

Politics and Art by Sharon Jeffus Copyright 2008

When I think of this coming election, I think of the process of electing a president and the amazing power of the media. Visual images have always been powerful in American history. During the days of the wagon trains and of the settling of the American west, art played a powerful part in defining the American Indian. Images of settlers being killed in Frank Leslie's Illustrated News and Harper's Weekly, and paintings by master artists such as Carl Wimar's "The Abduction of Daniel Boone's Daughter"):

(http://www.freebase.com/view/wikipedia/images/commons_id/889895) caused settlers to fear Indians. The real thing to fear was cholera, which killed many more pioneers, but the newspapers and artists didn't portray that. Today the media plays a powerful part in electing a candidate. They study the power of the image of a man. They use various forms of propoganda to sell their candidate. Perhaps more than any time in history, the media is playing a large part in the outcome of elections. Go to this website to read about the power or propoganda: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Propaganda>. There are two types of propoganda listed below. Read on and discover how you can be part of this process by using your artwork.

Bandwagon propoganda is the idea that everyone is doing it. You need to jump on the bandwagon and do it too. How would you convince someone visually to vote for your favorite candidate using this technique? The idea that everyone is going to do it is a powerful argument.

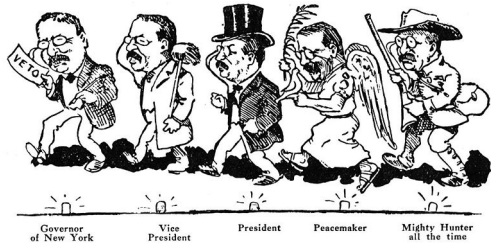
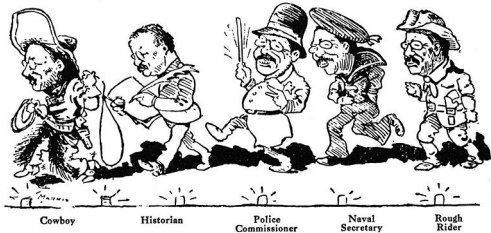
Transfer is seen often in elections today. This is a technique of projecting positive or negative images somewhere in the picture with the person. This is most often seen in a candidate standing in front of the American flag. Go to this website to see a picture of George Washington by the master artist Peale:http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Wasington_peale.jpg

What are some things in the picture that sets the tone? Do you notice the American flag in the background? Do you see the cannon and the horse?

Think about when you see the candidates today and what is in the foreground and background of the picture. These things are carefully planned. Choose your candidate and surround him with things that will help people understand what he is like and help to get him elected. Go to this website for a wonderful lesson on drawing a caricature from a photograph and draw the two presidential candidates in caricature: <http://www.drawingcoach.com/caricatures-from-photos2.html>



When you do a political cartoon, you use stereotyping and exaggeration. For an excellent lesson about this go to:<http://artswork.asu.edu/arts/students/cartoon/index.htm> When you read a newspaper, either hard copy or on the internet, go to the editorial section, and you can see some political cartoons. One of the most famous editorial cartoonists in American history was Thomas Nast. He developed the Democratic donkey and the Republican elephant. His cartoons were very powerful, even to the stopping of organized crime by doing a cartoon of Boss Tweed. It is reported he was offered \$500,000 to stop his cartoons. He was the first person to draw Santa Claus. On the next page, you can see his picture of Boss Tweed.



THE "BRAINS"
 THAT ACHIEVED THE TAMMANY VICTORY AT THE ROCHESTER DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION.

