

3/12/12

notes

could post/type  
on class  
wiki as  
correct answers  
Nathan Mand  
great  
work

# A Modest Proposal

## Activity 1 - Diction

"It is a melancholy object -

"a child just dropped from its dam may be supported by her milk for a solar year"

"in the most savage in human breast"

"wives are breeders"

"quickest proficiency in that art"

↳ refers to thievery ok

↳ calls it an "art" in Ireland

Swift describes humans with terms commonly used to describe lives stock or agriculture.

This sets the stage for him to later propose eating them.

technical jargon

He takes the perspective of a very practical man with little regard for human life, who equates poor people to animals. This mocks the heartless attitudes of the rich toward these beggars.

good

good

## Activity 2

Although the shift from mild irony to dark satire commences earlier, the phrase "a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food," is the most blatant point in the shift, as it is the first time at which Swift clearly proposes eating children.

## Activity 3

Swift argues that his proposal will greatly reduce the number of "Papists" or Catholics. His audience is rich land owners, and he relies on the premise that these landowners are Protestants who dislike Papists, and view them as "dangerous enemies"

He also argues that he can increase the overall wealth of the nation, as these children who were costing money will now be sold for profits.

He assumes his audience is thoroughly driven by desire for profit

Another argument is that if this "ditch" was produced in taverns, business would increase. Once again, he assumes that money and productivity are strong motivations for these rich people.

All three of the arguments along with basically every other, rely on the satirical assumption that the beggars are utterly worthless to the landlords, and do not, in their eyes, deserve to be treated as human beings.

Activity 4

good

An "expedient," as used by Swift, is a convenient means to attaining an end, and is often immoral or unjust. By saying "other expedients,"

Swift straightforwardly announces his proposal as an expedient. Other "expedients" that he suggests are the actual reasonable solutions, such as taxing the wealthy, cutting down on expensive foreign products, and "curing the expensiveness of pride." The continuing satire here is that these methods are legitimate ways to solve his problem, but are viewed as ridiculous and unimaginable by the wealthy.

Activity 5

Therefore, let no man talk of these and the like methods of relieving us of this burden, until there is some glimpse of hope there there will ever be a sincere attempt to put them into practice.