

Standardized Test Skills Practice

ACTIVITY 13

Writing About a Political Cartoon

Social Studies Objective: The student will respond appropriately in a written composition to the purpose/audience specified in a given topic.

Expressions of opinion are often presented visually in the form of **political cartoons**. Using caricature and symbols, political cartoons help readers see relationships and draw conclusions about personalities and events.

★ Learning to Write About a Political Cartoon

Use the following guidelines to help you write about political cartoons.

- Determine the main theme or subject of the cartoon.
- Find out what the cartoon's caricatures and symbols represent.
- Identify the issues that are addressed.
- Write a topic sentence based on the information you have gathered.
- Use supporting ideas to clarify the relationships among the cartoon's figures and symbols.
- Draw conclusions about the cartoonist's point of view.

★ Practicing the Skill

DIRECTIONS: Read the paragraphs below and complete the activity that follows.

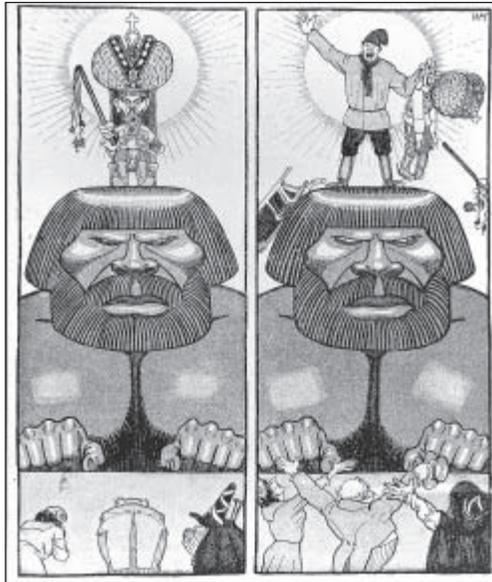
The Communist Manifesto

The German thinkers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels called on the workers of the world to unite in revolt against the capitalist and aristocratic ruling classes. In their pamphlet *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), they appealed: "Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians [workers] have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!" According to Marx and Engels, all history has been characterized by class struggles. In recent times, they declared, the owners of factories had exploited workers. Marx and Engels believed that conflict between property owners

and propertyless workers would continue until capitalism was destroyed. Their ideal was a society in which all goods would be held in common and all people would be equal.

History, however, did not proceed by Marx's plan. By 1900 conditions had improved for many western European workers. Some workers continued to favor public control of industry but used democratic means to achieve their goals. The first Marxist revolution took place in Russia, a largely agricultural society. There Marxist revolutionaries shunned democratic values and used force to win power and impose their beliefs on the Russian people.

DIRECTIONS: For special effect, cartoonists often exaggerate a person’s physical features or appearance. Their representations can be positive or negative, depending on their point of view. Study the political cartoon below and answer the questions that follow.



1. What is the theme of the cartoon?

2. What do the cartoon’s figures and symbols represent?

3. What is the cartoonist’s interpretation of Marx’s theory of class struggle?

4. Is the cartoonist supporting or opposing Marx’s viewpoint? Explain.



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DIRECTIONS: On a separate sheet of paper, write a composition about the political cartoon based on your analysis above. Develop a topic sentence, provide supporting ideas, and end with a conclusion.