

## INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: CARTOON ANALYSIS

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

“**Punch**” was a British weekly magazine of humour and **satire**\* that was established in 1841. There were humorous illustrations as well as articles in “**Punch**” and in 1843, the magazine coined the term “**cartoon**” to refer to the comic (funny) drawings that appeared in its pages.

The cartoons in “**Punch**” were **satirical**, they used humour to expose the social and political problems of the era of the **Industrial Revolution**. This began the tradition of having **political cartoons** in newspapers and magazines.

**Political cartoons** tell us about events in the past, but they also tell us what people thought about those events at the time. Historians use **cartoons** as **primary evidence** about **events** and **attitudes** from the past.

**\*Satire** is when writers and cartoonists using **humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule** to expose and **criticise** the foolishness and corruption of individuals, societies and governments.



This cartoon was published in “**Punch**” on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1858 at the height of ‘**The Great Stink**’ in **London** when the **Houses of Parliament** had to be closed for several weeks due to the foul smell from the **Thames River**. ‘**The Great Stink**’ was caused by unusually warm weather and the large amounts of raw sewage that ran from the City of London into the Thames. The cartoonist is warning that the pollution of the river would lead to the outbreak of **diseases** like diphtheria, scrofula and cholera. The cartoon shows that the **health hazards** caused by river pollution had become a **political issue** in **Industrial Britain**.

The caption of the Cartoon is:  
**Father Thames introducing his Offspring to the Fair City of London.**  
The offspring (children) are labelled:  
**Diphtheria, Scrofula and Cholera.**

**Questions:** (Complete in your exercise book.)

**Marks: [10]**

1. What historical **event** or **situation** is being shown in the cartoon? (1)
2. What **visual clue** in the cartoon shows that this event took place during the **Industrial Revolution**? (2)
3. Who or what represents the **City of London** in the cartoon? (1)
4. What **visual** and **verbal clues** has the cartoonist used to show that he thinks that the pollution of the Thames poses a **serious health hazard** to the citizens of London? (3)
5. What is the cartoonist’s **attitude** to the situation shown in the cartoon? Justify your answer with evidence from the cartoon. (3)

## NEW SKILL: HOW TO ANALYSE A CARTOON

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Political cartoons express **opinions** about public issues and public figures. In order to **decipher** and **interpret** the cartoonist's **meaning** and **point of view** you need to understand the **basic techniques** used by cartoonists. You also need to have some knowledge about the **historical period** (past or present) in which the cartoon was published. Cartoon analysis requires **critical thinking skills**.

### Techniques used by Cartoonists:

#### Symbolism

Cartoonists use **symbols** to stand for political figures, countries and concepts.

#### Examples of Symbols used in cartoons:

- dove, olive branch, peace sign = peace
- vulture, skeleton, skull and crossbones, Grim Reaper = death
- heart, Cupid, Venus = love
- angel = goodness
- devil = evil, wickedness
- Uncle Sam, stars and stripes flag, bald eagle = USA
- Bear = Russia
- Dragon = China



The Grim Reaper

#### Exaggeration and Distortion

Cartoonists often **exaggerate** or **distort** the physical characteristics of people or things in order to make a point. When you study a cartoon, look for any characteristics that are **unrealistic** (facial features like teeth, mouths, noses, eyebrows and ears are frequently overdone or distorted). Then, try to decide what point the cartoonist was trying to make through the exaggeration or distortion. If a person is shown in an unflattering and ugly way by the cartoonist that is usually a sign that the cartoonist is critical of that person.

*Find three features that have been exaggerated or distorted in this depiction of Donald Trump and then explain what points the cartoonist was making about Trump? Do you think the cartoonist supports Trump?*



#### Analogy

An **analogy** is a **comparison** between two unlike things that share some characteristics. By comparing a complex issue or situation with a more familiar one, cartoonists can persuade their readers to see it in a different light. For example, a country that is going through a period of political or economic turmoil (trouble) could be shown as a ship sailing through stormy seas. Cartoonists often create analogies by using animals to represent people (like using a donkey to represent a stubborn person).

#### Captions and Labelling

Cartoonist usually provide **captions** for their cartoons; they also often **label** objects or people to make it clear exactly what they stand for. This is very useful when the cartoon is an analogy.

#### Irony

**Irony** is the difference between the way things are and the way things should be, or the way things are expected to be. Cartoonists often use irony to express their opinion on an issue and to criticise what they see as wrong with a situation.

Use this **acrostic** to help you remember the **steps to analysing a cartoon**: **I S M A R**

### 1. Identify

With a pen/pencil label everything that you can possibly **identify** in the cartoon. Symbols or animals may be used to depict people. You must try to work out who or what everything represents. Study the date and caption, use any names given, try to identify any prominent (famous) figures.

