



INTERPRETING POLITICAL CARTOONS ACTIVITY 17

A Nation of Immigrants

Joseph Keppler was a cartoonist for the magazine *Puck*. Keppler was the second-most famous cartoonist of his time, after Thomas Nast. Like Nast, Keppler immigrated to the United States. The issue of immigration, therefore, was close to his heart. Here are two views of immigration drawn by Keppler during different time periods. The top cartoon was drawn in the early 1880s, and the bottom cartoon was drawn in the 1890s.

Directions: Study the cartoons below, and then answer the questions that follow.

“WELCOME TO ALL”



Library of Congress.



Culver Pictures, Inc.

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A Nation of Immigrants (continued)

Analyzing the Cartoons

1. In the top cartoon, who is the person on the left? How do you know? Who are the people facing him?

2. Who is greeting the immigrant in the bottom cartoon? How are they greeting him?

3. What do the shadows in the bottom cartoon's background symbolize?

Critical Thinking

4. **Recognizing Bias** Stereotypes are exaggerations that make the false assumption that all members of a group have the same characteristics. These characteristics can be physical or part of behavior. How does this cartoonist use stereotypes?

5. **Identifying Central Issues** The title of the top cartoon is "Welcome to All." Write a title for the bottom cartoon.

6. **Making Inferences** What has happened between the first cartoon and the second cartoon that accounts for the difference in the portrayal and reception of the immigrants?

Answer Key

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1. The person at left is Uncle Sam. We know this from his hat, white goatee, and striped pants. The people on the right are immigrants.

2. Wealthy Americans are greeting the immigrant by telling him not to enter.

3. The shadows represent the poor immigrants that the wealthy people were when they first arrived in the country.

4. Keppler uses facial features that fit the stereotypes of what various nationalities look like. He also uses stereotypes involving the dress and occupations of the poor immigrants and the obesity of the wealthy.

5. Answers will vary but should reflect the fact that immigrants are not as welcome as they were at the time of the earlier cartoon.

6. Answers will vary but should reflect the fact that increasing immigration stirred a fearful or hypocritical reaction in those who were already established in the United States.