

## 1 Review the Skill

SS CONTENT TOPICS: I.CG.c.1, I.CG.c.3, I.CG.c.6, II.CG.e.1, II.E.d.7, II.E.d.10, II.USH.f.8, II.USH.f.9  
SS PRACTICES: SSP.1.a, SSP.1.b, SSP.2.a, SSP.2.b, SSP.5.a, SSP.5.b, SSP.6.b, SSP.7.a

**Interpreting a political cartoon** calls for close study of the various elements in order to determine how cartoonist creates a message through images and text. The artist will **editorialize**, or express his or her opinion on a newsworthy or controversial issue.

One way in which political cartoonists convey their ideas to readers is through the use of caricature. A caricature exaggerates or distorts the characteristics of someone or something in order to make a comment, or editorialize, upon it. Political cartoonists also use symbols and visual details to convey meaning.

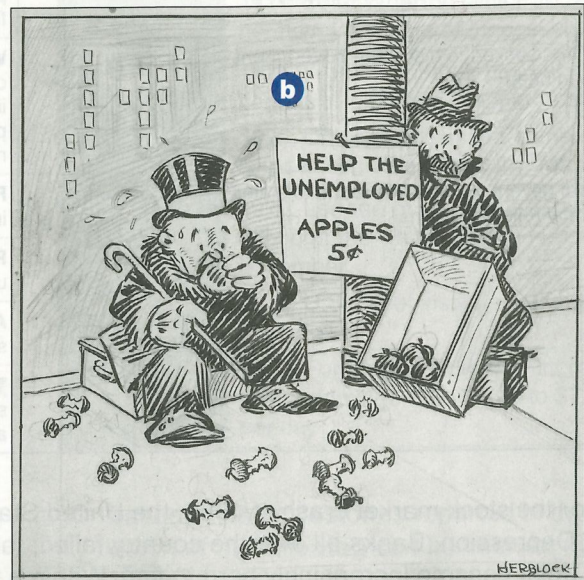
## 2 Refine the Skill

By refining the skill of interpreting political cartoons, you will improve your study and test-taking abilities, especially as they relate to the GED® Social Studies Test. Study the information below. Then answer the questions that follow.

**a** The titles and text of cartoons often provide valuable clues for interpreting their meaning.

**b** Political cartoonists do not typically depict situations in a realistic fashion. Look for the ways in which the images in a cartoon are distorted or exaggerated. Consider what purpose the cartoonist might have for using these exaggerations and distortions.

### a THE PHILANTHROPIST



"The Philanthropist," A 1930 Herblock Cartoon © Copyright The Herb Block Foundation

- Which of the following elements in this cartoon could be considered a caricature?
  - the sign
  - the man standing beside the light pole
  - the man eating the apples
  - the city pictured in the background
- What statement is the cartoonist making about the Depression?
  - It caused unemployment to increase.
  - It caused the price of food in the nation to increase.
  - It affected people in urban areas more than in rural areas.
  - It affected the wealthy as well as the poor.

### USING LOGIC

In this cartoon, the man eating apples has a top hat and a cane. The other man wears an old hat and coat. Based on clothing, you can infer that the man eating apples is rich, and the other man is poor.



★ **Spotlighted Item: DROP-DOWN**

**DIRECTIONS:** The passage below is incomplete. Use the information from the political cartoon to complete the passage. For each drop-down item, choose the option that correctly completes the sentence.

**NEW DEAL TO THE RESCUE**



This political cartoon presents one cartoonist's viewpoint on President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs. President Roosevelt (FDR) is shown as a **3. Drop-down 1** trying to cure the sick man sitting in the chair. The sick man is **3. Drop-down 2**. There are several medicine bottles arrayed on the table. The initials on the medicine bottles represent **3. Drop-down 3** that are meant to cure the sick man. You can infer that the artist's attitude about the New Deal is generally **3. Drop-down 4**.

