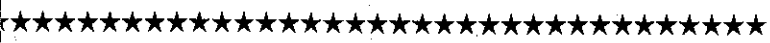


**ACTIVITY 12**  
**Interpreting Political Cartoons**



**Bloody Kansas**

After passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, the Kansas territory became a battleground. Pro-slavery and antislavery supporters rushed to settle in Kansas. The territory was torn by battles and massacres. The issue also bitterly divided the nation. It became a major issue in the 1856 presidential election and went a long way to preparing the way for the Civil War.

The cartoon on this page appeared during the 1856 presidential campaign. Study the cartoon and then answer the questions that follow.



**FORCING SLAVERY DOWN THE THROAT OF A FREESOILER**

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### Analyzing the Cartoon

1. Who does the man tied to the table represent? What is the meaning of the term *Freesoiler*?

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2. What is being forced down the throat of this man?

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3. Who are the other four men in the cartoon? How does the cartoonist show them in a negative way?

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4. What is the symbolism of the table. What do the following words on the table stand for?

"Democratic platform"

"Kansas"

"Cuba"

**★★★ CRITICAL THINKING ★★★**

5. **Making Inferences** To what political party do you think the cartoonist belonged? Explain your answer.

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6. **Analyzing Information** How are the following devices used in this cartoon: satire, symbolism, and caricature?

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7. **Expressing Problems Clearly** Be a political cartoonist. On the other side of this sheet, sketch a cartoon of your own that uses the same symbolism as in this cartoon to deal with a modern-day political issue. Label the platform, identify the characters, and write a caption, just as the cartoonist did. However, make the cartoon represent an issue of today, rather than one of 1856.