

Critical Thinking Skills Activity 29

Interpreting Political Cartoons

LEARNING THE SKILL

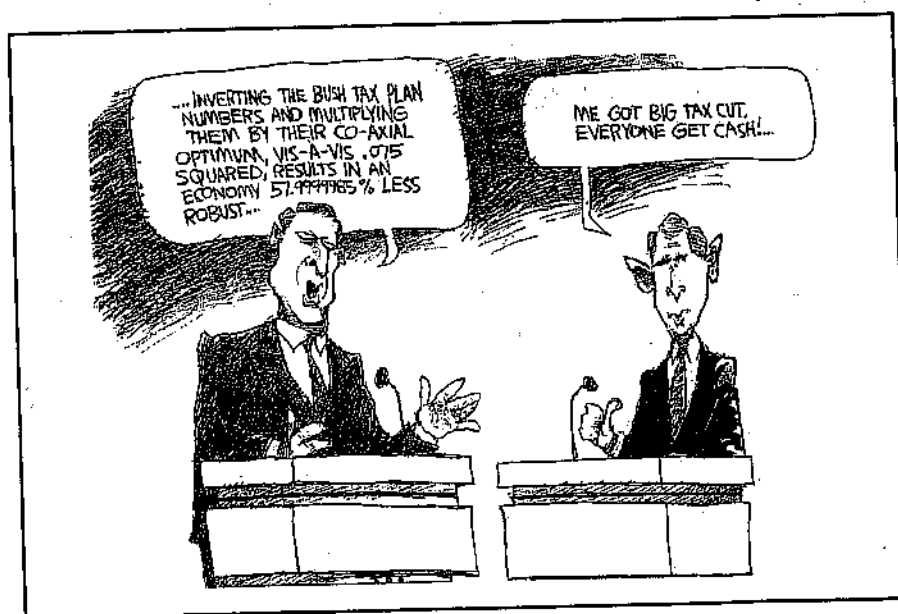
Expressions of opinion are often presented visually in the form of *political cartoons*. Using caricatures (exaggerated pictures) and symbols (ideas, images, or objects that stand for or suggest something else), political cartoons help readers see relationships and draw conclusions about personalities and events.

Use the following guidelines to help you interpret 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.
- Use supporting details to clarify the relationships among the cartoon's figures and symbols.
- Draw conclusions about the cartoonist's point of view.

PRACTICING THE SKILL

DIRECTIONS: Examine the political cartoon below about the 2000 presidential election and featuring candidates Al Gore and George W. Bush. Then answer the questions that follow on a separate sheet of paper.



1. What is the theme (or themes) of the cartoon?
2. Do Al Gore's words make any sense? What do they symbolize or represent?
3. What feature of George W. Bush is caricatured or exaggerated in this cartoon?
4. Do you think the cartoonist supported Bush or Gore in the 2000 election? Explain.