

## "A Modest Proposal" - Katie Tilley

**WebQuest Description:**

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Curriculum:** English / Language Arts

**Keywords:**

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### Standards and Objectives

**Student Objective:** Upon reading Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" students will compose a Presidential speech to present in front of the class. Students will demonstrate an understanding of proper qualities that should be found in a formal speech, as well as an understanding of satire through this characteristic in their own speeches.

**North Carolina Standards:**

- 3.01 Research and define issues of public concern by:
  - using a variety of resources such as the media center, on-line resources, interviews, and personal reflection.
  - specifying the nature of an issue, including the various claims made and the reasoning that supports these claims.
- 3.02 Organize and deliver an argument so that an intended audience respects it by:
  - wording the claim clearly.
  - specifying reasons in support of the claim that are likely to be convincing.

**5.01 Explore British literature by:**

- recognizing common themes that run through works, using evidence from the texts to substantiate ideas.
- relating the cultural and historical contexts to the literature and identifying perceived ambiguities, prejudices, and complexities.
- making associations between historical and current viewpoints.

**5.02 Extend engagement with selected works of British literature by:**

- observing how the imaginative experience of literature broadens and enriches real life.
- relating style, meaning, and genre (including fiction, non-fiction, drama, and poetry).
- applying literary, grammatical, and rhetorical terms of literature.
- demonstrating in various print and non-print media the significance of works.
- discerning the effect of interpreting literature from various critical perspectives.

**Technology Standards:**

- 3.01 Use word processing and/or desktop publishing for a variety of writing assignments/projects.
- 3.02 Use electronic resources for research.
- 3.04 Use technological tools for class assignments, projects, and presentations.
- 3.05 Adhere to Fair Use and Multimedia Copyright Guidelines, citing sources of copyrighted materials in papers, projects, and multimedia presentations.

## Introduction

Now that you have read "A Modest Proposal" written by Jonathan Swift it's your turn to put yourself in his shoes. Think about the social and political struggles that Ireland was facing during the 1720's. Imagine struggling to pay your rent or put food on your table. Swift was writing in an attempt to bring the societal issues into the public light. It will now be your turn to bring today's social and political issues into the public light! Please use the following website to assist your preparatory work:  
<http://www.victorianweb.org/previctorian/swift/swiftov.html>

## Tasks

Imagine you are running in the 2012 Presidential election, and the United States is facing the same issues England housed during Swift's composition of "A Modest Proposal." Create your platform based upon Swift's implausible "solution" to the social and political issues you will face as President. You will present this as a formal speech in class. This should be satiric in nature, as you will mimic the famous style of Jonathan Swift. Please view these two Presidential speeches and make note of what you do and do not enjoy.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxEauRq1WxQh>  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrp-v2tHaDo&feature=channel>

## Process

- 1- After an introduction to this unit, you will create a list of at least 5 societal issues the U.S. is currently facing, as well as provide 2-3 resources for each issue to use as supporting evidence. This will provide you with a solid foundation to build off in order to choose a topic that is worthwhile.
- 2- Now you will narrow down that list by choosing the topic of most interest to you. This topic must allow you to conduct large amounts of research, as well as write a 5-6 minute speech that you will present in class. Popular topics such as health care and education are acceptable; however, I encourage you to branch out choosing a topic that is not common.
- 3- You will be given the exact rubric I will use to grade your speeches to assist you in your research and writing so you should reference this frequently throughout your process. After watching two Presidential speeches in class you will also have these videos to reference in your preparation. Keep in mind how you felt watching those videos. Were you hooked, bored, compelled, etc? Use these strategies in your own writing.
- 4- Use the time you're given in class to put a large dent in your project in order to minimize outside work! This is also a great time to collaborate with other students if you get stuck in your process. Your colleagues are a great resource, as am I.
- 5- Once you have completed your research and written your speech you will present it in class as if you were addressing the citizens of the United States. I expect you to behave in a professional way and take this seriously.

# Evaluation

I will make note of the progress and attention you give towards your work while you complete research in class and begin writing your speeches. This means that you will need to work diligently throughout class when given time to conduct research through means of a mobile lab or computer lab, as well as in your in-class writing. Your speech will be graded by means of a rubric.

Category and Score	4	3	2	1	Score
Content	Shows a full understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of parts of the topic.	Does not seem to understand the topic very well.	
Speaks Clearly	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100-95%) the time, and mispronounces no words.	Speaks clearly and distinctly all (100-95%) the time, but mispronounces some words.	Speaks clearly and distinctly most ( 94-85%) of the time. Mispronounces many words.	Often mumbles or cannot be understood OR mispronounces multiple words.	
Enthusiasm	Facial expressions and body language generate a strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic in others.	Facial expressions and body language sometimes generate a strong interest and enthusiasm about the topic in others.	Facial expressions and body language are used to try to generate enthusiasm, but seem somewhat faked.	Very little use of facial expressions or body language. Did not generate much interest in topic being presented.	
Time-Limit	Presentation is 5-6 minutes long.	Presentation is 4 minutes long.	Presentation is 3 minutes long.	Presentation is less than 3 minutes OR more than 6 minutes.	
				Total Score	

# Conclusion

This assignment causes each student to personally relate to the motivation that Jonathan Swift felt as a writer. Students will understand the desperate feeling of the citizens of Ireland as they were oppressed and dominated by England. This assignment also allows us, as a class, to become more aware of current social and political issues that our country is facing.

# Teacher Page

**Standards**

**Credits**

**Other**