

LESSON PLAN POLITICAL CARTOONING

1. Dr. Seuss and U.S. Isolationism WW II

2. Sophomores U.S. History

Content Standard – During the 1930s, the United States government attempted to distance the country from earlier interventionist policies in the Western Hemisphere as well as retain an isolationist approach to events in Europe and Asia until the beginning of WW II.

3. Duration – one week

4. Learning objectives : Students will understand the definition of isolationism as it applies to the U.S. pre-WW II.

Students will analyze the use political cartoons by Dr. Seuss dealing with isolationism. Students will be able to make their own decisions about whether the U.S. should have stayed out of the war based on his political cartoons.

5. Students will be analyzing Dr. Seuss's cartoons dealing with isolationism pre-WW II. Information will be given about the United States desire to stay out of European affairs during this time period. We will discuss how Dr. Seuss was able to convey the idea of isolationism and how Americans were swayed either to back the policy of isolationism or to call for our government to help the Allies. Students will define isolationism as it applies to this period, discuss the “Good Neighbor Policy” 1933, the Neutrality Act 1935, where the Republican and Democratic parties stood on the issue and the Lend/Lease Act. A general background will be given about Dr. Seuss as a political cartoonist.

6. Students will be given the cartoons to be used, each student will have just one cartoon to analyze. They will use the Reading of an Editorial Cartoon worksheet answering the questions. No background will be given to the students prior to their analyzing their cartoon. They will be told to answer the questions just based on the cartoon itself.

7. Information will be presented to the students regarding the rise of Hitler and Nazi Germany. Reasons for the war beginning in Europe and how the United States tried to not help the Allies. The position our government took so that the country would remain in isolation. Both sides of this controversy will be presented, the pros and cons of staying out of European affairs and the need to help our Allies. The question of the reality of isolationism being a possibility during this time period, could the United States

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afford to turn its back on what was happening in Europe or would our government have to take a stand against Nazism and Hitler. Using Dr. Seuss's political cartoons I will show the students how people felt about staying out of the war. Those prominent Americans who backed isolationism will be identified – i.e. Charles Lindbergh.

8. After having given students background information they will be given the same political cartoon they analyzed before on step 6. They will once again use the Reading of an Editorial Cartoon to accomplish this task. I will then compare their answers to see what changes they have made and if they have analyzed the cartoon differently. Their score will be based on the changes, if there are no changes I will conference with them to see why.

9. Materials – Dr. Seuss cartoons from the book Dr. Seuss Goes to War, by Richard H. Minear, pages 29,30, 31, 32, 33,39, 48 & 28 worksheet reading of an Editorial Cartoon, bio of Dr. Seuss.

10. Students will need paper and pencil.

11. Extension activities – Some of Dr. Seuss's books will be brought in and read to the students. We will then compare them to his political cartoons. Such books as The Lorax, Green Eggs and Ham, or The Grinch Stole Christmas. The students will analyze the different books to see if they have any political leanings. The teacher may use other Dr. Seuss books if they wish, they are not tied to the three mentioned above. Students will create their own political cartoons dealing with isolationism in modern times dealing with our staying out of the Middle East.

12. Cartoons used:

Creator – Dr. Seuss

Title – Since When -page 29,

Publication – PM, New York newspaper

Publication Date April 28, 1941

Description – This cartoon shows a quarter with an ostrich sticking his head in the sand. It is labeled the Lindbergh Quarter, relating to the fact that Charles Lindbergh wanted the United States to stay in isolation.

Sources – Dr. Seuss Goes to War, author Richard H. Minear 1999

Creator – Dr. Seuss

Title – We Always – page 30

Publication – PM, New York newspaper

Publication Date – April 29, 1941

Description – This shows a man selling ostrich heads to the public as a reliever for

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Hitler Headaches. It then shows a man trying out his ostrich head putting it in the sand.

Source – Dr. Seuss Goes to War, author Richard H. Minear, 1999

Creator – Dr. Seuss

Title – Not Contagious – page 31

Publication – PM, New York newspaper

Publication Date – May 15, 1941

Description – Shows Uncle Sam in his own bed with another bed beside him. This bed is labeled Italian mumps, since Uncle Sam is in his own bed he feels that he will not get the mumps and therefore is safe. This refers to the fact that if the United States keeps its isolationist policy we will not have what is happening to countries in Europe happen to us.

Source – Dr. Seuss Goes to War, Author Richard H. Minear, 1999

Creator – Dr. Seuss

Title – Ho Hum, page 32

Publication - PM, New York newspaper

Publication Date – May 22, 1941

Description – The ostrich with an Uncle Sam hat is sitting in a nest at the top of a tree. There is a woodpecker with a Nazi symbol on it pecking down trees that are labeled as those European countries that have been attacked by Hitler. The ostrich sits as if he will not be leveled because the woodpecker will get tired. He has a this can't happen to me attitude.

Source – Dr. Seuss Goes to War, author Richard H. Minear, 1999

Creator – Dr. Seuss

Title – Bath Tub, page 33

Publication – PM, New York newspaper

Publication Date – May 27, 1941

Description – This shows the ostrich in the bath tub saying he is safe in his home tub. In the bath water are fish labeled with the swastika of Nazi Germany. The ostrich feels since he is home, in the United States nothing bad will happen to him. What happens elsewhere has no effect on him.

Source – Dr. Seuss Goes to War, author Richard H. Minear, 1999

Creator – Dr. Seuss

Title – Isolationist, page 39

Publication – PM, New York newspaper

Publication Date – July 16, 1941

Description – This shows a small man who has climbed a mountain to ask the great whale what an isolationist is, how are they defined. The great whale gives a description in the verse Dr. Seuss uses in his books.

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Source – Dr. Seuss Goes to War, author Richard H. Minear, 1999

Creator – Dr. Seuss

Title – Hall of Extinction, page 48

Publication – PM, New York newspaper

Publication Date – Nov. 25, 1941

Description – This shows two dinosaur sets of bones and an emaciated ostrich, labeled extinct, looking out in to the museum. The dinosaurs say looks like a new exhibit is coming. Again this refers to our policy of isolationism.

Source – Dr. Seuss Goes to War, author Richard H. Minear, 1999

Creator – Dr. Seuss

Title – He Never, page 28

Publication – PM, New York newspaper

Publication Date – December 8, 1941

Description – It shows the ostrich labeled isolationism flying up into the air after having been blown there by the word war. This is in reference to the bombing of Pearl Harbor the day before by the Japanese. No longer can isolationism be our policy now that the United States has been attacked. We are now in the war whether or not the United States wants to be at war.

Source – Dr. Seuss Goes to War, author Richard H. Minear, 1999