

Cartoon interpretation

by Franziska Lange

For the cartoon:

Groundhog Day

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Topic: Groundhog Day

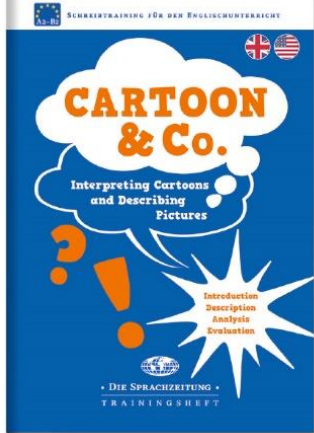
Cartoon interpretation

This cartoon by R. J. Matson was published by Cagle Cartoons. It's a cartoon about Groundhog Day, a US tradition which is celebrated every year on February 2.

The cartoon shows a scene on a sunny winter day with blue skies and snow covering the ground and the bare trees. There's a group of people in the background, and they're wearing warm jackets, scarves and hats. A banner behind them reads "Groundhog Day". There's a man on the left in old-fashioned clothes, including a waistcoat, a bow tie and a top hat. A man and woman standing next to him are holding microphones, and there's a camera on the right. Everyone is looking down the snowy hill towards a groundhog lying comfortably on a deckchair in front of a burrow, sunbathing. It's wearing sunglasses, and it's dressed in a short-sleeved shirt printed with sunflowers. There's a cocktail standing on the right armrest of the deckchair. The man in old-fashioned clothes is angrily putting his hands on his hips and saying, "He saw his shadow but he's pretending he didn't ..."

The topic of this cartoon is a quirky American holiday. Legend has it that if a groundhog comes out of its hole on February 2 and sees its shadow, i.e. on a sunny day, it will return to its hole, and the weather will stay cold for six more weeks. If it can't see its shadow, however, it will remain outside, and this means spring will begin. The groundhog in the cartoon is obviously not in the mood for another six weeks of hibernation and cold weather. Although it can see its shadow, it has decided to stay outside and enjoy the sunny weather.

A groundhog that breaks with tradition and does its own thing – the idea behind this cartoon made me laugh. I think what makes it particularly amusing is that the cartoonist has drawn it so vividly, with the groundhog sunbathing just like any human tourist on a summer holiday.



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