

# Reconstruction Through Art: Creating Your Own Political Cartoon

This assignment is due \_\_\_\_\_. It is worth 40 points.

**Purpose:** To demonstrate your understanding of a critical part of Reconstruction and the rise of Jim Crow (1865 - 1901).

**Background:** Political cartoons use words, imagery and symbolism in order to create a message. Often they use exaggeration or caricature to create emotion in their viewers. Throughout this unit we have examined or will examine the political cartoons of Thomas Nast, A. R. Waud, and others. Now it is your turn to demonstrate your understanding of political cartoons and the hardships and struggles experienced by black Americans between 1865 and 1901.

**Directions:** Using your knowledge of Reconstruction and the period after in which African Americans' rights were eroded by Jim Crow laws, vigilante terror, grandfather clauses, and other tools of disenfranchisement, draw and color a political cartoon in the style of those you have seen that demonstrates your knowledge of the subject and your opinion about the subject. (For those of you that are concerned about the drawing part, you may trace images from other sources. However, the cartoon itself must be your own idea.) This assignment may be completed with a partner.

*There are numerous subjects about which you could draw, including the Reconstruction Amendments, tools of disenfranchisement, Jim Crow Laws, the 1876 election and Plessy v. Ferguson.*

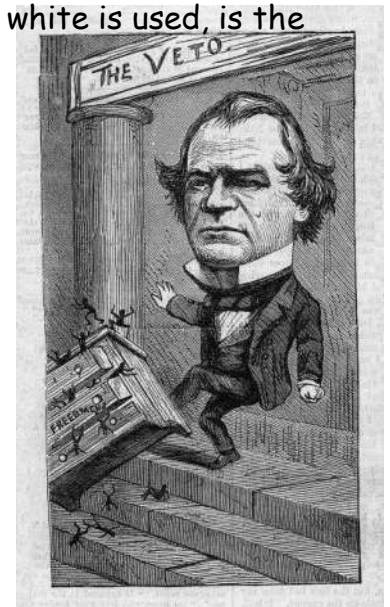
On a separate sheet of paper, type a paragraph about your cartoon that includes:

- the message of your cartoon
- why you feel that your subject is an important topic within Reconstruction and the Rise of Jim Crow
- three different ways (images, words, etc.) the drawing conveys your message, including one artistic device that helps get your message across (contrast of color or size, depth, exaggeration, use of irony, symbolism, etc.)

The assignment will be graded with the following in mind:

- ✓ Clarity of subject (Can the viewer tell what you are portraying? Are there facts about your subject that are apparent to the viewer?)
- ✓ Clarity of author's opinion (Can the viewer tell what you believe about the subject?)
- ✓ Use of color (Is color used to reinforce the message? If black and white is used, is the shading done with care?)
- ✓ Creativity / originality
- ✓ Neatness
- ✓ Attention to detail (in writing and drawing)
- ✓ Style choices

*In the cartoons to the right, the artist uses objects to represent things (the trains as the branches of government, the freedmen's bureau as a chest of drawers). He also uses actual representations of the character in order to make his point more obvious.*



The rubric I will be using looks like this (please be aware that cartoons copied from the internet, whether you change words around or not, are considered plagiarism and will receive a failing grade):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please work on:

- ☐ clarity of subject. (Either it is difficult to find the message or there are few to no facts about the subject apparent to the viewer.)
- ☐ clarity of author's opinion. (It is difficult to tell what you believe about the subject.)
- ☐ use of color. (Color needed to reinforce the message. If black and white was used, the shading needed to be done with care.)
- ☐ creativity.
- ☐ neatness.
- ☐ originality.
- ☐ attention to detail.
- ☐ style choices.
- ☐ the typed paragraph that included
  - a topic sentence that previews the contents of the paragraph
  - an explanation of why your subject is an important one
  - three different ways the message is conveyed, including an artistic device