

## Literary Analysis Workshop



### SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS

#### Literary Analysis

**Benchmark LA.1112.2.1.5** Analyze and discuss characteristics of subgenres (e.g., satire, parody, allegory) that overlap or cut across the lines of genre classifications such as poetry, novel, drama, short story, essay or editorial.

**Benchmark LA.1112.2.1.7** Analyze, interpret, and evaluate an author's use of descriptive language (e.g., tone, irony, mood, imagery, pun, alliteration, onomatopoeia, allusion), figurative language (e.g., symbolism, metaphor, personification, hyperbole), common idioms, and mythological and literary allusions, and explain how they impact meaning in a variety of texts with an emphasis on how they evoke reader's emotions.

## Satire

Can humor make someone see the serious side of an issue? Since ancient times, writers have used satire to attack injustice, to highlight the absurd, and to show the brutal truth about one topic while seeming to write about another. In their works, satirists have employed every genre to surprise and delight readers with portraits of society that elicit an equal measure of amusement and shock.

### A History of Mockery

Satire is a literary technique in which behaviors or institutions are ridiculed for the purpose of improving society. What sets satire apart from other forms of social and political protest is humor. The use of satire began with the ancient Greeks but came into its own in ancient Rome, where the “fathers” of satire, Horace (1st century B.C.) and Juvenal (2nd century A.D.), were inspired by the decadence of the Roman Empire to write scathing critiques of their society.

The next great flourishing of satire began in Europe in the second half of the 17th century and continued throughout the 18th century. In England, this “golden age” of satire encompassed the talents of the Restoration dramatists as well as John Dryden, Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, and Samuel Johnson. The 18th century was dominated by satiric poetry, prose, and drama. Satirists, as guardians of the culture, sought to protect their highly developed civilization from corruption by attacking hypocrisy, arrogance, greed, vanity, and stupidity. “The satirist is to be regarded as our physician, not our enemy,” wrote 18th-century novelist Henry Fielding.

With a few notable exceptions—namely, the writings of Lord Byron, William Makepeace Thackeray, and Samuel Butler in England and Mark Twain in the United States—satirical writing faded in the 19th century. Literary satire in the 20th century has been somewhat scarce, but other forms of media, such as political cartoons and television shows, have shown a resurgence of satire.

### Characteristics of Satire

For the most part, a satirist attempts to bring about change by exposing an oddity or a problem in an imaginative, often **humorous**, way. The target is often a social or political one. Typically, satirists use **irony** and **exaggeration** to poke



This illustration lampoons women's fashions.



fun at human faults and foolishness in order to correct human behavior. The two basic types of satire are named after the great Roman writers Horace and Juvenal, who perfected satire in different ways.

**Horatian satire** is playfully amusing and urbane. It seeks to correct vice or foolishness with gentle laughter and understanding. A famous example of Horatian satire is Alexander Pope's brilliant mock epic *The Rape of the Lock* (page 600). The poem, which satirizes the trivial pursuits of the idle wealthy, echoes the openings of ancient epics in its famous first lines.

What dire offense from amorous causes springs,  
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,  
I sing— . . .

—Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*

In the poem, a young lord is so smitten by a lady's beauty that he secretly cuts off a lock of her hair. The lady's offense at this violation takes on epic—or mock epic—proportions.

Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes,  
And screams of horror rend the affrighted skies.  
Not louder shrieks to pitying heaven are cast,  
When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last;

— Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*

**Juvenalian satire** provokes a darker kind of laughter. It is often bitter, or even angry, and criticizes corruption or incompetence with scorn and outrage. The most famous example of Juvenalian satire comes from Jonathan Swift, whose savage wit was unequaled among his 18th-century English contemporaries. Swift's fictional *Gulliver's Travels* (page 624) tended toward Juvenalian satire. But it was his famous essay, "A Modest Proposal" (page 610), that shocked and appalled readers. Notice the biting verbal irony in this passage from the essay, which describes certain abilities of young children.