**Drop-Down Answer Options**

- 3.1 A. member of Congress  
B. nurse  
C. businessman  
D. doctor

- 3.2 A. the New Deal  
B. the Constitution  
C. the United States  
D. the Congress

- 3.3 A. New Deal programs  
B. members of Congress  
C. popular medicines  
D. failed U.S. banks

- 3.4 A. extremely negative  
B. indifferent  
C. cautiously positive  
D. suspicious

**DIRECTIONS:** Study the cartoon, read the questions, then choose the **best** answers.



4. In this cartoon, which of the following is represented by the figure holding the cards?
- A. Herbert Hoover  
B. Woodrow Wilson  
C. the United Nations  
D. the United States
5. The cartoonist uses the images and text together to convey which of the following feelings?
- A. optimism  
B. skepticism  
C. confusion  
D. calmness



### 3 Master the Skill

**DIRECTIONS:** Study the information and the poster, read the questions, then choose the **best** answers.

Similar to political cartoons, political posters are created by artists to editorialize or express messages or beliefs. These posters may sometimes be used as propaganda, which is something designed to promote a particular idea or doctrine. This poster promotes one of the New Deal's most popular programs, the Civilian Conservation Corps. Known as the "CCC," it provided labor-intensive work for unskilled men who lived away from home in campsites where the work was located.



6. Which of the following best describes the way the artist depicts the young Civilian Conservation Corps worker on this poster?

- A. angry
- B. proud
- C. courteous
- D. exhausted

7. What was the program featured in this poster most likely designed to confront?

- A. bank failures
- B. political corruption
- C. outbreaks of disease
- D. unemployment

8. What was most likely the reason the poster had a positive propagandist message?

- A. There were too many applicants.
- B. The jobs were highly desirable.
- C. The jobs were very difficult.
- D. The wages were very good.

**DIRECTIONS:** Study the poster, read the questions, then choose the **best** answers.



9. Based on the information presented in the poster, what is a "Victory Home"?

- A. It is a home that flies the American flag.
- B. It is a home in which several residents own war bonds.
- C. It is a home that displays a victory sticker in the window.
- D. It is a home that finds ways to support the war effort.

10. Which of the measures listed on the poster is aimed directly at preventing shortages of gasoline?

- A. finding time to work for the war
- B. raising and sharing food
- C. walking and carrying packages
- D. conserving everything you have

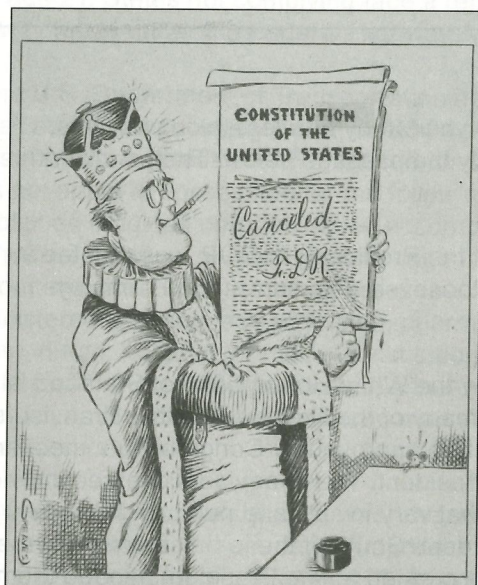
11. From the information on the poster, what might one conclude about the impact of the war on society?

- A. Most people were eagerly working to support the war.
- B. The war was consuming many critical resources and causing shortages.
- C. The war provided a good way to invest money.
- D. The war effort was limited to the military and their families.



**DIRECTIONS:** Study the information and the cartoon, read the questions, then choose the **best** answers.

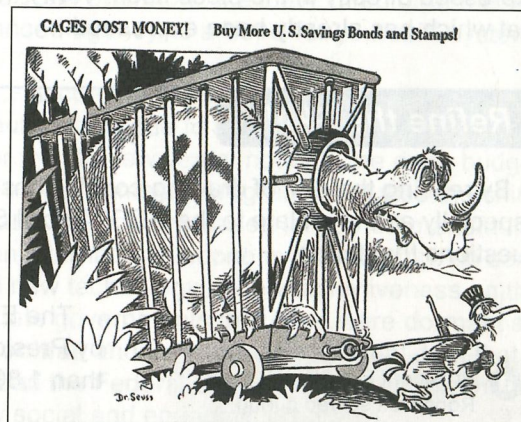
The U.S. Constitution does not specify the number of terms a President can serve. In 1940, President Roosevelt decided to run for a third term, and he won. Republicans were able to push an amendment through Congress in 1947, limiting a President to only two terms. It was ratified as the Twenty-Second Amendment in 1951.



