

# Cartoon of the Week



## FRAME 13

A high school student wonders how the U.S. will get out of Iraq.

## BASIC LEVEL

This is a cartoon from a high school student in Seaside, California. The student's name is Merideth Cochran. **What do you see in this cartoon?** (A man in a long hallway trying to figure out which door to use. The hallway's floor is marked "Iraq.") This man could be anyone, but his top hat and long coattails seem to say that he might be Uncle Sam. **Who is Uncle Sam?** (A made-up character who stands for the United States.) **What do you think this cartoon is saying about the war in Iraq?** (It seems to say that the U.S. does not know how to "get out" of the war.)

Look at the top of this cartoon. The lines of the hallway seem to go on forever. This is because the cartoonist has slanted them towards each other. The place they come together is called the vanishing point. **Do you like this drawing "trick"?** **Will you use it in your own drawings?** END OF STORY

## GENERAL LEVEL

This week's cartoon comes to us from Merideth Cochran, who attends Seaside High School in Seaside, California. It is a cartoon with a very simple structure. In it, there is only one figure, a man scratching his head. **Who is this figure supposed to be, and how do you know?** (The top hat and tails indicate that this is meant to be "Uncle Sam," the symbol for the United States.) He is standing in a long hallway marked "Iraq," with many exit doors on either side.

**What do you think this cartoon means?** (It seems to be saying that the U.S. is having a hard time trying to figure out how to get out of the Iraq war.) As you know, U.S. troops have been in Iraq for more than two years. Over 1,500 American troops have been killed during this time — some experts say that insurgent violence has increased lately. The January elections in Iraq gave many people hopes that democracy was coming to that country. But now it is May, and Iraq has still not been able to put together a government. There are many different opinions about when Iraq will be ready for a U.S. troop pull-out, but no one knows for sure. **Do you think this cartoon gets this message across?**

**Where does this hallway end?** (It does not seem to end at all.) This is due to an art technique known as the "vanishing point." The cartoonist makes the walls of the hallway, which should be parallel, come together in the distance. This makes it appear to go on forever. **Do you think this is a comment about the Iraq war?** END OF STORY

## ADVANCED LEVEL

Merideth Cochran is a student at Seaside High School in Seaside, California. This cartoon earned a third-place prize in the NewsCurrents Student Editorial Cartoon Contest. It is not a complicated cartoon, but it is deeper than it seems at first. **Does a cartoon need to be complicated to be good?**

**What is happening in this cartoon?** (A figure in a top hat and long coattails is standing in a hallway marked "Iraq," pondering which of many exit doors to use.) Obviously, this is meant to symbolize the current situation in Iraq. **What does this cartoon mean to you?** (Answers will vary, but students should recognize that the figure in the hat represents Uncle Sam, or the U.S.)

Many people are worried that the U.S. has no "exit strategy" in Iraq. **What does this phrase mean?** (A plan to get out in a timely and intelligent manner.) Cochran illustrates this by having multiple exit doors, and having the central figure confused as to which one to use. But the cartoon also seems to indicate that this war could go on forever, or at least for a very long time. It does this by using a perspective technique called the "vanishing point." **Where is the "vanishing point" in this picture?** (At the top, where the "parallel" lines of the hallway come together, which suggests an infinite distance.) This technique helps the cartoonist make a point without needing to spell it out in words. **Do you think this is an effective editorial cartoon? Why or why not?** END OF STORY