**Designing an Editorial Cartoon**

Although not all journalists are artists, all journalists need to be able to think artistically in order to team with designers and develop thoughtful designs that go beyond the literal. For example, editorial cartoons are often designed to accompany written editorials/columns. Being able to write an opinion story *and* come up with a concept for a cartoon to accompany it makes for a well-rounded journalist.

Editorial cartoons are satire. Creation of satire requires three steps:

1. Identify a target.
2. Identify aspects of that target worthy of ridicule.
3. Use satirical techniques (see next page) to call attention to those aspects.

You will use these steps to create a rough draft of an editorial cartoon.

**Step One:** Meet with your first designated partner to brainstorm a list of possible targets. Together come up with eight. Remember, your targets do not need to be national/political ones, although they can be. Try to think local and small. What bothers you daily?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. | 5. |
| 2. | 6. |
| 3. | 7. |
| 4. | 8. |

**Step Two:** Meet with your second designated partner. Discuss your ideas. Select three of your targets and brainstorm three aspects of the target worthy of ridicule.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Target 1:** | **Target 2:**  | **Target 3:** |
| 1. | 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. | 3. |

**Step Three:** Meet with your third designated partner. Share your ideas. Pick one. Draw a draft version (stick figures) of a cartoon. Be prepared to share it with the class.

**Useful Definitions**

**Satire:** A literary work that ridicules its target through use of techniques, such as reversal, incongruity, parody and/or exaggeration, in order to criticize the target. Editorial cartoons are satirical. It is the use of the techniques that moves something from simple criticism (which generally makes a straight-forward, honest argument) to satire.

**Use the R.I.P.E. method to ripen your criticism into satire.**

**Reversal:** To present the opposite of a typical order. This could be the order of events, a hierarchical order, etc. For example, placing children/students/farm animals in a position of power over parents/teachers/farmers would be an example of reversal.

**Incongruity:** To present things as absurd or out of place in relation to the surroundings. This can also include creating a metaphoric link between two things that wouldn’t ordinarily go together in order to highlight the absurdity. For example, linking genies and bottles to prescription pill bottles, and personifying the opioid drug epidemic as an angry genie coming out of a pill bottle.

**Parody:** To imitate the style or techniques of a person, place or thing. For example, the “Scary Movie” franchise parodies the genre of horror films in order to mock and comment on those films.

**Exaggeration:[[1]](#footnote-0)** To increase something beyond the normal bounds in order to make it ridiculous and reveal its faults. This can be an increase in literal size, or something more figurative.Caricature artists do this all the time when they draw famous people (Remember President Obama’s exaggerated ears that seemed part of any cartoonist’s rendering?) but in order for it to be satirical exaggeration it needs to criticize rather than simply illustrate.

1. Shrinking something to an absurd level is also a great satirical technique. For example, making a door tiny can show how a new law/statute makes it impossible to get anything done. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)