

23

CHAPTER

Viewing and Presenting *Static Images: Cartoons and Comic Strips*

Aims of Chapter

By the end of this chapter you should be able to:

- *recognise the impact of visual language in everyday life.*
- *respond to and analyse a cartoon.*
- *create a comic strip which tells a story combining visual and verbal features.*

Links to NCEA: Visual Text



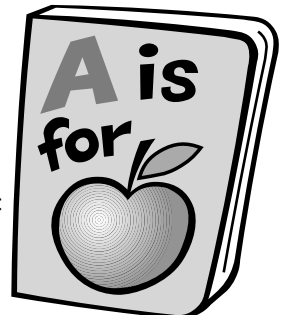
Introduction – Visual Language

Each day we are sent different visual messages. Television, videos and movies all send us powerful messages on the screen; newspapers and magazines combine words with visual images to send their messages; the way people talk, look and behave can influence how we react to them.

Visual messages are strong and important and it is essential that we think about the messages we receive and what they mean. In visual language words and visual features are combined in different ways for different purposes and different audiences.

There are many forms of visual images, for example:

- a child's story book combines pictures with clear, bold print so the reader can easily understand the story.
- a science fiction movie combines futuristic moving images with strange and exotic settings to transport the viewer into a different and exciting world.

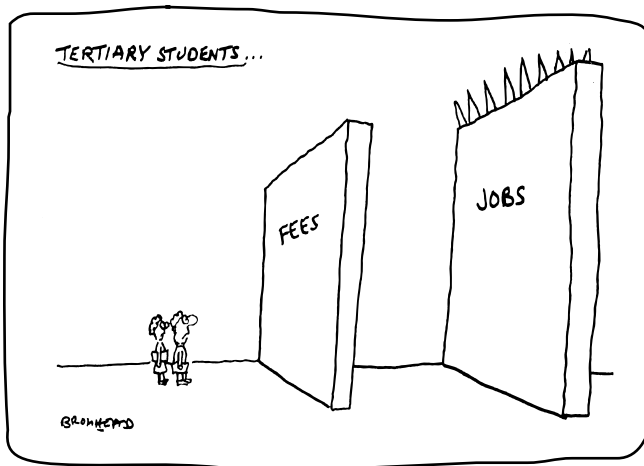


- advertisers play on our emotions with the images of success and desire they associate with their products.
- an actor shows the feelings, thoughts and emotions of a character by the way he/she moves, varies facial expression and voice tone. Even the clothing worn sends a message to the viewer.



Static Images: Using Cartoons

What is this cartoon suggesting?



A **cartoon** is a **static image**, a picture that does not move. Static images also include posters, photographs, comic strips, book covers, advertisements and a wide range of cards that communicate a message. A cartoon is one example of a static image.

Cartoonists use pencil, pen and paper to present their ideas about political and controversial issues and to explore ideas about people and their problems in life. A clever cartoonist can allow the reader to look at an issue in a funny and refreshing way.

A one-frame cartoon is often similar to an editorial in that it may express an opinion about a current topic. This is why newspapers usually place such a cartoon on the same page as the editorial and the letters to the editor. They all express an opinion and offer comments on certain issues.



Useful Tips: Guidelines for Studying Cartoons

Below are some guidelines for studying cartoons. These guidelines will help you to analyse and understand the message the cartoon sends.

1. *Framework*
- What type of panel has the cartoonist used?
 - How does it help the meaning of the cartoon?

2. *Dimensions*



- Who is in the cartoon?
- What size are the characters and figures used in the drawings?
- What is happening in the cartoon?
- Is the background simple or complicated?

3. *Symbols*



- What symbols are used?
- What do the symbols represent?
- How do the symbols help convey the message of the cartoon?

4. *Bias*



- Who looks nice, kind, helpful?
- Who looks ugly, nasty, stupid?
- What facial features are used to convey expressions; eg happiness, meanness, annoyance?
- Has the cartoonist taken sides?

5. *Message*

- What is the cartoon saying?
- What ideas does the cartoonist want you to think about?
- Does the cartoon express a serious message?
- Is it just entertainment?

6. *Words*



- Has the cartoonist used labels, speech balloons or captions to help to get his/her ideas across?
- What words are in bold or capital letters to show emotion? eg EEK, POW.
- What words are made up to convey sound or movement?