



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

## Graph and Chart Skills

### Analyzing a Political Cartoon

Political cartoons are drawings that express a point of view. They generally show public figures, political events, or social or economic situations. The cartoonist may use symbols, labels, captions, or exaggeration to make a point.

To analyze a political cartoon, you need to examine it carefully and ask yourself what is happening in the cartoon. Who or what do the characters represent? What symbols are used? What do the labels mean? By studying all the clues, you can identify the point the cartoonist is making.

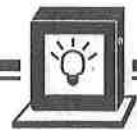
**Directions:** Study the political cartoon below, and then answer the questions.



Gary Brookins, 1994 *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. Reprinted by permission of Gary Brookins.

1. Who or what does the lifeguard represent?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What clues helped you identify the lifeguard?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who or what do the people in the water represent?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why is the lifeguard perplexed?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What point is the cartoonist making?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_



## Critical Thinking Skills

### Recognizing Bias

To evaluate what you are reading, you need to be able to recognize bias. Biased descriptions present only one point of view. To recognize bias, ask yourself if the writer makes assumptions that are not justified. Charlie Pye-Smith is a British writer who realized how biased some history books had been. The selection below is from his book *The Other Nile*, published in 1986.

**Directions:** Read the selection below. Then, answer the questions that follow.

There was a recent copy of the *Egyptian Gazette* in my hotel room. I skimmed through it . . . and my attention was caught by an item of news which came from one of the gulf emirates [territories governed by an Arabian prince] . . . that the ruler had selected a group of eminent [outstanding] historians to rewrite his country's history. Their task was to rectify [correct] the "errors" made by previous histories. . . .

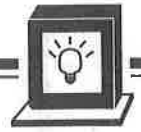
At first this all struck me as farcical [absurd]. Yet when I thought of the books which I had pored over [studied] as a child, books about Africa and explorers, I realized that this ruler was following in the noble tradition of the Victorian [nineteenth-century English] historians, whose interpretation of the events in Africa was outstanding more for its racial bigotry, its presumption of white superiority, and its [lack of interest] in the fate of Africans, than for any erudition [scholarship] or accuracy in recounting what really happened out here. I grew up thinking of the Nile simply as a geographical conundrum [puzzling

problem] . . . and the heroes of my books were men like Baker, Speke, Stanley, Livingstone, and Burton [English explorers of the Nile River and its sources]. It was Speke, as far as my histories were concerned, who had discovered the source of the Nile—no mention was made of the Arabs who for centuries had known where it was (near Lake Victoria), let alone the Africans who actually lived there. This history, written by Europeans and for Europeans, had a certain flavour of romance to it when I was young. Now it bores me profoundly, since the main characters are interesting not for their vision of what might have become in Africa (few had any), but only for their idiosyncrasies [behavioral peculiarities]. . . . [F]or the most part these explorers—there were exceptions like Livingstone—went to Africa for self-aggrandizement [to increase their own power, rank, or honor] and for whatever kudos [praise] they could attract by their adventure.

From *The Other Nile* by Charlie Pye-Smith. Published by Penguin Books Ltd. Copyright © Charlie Pye-Smith 1986.

1. What is the author's criticism of the Victorian historians who wrote books about Africa and the explorers of the Nile?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How does the author view most of the Europeans who explored the Nile River?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. According to Charlie Pye-Smith, why are some historians, such as the Victorian historians he cites, inaccurate in their interpretation of events and unable to recount "what really happened out here"?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_



## Critical Thinking Skills

### Distinguishing Fact from Opinion

You need to be able to distinguish fact from opinion in order to reach your own conclusions about issues and events. To do that, you need to determine which statements are based on facts that can be proved and which statements express a person's beliefs or feelings.

**Directions:** Study the statements below about Adolf Hitler. Then, answer the questions that follow.

- 1 Adolf Hitler was born in Branau, Austria, in 1889.
- 2 While in jail after an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the Bavarian government, Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf*.
- 3 *Mein Kampf* is one of the most fascinating political books ever written.
- 4 Hitler gave himself the title *Führer* ("Leader") in 1934.
- 5 Two of Hitler's foreign policy goals were the destruction of the treaty of Versailles and the transformation of Germany into a military power in Europe.
- 6 If Hitler had not been so egotistical, he would have succeeded in his plans to dominate Europe.
- 7 Hitler was stubborn; he refused to leave his headquarters in Berlin when the Soviets arrived.
- 8 Hitler, the most brutal dictator the world has ever known, was responsible for the mass extermination of nearly six million Jews.

1. Which statements are based solely on facts?

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2. What two sources could you use to check these statements to make sure they are true?

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3. Which statements express opinions?

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4. Which statements, if any, contain both facts and opinions?

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5. Which opinions, if any, are supported by at least one fact?

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## Graph and Chart Skills

### Analyzing Statistics

Social scientists use many different kinds of statistics to describe the characteristics of a region or a country. Such statistics are efficient ways of providing information, and they enable you to make quick comparisons. Some of the most commonly used statistics are described below.

**Directions:** Study the definitions, and then complete the activities.

**Birthrate.** This rate reflects the number of live births each year for each 1,000 people. A birthrate of 36 means that for every 1,000 people, 36 babies are born each year.

**Death Rate.** This rate means the number of deaths each year for every 1,000 people.

**Rate of Natural Increase.** This number tells the rate by which a population is growing: the birthrate minus the death rate, expressed as a percentage.

**Infant Mortality Rate.** This rate shows the number of infants out of every 1,000 born who die before their first birthday.

**Life Expectancy.** This figure is the average number of years a person is expected to live. Because men and women have different life expectancies, figures for both genders are often provided.

**Literacy Rate.** This rate is usually defined as the ability to read and write at the lower elementary school level. It is sometimes defined as the ability to read instructions necessary for a job.

**Gross National Product (GNP).** This number represents the total value of goods and services produced in a year.

**Per Capita GNP.** To find this figure, gross national product is divided by the country's population. This figure shows what each person's income would be if the country's income were divided equally. That is not usually the case.

1. Choose three countries that interest you, and find the statistics for each, as listed above. You will find the statistics you need in an almanac.
2. Prepare a table that will enable you to compare the statistics you find.
3. Write a brief description of your findings on the lines below.

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