

Teaching with Progressive Era Political Cartoons

The Progressive Era was an era of reform and, by using our political cartoons, it becomes a fun and exciting moment of history to teach! The imagery of President Theodore Roosevelt alone expresses a range of popular opinions that you and your students are sure to enjoy. Recently, HSP released a series of [political cartoon lesson plans](#) ^[1] that include a [lesson using Progressive Era cartoons](#). ^[2]

These cartoons are unique because they capture both the economic situation of the time and the presidential races from Roosevelt to Wilson. The cartoons also feature a cameo of the big business mogul, JD Rockefeller, and the issues that came along with the shift from a laissez-faire style of government to increased government regulations.

One of the main points students can take from these particular cartoons are the range of popular opinions within the cartoons. The point of view of the creators do not always coincide with each other, or with the legacy that we know today. The cartoons show a frustrated President Theodore Roosevelt, a bullied President William Taft, and finally end with a win by President Woodrow Wilson that includes the ill-fated “Bull Moose” and the “Republican Elephant” left in the dust. As a time of great social and political reform, this era cannot be taught without these splendid primary source visuals to illustrate the public perspective.

We are currently offering outreach and in-house programs using our various political cartoons. If you are interested in having us visit your classroom or would like to plan your next field trip with HSP please **contact us** ^[3]. These programs are free, and they allow students of all grade levels to experience using primary sources on a wide variety of subjects, including the Progressive Era.

Links

[1] <https://hsp.org/education/unit-plans>

[2] <https://hsp.org/education/unit-plans/the-progressive-era-and-economics>

[3] <mailto:aparks@hsp.org?subject=political%20cartoons>