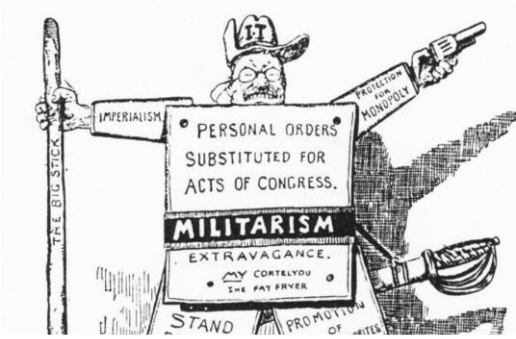
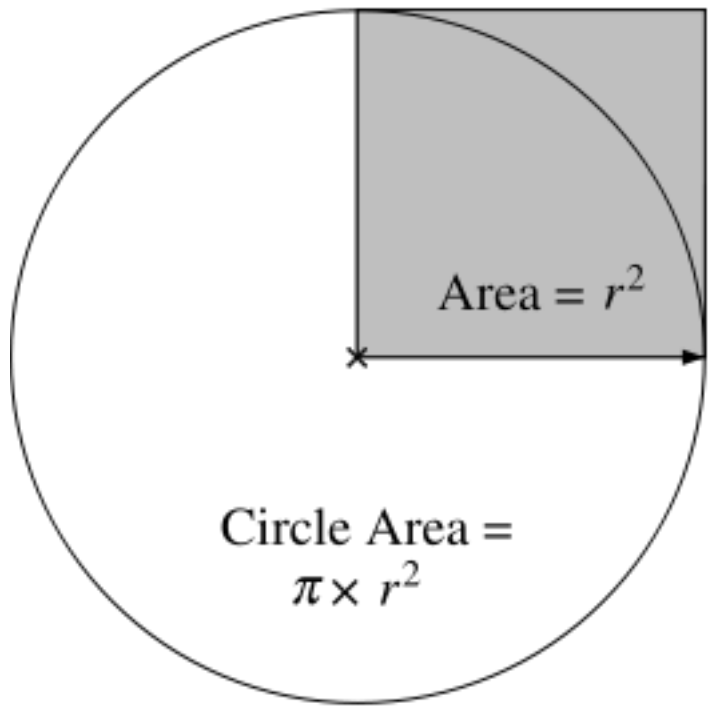
In the pictures above, you can see the wonderful ways that Teddy Roosevelt was portrayed. He wore many hats and the artist is depicting that. In the picture on the lower right, he is being portrayed as very militaristic. Take each presidential candidate on the following pages and dress him up. How would you characterize each man?

Political buttons are also a large part of American history. George Washington even had a button. In the late 1700 and early 1800's, political buttons were real buttons sewn onto coats. Modern forms typically have pins on the back and are therefore also called pinback buttons.

The first photographic images on pins dates to 1860 when Abraham Lincoln and his various opponents used the tintype picture on buttons.

Get cardstock paper and you can make your own buttons. Cut circles approximately 3 inches across. Use markers to draw and write your message about your candidate. Neatness counts.

You local Wal Mart store will have pin backs you can purchase to turn them into pins. You can even use clear contact paper to put over these buttons. You can use the pattern on the right for your button.