### 2. Situation

You should now have worked out what **situation (event or issue)** the cartoonist is depicting in the cartoon. Cartoonists usually depict situations/events/issues from the time period in which they live.

### 3. Meaning/Message

Cartoonists are communicating a **message**. Even cartoons that simply seem humorous (funny) have a message. Interpreting a cartoon involves working out the **meaning** of the cartoon. You must work out what the cartoonist is saying about the situation (event or issue) that is depicted in the cartoon.

Cartoonists use **persuasive techniques** to get their message across. They want to **persuade** the reader agree with their message.

### 4. Attitude (Bias/Opinion)

Cartoons are seldom neutral. The cartoonist has his/her own **opinions** and **point of view**. Often a cartoonist is motivated by strong **feelings** like anger, outrage or pride. This means we must be on the lookout for **bias** in cartoons. The cartoonist's **attitude** is how the cartoonist **feels** about the situation or incident depicted in the cartoon. The cartoonist's attitude is often apparent in the **message** of the cartoon and in the **persuasive techniques** the cartoonist has used to promote that message. When cartoonists distort and exaggerate the facial expressions and body sizes of political figures, they are revealing how they **feel** about those figures. Look for **clues** to the cartoonist's **attitude (bias or opinion)** in whether they have portrayed the situation (event or issue) in a **positive** or **negative** way.

### 5. Reflection

**Reflect** on the cartoon using your **historical knowledge** of the time period when the cartoon was published. If you are analysing a recently published cartoon you will have to draw on your knowledge of **current affairs**. Your background knowledge will help you interpret the cartoon.

**Cartoon Analysis Exercise:** *(Complete in your exercise book.)*

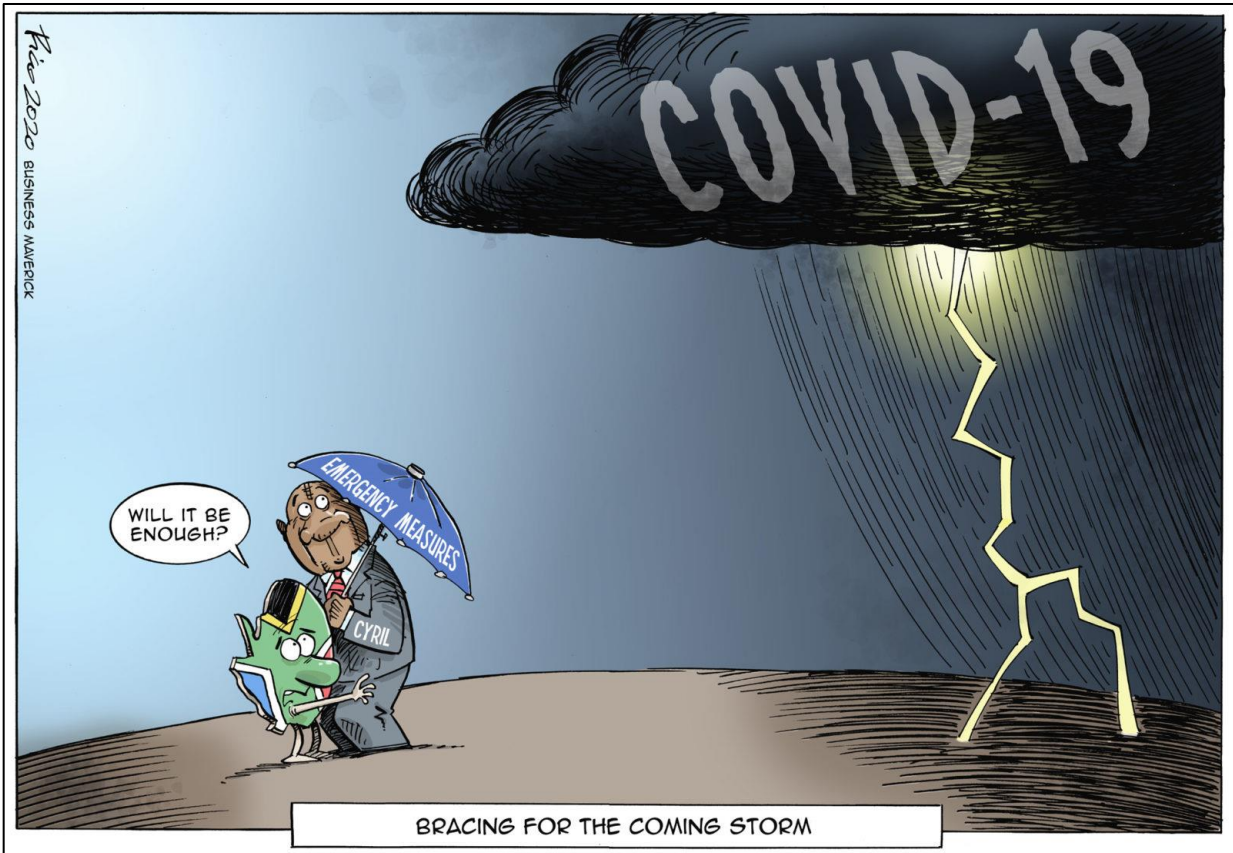
**Marks: [15]**

Find an interesting **cartoon** in the newspaper that deals with a **current issue** and interpret it using the **ISMAR** method. If you can't get a newspaper you can access current cartoons online or you can choose one of the cartoons dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic that appear below.