They can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing till they arrive at six years old, except where they are of towardly parts [have a promising talent]; although I confess they learn the rudiments much earlier . . .

—Jonathan Swift, "A Modest Proposal"

## STRATEGIES FOR READING SATIRE

Use the following strategies when reading a satirical work:

- Determine the object of the satire. The custom or character that provokes laughter is probably the undesirable part of society the writer is criticizing.
- Note what is criticized in order to infer what the satirist believes is right and proper.
- Watch for irony, which often points directly to the object of satire.
- Pay attention to anything that is exaggerated.
- Evaluate whether the satire is Horatian (playful and sympathetic) or Juvenalian (bitter and critical).

### Close Read

What is exaggerated in this passage? What is ironic?

### Close Read

What is humorous about this passage? What assumption is made that might shock readers?



FLORIDA

**SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS**  
**Literary Analysis**  
**Benchmark LA.1112.2.1.3** Analyze, compare, evaluate, and interpret poetry....  
**Benchmark LA.1112.2.1.5** Analyze and discuss characteristics of subgenres....

**NOTABLE QUOTE**

*"To err is human, to forgive, divine."*

**FYI**

Did you know that Alexander Pope ...

- was run over by a wild cow when he was three years old?
- suffered from poor health and once said that his life had been a "long disease"?
- wrote the first two cantos of *The Rape of the Lock* in less than two weeks?

**Author Online**

For more on Alexander Pope, visit the **Literature Center at ClassZone.com**.

from **The Rape of the Lock**

Poem by Alexander Pope



**Alexander Pope**

1688–1744

As a poet and satirist, Alexander Pope was unrivaled during the early 18th century. Revered for his masterful use of the heroic couplet, Pope influenced the literature of the first half of the 18th century so undeniably that the time period is sometimes called the Age of Pope.

**A Precocious Poet** Pope was raised as a Roman Catholic during a period in England's history when only Protestants could obtain a university education or hold public office. For this reason, he was largely self-taught. Pope was an exceptional youth; by the time he was 17, his poems were being read and admired by many of England's best literary critics.

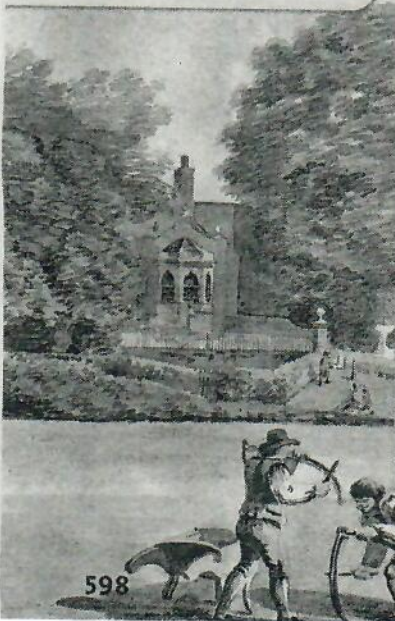
At the age of 12, Pope developed tuberculosis of the spine, possibly from drinking contaminated milk. The tuberculosis stunted his growth (he never grew taller than four feet six inches) and permanently deformed his spine. Pope's

illness limited the amount of physical activity he could engage in, which may have contributed to his early devotion to reading and writing.

**Fame and Fortune** Pope's most celebrated work, *The Rape of the Lock*, appeared in 1712, when he was only 24. Poetry, however, did not pay the bills. Pope was a neoclassicist, modeling his writing on the works of ancient Greece and Rome, which stressed balance, order, rationality, and sophisticated wit. As a great admirer of classical poetry, he took on the task of translating Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. It was an enormous amount of work, but the money he made on the project made him financially independent—a luxury most poets of his day did not enjoy.

**Good Friends and Cruel Enemies** Pope was a member of the exclusive Scriblerus Club, a group of writers affiliated with the Tory political party who dedicated themselves to exposing the pretensions and affectations of literary society through satire. Other members of the club included his good friends John Gay and Jonathan Swift. Although Pope's poetry was widely admired, he was often the object of criticism from less talented writers who attacked his religion, politics, and, most cruelly, his physical appearance.

