

Satire Project

It's time to try your hand at creating satire! Think wicked thoughts to make a 'modest' proposal to fix a vice in our society, much like Jonathan Swift did in his 'proposal.' While your problem should be a serious issue, your solution, obviously, should be satirical. Your objective is to draw attention to an important social issue while proposing a ludicrous solution. The contrast of the problem and solution should make the need for reform evident.

The key to success in creating good satire is to use your own style, sense of humor, and opinions to **create an informed and humorous piece that also advocates a mock "solution" to the social issue in order to call attention to the issue.** In response to a current concern or issue, write or produce your own "modest proposal" for publication or production. You may present your satire in a number of ways.

Objective: You will create a product that represents your understanding of the use of satire.

Formatting Requirements:

Due Date: _____

- 12 point, Times New Roman font
- Double-spaced
- Full MLA Heading
- **Written portions must be typed and submitted to turnitin.com**

Please select the option that you feel you could be most successful with.

OPTION #1: News Article

You will write a news article that parodies either a current event (ex. – presidential race, DiCaprio FINALLY winning an Oscar) or social trend (ex. – obsession with smart phones/technology, impatient people). Just like the articles we examined in class, your article should contain fictionalized statistics, interviews, and a headline.

Remember, the purpose of this is to make it **sound like** an actual news article (informative, objective) but still ridicule/criticize the issue you've chosen to address.

Length Requirement: 500-800-word news article, appropriately formatted (including headline, byline, and possibly a featured image that goes along with the story) and a ½ page explanation of the satirical choices you made

Maximum Group Size: 1 (individual assignment)

Model Text: Any article from *The Onion* or *The Babylon Bee*

OPTION #2: Political Cartoon

You will illustrate a series of 3-5 political cartoons that ridicule a current figure/event (ex. – presidential race) or social trend (ex. – obsession with smartphones/technology). Your illustrations should be colorful, contain dialogue/thought bubbles, and reflect your best effort. *If you aren't artistic, this probably ISN'T the best option for you.*

In addition to your cartoon, you will type and turn in a 1 page explanation of your cartoon that effectively explains the cartoon's satirical elements (exaggeration, irony, humor, etc.).

****NOTE:** This must be a **hand-drawn** political cartoon, so if you aren't artistic, this probably ISN'T the best option for you.

Requirements: Three-to-five full-page Political Cartoons and a typed 250-word explanation for each cartoon

Maximum Group Size: 1 (individual assignment)

Model Text: Political Cartoons from a major publication like *The New Yorker* or *Townhall*

OPTION #3: Broadcast Journalism News Segment

You (and a partner, if you'd like) will perform or record a 3-4 minute news segment (recorded or live). Consider current world/local events that you could mock in your broadcast.

In addition to your broadcast production, you will type and turn in (to turnitin.com) your script and a ½ page explanation of how your broadcast effectively uses satirical elements (exaggeration, irony, humor, etc.).

Requirements: 3-4 minute news segment (recorded or live); typed script; typed explanation of satirical elements included (should be original for each person, NOT the same explanation from all group members).

Maximum Group Size: 2 (partner assignment)

Model Text: *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver, The Colbert Report, The Daily Show, Weekend Update* (from SNL)

OPTION #4: Original Song

You will perform a satirical song.

Requirements: 2-3 minute song (recorded or live); typed copy of your lyrics; typed (½ page) explanation of the satirical elements included in your lyrics/performance

Maximum Group Size: 1 (individual assignment)

Model Text: Any "Weird" Al Yankovic Song

OPTION #5: Comedic Sketch

If you choose this option, your performance must include all members of your group and must reflect at LEAST FIVE different satirical elements.

Requirements: 2-3 minute sketch (recorded or live), 2 page typed script, ½ page explanation of satirical elements used in the sketch from EACH member of your group (should be original for each person, NOT the same explanation from all group members).

Maximum Group Size: 2 (partner assignment)

Model Text: *Saturday Night Live, Key & Peele*

OPTION #6: Children's Book

Create a children's book with both illustrations and written text that satirizes a social issue.

Requirements: a book with illustrated cover, characters, and plot; text length is a minimum of ten pages with at least five illustrations; typed; include a ½ page explanation of satirical elements and social issue satirized.

Maximum Group Size: 1 (individual assignment)

Model Text: Dr. Seuss's *The Butter Battle Book*

OPTION #7: Allegorical Short Story or Poem

Write an allegorical short story or poem similar to Mandeville's "The Grumbling Hive" that presents a social or political issue hidden within another story.

Requirements: Three page (minimum) story that includes a basic plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution); your story should end with a one-paragraph moral; typed; include a ½ page explanation of satirical elements and social/political issue satirized.

Maximum Group Size: 1 (individual assignment)

Model Text: "The Grumbling Hive" by Mandeville; "Baby Cakes" by Gaiman; Aesop's Fables

OPTION #8: An Essay similar in format to Swift's "A Modest Proposal"

Compose a multi-paragraph essay proposing a solution to a social or political issue in the style of Jonathan Swift.

