Analysing a cartoon

A cartoon usually combines a drawing with a text. Cartoons often pick up on one current news event and criticise people, institutions or developments in society and politics.

Some cartoons may just be entertaining, often making fun of public figures, but others can make a serious and important critical point simply and clearly using visual means.

**Step 1: Introduction**
- Give available information on the context (author, date and first publication source).
- Briefly state the issue or target group.

**Step 2: Description**
- Describe the cartoon in detail.
- Include the contents of captions, speech bubbles etc. and their relationship to the picture.

**Step 3: Analysis**
- Examine the elements (characters, objects, text) and explain the message they convey.
- Pay attention to the function of characters (do they represent well-known people or a particular group?) and typical techniques (see tip box).

**Step 4: Evaluation**
- State whether the cartoon is effective and which elements are responsible for its success/failure.
- Give your personal opinion (if asked) or your thoughts on which topic the picture represents.

**TIP**
Cartoonists often use the following techniques:
- highlighting prominent features/actions/events by caricature (exaggerating characteristic elements)
- exposing inconsistencies (e.g. contrasting a statement with a picture showing the opposite)
- irony (depicting the opposite of what is really meant)
- making use of puns or word play
- symbolic elements