Pope's satire grew more biting as he aged, and he articulated his views on England's political and literary leaders in many of his later works. Pope died shortly after his 56th birthday and was buried near his parents in Twickenham, the rural town where he had spent the latter half of his life.





● **POETIC FORM: MOCK EPIC**

A **mock epic** uses the lofty style and conventions of epic poetry to satirize a trivial subject. In *The Rape of the Lock*, Pope makes fun of a silly quarrel by narrating it in a grandiose manner. As you read, look for epic characteristics such as formal language, boasting speeches, supernatural intervention in human affairs, and elaborate descriptions of weapons and battles.

● **LITERARY ANALYSIS: HEROIC COUPLET**

A **heroic couplet** is a pair of rhymed lines written in **iambic pentameter**, a metrical pattern of five feet (units), each of which consists of two syllables, the first unstressed and the second stressed. Pope was a master of the heroic couplet, employing it for matters both witty and wise, as in the following example:

*Ō thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,  
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate:*

As you read *The Rape of the Lock*, notice how Pope uses surprising rhymes to create humor.

● **READING STRATEGY: UNDERSTAND ELEVATED LANGUAGE**

Pope often uses difficult words and unusual syntax, or word order, to mimic the style of epic poetry and to maintain the meter and rhyme scheme of heroic couplets. The following strategies can help you make sense of his elevated language:

- Use **sidenotes** to understand unfamiliar words and historical allusions in the text.
- Try to **visualize** the action in the poem.
- **Paraphrase** sentences, restating them in your own words. If sentences have unusual syntax, rearrange the words to form a more familiar sentence structure.

As you read, use a chart like the one shown to record and paraphrase examples of elevated language.

Example	Paraphrase
Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort ...	The heroes and maidens often go to this place.

*What are the signs of*  
**VANITY?**

**KEY IDEA** All of us are susceptible to occasional bouts of **vanity**. Some people find it difficult to resist a chance to gaze lovingly at themselves in a mirror or talk at length about their favorite subject—theirself. In *The Rape of the Lock*, Pope holds up a different kind of mirror, one that he hoped would prompt people to take a more critical look at themselves.

**SURVEY** How can you tell if someone is vain? Complete the following survey to help you distinguish between vanity and self-confidence. Then form a small group with three or four classmates and discuss how everyone answered each question.

1. You spend a lot of time choosing just the right outfit to wear.  
 VAIN     SELF-CONFIDENT
2. You usually think you have the best solution to a problem.  
 VAIN     SELF-CONFIDENT
3. You frequently check your appearance in mirrors, windows, etc.  
 VAIN     SELF-CONFIDENT
4. What you have to say is almost always important.  
 VAIN     SELF-CONFIDENT
5. People are sometimes envious of you.  
 VAIN     SELF-CONFIDENT



# THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

ALEXANDER POPE

**BACKGROUND** *The Rape of the Lock* was based on a real-life quarrel between two affluent Roman Catholic families, the Fermors and the Petres. The feud began when young Lord Petre (the “Baron” in the poem) snipped a lock of hair from Arabella Fermor (“Belinda”). The dispute escalated out of all proportion, and a friend of Pope’s asked him to intervene, hoping that he could “laugh them together again.” Pope rose to the occasion, mocking the folly of the dispute by portraying it as if it were a battle of epic scale.