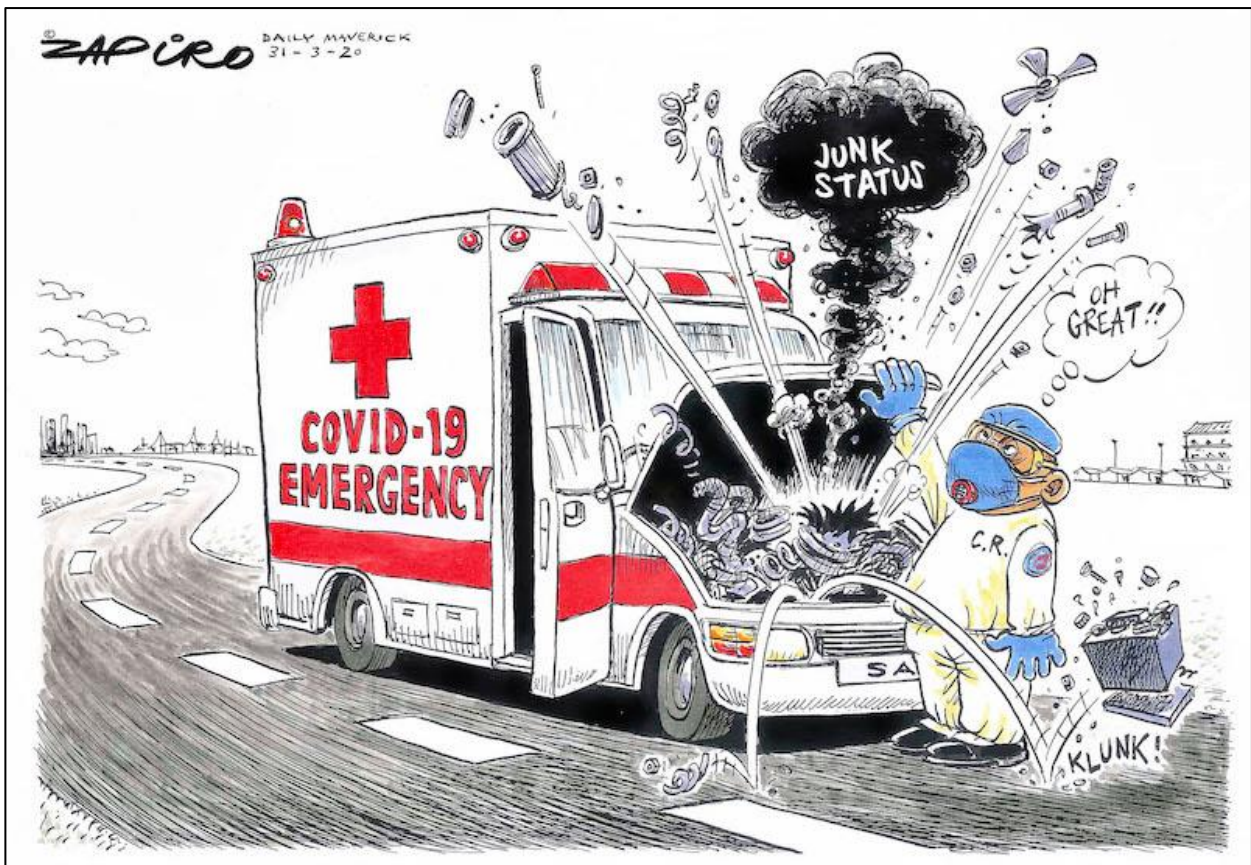
**Marks allocation:**

<b>Identify</b>	<b>(5)</b>
<b>Situation</b>	<b>(3)</b>
<b>Meaning/Message</b>	<b>(3)</b>
<b>Attitude (Bias/Opinion)</b>	<b>(2)</b>
<b>Reflection</b>	<b>(2)</b>

