Japan, the United States, and North Korea: A Media Literacy Approach to Understanding the Current Nuclear Crisis

Grade Level: High School

Timeframe: 45 minute period or an 82 minute block (or longer)

Standards:
NYS Social Studies Framework
10.8 TENSIONS BETWEEN TRADITIONAL CULTURES AND MODERNIZATION: Tensions exist between traditional cultures and agents of modernization. Reactions for and against modernization depend on perspective and context. (Standards: 2, 3, 4, 5; Themes: ID, TCC, SOC, GOV, CIV, TECH)

10.9 GLOBALIZATION AND A CHANGING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT (1990–PRESENT):
Technological changes have resulted in a more interconnected world, affecting economic and political relations and in some cases leading to conflict and in others to efforts to cooperate. Globalization and population pressures have led to strains on the environment. (Standards: 2, 3, 4, 5; Themes: MOV, TCC, GEO, GOV, ECO, TECH, EXCH)

10.9d Globalization has created new possibilities for international cooperation and for international conflict.

National Association for Media Literacy Education and Project Look Sharp Standards:
1. All media messages are “constructed.”
2. Each medium has different characteristics, strengths, and a unique “language” of construction.
3. Media messages are produced for particular purposes.
4. All media messages contain embedded values and points of view.
5. People use their individual skills, beliefs and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages.
6. Media and media messages can influence beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors and the democratic process.

Objectives:
1. Critically engage with and deconstruct editorial cartoons
2. Contextualize editorial cartoons using timelines
3. Apply their understanding of the current nuclear crisis and relationship between Japan, North Korea, and the United States

Procedures:
This lesson can occur at any point in a school year as current event lesson. However, it may best fit in at the end of a unit on the Korean War or Modern Globalization.
1. Ask students what they know about relations between North Korea, the U.S. and Japan.

2. Show Powerpoint - including the Map of Japan and Korea and ask students:
   a. Based on the geography, what kind of relationship might exist between North Korea and Japan? What makes you think that?

3. Show the next 2 slides depicting current formal diplomatic relations.

   a. What trends do you notice?
   b. What stands out to you?
   c. How would you summarize North Korea’s relationship with Japan? What about North Korea’s relationship with America? What makes you say that?

5. Introduce the activity - Students will analyze editorial cartoons about the current nuclear crisis using the editorial cartoon analysis worksheet (a cartoon analysis vocabulary sheet is available as well). Note: the cartoons are available in the powerpoint and can be printed.

6. Debrief Discussion - Media Literacy:
   a. Do editorial cartoons report the truth? Explain your opinion.
   b. Who might benefit from these editorial cartoons and who might be harmed?
   c. Should U.S. media carry editorial cartoons from Japanese cartoonists? Why or why not?
   d. How might these images look if U.S. cartoonists were creating them for a U.S. audience?
   e. How can the perspectives of individual cartoonists influence the views and beliefs of their audience?
   f. How do editors affect what the artists produce? How does audience affect what the cartoonist produce?

**Modifications:**
1. Depending on cohort and on how well practiced students are at political cartoon analysis, teacher can model analysis with one cartoon with the full group.
2. Consider options for differentiation and choice → students can work individually or with partners, teacher can assign certain cartoons to specific students, or students can even choose which cartoon(s) they analyze.

**Extension**
Teacher may consider having students present their analysis.

**References**


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1991 – North and South Korea both join the United Nations.

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August 1998 – The Taepodong-1 rocket is test-fired over Japan in what it calls a satellite launch, but which the US and others maintain is actually a missile test.

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September 2002 – Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi makes historic visit during which North Korea admits to having abducted 13 Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s and that at least four are still alive.

October 2002 – Japan, South Korea and the US halt oil shipments to the communist state after it admits to secretly developing a uranium-based nuclear program.

January 2003 – North Korea withdraws from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, marking the beginning of a series of six-party talks involving China, the Koreas, the US, Japan and Russia to try to resolve the nuclear issue.

2006 – The first North Korean nuclear weapons test is conducted in an underground facility.

April 2009 – North Korea launches a long-range rocket, carrying what it says is a communications satellite; The United States, Japan and South Korea say the launch was actually the test of a Taepodong-2 missile. Condemnation from the UN Security Council prompts North Korea to walk out of six-party talks and restart its nuclear facilities.

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April/May 2018 – Discussions begin to for President Trump and Kim Jong-un to meet.

June 2018 - Kim Jong-un and US President Donald Trump's historic meeting in Singapore seeks to end a tense decades-old nuclear stand-off.
Adapted from:


“Timeline: North Korea’s Nuclear Ambitions and the Shift to Diplomacy.” France 24, France 24, 11 June 2018,
## Political Cartoon Analysis Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXTUALIZATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Look back at the timeline.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What events may have affected the content of this cartoon?</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Who produced this cartoon and for what purpose?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Who is the intended audience?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● How credible is this information and what is left out that might be helpful to know?</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLOSE READING</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● List some of your observations (what do you SEE):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Who are the people or places in the cartoon?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Does the artist use specific colors? What might that symbolize?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● How does the artist use size and placement? What is big or small? How does that affect the meaning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Does the artist use symbols? If so, what do the symbols represent?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Does the artist use design element such as personification, satire, caricature, irony? If so, why?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>CONCLUSIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the message is the artist trying to communicate to the reader?</td>
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</table>
Political Cartoon Vocabulary and Design Elements

1.) editorial: an article presenting an editor's point of view or opinion

2.) cynical: distrustful of people's motives

3.) symbol: something that stands for or represents something else

4.) caption: title of a drawing or illustration

5.) caricature: an exaggeration of personal characteristics, usually in picture form

6.) personification: attributing human characteristics to animals or objects

7.) irony: the use of words to express something other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning

8.) satire: wit, irony, or sarcasm used to expose and discredit
Japan, the United States, and North Korea

A Media Literacy Approach to Understanding the Current Nuclear Crisis
The Reach of North Korea’s Ballistic Missiles

With the addition of the KN-08, North Korea would add to its arsenal another missile capable of reaching the continental United States. The KN-08 is currently under development.

Major countries with formal diplomatic relations

SOURCE U.S.-based National Committee on North Korea

Major countries with no formal diplomatic relations

France
North Korea
South Korea
Japan
United States

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Title: Sabres Rattling
Artist: Roger Dahl
The Japan Times
Date: 8/30/2017
Perhaps our "diplomatic dialogue" approach needs tweaking.

Kim Kong

The Japan Times

9/9/2017
Title
NK Golf Bunker

Artist
Roger Dahl
The Japan Times

Date
11/11/2017

In the cartoon, two golfers are standing in a bunker. One of them says, "AFTER YOU, DEAR GUEST!" and the other one is looking at a large mound of sand that says "NORTH KOREA QUAGMIRE."
Debrief Discussion - Media Literacy

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