

A Modest Proposal Argumentative Writing and Close Reading Task

Text grade band placement:	
11-College and Career Ready	
Text	Text Complexity Analysis
<p>Title: “A Modest Proposal”</p> <p>Author: Jonathan Swift</p> <p>Citation/Publication info: Swift, Jonathan. "A Modest Proposal." <i>Holt McDougal Literature: Grade 12</i>. [s.l.]: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. 622-31. Print.</p> <p>Link: http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/SwiMode.html</p>	<p>Quantitative: Lexile: 1440L</p>
	<p>Qualitative: Vocabulary: Generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading Subject Matter Knowledge: requires extensive, perhaps specialized prior content knowledge</p>
	<p>Reader and Task: Students will gain extensive vocabulary and historical content knowledge through this task.</p>
ELA Common Core Standards addressed by task	
<p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.2 Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p>	

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

What key insights should students take from this text?

- Satire writing
- Examples of verbal irony
- Understand the need for sarcasm in this text
- Elements of proposition and support
- Definition of injustice

Text-Dependent Questions

1. How does Swift use verbal irony in the title of the essay?
2. What does Swift think about religious views including Irish Catholics, English and Irish Protestants, and those who live abroad?
3. What does Swift blame widespread thievery in Ireland and why?
4. Why does Swift give the reader financial calculations in this text? How would his proposal improve family life?
5. Why does Swift reveal the historical differences between the English and the Irish in refuting the opposing view?
6. Now that you have finished reading *A Modest Proposal*: why would Swift make such an extreme proposal?

Writing Mode	Writing Prompt
Argumentative	Imagine you are a British citizen in 18 th century England. Using details from the text, write a rebuttal to Jonathan Swift that refutes his argument. Your response must include your claim, textual evidence, and counterargument.

Scaffolding and support for special education students, English language learners, and struggling readers:

Help students through vocabulary support such as word squares and understanding archaic language. Work on developing reading fluency and help them make inferences.