

PROCESS PAPER

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SENIOR DIVISION

GROUP WEBSITE

WORD COUNT: 499

STUDENT-COMPOSED WORDS: 1197

MULTIMEDIA: 0

How did you choose your topic and how does it relate to the annual theme?

This year we are taking AP U.S. History and a big part of our curriculum is focusing on analyzing different multimedia and their roles in history. We have studied political cartoons and have even used them in our previous NHD projects. Political cartoons are very familiar multimedia and we often downplay its significance in history. When thinking about "communication in history," we thought immediately about political cartoons, specifically *Puck* cartoons, and decided to focus on its unique role in political and social reform.

How did you conduct your research?

Because the topic is relatively recent, we found many *Puck* magazine archives with original images or copies of the cartoons. However, *Puck* magazine lost its fame very early on so there is very little information about the magazine itself. Our focus was not on historical facts about the magazine but rather our own analysis of the cartoons and the cartoons' historical relevance. We decided to focus on *Puck* cartoons during U.S. elections so we chose a few elections and researched the significance of *Puck* cartoons during those elections. To extend our research to contemporary roles of political cartoons in general, we analyzed the effects of political cartoons in society and the controversies that have ensued.

How did you create your project?

Our topic, *Puck* cartoons, would be best presented through visuals and we felt that a website would be best to present and view our multimedia. We wanted to make our website look like the *Puck* magazine. We used the NHD website platform and arranged our text and cartoon images to resemble 19th and 20th century *Puck* magazine with old English fonts and colors.

What is your historical argument?

This year's theme is "communication in history." Communication can come in many forms: through written works, conversations, speeches, body language, gestures, and etc. Verbal communication is obvious but nonverbal communication is often disregarded. Some of the most important communication is nonverbal. Political cartoons serve as one of the most important forms of media used for political and social change. Political cartoons communicate disappointment, hatred, love, and admiration, while depicting relevant images to help people understand issues they may not understand otherwise. Political cartoons reach groups of the society most verbal speeches and conversations never reach. Our project looks at the communication of *Puck* cartoons and the impact these cartoons had on society and politics.

In what ways is your topic significant in history?

Our topic is significant in history because many people don't realize the impact political cartoons have on people's opinions and world views. Political cartoons also give artists the opportunity to use their right to freedom of speech and press to express their opinions on many significant issues in the world using art rather than words. Political cartoons are an important form of journalism that use art to convey their message. Specifically *Puck* cartoons, however, was significant because it was the first magazine to publish colored cartoons on a weekly basis and lead to the use of color printing in almost all American publications by the end of the 19th century. *Puck* cartoons were also said to have influenced several U.S. elections.