

## 3 Worksheet on Visual Literacy – Cartoons

Text: “Unreal-o-tainment”, from: Düwel/Grün, *The Media*, Viewfinder Topics New Edition plus (München: Langenscheidt, 2011), pp. 32f.

### A BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### HOW TO INTERPRET A CARTOON

##### 1) Take a close look at the cartoon and find out about these aspects:

- caption
- speech bubble(s)
- background/foreground
- people (gender, age, facial expression etc.)
- year of publication
- cartoonist

##### 2) Ask yourself these questions:

- What’s the cartoon’s message? What is being criticized?
- Which emotions does it convey?
- Which associations/connotations does the cartoon bring to mind?
- Is there a target group?

##### 3) Write down your interpretation/ analysis:

- (Optional: Start by stating the cartoon’s message in one short sentence.)
- Describe all the aspects/ details of the cartoon that contribute to the message.
- Then summarise your findings from 2).

##### Don’t forget:

- Use the present progressive for activity verbs.
- Watch out for this German-English interference: say “In the picture...” not “On the picture”.

## B CARTOON INTERPRETATION

**1. Here's an interpretation of the cartoon on p. 32 but the sentences have been jumbled. Find the correct order.**

- Here, the team is going too far.
- Apparently, this cartoon is criticising a special TV format: reality TV.
- In the cartoon, there's a man who is standing on the edge of a cliff with a stone tied around his neck.
- It's obvious that he is about to commit suicide by jumping into the water and drowning.
- Moreover, you can see two men, one of them a cameraman with a portable camera and one an audio engineer with a microphone.
- In reality TV shows, the camera and the viewer are passive observers following people in everyday situations.
- Surprisingly, both of them are wearing diving suits and flippers, ready to jump into the water and to film the dying man under water.
- What's strange about the scene is that behind him you can see a big yellow outside broadcast van of a reality TV company.
- The personal feelings of the man are totally ignored as reality TV lives on sensations and emotions.

**2. Again, the same interpretation of the cartoon on p. 32 but without punctuation. Rewrite the text.**

in the cartoon there's a man who is standing on the edge of a cliff with a stone tied around his neck it's obvious that he is about to commit suicide by jumping into the water and drowning what's strange about the scene is that behind him you can see a big yellow outside broadcast van of a reality TV company moreover you can see two men one of them a cameraman with a portable camera and one an audio engineer with a microphone surprisingly both of them are wearing diving suits and flippers ready to jump into the water and to film the dying man under water apparently this cartoon is criticising a special TV format reality TV in reality TV shows the camera and the viewer are passive observers following people in everyday situations here the team is going too far the personal feelings of the man are totally ignored as reality TV lives on sensations and emotions

*(Daniela Pröls)*