BREAKING DOWN A POLITICAL CARTOON

1) First find all of the words that are readable or recognizable & the title if there is one.

1a) Connect these words to information you’ve learned in history class or connect it to prior knowledge from your personal life. Your experiences matter too.

1b) Sometimes the cartoonist labels a character outright with their country or concept.

2) Find symbols- symbols can be animals, objects, clothes, patterns, and more.

2a) Look at each symbol and think to your self, “Have I ever seen this before?” ,“What concept or idea from SS does this remind me of?” , “What concept or idea from my life does this remind me of?”

2b) What concept or country is that symbol always associated with?

3) Profiling-people- cartoonists help you know who a person from a specific country is or area they are from by drawing them in specific clothing, or wearing specific types of hats. Most times you will see these drawings in black and white, so we won’t focus too much on the color of their clothes.

3a) Many times the artist will exaggerate something that is associated with a

certain country; like a large sombrero hat to state that this character is from a Latin American country.

3b) Actions within the cartoon are also tell-tale signs of the cartoonists message.

4) The largest characters and symbols, as well as, the title of the cartoon inform you of the main idea and topic of the cartoon.

4a) Finally, knowing the source [where/who made it and when] will also help you figure out the main idea and topic of the cartoon.

5) To answer any question about a cartoon you must describe how you know specific information. As with the case of the “Carving up China” cartoon, we know what certain countries were based on the labels across the animal’s bodies. It’s not enough to just know, you have to prove how you know.

Using a graphic organizer can help you break down the concepts, themes, and message a political cartoonist is trying to portray [represent]. Use this organizer to help break down the information.

What activities are going on in the cartoon? See 3 above:

Who is in the cartoon? See 3 above:

What symbols are in the cartoon? See 2 above:

What words are in the cartoon? See 1 above:

What is the title (see 1 above)?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Where did it come from (see 4 above)? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_