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OBJECTIVES

1. Students will better understand the historical reasons for and the nature of the drive for unity in Europe today.
 2. Students will better understand some divisions that make full European unification difficult.
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The Drive for Union

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration 1

For the past five hundred years, Europe has been a powerful region and a leader in science, medicine, industry, and the development of more open and democratic political systems. But Europe has also been a violent region. Is that changing now? That's the question this cartoon asks. Since World War II, Europeans have slowly worked to unify their region. Some hope to achieve a kind of "United States of Europe." But so far, this dream has been hard to realize. This cartoon suggests that the unification process is still far too complicated to create a real feeling of unity.

Illustration 2

European unification has grown in a slow, piecemeal fashion. In 1951, France, West Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Italy agreed to uniform rules for producing and selling coal and steel. To do this, they set up the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). In 1967, this led to the European Community (EC), eventually expanded to twelve members. The new members were Britain, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain. Later, The EC became even more unified as the EU or European Union. In 1994, Austria, Finland, and Sweden joined, bringing the total membership to fifteen nations. As a result of the end of communism in Eastern Europe, a much larger expansion of ten nations was set to take place in 2004. This cartoon comments on this expansion.

Illustration 3

In 2003, the United States argued bitterly with some European nations about whether or not to go to war with Iraq. Among other things, this argument revealed a deep split within Europe itself. The cartoon shows British prime minister Tony Blair and U.S. president George W. Bush, on the right. These two men took the lead in fighting the war in Iraq. On the left are the leaders of France and Germany, Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schroeder, respectively. France and Germany strongly opposed using force to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. Many experts at the time said this split was in part between those like Blair, who view a unified Europe as mainly a partner with the United States, and those like Chirac and Schroeder, who see it more as a rival whose task is to check or contain U.S. power. Only time would tell how deep such a split was in Europe and how it will affect the drive for European unification.

Lesson 1 — The Drive for Union

Illustration 1

BEHRENDT
DE TELEGRAAF
Amsterdam
NETHERLANDS



CARTOONISTS & WRITERS SYNDICATE <http://CartoonWeb.com>

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Discussing the Illustration

1. For the past five hundred years, Europe has been a powerful region and a leader in science, industry, and ideas. But Europe has also had a violent history, as this cartoon suggests. Can you name some major wars that have taken place in Europe during the past five hundred years?
2. For more than fifty years, many European nations have worked toward unification. What generally does the term “unification” mean in this case?
3. The drive to unify Europe was fueled by the hope that it would lower chances for violent conflict there. In your view, has this hope been realized? Why or why not?
4. This cartoon suggests that military conflict in Europe has given way to another kind of conflict. What sort of conflict does the cartoon seem to have in mind? From what you know about the process of European unification, does this cartoon make a fair point? Why or why not?

