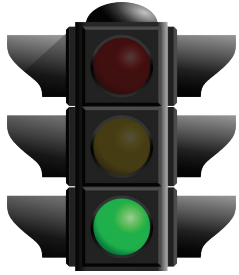




The “Join, or Die” Political Cartoon

Images are all around us. Some give us instructions. Others represent a group or idea. You might know these:



Sometimes people design images to get us to change our minds, or to take action.

Have you ever seen this image about preventing forest fires?



Benjamin Franklin used an image of a snake to get people to take action more than 200 years ago.

Benjamin Franklin published this “Join, or Die” snake cartoon on May 9, 1754. At that time, the British colonists in North America felt threatened by the French who were building military forts and settling on land claimed by the British. Native American nations had been living on this land for generations. France and Britain soon went to war with each other.



Deconstructing “Join, or Die”

Take a close look at the “Join, or Die” cartoon. Write down what you see, what you think, and what you wonder about. All answers are okay!



I see:

I think:

I wonder:

Take a Deeper Dive...

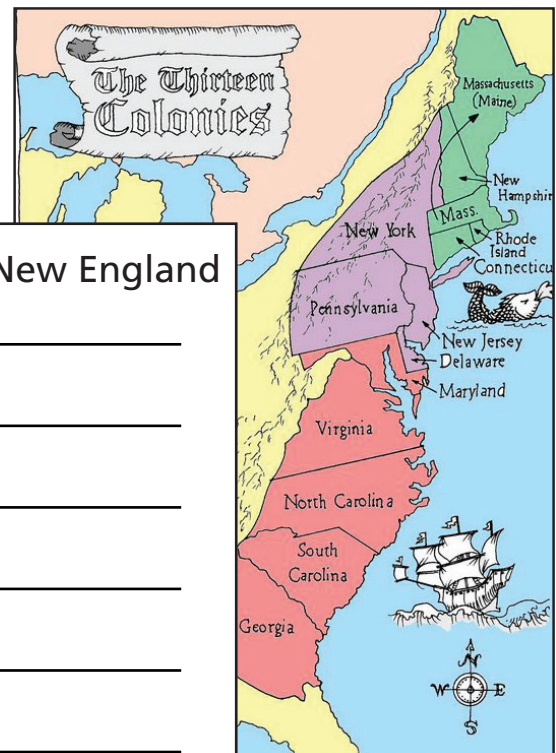
Each part of the image has a particular meaning.

Snake – Snakes are often thought of as powerful creatures. Each piece of the snake has a letter or letters on it. Use the map to figure out what the letters might stand for.

Hint: Start with New England.

Words – The words have both a message of unity and a warning of what could happen without unity. Now put it all together – a powerful creature cut into pieces with “Join, or Die” words. What do you think the message is?

Write it down in your own words:



N.E. New England

N.Y. _____

N.J. _____

P. _____

M. _____

V. _____

N.C. _____

S.C. _____



Construct Your Own Political Cartoon

Think of a message that is important to you. Maybe it is about encouraging others to protect animals, or to be kind and compassionate, or to help out at home. Write it down:

Choose the parts of your cartoon:

My image will include: _____

My words will be: _____

Benjamin Franklin may have been inspired by other snake cartoons he saw before he printed his. Many people have used his cartoon, sometimes even changing the meaning.

Here are some images that may inspire your creation!



Draw Your Cartoon!