12. Why does the cartoonist portray President Roosevelt dressed as a king?
  - A. He believes Presidents should wear robes to command more respect for the office.
  - B. He believes President Roosevelt is acting like a king because of his desire for a third term.
  - C. He wants the United States to become a monarchy.
  - D. He is mocking the monarchy of America's British allies.
13. Which of the following can be inferred as the reason a Republican-controlled Congress supported the Twenty-Second Amendment?
  - A. They wanted to make sure that all future Presidents had at least two terms.
  - B. They were eager to satisfy a public that wanted to place term limits on the President.
  - C. They were following President Roosevelt's wish to be the only four-term President.
  - D. They wanted to ensure that no other Democrat could win election more than two times.

**DIRECTIONS:** Study the information and the cartoon, read the questions, then choose the **best** answers.

After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in late 1941, the United States was propelled into World War II. For almost four years, Americans fought in Europe against Nazi Germany and its allies and against Japan in the Pacific.



Retrieved from the Mandeville Special Collections Library, USCD

14. Which of the following does the animal in the cage represent?
  - A. the United States
  - B. Nazi Germany and its allies
  - C. people who resisted serving in the military during World War II
  - D. the lands Japan controlled in the Pacific
15. According to the cartoon, which of the following will occur as a result of buying savings bonds and stamps?
  - A. allow the building of more zoos
  - B. make millions of dollars for people who buy bonds and stamps
  - C. help American soldiers win the war
  - D. help the United States and Germany become friendly toward each other
16. According to the cartoon, in which of the following roles is the United States **best** represented?
  - A. as Uncle Sam the zookeeper, keeping the dangerous Nazi animal from doing harm
  - B. as a smiling duck-like bird carrying a rifle
  - C. as a zookeeper trying to raise money for more cages
  - D. as a large, dinosaur-like animal being carted about in a cage





## 1 Learn the Skill

**Political cartoons** are drawings that are intended to make political or social statements. These cartoons communicate the opinions of the artists who draw them. These individuals, known as **political cartoonists**, often use their editorial skills and humor or satire to make their points. Political cartoonists may also use a **caricature**, or an exaggerated representation of a thing or a person's physical features, to present a point of view. By **interpreting political cartoons**, you can gain valuable first-hand knowledge of the different ways that people viewed historical events during the time in which they were happening.

As with other areas of the GED® test, the skill of interpreting political cartoons will test your ability to interpret information at various Depth of Knowledge levels through the use of complex reading skills and thinking skills.

## 2 Practice the Skill

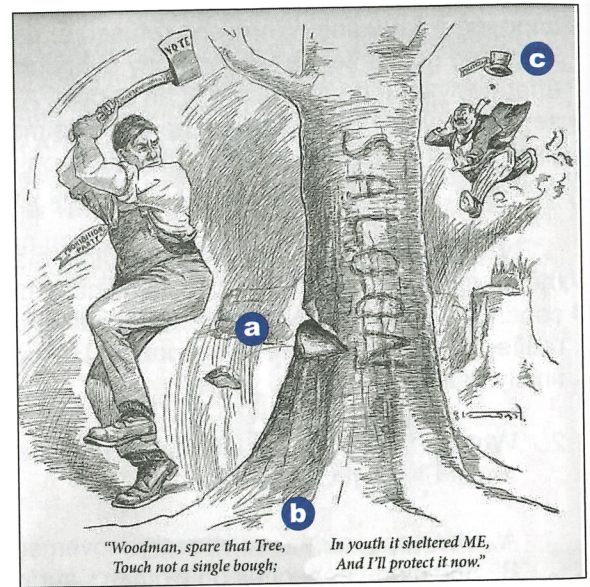
By practicing the skill of interpreting political cartoons, you will improve your study and test-taking abilities, especially as they relate to the GED® Social Studies Test. Study the information below. Then answer the question that follows.

**a** Symbols often help convey meaning in political cartoons through the use of images and words, such as the axe blade (vote) chopping into the tree (saloon).

**b** Political cartoons often include labels that identify items shown in the cartoon. Captions that may appear below a cartoon help clarify the cartoon's meaning.

**c** The man to the right of the tree is a caricature of a politician. He is the one saying the words at the bottom of the cartoon.

