

Educator Overview:

Drawing History: History Told Through Thomas Nast Political Cartoons

Audience	Grade Levels 9-12	Subject Social Studies The Arts	Topics Civics and Government American History Civil War Reconstruction Visual Arts
Guiding Questions	1. How do the arts and visual expression shape public memory in a democracy?	2. What makes political cartoons primary sources?	3. How do political cartoons inform current events?
Background Knowledge	<p>Vocabulary Students Should Know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Source- A first-hand record of an event or topic created by a participant in or a witness to that event or topic. Primary sources can be a document, letter, eye-witness account, diary, article, book, recording, statistical data, manuscript, or art object. • Symbolism – An image that stands for a larger concept, event, person, or idea • Labeling – A word or phrase that makes it clear who a person or what an object is • Irony - The use of words to express something other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning • Analogy – A comparison between two things, even a complex issue with a familiar one • Caricature - A drawing of a person that is not too exaggerated <p>Consider other background knowledge your student may benefit from knowing (ex. The American Civil War, Reconstruction)</p>		
Content Topics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Narrative/Slideshow about Thomas Nast and his Grand Caricaturama 2. Timeline: Key events from the American Civil War and how Thomas Nast depicted them artistically in selected black and white Grand Caricaturama sketches 3. Hotspot: The events and key figures in “The Last Ditch” painting on display at MHHM 		

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Hotspot: The events and key figures in the “Palace of Tears” painting on display at MHHM 5. Slideshow: Wrap up discussion questions
Student Engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apples to Oranges: Students compare and contrast the themes and topics of the images in the timeline <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. This requires students to connect via computer, tablet, or mobile device and have a way to receive a link to the game. It can be played in the classroom or remotely. 2. Annotation: Discussion questions about the “Last Ditch” painting. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discussion questions can be assigned as a worksheet to be done individually or in a group, or used for discussion in the classroom. 3. Annotation: Students identify the tools and techniques Thomas Nast used in “The Palace of Tears” to tell stories through art <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. This worksheet is downloadable and can be assigned individually, done in groups, or as a full class. An answer key is included for teachers under <i>Contents → Education Materials</i> 4. Annotation: Students evaluate newspaper reviews of the Grand Caricaturama to identify positive and negative reviews. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. These quotes can be printed, cut and passed around to students.
Other Notes (Supplies needed, independent vs. whole class engagement)	<p>The content for the Resource Kit uses curriculum developed by an 11 person Teacher Advisory Committee, made up of history, art, and English New Jersey Teachers. The curriculum and this Resource Kit are designed to be multi-disciplinary with History, Art, and English. You may wish to coordinate with other teachers to find out when they may be focusing on drawing, political cartoons, Reconstruction, and the Civil War.</p> <p>Notes for “The Last Ditch”: “The Last Ditch” depicts Union commander General Ulysses S. Grant and General Philip Sheridan on horseback in pursuit of Confederate General Robert E. Lee. Nast shows Grant calmly and with firm resolve downing the over-life-sized figure of Lee and beheading him. Lee, who has fallen from his horse and broken his bloodied sword, looks back at Grant fully aware of defeat. In the prone,</p>

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disarmed figure of Lee, Nast shows Grant toppling the Confederacy and the Southern Cause.

Notes for "Palace of Tears": In "The Palace of Tears" Nast conveys his dismay with the failed promises of Reconstruction by attacking President Andrew Johnson's pro-South policy. Nast depicts Johnson enshrined as a knock-kneed, tiny monarch atop a pedestal bearing the inscription "My Policy Unbroken Harmony" presiding over the 1866 National Union Convention, which is awash in crocodile tears. In the left foreground, Nast depicts Clement Vallandigham, a pro-Southern peace democrat, with the body of a copperhead snake. During the Civil War, Union supporters referred to Pro-southern peace democrats as "Copperheads" for scheming to undermine the North's war effort. Behind Vallandigham, Nast illustrates a looming Congressman Fernando Wood, whom he depicts as a winged serpent. Nast frames Wood's body with large red and black wings, and illustrates a coiled serpent's tail visible between the figure's legs. As mayor of New York City before the Civil War, Wood favored the city's secession from the Union for economic reasons. Nast presented this mural accompanied by the song "The Long, Long, Weary Day, was Passed in Tears Away." Through "The Palace of Tears" Nast illustrates that the convention, far from a union, was rather a sellout to Southern demands during Reconstruction.