*In the first of the poem’s five cantos, a Muse is evoked for inspiration (a tradition in epic poetry) and Belinda is warned of impending danger by Ariel, a spirit sent to protect Belinda. In Canto 2, Belinda rides up the Thames River to a Hampton Court party and is noticed by the scheming Baron, who resolves to possess one of the two curly locks spiraling down Belinda’s back.*

## from CANTO 3

Close by those meads, forever crowned with flowers,  
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising towers,  
There stands a structure of majestic frame,  
Which from the neighboring Hampton takes its name.  
5 Here Britain’s statesmen oft the fall foredoom  
Of foreign tyrants and of nymphs at home;  
Here thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey,  
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea. **A**  
Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,  
10 To taste awhile the pleasures of a court;  
In various talk the instructive hours they passed,  
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;  
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,  
And one describes a charming Indian screen;

**1 meads:** meadows.

**2 Thames** (tēmz): a river that flows through southern England.

**3–4 structure . . . name:** the royal palace of Hampton Court, about 15 miles from London.

**6 nymphs** (nīmfz): maidens; young women.

**7 Anna . . . obey:** Queen Anne, who rules over the three realms of England, Scotland, and Wales.

### **A** HEROIC COUPLET

In Pope’s time, *tea* was pronounced “tay.” How does Pope use rhyme in lines 7–8 to mock pomposity?

- 15 A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;  
At every word a reputation dies.  
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,  
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.  
Meanwhile declining from the noon of day,
- 20 The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;  
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,  
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine;  
The merchant from the Exchange returns in peace,  
And the long labors of the toilet cease.
- 25 Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,  
Burns to encounter two adventurous knights,  
At ombre singly to decide their doom,  
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come. . . .  
The Baron now his Diamonds pours apace;
- 30 The embroidered King who shows but half his face,  
And his refulgent Queen, with powers combined,  
Of broken troops an easy conquest find.  
Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild disorder seen,  
With throngs promiscuous strew the level green.
- 35 Thus when dispersed a routed army runs,  
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,  
With like confusion different nations fly,  
Of various habit, and of various dye,  
The pierced battalions disunited fall
- 40 In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them all.  
The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily arts,  
And wins (oh, shameful chance!) the Queen of Hearts.  
At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,  
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look;
- 45 She sees, and trembles at the approaching ill,  
Just in the jaws of ruin, and Codille.  
And now (as oft in some distempered state)  
On one nice trick depends the general fate.  
An Ace of Hearts steps forth: The King unseen
- 50 Lurked in her hand, and mourned his captive Queen.  
He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,  
And falls like thunder on the prostrate Ace.  
The nymph exulting fills with shouts the sky,  
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply. **B**
- 55 O thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,  
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate:  
Sudden these honors shall be snatched away,  
And cursed forever this victorious day.  
For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crowned,
- 60 The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;

17 **snuff**: powdered tobacco that is inhaled.

24 **toilet**: the process of dressing, fixing one's hair, and otherwise grooming oneself.

27 **ombre** (om'ber): a popular card game of the day, similar to bridge.

30 **King . . . face**: the king of diamonds, the only king shown in profile in a deck of cards.

31 **refulgent** (ri-'fööl'jənt) **Queen**: resplendent or shining queen of diamonds. The Baron is leading his highest diamonds in an effort to win.

34 **promiscuous** (pre-mis'kyöö-əs): unsorted; **level green**: the green cloth-covered card table.

36 **Afric's sable sons**: Africa's black soldiers.

41 **Knave**: jack.

43 **the virgin's**: Belinda's.

46 **Codille** (kö-döl'): a losing hand of cards in ombre.

47 **distempered**: disordered.

48 **nice**: delicate; subtle; **trick**: a single round of cards played and won.

**B ELEVATED LANGUAGE**  
Reread lines 53–54, imagining the sounds that Pope describes. Write a **paraphrase** of this couplet.

60 **berries**: coffee beans.