The Prohibition Party formed in the mid-1800s and campaigned for several years to outlaw the production, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages. It is the oldest minor U.S. political party still in existence. From time to time it has nominated candidates for state and local office in nearly every state.



- Which of the following do the depictions of the two figures in the cartoon suggest about the cartoonist's viewpoint on Prohibition?
  - The cartoonist believes that politicians are rightfully concerned about Prohibition.
  - The cartoonist believes that the Prohibition Party is right in trying to outlaw alcohol.
  - The cartoonist fears that the Prohibition Party is pursuing their goals recklessly.
  - The cartoonist suggests that many politicians support the work of the Prohibition Party.

### MAKING ASSUMPTIONS

Political cartoons express editorial commentary or opinion. As you examine the words, pictures, or symbols in political cartoons, consider how these items express the artist's viewpoint.



### 3 Apply the Skill

**DIRECTIONS:** Study the information and the cartoon, read the questions, then choose the **best** answers.

Following the stock market crash of 1929, President Herbert Hoover sought to minimize the effects of the crash on the economy of the United States. American farmers were earning much less than before, and they could not pay their mortgages and bills. Without these payments, rural banks failed. After 1932, drought conditions plagued the Midwest, adding to existing agricultural problems. Industries failed, and factories and stores closed.

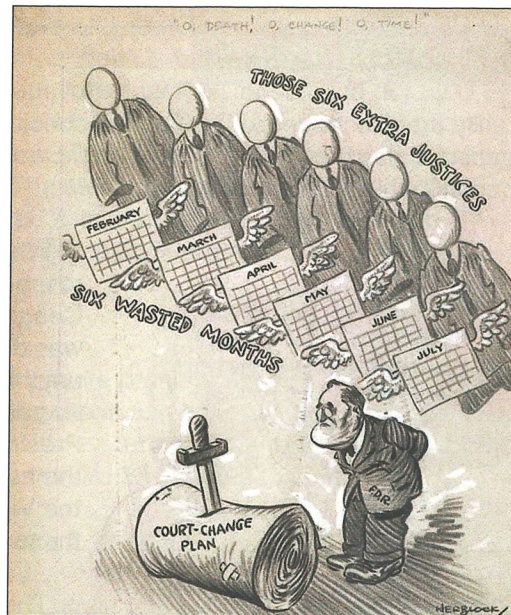
Between 1929 and 1933, 5,000 American banks collapsed, one in four farms went into foreclosure, and an average of 100,000 jobs vanished each week. By 1932, more than 12 million Americans were unemployed. Part of President Hoover's plan to improve the nation's economy involved working with business and labor leaders.



2. Which of the following statements best describes the cartoon's depiction of President Hoover?
  - A. He is shown as a weak and ineffective leader.
  - B. He is shown as guiding the country's economy back to stability.
  - C. He is shown as unsure of the correct course of action to improve the economy.
  - D. He is shown as wary of supporting big business during this crisis.
  
3. Which of the following does the cartoonist identify as the cause of the economic crash?
  - A. The cartoonist blames President Hoover.
  - B. The cartoonist thinks labor is the source of the problem.
  - C. The cartoonist points to speculation as the cause.
  - D. The cartoonist states that detours from regular business practices are to blame.

**DIRECTIONS:** Study the information and the cartoon, read the questions, then choose the **best** answers.

In February 1937, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt proposed legislation that would increase the number of U.S. Supreme Court justices from 9 to 15. For each justice over the age of 70 (a total of six at the time), he would be empowered to appoint a new justice. This would have altered a court that had struck down some of the proposed New Deal programs. After six months of hearings and debates in Congress, the President's plan failed.



"O, death! O, change! O, time!" A 1937 Herblock Cartoon, ©The Herb Block Foundation

4. How does the artist characterize President Roosevelt's demeanor in this political cartoon?
  - A. His demeanor is portrayed as hopeful.
  - B. His demeanor is portrayed as angry.
  - C. His demeanor is somewhat sad and dismayed.
  - D. His demeanor is cold and calculating.
  
5. Why does the cartoonist show pages from a calendar with wings attached?
  - A. Six months' time was wasted while Congress considered the President's proposed plan.
  - B. The six justices who were 70 years old had passed away.
  - C. The wings represent the fleeting nature of service on the U.S. Supreme Court.
  - D. The pages and wings represent President Roosevelt's strained relationship with Congress.