



"Immigration and Disease" 8th-12th Grade Lesson Plan

Overview:

For the past one-hundred and fifty years, American society has associated newly-arrived immigrants with spreading contagious diseases. Masses of immigrants (many of whom arrived to escape disaster and catastrophes) faced unfounded discrimination as they entered the country. Public sentiment argued that the Irish carried diseases like typhoid and cholera; Italians had polio; Jewish immigrants were labeled to have tuberculosis. We still do this today. Take a look at SARS, H1NI and AIDS and see who takes the fall. With the recent Ebola outbreak, this topic has taken a renewed focus. This lesson takes a historic look at immigration and disease.

Time Frame:

One Class, 45 minutes

Materials:

- Political Cartoons
- TV/ Projector
- Access to the Internet (for the *Daily Show* clip)
- Pen and paper

Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Discuss several reasons why American society had accused newly-arrived immigrants of harboring disease to the United States.
- Compares why these societal apprehensions toward immigrants existed a hundred years ago to contemporary associations of today.
- Evaluate ways on how we can defuse these myths of immigration and diseases today.

Procedure:

1. Introduce students to the topic with a clip from "The Daily Show."
<http://thedailyshow.cc.com/videos/9hryow/immigrant-disease>

2. Inform students that before we had films, people used political cartoons (and still do) to galvanize people around issues. Explain that in this activity, students will be analyzing political cartoons that address current issues. They will consider the illustrator's point of view, how the illustrator makes his or her point and what perspectives or considerations are not presented in the illustration. They will also think about and share their own ideas regarding issues raised in these cartoons.
3. Divide the class into groups of four. Instruct each group to analyze a specific set of cartoons. Ask them to discuss the following questions
 - What was the illustrator trying to say?
 - How did he or she attempt to do this? Are the characters in the cartoon symbols of a broader group or idea?
 - What group or individual perspectives are NOT represented in this illustration?
 - Ask each group to share their cartoons with the class and to summarize their answers to the questions. Encourage them to report back on any different interpretations they had within their group.
4. Ask students to have an informed discussion about their observations to the political cartoons. Compliment their discussion with these readings produced by political pundits of various ideologies. Please check out the following websites for more information to the topic:
<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2005/feb/12/20050212-112200-6485r/>
http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2014/07/immigrant_scaremongering_and_hate_conservatives_stoke_fears_of_diseased.single.html
5. For either set of cartoons/images, ask the group to discuss one or more of the following questions. (Featured on the next page)

Cartoon Set A – Contemporary views of immigration, labor, and healthcare

Cartoon Set B – Ideas about U.S. immigration past and present

- Why do you think people created and published these cartoons? What was each author hoping to achieve? Who is the intended audience?
- How does each illustrator want the reader to feel about immigration?
- Whose interests do these viewpoints serve?
- What do you think about the contemporary cartoons? Do you agree or disagree with the illustrator's point of view?
- How did the American society express their concerns about newly-arrived immigrants?

- To what extent have these issues changed over time?
 - When you compare the cartoons, what is the difference between the statements they are trying to make?
6. Assessment Evidence: Ask students to ponder why these apparent connections between immigrants and disease have persisted in our ideology. In what ways, can we curb these unfair stereotypes and unfounded criticisms from disrupting our future conversations? Compose a one-paragraph response and have students prepared to answer the following statements.

Historic Images:



