

The Plum Pudding in Danger!

The British and the French nations have a long history of mutual dislike. And the British especially loved to hate Napoleon! One reason for this antipathy is the different important religions of both countries. The British crown represents the Protestant faith and the French are known for supporting Catholicism. Still another reason is competition for the best sea trade routes and the Britain fear of Napoleon's possible invasion of their country as well as his global expansion plans.

Here is a caricature by the famous artist James Gillray¹ from the year 1805 called "Plum Pudding in Danger"². Have a good look. Try to find details in the picture. Work with a partner and describe the action and figures before you answer the questions below:



1. Do you recognise Napoleon? How is he shown? What is he doing?
2. What does the plum pudding represent in the caricature?
3. The other person at the table is British Prime Minister William Pitt. He is Britain's Prime Minister, a politician but what is he wearing? Why?
4. What does plum pudding stand for in English food culture? At what holiday is plum pudding usually eaten? Are there *German* foods which are only prepared for special holidays?
5. Can you say what opinions the artist is expressing about France and England in this caricature? Are they sharing the pudding? What does William Pitt's cut of the pudding say about England's global ambitions? (hint: think about where tea and spices come from). According to the picture, who would get the sea and who would get the land?
6. Can you explain the title of the caricature: "Plum Pudding in Danger"?

Vocabulary: *mutual* – gegenseitig, *antipathy* – Antipathie, missfallen, *represents* – vertreten, etwas darstellen, *faith* – Glaube, *competition* – Konkurrenz, *sea trade* – Seehandelsverkehr, *invasion* – Überfall *expansion* – Ausweitung, Expansion, *plum* – Pflaume, *politician* –Politiker, *ambitions* – Ambitionen, *spices* – Gewürze

¹ James Gillray (1756-1815) was the leading English caricaturist of the late eighteenth century, and is generally recognised as the father of the satirical cartoon.

²Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZC4-8791