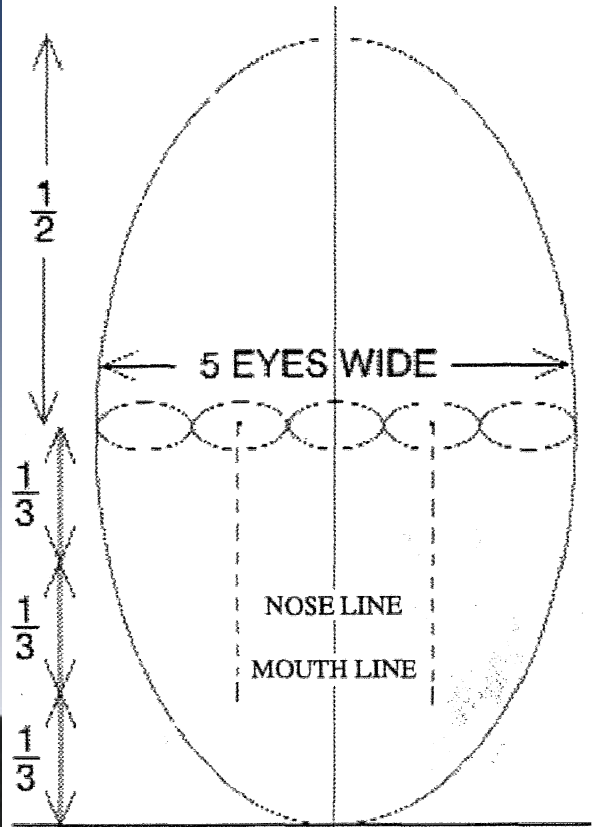
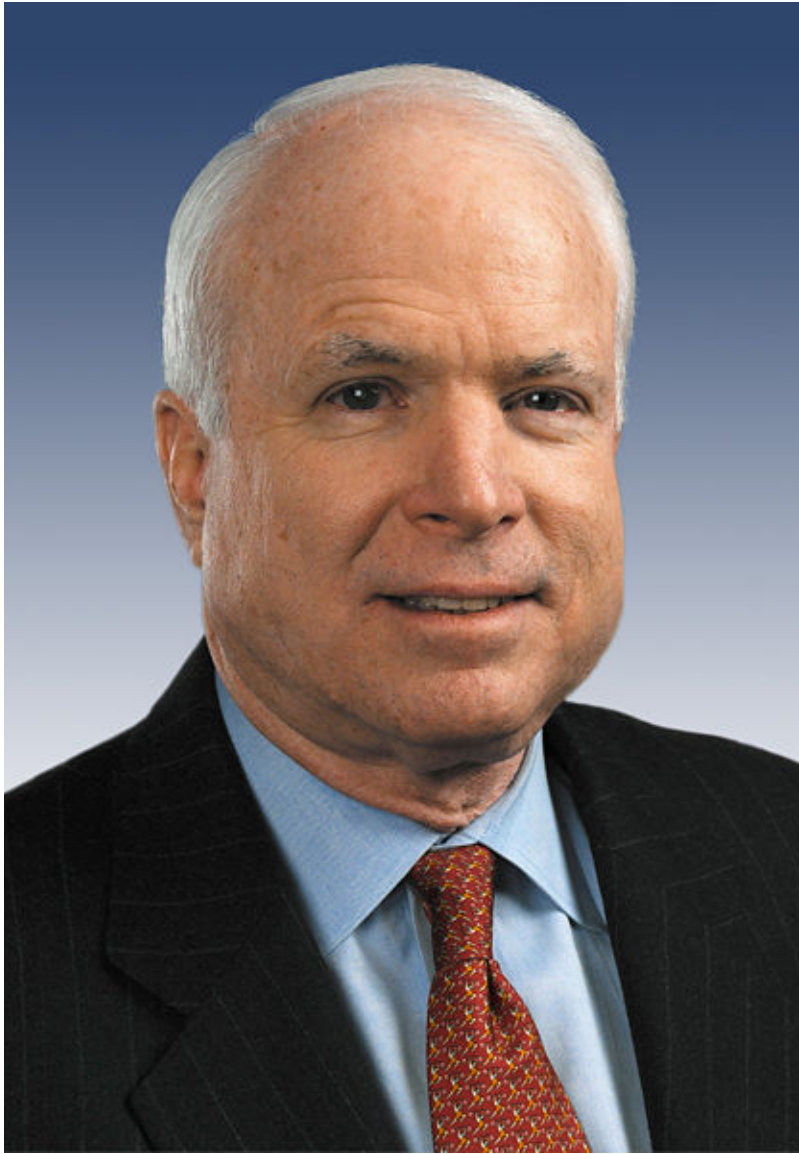
When it comes to making political posters, planning is very important. You want a clear and bold design. You want to make sure your letters are planned out. Use a ruler and draw the whole design lightly in pencil. When you have this completed, color the lettering in with markers. You can use any medium for the art part, but it is better to use markers for the letters. In the poster below, you can read the writing easily. You don't have to figure out what the poster is about. You could do a picture of one of the candidates with this finger pointed at the public. What would they say? The picture below is public domain. That means that you can use it free and without charge. It might be a good idea for a poster. Make a political poster about your favorite candidate. Then go to a public place and see if you can put it up. <http://www.merchantcircle.com/blogs/The.Book.Louse.352-207-7025/2008/10/How-to-Make-a-Poster-Look-Like-a-Painting/125597>

BRITONS



JOIN YOUR COUNTRY'S ARMY!
GOD SAVE THE KING

Reproduced by permission of LONDON OPINION



When you draw a picture of your candidate, remember to put their face in proportion. Go to this website to see how to draw a portrait from a photo:

[http://www.portrait-](http://www.portrait-artist.org/basics/realistic-portrait.html)

[artist.org/basics/realistic-portrait.html](http://www.portrait-artist.org/basics/realistic-portrait.html)

Since there is not a really big chance one of the candidates will pose for you, it is a good idea to use a photo like either one of these on this page and the next.

Once you have your picture of your candidate, and have studied his features, you can make a political button, a political poster, an editorial cartoon, etc. These are all ways you can take part in the political process.







When it comes right down to it, we need to pray for America. Richard Jeffus did this picture of our national emblem kneeling at the cross. The Bible says "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, then I willLook in your Bible to find the rest of this verse. Can you find a Bible verse that can go on your poster that might make a difference? If you liked this lesson, Visual Manna now has their art curriculum that teaches art that has unit studies with each lesson. Go to our website to read about our new products. If you have skype on your computer, you can even take live internet art classes for a very reasonable price! Contact us today for more information: 1-573-729-2100 or go to visualmanna.com and order from our catalog.