How do people in other countries view the United States? One way to find out is to study political cartoons from around the world.

Wherever they live, cartoonists use the same devices to convey their views. Here are some of the most common:

- **symbol**: an object that is widely understood to stand for a country, an institution, or an idea. Uncle Sam, with his top hat and beard, is a well-known symbol of the U.S.
- **caricature**: an exaggerated drawing of a person, either to poke fun or to make the subject instantly recognizable.
- **hyperbole (hy-PUR-buh-lee)**: a deliberate exaggeration of a situation, often for comic effect.
- **irony**: something that happens or is said that differs from what the character means or what the reader expects.

With these devices in mind, look at the cartoons on these pages and answer the questions that follow. What do they tell you about how the United States is viewed around the world?

**QUESTIONS**  
Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Who is the subject of the cartoon? What physical features does the cartoonist caricature?
2. Roughly when was this cartoon drawn? How do you know?
3. How does the cartoon use irony?
4. What do you think the cartoonist is saying?
5. Is the cartoon sympathetic to its subject? Is it fair? Explain your answers.

See the October 25/November 8, 2010, Teacher’s Edition, p. T-4, to learn how to access answers to our World Week questions.
Reading a Political Cartoon

AMERICA AT WAR

The U.S.-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan are often described as “missions”—or tasks carried out for a noble purpose. What do the cartoons on this page say—or imply—about the American missions in these two countries?

QUESTIONS

Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What recent news event is the top cartoon about?
2. How does the cartoonist use hyperbole?
3. Why are Uncle Sam’s words ironic?
4. Who is pictured in the bottom cartoon and what is he doing?
5. What does the cartoonist seem to be saying? Which two elements in the cartoon tell us this?
Reading a Political Cartoon

POOL PARTIES?

These cartoons comment on two separate but interrelated concepts—the U.S. economy and America’s role in the world. Both use pools as a metaphor—a word or an object used to represent an idea.

1. What does the empty pool in the top cartoon represent? Who are the people gathered at its edge?
2. What do you think President Obama is saying to the people? Symbolically, what is he asking of them?
3. How is the small pool labeled “Jobs” used to convey the cartoon’s message?
4. In the bottom cartoon, if Uncle Sam in the pool represents the U.S. role in the world, what is the cartoonist saying about China’s role? What could the items each man is holding symbolize?
5. What can we read from the faces and body language of the two men? What might this say about relations between the U.S. and China?

QUESTIONS
Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

PARESH NATH • KHALEej TIMES (UNITED ARAB EMIRATES) • CAGLE CARTOONS

HENG • LIANHE ZAOBAO (SINGAPORe) • CARTOONARTS INTERNATIONAL
AN ELUSIVE PEACE

Since its founding in 1948, Israel has been in bitter conflict with its Arab neighbors. While there has been progress, including peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan, resolution of key issues between Israel and the Palestinians has proven much tougher.

For decades, U.S. Presidents have tried to bring Israeli and Palestinian leaders together to talk peace. So far, these efforts have failed. Now President Obama is taking his turn by encouraging negotiations between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

QUESTIONS

Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. In the cartoon at top, Obama greets Netanyahu (left) and Abbas (right). What is he welcoming them back to?
2. The cartoon relies on a well-known metaphor that compares something to “a house of cards”—a flimsy structure in danger of collapse. What is that “house” in this case?
3. What danger is Obama in, according to the cartoon?
4. In the cartoon at bottom, “newlyweds” Abbas and Netanyahu have broken down on their honeymoon. What does their car symbolize?
5. What comment does the cartoonist make by showing Obama as the tow-truck driver?