



A Modest Proposal by Jonathan Swift (Annotated)

By Jonathan Swift

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A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland From Being a Burden on Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick, commonly referred to as A Modest Proposal, is a Juvenalian satirical essay written and published anonymously by Jonathan Swift in 1729. Swift suggests that impoverished Irish might ease their economic troubles by selling their children as food for rich gentlemen and ladies. This satirical hyperbole mocks heartless attitudes towards the poor, as well as Irish policy in general.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Jonathan Swift (30 November 1667 – 19 October 1745) was an Anglo-Irish satirist, essayist, political pamphleteer (first for the Whigs, then for the Tories), poet and cleric who became Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. Swift is remembered for works such as *Gulliver's Travels*, *A Modest Proposal*, *A Journal to Stella*, *Drapier's Letters*, *The Battle of the Books*, *An Argument Against Abolishing Christianity* and *A Tale of a Tub*.

Jonathan Swift was born in Dublin, Ireland. He was the second child and only son of Jonathan Swift (1640–1667) and his wife Abigail Erick (or Herrick), of Frisby on the Wreake. His father, a native of Goodrich, Herefordshire, accompanied his brothers to Ireland to seek their fortunes in law after their Royalist father's estate was brought to ruin during the English Civil War.

He is regarded by the *Encyclopædia Britannica* as the foremost prose satirist in the English language, and is less well known for his poetry. He originally published all of his works under pseudonyms – such as Lemuel Gulliver, Isaac Bickerstaff, Drapier's Letters as MB Drapier – or anonymously. He is also known for being a master of two styles of satire, the Horatian and Juvenalian styles.

His deadpan, ironic writing style, particularly in *A Modest Proposal*, has led to such satire being subsequently termed "Swiftian".

Gulliver's Travels, a large portion of which Swift wrote at Woodbrook House in County Laois, was published in 1726. It is regarded as his masterpiece.

Users Review

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Joseph Tucker:

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