On shining altars of Japan they raise  
 The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:  
 From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,  
 While China's earth receives the smoking tide.  
 65 At once they gratify their scent and taste,  
 And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.  
 Straight hover round the fair her airy band;  
 Some, as she sipped, the fuming liquor fanned,  
 Some o'er her lap their careful plumes displayed,  
 70 Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.  
 Coffee (which makes the politician wise,  
 And see through all things with his half-shut eyes)  
 Sent up in vapors to the Baron's brain  
 New stratagems, the radiant Lock to gain.  
 75 Ah, cease, rash youth! desist ere 'tis too late,  
 Fear the just Gods, and think of Scylla's fate!  
 Changed to a bird, and sent to flit in air,  
 She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair!  
 But when to mischief mortals bend their will,  
 80 How soon they find fit instruments of ill!  
 Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace  
 A two-edged weapon from her shining case:  
 So ladies in romance assist their knight,  
 Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.  
 85 He takes the gift with reverence, and extends  
 The little engine on his fingers' ends;  
 This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,  
 As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.  
 Swift to the Lock a thousand sprights repair,  
 90 A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair,  
 And thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear,  
 Thrice she looked back, and thrice the foe drew near.  
 Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought  
 The close recesses of the virgin's thought;  
 95 As on the nosegay in her breast reclined,  
 He watched the ideas rising in her mind,  
 Sudden he viewed, in spite of all her art,  
 An earthly lover lurking at her heart.  
 Amazed, confused, he found his power expired,  
 100 Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired.  
 The Peer now spreads the glittering forfex wide,  
 To enclose the Lock; now joins it, to divide.  
 Even then, before the fatal engine closed,  
 A wretched Sylph too fondly interposed;  
 105 Fate urged the shears, and cut the Sylph in twain

**61 shining altars of Japan:** small lacquered tables. In mock-epic style, Pope elevates the tables to altars.

**64 China's earth . . . tide:** China cups receive the hot coffee.

**66 repast** (rĭ-păst'): meal.

**67 the fair:** Belinda; **her airy band:** the Sylphs (sĭlfs), supernatural creatures attending Belinda. Epic heroes and heroines are generally aided by higher powers.

**74 new stratagems** (străt'ə-jəmz) . . . **gain:** new schemes for acquiring a lock of Belinda's hair.

**76-78 Scylla's** (sĭl'əz) **fate . . . Nisus'** (nĭ'səs) **injured hair:** In ancient Greek legend, Scylla was turned into a bird because she betrayed her father, King Nisus, by giving his enemy the purple lock of his hair on which his safety depended.

**89 sprights** (sprĭts): the Sylphs.

**93 Ariel** (ăr'ē-əl): Belinda's special guardian among the Sylphs.

**95 nosegay:** a small bouquet of flowers.

**101 the Peer:** the Baron; **forfex:** a fancy term for scissors.





*The Rape* (1896), Aubrey Beardsley. From *The Rape of the Lock* by Alexander Pope. Line block print. CT46089. Victoria & Albert Museum, London.  
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(But airy substance soon unites again):  
The meeting points the sacred hair dis sever  
From the fair head, forever and forever!

- Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes,  
110 And screams of horror rend the affrighted skies. **C**  
Not louder shrieks to pitying heaven are cast,  
When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last;  
Or when rich china vessels fallen from high,  
In glittering dust and painted fragments lie!  
115 “Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,”  
The victor cried, “the glorious prize is mine!  
While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,  
Or in a coach and six the British fair,  
As long as *Atalantis* shall be read,  
120 Or the small pillow grace a lady’s bed,  
While visits shall be paid on solemn days,  
When numerous wax-lights in bright order blaze,

**C HEROIC COUPLET**

Reread lines 107–110. Which details in these couplets highlight the contrast between the actual incident that occurs and Belinda’s exaggerated reaction?

**115 wreaths . . . twine:** In epics, victors or champions traditionally wore laurel wreaths as a kind of crown.

**118 coach and six:** a coach drawn by six horses.

**119 *Atalantis*:** *The New Atalantis* by Mary Manley, a thinly disguised account of scandal among the rich.



While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,  
So long my honor, name, and praise shall live!

