

## 3 Visual Literacy – Answer Key

**2. Now, write an analysis / interpretation of the cartoons on pp. 57f.**

Suggested Answers:

*Cartoon about an “un-American” driver (p. 57)*

This cartoon about an “un-American” driver criticizes America’s wasteful fuel consumption. A man, who has just been stopped by a police officer, can be seen in the foreground with his really small car, whereas in the background there is a two-lane road with a huge traffic jam, caused by SUVs. In a stop-and-search operation, the man with the small car has been signalled to stop. The officer is telling him that he’s sorry to have inconvenienced him but his “conspicuous practice of not wasting as much fuel as possible” made him “look distinctly UN-AMERICAN” (cp. speech bubble). The caption highlights that gas-guzzling SUVs have become extremely popular in the US for everyday driving purposes and are now associated with being typically “American,” despite being strongly criticized by environmentalists for consuming large amounts of gas. The message of the cartoon is that wasting energy with inefficient cars such as SUVs has become mainstream and is no longer questioned by American drivers.

*Cartoon about life without risks being no fun (p. 58)*

The cartoon is made up of four individual pictures; they show a spokesman behind a 'Ford' desk, giving a lecture about SUVs. In the first three pictures the man has a serious look on his face. He begins by conceding that SUVs are a risk to clean air, in the second picture he acknowledges that they are a risk to other motorists and in the third picture he even admits that they are a risk to the planet's atmosphere. In contrast to the first three pictures, he enthusiastically announces in the last picture: "But, hey – what fun is life without risk?!" (cp. speech bubble). The caption highlights that 'Ford' is selling a way of living 'the American dream', which is justified by the spokesman's reassuring attitude of having fun now, despite the obvious negative impact of SUVs. The unexpected twist at the end really stresses the message of the cartoon: having fun seems to be a guaranteed right in the USA, regardless of environmental sins.

*(Daniela Pröls)*