Source: *Puck*, ca. 1883

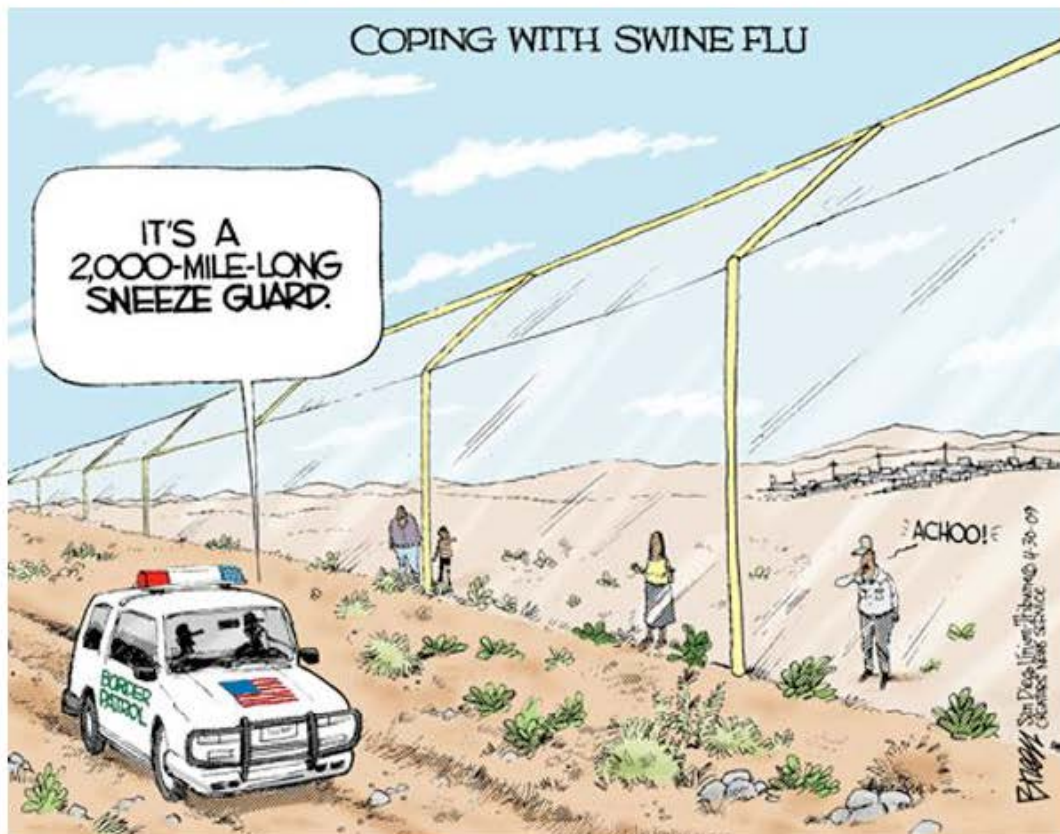


Source: *The Wasp*, May 26, 1882

Contemporary Cartoons:



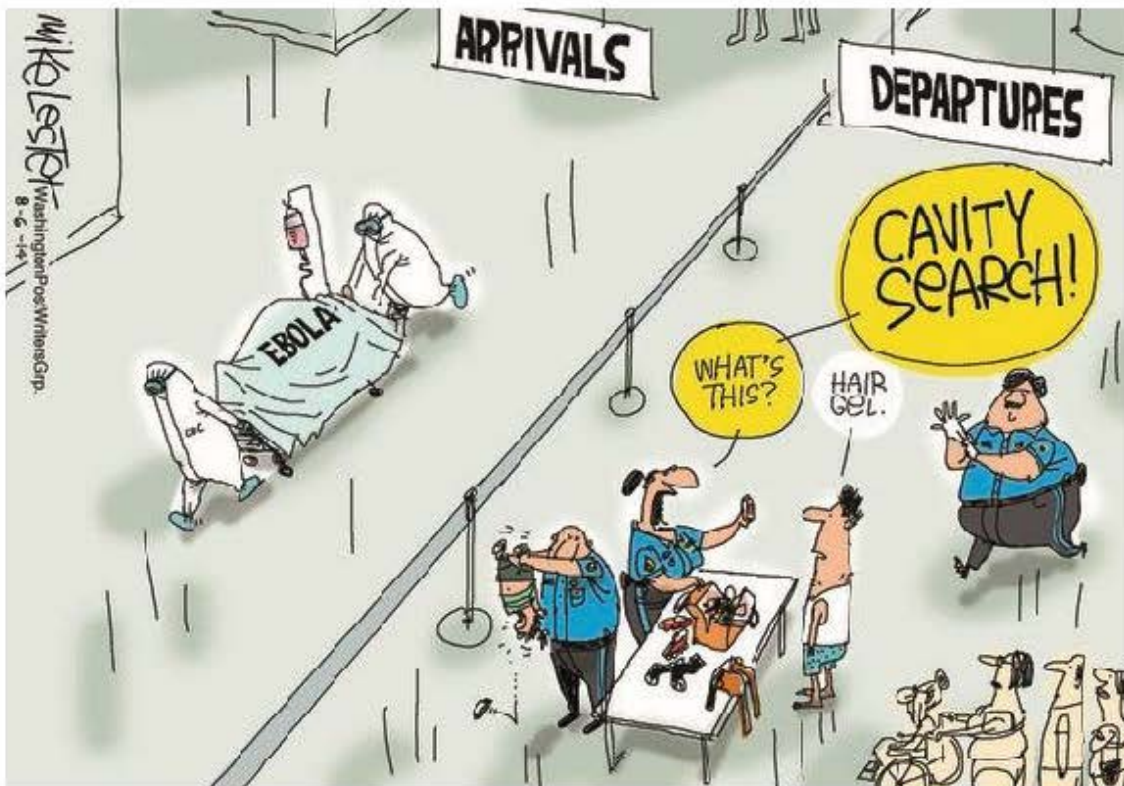
Source: <http://radgeek.com/gt/2009/05/mexico-cartoon-donna-barstow.gif>



Source: Cartoon by Steve Breen, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 30 April 2009



Source: BILL DAY Copyright 2014 Cagle Cartoons



Source: Mike Lester, WashingtonPostWritersGrp. 2014