- 125 “What time would spare, from steel receives its date,  
And monuments, like men, submit to fate!  
Steel could the labor of the Gods destroy,  
And strike to dust the imperial towers of Troy;  
Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,  
130 And hew triumphal arches to the ground.  
What wonder then, fair nymph! thy hairs should feel,  
The conquering force of unresisted steel?” **D**

*In Canto 4, following an epic tradition, a melancholy sprite descends to the Underworld—which Pope calls the “Cave of Spleen”—and returns to the party with a vial of grief and “flowing tears” and a bag of “sobs, sighs, and passions,” which are emptied over Belinda’s head, fanning her fury even further.*

*from* CANTO 5

- “To arms, to arms!” the fierce virago cries,  
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.  
135 All side in parties, and begin the attack;  
Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whalebones crack;  
Heroes’ and heroines’ shouts confusedly rise,  
And bass and treble voices strike the skies.  
No common weapons in their hands are found,  
140 Like Gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound. . . . **E**  
See, fierce Belinda on the Baron flies,  
With more than usual lightning in her eyes;  
Nor feared the chief the unequal fight to try,  
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.  
145 But this bold lord with manly strength endued,  
She with one finger and a thumb subdued:  
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,  
A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;  
The Gnomes direct, to every atom just,  
150 The pungent grains of titillating dust.  
Sudden, with starting tears each eye o’erflows,  
And the high dome re-echoes to his nose.  
“Now meet thy fate,” incensed Belinda cried,  
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.  
155 (The same, his ancient personage to deck,  
Her great-great-grand sire wore about his neck,  
In three seal rings; which after, melted down,  
Formed a vast buckle for his widow’s gown:

125 date: end.

127–128 the labor of the Gods . . .  
towers of Troy: Troy, an ancient city famous for its towers, whose walls were said to have been built by the Greek gods Apollo and Poseidon.

**D** MOCK EPIC

In lines 125–132, what humorous effect does Pope create by using lofty language and allusions to Greek mythology?

133 virago (və-rā’gō): a woman who engages in warfare or other fighting. She has come to Belinda’s aid at Ariel’s request.

136 whalebones: elastic material from whales’ mouths, used in corsets or support undergarments.

**E** MOCK EPIC

What characteristics of a mock epic do you find in lines 133–140?

145 endued (ĕn-dōōd’): endowed; provided with.

149 Gnomes (nōmz): supernatural creatures bent on causing mischief.

152 And the high . . . nose: In other words, he sneezes.

154 bodkin (bōd’kĭn): a long, ornamental hairpin.

157 seal rings: signet rings bearing a person’s family crest or initials.



Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,  
 160 The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;  
 Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs,  
 Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.)  
 "Boast not my fall," he cried, "insulting foe!  
 Thou by some other shalt be laid as low.  
 165 Nor think to die dejects my lofty mind:  
 All that I dread is leaving you behind!  
 Rather than so, ah, let me still survive,  
 And burn in Cupid's flames—but burn alive."  
 "Restore the Lock!" she cries; and all around  
 170 "Restore the Lock!" the vaulted roofs rebound.  
 Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain  
 Roared for the handkerchief that caused his pain.  
 But see how oft ambitious aims are crossed,  
 And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost!  
 175 The lock, obtained with guilt, and kept with pain,  
 In every place is sought, but sought in vain:  
 With such a prize no mortal must be blessed,  
 So Heaven decrees! with Heaven who can contest?  
 Some thought it mounted to the lunar sphere,  
 180 Since all things lost on earth are treasured there.  
 There heroes' wits are kept in ponderous vases,  
 And beaux' in snuffboxes and tweezer cases.  
 There broken vows and death-bed alms are found,  
 And lovers' hearts with ends of riband bound. . . .  
 185 But trust the Muse—she saw it upward rise,  
 Though marked by none but quick, poetic eyes. . . .  
 A sudden star, it shot through liquid air,  
 And drew behind a radiant trail of hair. . . .  
 Then cease, bright nymph! to mourn thy ravished hair,  
 190 Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!  
 Not all the tresses that fair head can boast  
 Shall draw such envy as the Lock you lost.  
 For, after all the murders of your eye,  
 When, after millions slain, yourself shall die:  
 195 When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,  
 And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,  
 This Lock the Muse shall consecrate to fame,  
 And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name. **F**

**159 Her infant grandame's** (grăn'dāmz) . . . **grew:** It was next melted down and turned into a whistle used by Belinda's grandmother as a child. Pope is here making fun of family heirlooms.

