VISUAL LITERACY - CARTOONS

Radio Broadcast 29 Sept 10:00 – 11:00

What is Visual Literacy?

Visual Literacy, “a person’s ability to interpret and create visual information—to understand images of all kinds and use them to communicate more effectively,”

Visual literacy includes such areas as facial expressions, body language, drawing, painting, sculpture, hand signs, street signs, international symbols, layout of the pictures and words in a textbook, the clarity of type fonts, computer images, student produced still pictures, sequences, movies or video, user friendly equipment design, critical analysis of television advertisements and many, many other things.

Visual Literacy is examined in Section C on Paper 1. There are two aspect that can be examined, cartoons and advertising. In this session we will deal with Cartoons.

Cartoon Analysis:

When analyzing a cartoon, it is important to look at the following aspects:

❖ Setting:
  • Where and when is the cartoon set?
  • What is the particular social context?

❖ Characters:
  • What actions and emotions are communicated through body language?
  • What emotions are communicated through facial expressions?
  • What does the body language suggest about the relationships between characters?

❖ Action:
  • What is happening in the cartoon?
  • How is the action portrayed?

❖ Language:
  • What words have been used?
  • How has punctuation been used to suggest emotion?

❖ Stereotypes / Symbols:
  • Has the cartoonist made use of stereotypes?
  • Has the cartoonist used any symbols to represent something else?

❖ Caricatures:
  • A caricature is a drawing of a public figure that shows exaggerated features for easy identification and/or ridicule.
  • Caricatures can be insulting or complimentary and can serve a political purpose or be drawn solely for entertainment.
  • Caricatures of politicians are commonly used in editorial cartoons, while caricatures of movie stars are often found in entertainment magazines.
  • Most of us don't like to face ugly truths about ourselves or the society in which we live. What satirists do is force us to confront these issues through humour.
They use wit, irony or sarcasm to mock or expose people, events or attitudes which they feel we, as a society, need to think about.

What they hope to achieve is change. They hope that in viewing their work, we will realise how ridiculous we're being, and that these moments of insight will cause us to change our attitudes and actions, or put pressure on others to do so.

FOUR easy steps when analysing a cartoon?

- Body Language
- Pictures in frames
- Speech Bubbles
- Point / conclusion
Questions for discussion:

Question 1

[Source: YOU, July 2010]

Questions:

1. Refer to frame 1.
   Name the game that the children are playing.

2. Refer to frame 1.
   What, do you think, does the repetition of the word 'beep' indicate?

3. Refer to frames 1 and 2.
   How can you tell that the boy enjoys playing the game?

4. Refer to frame 2.
   Why are the words 'Ready or not, here I come!' written in bold?

5. Refer to frame 3.
   Identify a word that suggests that Mr B is pleased that he did not grow up in Elmo's generation.

Question 2

Study the following comic strip and then answer the questions that follow:
2.1 Refer to FRAME 1 of the cartoon.
What does the traffic officer's pointing finger tell you about his mood? (2)

2.2 What do you think of the driver's excuse in FRAME 1 of the cartoon? (2)

2.3 Refer to FRAME 2 of the cartoon.
Complete the sentence below by choosing the correct answer from the list provided.
Write down only the question number and the letter corresponding to the correct answer.

The tone of the traffic officer's remark in FRAME 2 is …

2.4 Look at the face of the driver in Frame 2. Do you think he was satisfied with what happened? Motivate your answer. (3)

2.5 Look at the outfits (clothes) of the two characters in the cartoon. What seems to be odd/strange about what they are wearing? (2)

[10]