

Swift's "A Modest Proposal"  
WS\_2\*

***Be prepared to turn in this assignment at the end of class on Friday, January 18 for credit.***

1. In what sense does the essay make literal the metaphor that the English are devouring the Irish? What is the relationship between the metaphoric devouring and the literal starvation of the Irish people? (Knowing something about the historical context for this wouldn't hurt.)

2. Swift lets the mask of the persona slip at several points in the essay. Where does Swift's genuine sentiment emerge? (Give page numbers, short quotations, and explanations.)

3. Discuss the brutality of the imagery (for example, "dressing them hot from the knife"). To what extent is this effective? Why? (Offer sample passages, and explain them.)

4. Why is the comparison between the economic state of Ireland and the cannibalism of infants appropriate?

5. What is the moral purpose of Swift's satire?

6. Who is Swift's audience for the satire?

7. Are there modern parallels for which the satire would be applicable?

*\*Questions are taken from the NAEL teaching guide, sometimes with modifications.*