

VICTORIAN ENGLAND: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Enjoying A Laugh: : Caricatures and Limericks



WHAT WE LEARNED:

- We learned that caricatures are comical illustrations designed to poke fun at a subject.
- We learned that caricatures are generally pencil or ink line drawings, sometimes with color added, and that all caricatures have one thing in common—exaggeration.
- We explored the lives and art of three of the Victorian Era's most celebrated caricature artists: Harry Furniss, Leslie Ward, and Edward Lear

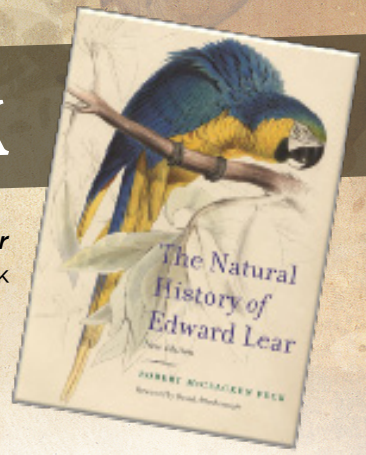
ART ACTIVITY: Ink Caricatures

Today your young artist learned about humor during the Victorian era. We explored the many caricatures made by Harry Furniss and Leslie Ward who used to loiter at social events memorizing the distinct, and comical, features of the celebrities of their day. Then we practiced the art of caricature by making these amusing portraits. We took some time to study the human face and break it down into its simple shapes and proportions. Then we exaggerated our models' features to make our caricatures distinctive and add some humor. We hope your child will continue to explore this comical art form on their own!



BOOK NOOK

The Natural History of Edward Lear
Robert McCracken Peck



A CLOSER LOOK: Harry Furniss

In today's lesson we saw how Harry Furniss "transformed" the eminent prime minister William Gladstone into a hilariously funny caricature. Do you remember how he exaggerated a single costuming detail to emphasize Gladstone's "starchy" personality? He then added five additional images to create a series which he titled "Mr. Gladstone Gets His Collar Up" (pun intended)! Each image in the series highlighted "over the top" gestures and poses that further illuminated Gladstone's personality!

Furniss also created several caricatures of Benjamin Disraeli, Gladstone's greatest political rival and a favorite of the Queen. Compare Furniss' two images of "Gladstone Addressing the Parliament" with the two of "Disraeli Addressing the Parliament." Once you've finished your visual analysis, write a paragraph noting how the caricatures accentuate the personality differences between these two politicians. Based on your observations, which of the two would "win your vote"?

WILLIAM GLADSTONE



BENJAMIN DISRAELI



The Victorian era was not only the golden age of children's literature but also of magazine publishing. The satirical weekly *Punch*, started in 1841 by the English journalist and reformer Henry Mayhew, was wildly popular as was Thomas Gibson Bowles' later publication *Vanity Fair*. The popularity of these magazines was in large part due to the caricatures that accompanied the droll political and cultural news articles. The visual commentary provided by Harry Furniss, Leslie Ward, and Edward Lear would raise caricatures into a valued art form, paving the way for the political and cultural caricaturists and cartoonists we so enjoy today.

CONNECTIONS AT HOME: Leslie Ward

As we learned, Leslie Ward's parents were famous Royal Academy painters (in fact, M&G has a painting by his dad, [Edward Matthew Ward](#)). At first, his parents were not at all pleased about their son's fascination with making caricatures. Of course, after Leslie became one of the most admired caricature artists of the time, their "distaste" for the art form was forgotten! So, when a newsy piece about his famous father was published in *Vanity Fair*, Leslie drew this funny caricature to complement the article!

Since the writers chose to emphasize Mr. Ward's importance as a Royal Academy painter, Leslie's exaggerations of facial features, stance, and clothing were designed to make us (and his father) laugh at taking this importance too seriously! As Leslie knew, his father was after all much more than just a "serious painter." For example, notice the handkerchief sticking out of Mr. Ward's back pocket—a humorous detail in an otherwise very carefully dressed gentleman.



Your Turn!

Use the skills you learned in today's lesson and art activity to create a caricature of one of your family members. A good way to get your creative juices flowing is to have a family brainstorming session (maybe in front of a warm fire or over dinner). You could open the discussion by asking each family member what they find funny, odd, or even annoying about themselves: "I'm a worrywart." "I love daydreaming." "I'm always forgetting things!" Next, get into a "Leslie Ward mindset" and think about your subject's facial features, hair style, typical poses/gestures, and even clothing details. Choose one or two details to exaggerate—ones you think could emphasize the personality trait you're trying to capture. Once you've finished the caricature, give it a descriptive title and share it with family and friends.

TECHNOLOGY AND ART:

Edward Lear's Lithography

Edward Lear's fondness for painting parrots eventually led to his mastery of lithography, a technique that allowed him to create beautifully colored prints of his drawings. This lithograph pictures male and female Eclectus parrots (a species native to Australia). The work is now part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection.

"The bird is unique for its distinct plumage—predominantly green in males, red and blue in females. The design was made for one of the lithographs in *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidae, or Parrots*, the first book devoted to a single bird species, which Lear published between 1830 and 1832." You can learn more about the lithographic process Lear used [HERE](#).



ADDITIONAL Resources

- **Cartoon Faces Made Easy—Measuring with Distance** with caricature artist, AJ Jensen
- **Caricature Drawing Tip: Line Work** with caricature artist, AJ Jensen
- **How to Caricature Noses: 5 Tips** with caricature artist, AJ Jensen
- See more of **Edward Lear's stunning lithographs**
- Learn more about **Edward Ward's Luther Discovering Justification by Faith**
- Purchase **Cartoon Faces: How to Draw Heads, Features, and Expressions by Christopher Hart** or view the resource **HERE**

Due to the changing nature of web resources, M&G strongly urges you as the parent to preview these sites before your child accesses them. The fact that these sites are available on this handout does not imply that M&G endorses their content from the standpoint of morals, philosophy, theology, or scientific hypotheses.

M&G Educational Mission:

Through tours, events, and publications, the Museum & Gallery seeks to partner with educators in fulfilling all of the National Visual Arts Content Standards. By integrating art into the core curriculum, M&G's goals are to teach children to value the arts, to communicate through the arts, to become creative problem solvers through the inclusion of STEAM-related concepts and fully-developed STEAM units, to understand history and culture in light of the arts, to improve literary interest and understanding through visual storytelling, to critique the arts, and to develop an aesthetic awareness of the arts. Through fulfilling the mission, M&G is able to help develop citizens who have the ability to think, feel, and understand the world in which they live.

