In the 1760s, British taxes such as the Stamp Act enraged many American colonists, who objected to “taxation without representation.” This famous phrase has survived as an expression of American hostility toward unfair laws and oppressive taxation. Study the cartoon below and answer the questions that follow.

"You know, the idea of taxation with representation doesn't appeal to me very much, either!"

Interpreting Political Cartoons

1. What is the setting of this cartoon?
2. What opinion is the character expressing about taxation?
3. Do you think the opinion expressed by the characters in the cartoon is representative of the time they lived in or more appropriate to current times?
4. Recognizing Cause and Effect If the view of the colonists shown here had been prevalent in the revolutionary era, do you think that would have affected the outcome of the Revolution and the events that followed?
The period before the drafting and signing of the Constitution was a critical period for the future of the United States of America. A group of former colonies with different resources, aspirations, and philosophies had to decide how they were going to unite to become one country with one central government. Study the cartoon below and answer the questions that follow.

Interpreting Political Cartoons

1. What historical figures are shown here?
2. What are they trying to do?
3. Why do you think they are looking at so many flags? What do you think makes their decision so difficult?
4. Identifying Central Issues What is the main point being made in this cartoon?
When the Framers met to draft the Constitution, they faced an enormously challenging task. Issues that they debated then, such as which branch of government would have the authority to declare war, still raise questions in our time. Study the cartoon below and answer the questions that follow.

Interpreting Political Cartoons

1. Who are the characters gathered around the table supposed to be?
2. What are they doing?
3. What is the significance of the captions? What does the interaction between the characters demonstrate about the Constitution?
4. Identifying Assumptions According to the Constitution, does the President really have the power to declare war?
The development of the United States judicial system has roots at least as far back as the 1100s. It has continued to develop in recent years, with much publicized cases like the 1995 trial of football and movie star O.J. Simpson capturing the attention of the media and the world. Simpson, accused of murdering his ex-wife and another man, was tried and acquitted. Study the cartoon below and answer the questions that follow.

Interpreting Political Cartoons

1. What are the first three figures in the cartoon meant to represent?

2. What are the figures shown under 1995 supposed to represent? Why did the cartoonist select this theme?

3. Recognizing Bias Do you think the cartoon portrays the evolution of our judicial system fairly? Why?