**COVID-19 CARTOON A:**



**COVID-19 CARTOON B:**



**INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: CARTOON EXERCISES**

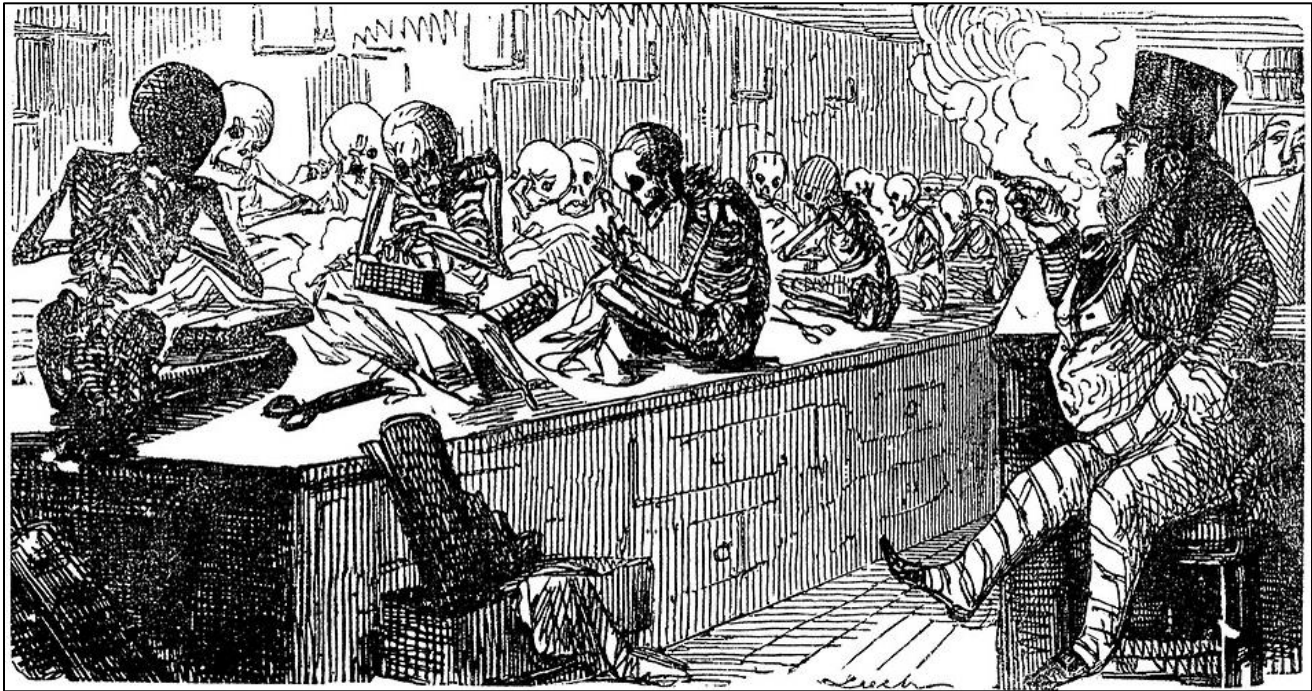
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Complete in your exercise book.)

**INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION CARTOON A:**

This cartoon by the cartoonist, John Leech, was published in *Punch Magazine*, in 1845.

The caption of the cartoon is: **Cheap Clothing.**



**Question One:** Refer to **Cartoon A** (above)

- 1.1 What **message** is the cartoonist communicating by showing the **factory workers** as **skeletons**? (3)
- 1.2 How has the cartoonist shown the **factory owner**? (Describe what you see.) (3)
- 1.3 What **situation** (issue) is being shown in the cartoon? (2)
- 1.4 How do you think the cartoonist **felt** about the situation in the cartoon? (What was the cartoonist's **attitude** to the situation?) (2)

[10]

**INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION CARTOON B:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This cartoon by the cartoonist, Robert Jacob Hamerton, was published in *Punch Magazine*, in 1843. The caption of the cartoon is: **Capital and Labour** (capital = wealth). The cartoon was a response to a report on the conditions of child workers in the factories and mines that was made public in 1842. The cartoon contrasts the **suffering** of the **labouring poor** with the **wealth** of the **upper class**. A figure representing **Hope** (accompanied by **Cupid**) has been prevented by a locked door from helping the poor.



**Question Two:** Refer to **Cartoon B** (above)

- 2.1 What **visual clues** has the cartoonist used to show that the members of the **wealthy upper class** lived lives of **luxury**? Give **visual evidence** from **Cartoon B**. (3)
- 2.2 What **visual clues** has the cartoonist used to show that the members of the **lower class** in society lived lives of **poverty** and **misery**? Give **visual evidence** from the **Cartoon B**. (3)
- 2.3 What does **Cupid** symbolise (or represent) in the cartoon? (1)
- 2.3 What do you think the cartoonist's **opinion (attitude)** about the situation he is showing in the **Cartoon B** is? Justify your answer by explaining the **message** of the cartoon. (3)

[10]