**168 burn in Cupid's flames:** burn with passion.

**170 rebound:** echo.

**171–172 Othello . . . pain:** In Shakespeare's *Othello*, the deeply jealous Othello demands the handkerchief that he believes is a sign of his wife's infidelity.

**179 mounted to the lunar sphere:** climbed up to the moon.

**182 beaux' (bōz):** the wits of fops.

**184 riband** (rīb'ənd): ribbon.

**185 Muse** (myōōz): the goddess who inspires the writing of the poem. In typical epic fashion, the narrator opens the poem by addressing his Muse and continues to address her throughout the poem.

**188 trail of hair:** The word *comet* comes from a Greek word that means "long haired."

**193 murders of your eye:** men struck down by your glance.

**F ELEVATED LANGUAGE**

Reread lines 193–198 and the accompanying sidenote. **Paraphrase** what the narrator says to comfort Belinda about the loss of her lock.





SUNSHINE STATE STANDARD

Literary Analysis

Benchmark LA.1112.2.1.5 Analyze and discuss characteristics of subgenres (e.g., satire, parody, allegory) that overlap or cut across the lines of genre classifications such as poetry, novel, drama, short story, essay or editorial.

## Comprehension

1. **Summarize** What happens in the card game in lines 29–54?
2. **Recall** How does the Baron obtain the lock of Belinda’s hair?
3. **Clarify** At the end of the poem, what happens to the lock of Belinda’s hair?

## Literary Analysis

4. **Make Inferences** Judging from the excerpts you read from *The Rape of the Lock*, how do you think Pope felt about **vanity**?
5. **Identify Irony** A contrast between expectations and actual outcomes is referred to as **situational irony**. What is ironic about the ending of *The Rape of the Lock*?
6. **Interpret Satire** In addition to satirizing a quarrel, Pope used *The Rape of the Lock* to point out flaws in British society and upper-class behavior. For each of the following passages, describe the flaw that Pope is criticizing:
  - lines 15–16 (“A third interprets . . . dies.”)
  - lines 21–22 (“The hungry judges . . . dine;”)
  - lines 111–114 (“Not louder shrieks . . . lie!”)
7. **Examine Heroic Couplet** One of the drawbacks of heroic couplets is that they can begin to sound monotonous in a long poem. Reread lines 167–168. How does Pope vary the rhythm in this couplet? What does the variation in the rhythm suggest about the Baron?
8. **Analyze Mock Epic** *The Rape of the Lock* parodies the epic form by treating a trivial subject in a grand, lofty style. Citing specific examples from the text, describe how Pope makes fun of these elements of traditional epic poetry:
  - elaborate descriptions of weapons and battles
  - poet’s use of formal language
  - plot affected by supernatural intervention
  - boasting speeches
9. **Draw Conclusions About Elevated Language** Review the chart you filled in as you read, comparing your paraphrases with the original lines. In what ways does Pope’s use of elevated language enhance the poem?

## Literary Criticism

10. **Different Perspectives** Pope’s friend Jonathan Swift once wrote, “Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody’s face but their own.” While the mock epic *The Rape of the Lock* was written nearly 300 years ago to poke fun at vanity, beauty, and pride, in what ways does the satire reflect today’s society?





FLORIDA

**SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS**  
**Reading Process & Literary Analysis**  
**Benchmark LA.1112.1.7.5** Analyze a variety of text structures....  
**Benchmark LA.1112.2.1.5** Analyze and discuss characteristics of subgenres (e.g., satire)....