Requirements: Write a five-paragraph (minimum) essay using the same organizational and satirical elements employed by Swift to satirize a modern issue. Feel free to add additional paragraphs as needed but your essay should follow the basic model below:

- 25-30 word subtitle.** Your essay should be called "A Modest Proposal," but the subtitle should flesh out what societal problem you are trying to solve (without giving away your "shocking" element). (Swift's full title is "A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from Being a Burden to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Public." Shoot for something like that.)
- Paragraph 1:** A clear first paragraph that contains an **indelible image** of your societal problem. (Swift's image in his first paragraph is that of the mother with six children dressed in rags begging for alms. Try to include an image of your problem that elicits the readers' sympathies in a similar way.)
- Paragraph 2:** A paragraph description of your **shocking solution**. (This is like the paragraph in which Swift talks "delicious and nourishing" babies.)
- Paragraph 3:** A list of **six clearly labeled "logical reasons"** for why your solution would work. (Label your sentences "firstly," "secondly," "thirdly," as Swift does.)
- Paragraph 4:** An **italicized** paragraph describing your response to the **opposition's argument**. (Note Swift's italicized paragraphs for guidance on this.)
- Paragraph 5: Conclusion.**
- Separate from your essay,** include ½ page explanation of your social issue and satirical choices

Maximum Group Size: 1 (individual assignment)

Model Text: Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" (page 448 in textbook)

Option # 9: another creative idea (propose idea to instructor for approval and project-specific requirements)

- How will you present your satire? What ideas / specifics will you include? What supporting details will you use to create your satire?

- What elements of satire will you use? (Please see rubric for required elements.) Will your satire be Horatian or Juvenalian?

Step 2: Organize and Write/Draw/Record/Etc.

Once you have all the 'hard facts' that you need, you can begin writing your 'proposal.'

- Be sure to have a recognizable persona / clear voice.
- Make sure to use proper rhetoric and logic (however ludicrous) in developing your arguments.
- Include enough factual information to warrant true reader concern over the issue you are presenting. Your 'proposal' will build on this information to make your solution seem that much more necessary.
- Begin crafting your satire!

Warning: HAVE COMMON SENSE!

- While this project is meant to be humorous and mocking in bringing about satirical reform, **please be sensitive in how you approach your topics.** It may be tempting to ridicule a group simply because you don't like them or because the group is an easy target, but you need to make sure you are only ridiculing those groups who commit a crime against social conscience. For example, it's politically incorrect (and just mean) to pick on overweight people, but you *could* satirize the airline industry for either making seats that do not fit Americans' ever-expanding backsides or for adhering to insensitive policies (i.e., removing excessively overweight people from their planes).
- Limit your use of invectives or harsh reductions. Remember, **the point of satire is not to offend but to bring about awareness of the social issue. If you offend your audience, they may never learn the lesson or change their behavior.** Be warned: your proposal needs to attack a social vice, **NOT a person or subgroup!**

SATIRE PROJECT/PRESENTATION RUBRIC

Name: _____

Topic for Satire: _____

Medium: _____

Author's Intent: _____

Choice of Topic / Social Issue 2 4 6 8 10

- Topic is clearly an important social issue for American society or our local community.
- Easy for audience to understand what the problem is and why it's a genuine problem.

Research 2 4 6 8 10

- Research is evident in the final project.
- Research aids in development and effectiveness of the satire; incorporated into satire when appropriate.
- Research gives an intelligent background to the social issue.

Citations 2 4 6 8 10

- MLA-formatted works cited included
- All elements are correct and complete

Development / Organization 2 4 6 8 10

- Develops the satire in a logical sequence, leaving out no important support, so audience "gets" the satire.
- Does not belittle or "hurt" a group; instead, satire attempts to reform a crime against social conscience /redirect a given group's behavior.
- The solution to the problem is easy to understand and is logical, if ridiculous. There are no loose ends. An effective satire.

Persona 2 4 6 8 10

- The persona (voice of the satire) and/or the main character(s) is clearly described through dialogue and/or actions.
- The audience recognizes the importance of the character/medium to the story being told.

Elements of Satire 2 4 6 8 10

- Introduces and develops at least 3 elements of satire, including irony, puns, stereotypes, inversion/reversal, understatement, hyperbole, incongruity, sarcasm, invective etc.

Presentation 5 7 10 15 20

- The student has rehearsed his/ her satire and fluidly delivers the presentation. Good use of notes and eye contact.
- If a video presentation, video looks professional, with logical editing and sequencing.
- Presentation is between 2-3 minutes in length.

Project as a Whole 5 7 10 15 20

- Project reflects care and consideration. Student showed good judgment in approach to satire and was cognizant of attacking a vice, not a person or group.
- Includes an effective explanation of the satire that connects the method of satire to the satirical elements utilized in the original satire.
- No errors in writing, requirements, etc.

TOTAL: _____ /100 points