

IMAGE ANALYSIS: IN THEIR OWN WORDS



This lesson will introduce students to the skill of analyzing art while considering its metaphorical meaning.

This activity is excerpted from Unit 2 of the *Through Their Eyes: Major Causes and Events of the American Revolution Teacher Resource Guide*. To see the full lesson and all supporting materials, visit: www.amrevmuseum.org/teacher-resource-guides

CONTEXT

Many people living in the British Empire expressed their views on significant current events through art. Political cartoons were one method employed by artists to share their perspective on the unfolding conflict between Great Britain and Revolutionaries in her American colonies. This type of artistic representation provides historians with a window into how those living during this tumultuous period viewed their own world.

AIMS/OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Analyze a primary source to identify one cause of American colonial protest against Britain

Interpret the abstract meanings of images by decoding symbolism within them

Compare and contrast images to learn about political perspectives in Revolutionary America

MATERIALS

Primary Sources:

Print: *The Horse America, Throwing His Master* published by William White, 1779 (Library of Congress)

Other Resources:

MoAR Virtual Museum “Becoming Revolutionaries” Galleries: <http://www.amrevmuseum-virtuالتour.org/>

Student Response Worksheet

PROCEDURES

- First, ask students why they believe the American Revolution started. What were colonists upset about? Share the print *The Horse America, Throwing His Rider* with students. Have them look closely, then make observations about what they see. This portion of the lesson is well-suited to collaborative discussion with a partner or group members if possible. Students can review the text page accompanying the image to enhance their discussion as they try to answer the following: Who is pictured? What is happening? What message do they think this image is sending? How does this fit with their understanding of why colonists were upset? What does this image NOT tell them? Why do they think these things are not included? Ask students to record their observations on the accompanying worksheet.
- Second, ask students to consider who might have created this political cartoon. What perspective were they trying to share? Do they think the artist would have considered him/herself a Revolutionary? Why or why not? Students can record their thoughts on the student response worksheet.
- Next, have students enter the Virtual Museum and, using the drop-down menu in the upper right-hand corner, navigate to the “Liberty Tree” and “Propaganda on Both Sides” galleries. Have students look for examples of political cartoons and select 1 of interest. Using the above questions as a guide, and supported by labels in the Virtual Museum, ask students to analyze this second image. Then ask students to compare and contrast the two images against one another, recording their notes.

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- Finally, have students create their own political cartoon about a topic from contemporary times or from the Revolution. They can draw their own images or copy/paste images and make edits or add captions to help assign meaning to them. These cartoons can be shared with an adult or within small student groups to allow others the opportunity to analyze their meaning.
 - Students should submit their worksheet once all sections are complete.

CONTEMPORARY CONNECTION

Have students search for a political cartoon featuring current events and analyze its meaning. Students can share their analysis with classmates or an adult and defend their interpretation.