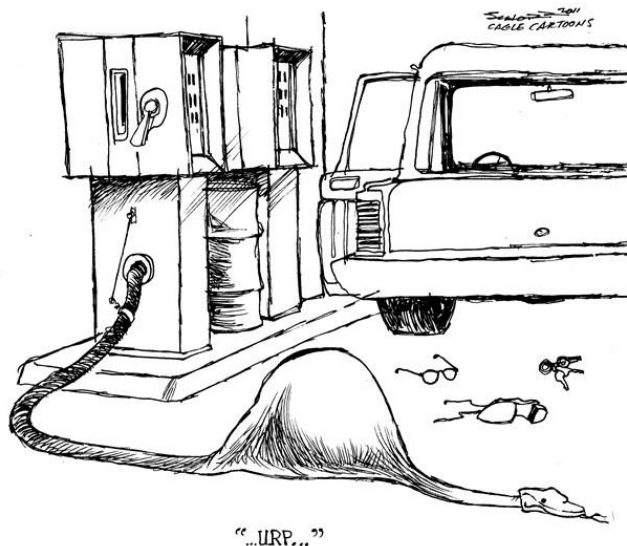
Publication: Denver Post

Publication Date: 4/1/2004

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: OPEC fisherman, Uncle Sam fish

Source: www.cagle.com

Blame Direction: American Consumers? American Government Policy? OPEC?



"...URP..."

By [Bill Schorr](#), Cagle Cartoons - 4/21/2011 12:00:00 AM

Creator: Bill Schorr

Title: Urp

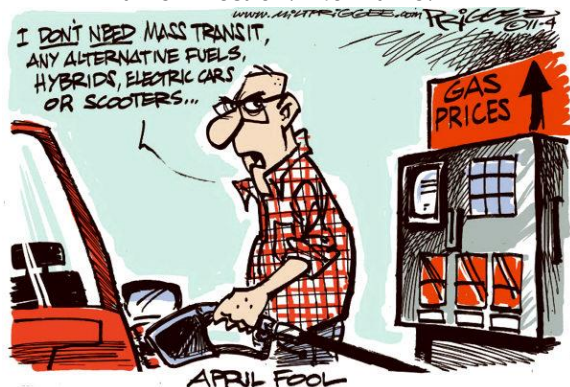
Publication: Cagle Cartoons

Publication Date: 4/21/2011

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: Gas hose snake swallowed consumer

Source: www.cagle.com

Blame Direction: No Blame?



By [Milt Priggee](#), www.miltpriggee.com - 3/31/2011

Creator: Milt Priggee

Title: April Fool

Publication: www.miltpriggee.com

Publication Date: 3/31/2011

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: consumer states he doesn't need things that might help reduce gas prices

Source: www.cagle.com

Blame Direction: Certain American Consumers? Certain American Government Policies?

(People opposed to mass transit, people opposed to alternative fuels, people opposed to hybrid cars, people opposed to electric cars, people opposed to scooters)?



Walt Handelsman Copyright 2011 Tribune Media Services

Creator: Walt Handelsman

Title: Cheap Gas

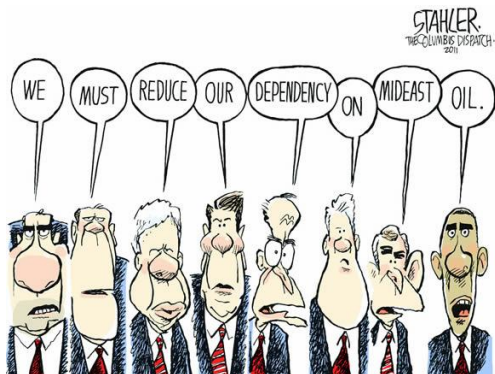
Publication: Tribune Media Services

Publication Date: 2011

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: sign says "CHEAP GAS compared to what you'll pay next week"

Source: www.cagle.com

Blame Direction: No blame?



Creator: Jeff Stahler

Title: "We must reduce our dependency on Mideast oil."

Publication: Columbus Dispatch

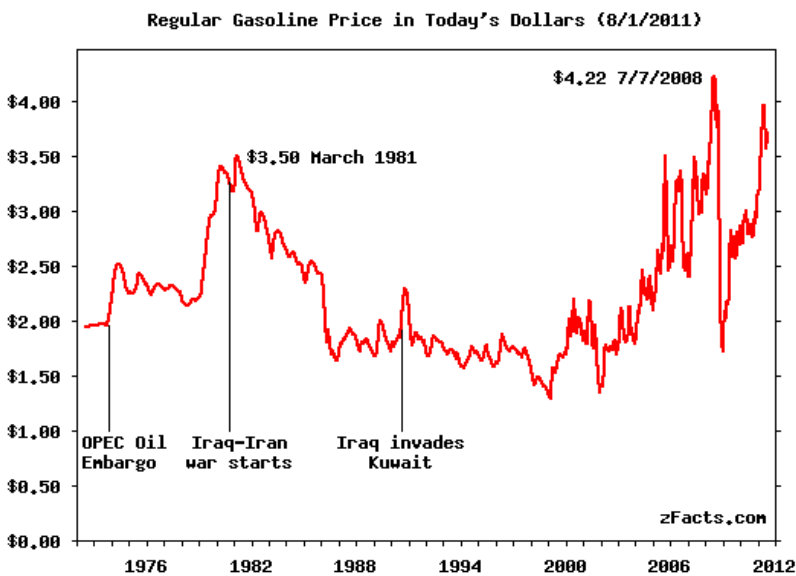
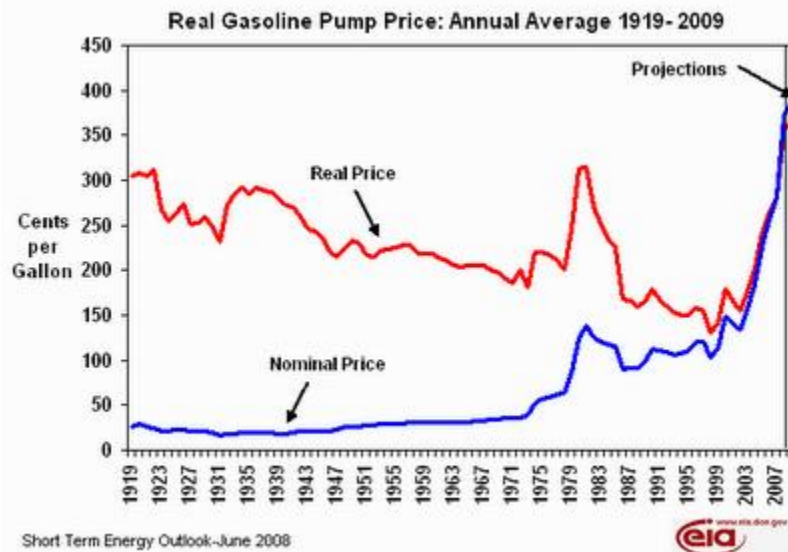
Publication Date: March 31, 2011

Summary/Description of cartoon or source: all US presidents saying the same thing since Nixon

Source: the Columbus *Dispatch*

Blame Direction: Every US President (and policy) Since Nixon? No Blame?

<http://www.eia.gov/>



<http://zfacts.com/> (opinionated site, so chart may be biased
...but it was the clearest chart I found online)