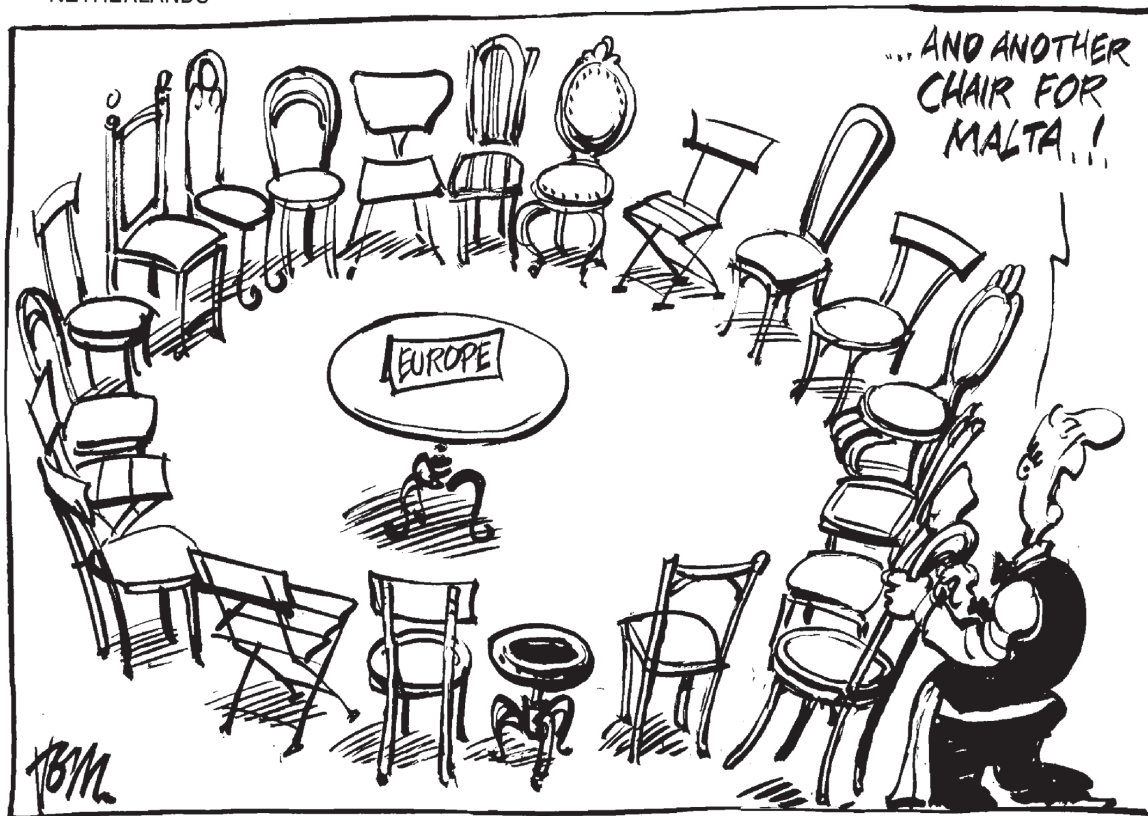
Follow-up Activities

1. This cartoon makes its point without words, but many cartoons use captions to help make a point. Look at the editorial page of your local newspaper to get a sense of how captions are used in editorial cartoons. Next, after you have learned more about efforts to unify the nations of Europe, come up with a caption of your own for this cartoon. Share your caption with the class, and discuss why you think it does or does not improve the cartoon.
2. **Small Group Activity:** The European Union is built around three areas of cooperation among member states. These three areas are often called the three pillars of unification. Learn more about this phrase, “the three pillars of unification,” and learn how in general the European Union is presently organized. Create a chart showing this structure. Now conduct a pro-con debate about the lower half of this cartoon, with one side calling it unfair and the other saying it is accurate about the EU. Use the chart you made to help make your points.