**NOTABLE QUOTE**

*"I hate and detest that animal called man."*

**FYI**

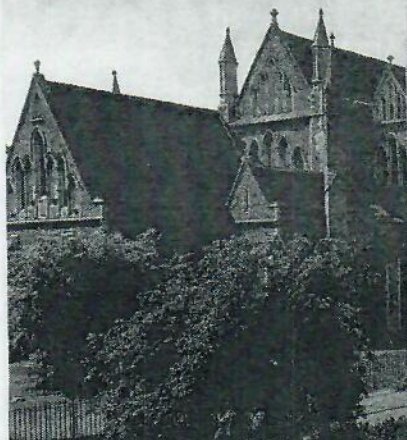
Did you know that Jonathan Swift ...

- had learned to read by the time he was three?
- coined the term *yahoo* to refer to a boorish and ignorant person?
- left much of his fortune to go toward the building of a mental hospital?

**Author Online**

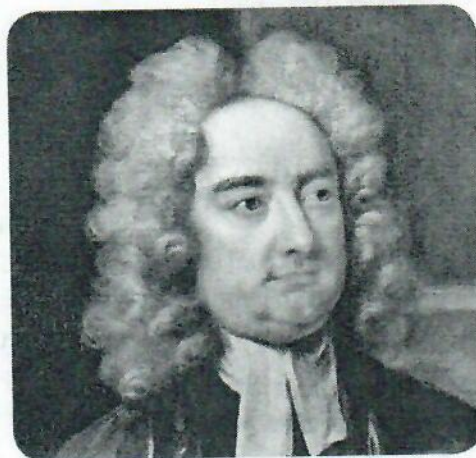
For more on Jonathan Swift, visit the Literature Center at [ClassZone.com](http://ClassZone.com).

St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin



# A Modest Proposal

Essay by Jonathan Swift



## Jonathan Swift

1667–1745

Jonathan Swift has been called the greatest satirist in the English language. His genuine outrage at man's inhumanity to man and his commitment to championing liberty found voice in his biting satire and unflinching criticism of his times. Few writers of the 18th century were as politically and socially influential as Swift.

**A Priest with a Pen** Jonathan Swift was born of Anglo-Irish parents in Dublin, Ireland. Though his family was not wealthy, Swift attended the prestigious Trinity College. After graduating, he moved to Surrey in England to accept a position as secretary to a retired diplomat. In 1695, Swift was ordained as an Anglican priest and became a full-fledged satirist, with two completed works ready for publication.

Swift was a clergyman and a political writer for the Whig party. His first two satires, *The Battle of the Books* and *A Tale of a Tub*, quickly established his acerbic style. Whether lampooning modern

thinkers and scientists (John Locke and Sir Isaac Newton among them), religious abuses, or humanity at large, Swift raged at the arrogance, phoniness, and shallowness he saw infecting contemporary intellectual and moral life. Though his early publications were anonymous, people began to recognize his vicious and witty political writing through his contributions to London periodicals such as Richard Steele's and Joseph Addison's *The Spectator*.

When the Whigs lost power to the Tories in 1710, the Tories courted the conservative Swift to join their side. As a man of principle and a strict moralist, however, he ultimately became disenchanted with the compromises and manipulations of politics.

**Irish Patriot** In 1713, Swift was appointed dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. Though Swift at first felt exiled in Ireland, in time he regained his interest in politics. Angered by the way England tyrannized Ireland, Swift fought back in a series of publications called *The Drapier's Letters*, in which he wrote, "Am I a freeman in England, and do I become a slave in six hours by crossing the channel?" For Irish Catholics and Protestants alike, Swift became a hero. His last major work about Ireland, "A Modest Proposal," is one of the most famous satires ever written.

**Gulliver's Success** In 1726, Swift anonymously published the masterly satire *Gulliver's Travels*, in which he vents his fury at political corruption and his annoyance with the general worthlessness of human beings. Though Swift aroused controversy, *Gulliver's Travels* turned out to be surprisingly popular, and it remains a classic for readers of all ages.