“A Modest Proposal” by Jonathan Swift

Historical Background:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neoclassical Period (1660-1798)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Highlight the information above that influenced led to Swift writing “A Modest Proposal”. See “Build Background” on pg. 611 for some ideas.
Author Background:
I. Early Life

II. Satire & Politics

III. Irish Patriot

IV. Literary Contributions

V. The Satirist
“A Modest Proposal” Outline

I. Introduction: Topic & Thesis
   A. Problem:____________________________________________________________
   B. Relevance
      1. ________________________________________________________________
      2. ________________________________________________________________
   C. Transition to Proposal: _____________________________
   D. Satirical Thesis: _______________________
      ___________________________________________________________________

II. Body Paragraphs
   A. Logistics: How will the proposal be implemented?
      1. Selection:_____________________________________________________
      2. Customers:_____________________________________________________
      3. Quantity:_____________________________________________________
   B. “Positives” of the Proposal
      1. Supply:_______________________________________________________
      2. Relationships:________________________________________________
      3. Profit:_______________________________________________________
      4. Alternative Uses:_____________________________________________
      5. Jobs:_______________________________________________________
   C. Swift’s Digression from the Topic:_______________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
   D. “Positives” of the Proposal (continued)
      1. Overpopulation:______________________________________________
      2. Economic Gain:______________________________________________
      3. Monetary Circulation:_________________________________________
      4. Child Rearing:_______________________________________________
      5. Restaurants:________________________________________________
      6. Familial Relationships:________________________________________
      7. Misc:_______________________________________________________
         ________________________________________________________________
E. Refutation of Criticism
   1. Less logical proposals: ________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________
   2. Others may not refute this “modest” proposal until ______________________
      ________________________________________________________

III. Conclusion
A. Call to Action: _______________________________________________________
   1. Problem #1: _______________________________________________________
   2. Problem #2: _______________________________________________________
B. Summary of Previous Problems: _______________________________________
   1. _________________________________________________________________
   2. _________________________________________________________________
C. Statement of Altruism: _______________________________________________
   1. _________________________________________________________________
   2. _________________________________________________________________
**Truth Revealed**

*Directions:* Find three ironic statements in “A Modest Proposal” that reveal important facts about Ireland’s condition in Swift’s time. Use the graphs below to record your ideas about the truth revealed in each quote. An example has been provided to guide you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ironic Statement</th>
<th>Ironic Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I am assured by our merchants that a boy or girl before twelve years old is no salable commodity” (Swift 615)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truth Revealed</th>
<th>Truth Revealed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish children are not seen as human beings but as worthless objects.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ironic Statement</th>
<th>Ironic Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truth Revealed</th>
<th>Truth Revealed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nonfiction Analysis: “A Modest Proposal”

1. Describe the **speaker** of the essay.

2. What is the **purpose** of the essay?

3. Who is the **audience** of the essay?

4. What is the speaker’s **tone**? Provide at least three quotes to support your choice.
   
   **Tone:** _________________________________
   
   **Evidence:**
   
   A. _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   
   B. _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   
   C. _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

5. What is Swift implicitly proposing as the literal **thesis** to the essay? (not his outlandish proposal)
**Characteristics of Satire in “A Modest Proposal”**

*Directions*: For each characteristic of the satire genre, quote at least two examples from “A Modest Proposal” that illustrate the characteristic. Don’t forget to use parenthetical citations!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Example(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the use of persona</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shocking &amp; disturbing diction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ironic statements &amp; situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understatements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Socratic Seminar Preparation: “A Modest Proposal”

Directions: Before you come to a Socratic Seminar class, please read the seminar guidelines and write at least one question in each of the following categories (be sure to note where in the text you think the question will be most relevant).

1. **World Connection Question.** Write a question connecting the text to the real world.
   
   Example: After reading “The Pardoner’s Tale,” what examples of greed can you think of from modern society? How are they similar and different from the Pardoner’s actions? Would someone like the Pardoner be able to effectively manipulate the "modern man"?

   My Question: ___________________________________________  

2. **Close-ended Question.** Write a question about the text that will help everyone in the class come to an agreement about events or characters in the text. This question usually has a “correct” answer.

   Example: At the end of “The Pardoner’s Tale,” why does the Pardoner ask for money? Why is he effective at getting money from the pilgrims?

   My Question: ___________________________________________  

3. **Open-ended Question.** Write an insightful question about the text that will require proof and group discussion and “construction of logic” to discover or explore the answer to the question.

   Example: How does “The Pardoner’s Tale” tie to the characteristics commonly associated with Medieval era literature?

   My Question: ___________________________________________  

4. **Universal Theme/Core Question.** Write a question dealing with a theme(s) of the text that will encourage group discussion about the universality of the text.

   Example: How is Chaucer commenting on the Church through this ironic, narrative poem? What is his opinion of the Church’s leaders? Why?

   My Question: ___________________________________________  

5. **Literary Analysis Question.** Write a question dealing with HOW an author chose to compose a literary piece. How did the author manipulate point of view, characterization, poetic form, sentence structure, for example?

   Example: How is irony used in “The Pardoner’s Tale” to effectively convey the moral of the tale to the pilgrims?

   My Question: ___________________________________________  

Additional Questions (choose any of the question types from above): (This part is not optional!)

1. ___________________________________________  
2. ___________________________________________  
3. ___________________________________________