

Common Symbols Used in Political Cartoons

The following is a list of common symbols you will find in political cartoons and their meanings. Use this list as you analyze each cartoon.

Dove	Peace
Olive branch	Peace, Forgiveness
Vulture	Preying on others, Death
Buzzard	Preying on others, Death
Skull/Bones	Death
Elephant	Republican Party
Donkey	Democratic Party
Phoenix	Something new and powerful arising from destruction
Uncle Sam	U.S. Government, American People
Sphinx	A great king with absolute power
Tortoise	Someone who moves slowly, a winner
Hare	Someone who moves quickly, a loser
Capitol Building Dome	Congress
White House	The President
Scales, a balance	Supreme Court, justice, fairness
Eagle	American Government, the Constitution
Laurel Wreath	Victory
Statue of Liberty	Freedom
Liberty Bell	Freedom
Serpent	
Acorn	strength
Bear	strength
Chains	bondage/slavery
Dawn	beginning/hope
Fog	confusion/obscurity
Island	lost paradise/isolation
Ivy	immortality or dependence
Key	liberation/knowledge/mystery/initiation
Lightning	sudden illumination/destruction of ignorance
Oak	strength
Ocean	the unfathomable/formlessness/ chaos/or stability
Pen	learning/knowledge/creation of destinies
Raven	bad news/death
River	life