Lesson 1 — The Drive for Union

Illustration 2

TOM
TROUW
Amsterdam
NETHERLANDS



CARTOONISTS & WRITERS SYNDICATE <http://CartoonWeb.com>

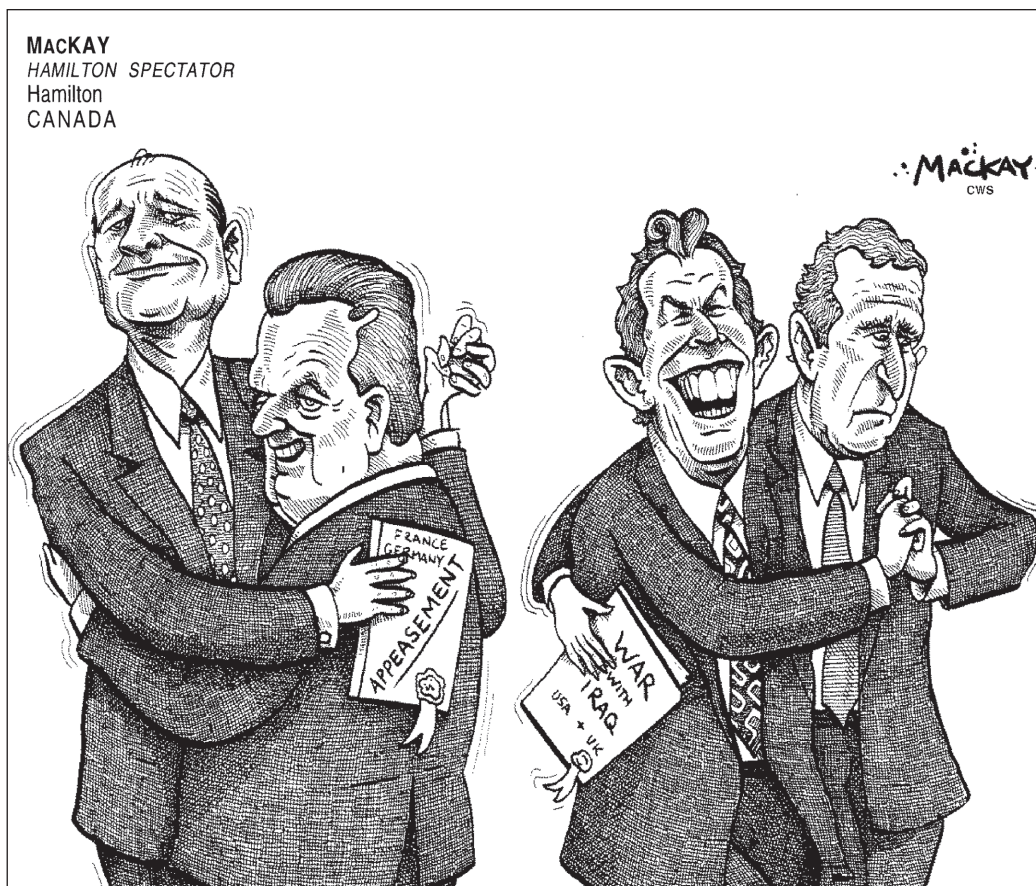
Discussing the Illustration

1. The first official efforts toward unification in Europe occurred in the late 1940s and early 1950s. This was just after one of Europe's, and the world's, bloodiest wars. What war was that? In what way did the war bring about efforts to unify Europe?
2. The drive to unite Europe began back in 1951 with a group known as the European Coal and Steel Community. Can you name its original six members and briefly explain the group's purpose?
3. Since then, unity has been sought by larger and larger organizations of European nations, each one with greater powers. What is the current name of the organization that unites Europeans, and how many nations belong to it?
4. Throughout the 1990s, the EU was mainly limited to Western Europe. But in 2004, this was to change in a very large way, as this cartoon indicates. What major development in world history made this latest enlargement of the EU possible?

Follow-up Activities

1. See how much your friends or family know about the European Union. Ask at least three of them, separately, to see how many of the "chairs" in the cartoon they can identify. Then ask them how many of those they named are new members, admitted in 2004 or later. Use what you learn from this survey to give a short talk to the class on American interest in and knowledge about Europe and the EU.
2. The European Union was set to admit a number of new nations beginning in 2004. At the same time, work was under way for unifying Europe even more strongly under a constitution. The goal was to have that constitution ratified by 2005. Learn about the current status of the European Union. How many nations currently belong? Has the constitution been ratified by the legislatures of all member states? What key issues, if any, remain to be worked out? Give a brief talk to your class summarizing the current status of the EU.

Illustration 3



Cartoonists and Writers Syndicate

Discussing the Illustration

1. The EU may unite Europe in one organization. But that does not mean all European nations agree with one another on every issue. This cartoon is actually about one very big disagreement in Europe in 2003. From the cartoon, what was the issue that divided some European leaders from others?
2. One of these men is NOT a European leader. Can you identify him and the man he is dancing with? Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schroeder are the other couple. Can you name the nations they led?
3. From what you know of the arguments about the war in Iraq in 2003, can you explain why these men are shown as two separate couples? Why do you think President Bush is shown as troubled, whereas the others seem happy?
4. Notice the word “appeasement” in the cartoon. What point do you think the artist wants to make by linking that word to Chirac and Schroeder? Do you agree with that point? Why or why not?

Follow-up Activities

1. In 2003, the four figures in this cartoon were leaders of France and Germany (on the left) and Great Britain and the United States (on the right). Are these men still leading these four nations? If not, who are the leaders of these nations right now? From what you read in the news, is this cartoon still accurate in the way it pictures the divisions among these nations? How do you know? Write a paragraph about this cartoon, bringing it up to date.
2. In 2002 and early in 2003, France and Germany opposed the United States and Great Britain over Iraq. At one point, the U.S. secretary of defense called France and Germany part of the “Old Europe,” but suggested that a “New Europe” was more in favor of the U.S. and British stand on Iraq. Learn more about the arguments over this idea of an “Old” and a “New” Europe. Based on what you learn, and using the above cartoon, give a talk to the class on why you do or do not think the Old Europe/New Europe distinction is valid.