

Your Own Modest Proposal Essay & Reflection Assignment

Assignment: After reading Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal," write your own satirical solution to a problem in modern American society.

Possible Topics: Choose an issue in your world that bothers you in some way. Consider current trends or views regarding poverty, politics, commercialism, professional sports, obesity, war, global warming, education, celebrities, technology, etc., what is going wrong, why, and what you would like to see done about these problems.

Some specifics: Your final product should be at least five paragraphs long. It should have a structure similar to Swift's essay, should contain a similarly sarcastic tone, and should implement at least four of the six major satirical techniques: exaggeration, irony, understatement, incongruity, parody, and reversal.

Process:

1. Read and analyze Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal." Note the **structure and tone** of the essay, as well as Swift's use of satirical techniques.
2. Brainstorm societal problems that you might want to address (i.e. the famine in Ireland, which Swift addresses). Your problem should be something that impacts **our nation's society as a whole**, so **don't** pick something that only applies to American Senior High School, any specific person, or M-DCPS policy.
3. Outline and write your essay. You may feel free to add additional paragraphs where appropriate, but **your essay should follow the basic model below**:
 - a. **25-30 word subtitle.** Your essay should be called "A Modest Proposal," but the subtitle should flesh out what societal problem you are trying to solve (without giving away your "shocking" element). (Swift's full title is "A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from Being a Burden to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Public." Shoot for something like that.)
 - b. **Paragraph 1:** A clear first paragraph that contains an **indelible image** of your societal problem. (Swift's image in his first paragraph is that of the mother with six children dressed in rags begging for alms. Try to include an image of your problem that elicits the readers' sympathies in a similar way.)
 - c. **Paragraph 2:** A paragraph description of your **shocking solution**. (This is like the paragraph in which Swift describes "delicious and nourishing" babies.)
 - d. **Paragraph 3:** A list of **six clearly labeled "logical reasons"** for why your solution would work. (Label your sentences "firstly," "secondly," "thirdly," as Swift does.)
 - e. **Paragraph 4:** An **italicized** paragraph describing your response to the **opposition's argument**. (Note Swift's italicized paragraphs for guidance on this.)

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f. **Paragraph 5: Conclusion.**

4. Write a brief (one-paragraph) **meta-cognitive reflection** about how you came up with your ideas and modeled your essay after Swift's.

Satire Essay & Reflection Grading Rubric

	Your Score	Possible Points
Subtitle		10
P1: Indelible Image		15
P2: Shocking Solution		15
P3: "Logical" Reasons		15
P4: Opponent's Argument		15
P5: Conclusion		15
Meta-cognitive Reflection		15
Extra Credit Elevated Vocabulary		*10
Total Score		100

Note on Extra Credit: Up to five points of extra credit will be awarded for your use of elevated vocabulary – like “melancholy” and “prodigious,” both of which Swift uses in his first few paragraphs. (Consider using appropriate vocabulary from your journal assignments or Townsend Press vocabulary words.)

Comments:
