

A Modest Proposal

Answer Key

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Unpacking Swift's Satire I. Unveiling the Irony Swift's "A Modest Proposal" isn't a cookbook for solving Ireland's problems; it's a scathing indictment of English policy and societal indifference. The essay's power lies in its masterful use of satire, a literary device that uses humor, irony, and exaggeration to expose and critique folly. The historical context of 18th-century Ireland, rife with poverty and oppression under English rule, is crucial to understanding the piece's biting commentary. **II. Understanding the Proposal's Core Argument** Poverty and overpopulation choked 18th-century Ireland. Swift, in his famously outrageous proposal, suggests a seemingly logical solution: selling impoverished children as food for the wealthy. This shocking proposition immediately grabs the reader's attention. The absurdity is the key. The reader's revulsion serves Swift's purpose. **III.**

Deconstructing Swift's Rhetorical Strategies Swift meticulously crafts his argument. He utilizes statistics, presenting them with an almost clinical precision to bolster his absurd claim. He appeals to practicality, highlighting the economic benefits of his gruesome scheme. He employs detailed, almost graphic descriptions, creating a visceral impact. The irony is palpable. His seemingly logical reasoning applied to such a horrific proposition lays bare the hypocrisy of the existing systems. The satire's potency stems from this jarring juxtaposition. Swift uses sarcasm and hyperbole, enhancing the absurdity and amplifying the satire's message. **IV. Analyzing the Target Audience and their**

Reactions Swift targets the English ruling class, whose policies directly contributed to Ireland's suffering. The wealthy English are the primary beneficiaries of the proposed "solution." The Irish people, however, are the tragic victims—both in reality and in Swift's twisted proposal. The intended reaction was one of outrage and moral revulsion—a reaction meant to jolt the reader into recognizing the inherent inhumanity of the situation.

V. Exploring the Underlying Social Commentary Swift's essay is a potent

critique of English policies towards Ireland, exposing the injustice and inequality inherent within them. He highlights the failure of established charitable institutions to address the widespread poverty. The "modest proposal" serves as a stark commentary on the lack of compassionate leadership. It was a call for systemic, not just superficial, change. **VI. Unpacking the Symbolic Meaning**

The children represent the future of Ireland, a future that's being systematically destroyed. Cannibalism symbolizes the exploitation and dehumanization of the Irish people. The entire proposal serves as a powerful symbol of the consequences of unchecked greed and indifference. The act itself reflects the moral decay of a system that allows such suffering to exist. **VII. Beyond the Obvious: Deeper Interpretations**

The essay evokes moral indignation, forcing readers to confront their own complicity in perpetuating injustice. It exemplifies the effectiveness of satire in provoking social change. Swift's legacy remains relevant because his satire addresses fundamental questions about social responsibility and the human condition. **VIII. Conclusion: The Enduring Relevance of "A Modest Proposal"** "A Modest Proposal" remains a timeless critique of social injustice. The power of satire continues to resonate, reminding us of the importance of critical thinking and compassionate action. The lessons learned from Swift's masterpiece are profoundly relevant to contemporary issues of inequality and social injustice. Its stark message holds a mirror up to society, urging us to confront the realities of poverty and oppression. **10 Frequently Asked Questions on "A Modest Proposal" Answer Key:**

1. What is the main purpose of "A Modest Proposal"? 2. What is the central irony in Swift's essay? 3. How does Swift use satire to convey his message? 4. Who is the target audience of "A Modest Proposal"? 5. What is the significance of the proposed "solution"? 6. What social problems does Swift critique in his essay? 7. What are the symbolic meanings in "A Modest Proposal"? 8. How does Swift use language and rhetoric to support his argument? 9. What is the lasting impact

and relevance of "A Modest Proposal"? 10. What are some different interpretations of Swift's essay?

Unpacking 'A Modest Proposal'

Answer Key: More Than Just a Study Guide

Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" is a literary grenade, lobbed into the heart of 18th-century Irish society. It's a text that continues to provoke, disturb, and, for many, inspire debate centuries later. When students and scholars delve into this satirical masterpiece, the need for an "A Modest Proposal answer key" often arises. But what exactly does that entail? Is it a simple list of right and wrong answers? Or is it something far more nuanced, a tool to unlock the layers of Swift's audacious commentary?

Let's be clear: a true "answer key" for "A Modest Proposal" isn't about finding definitive, quantifiable answers. Instead, it's about understanding the **intent** behind the text, the rhetorical strategies employed, and the social and political context that birthed such a shocking proposition. It's about deciphering the satire, identifying the targets of Swift's scorn, and appreciating the brilliance of his inverted logic. So, grab a virtual cup of tea (and perhaps a strong stomach) as we unpack what a comprehensive approach to understanding "A Modest Proposal" – the true "answer key" – really looks like.

The Unveiling of Satire: What is Swift

***Really* Saying?**

The core of any "A Modest Proposal answer key" lies in understanding its satirical nature. Swift, as a clergyman and writer living in Ireland under English rule, was deeply concerned about the abject poverty and suffering of the Irish populace. The "proposal" itself – that the impoverished Irish should breed and sell their children as food to the wealthy – is so horrifically absurd that it forces the reader to confront the unsustainability and inhumanity of the actual societal conditions.

When you encounter questions about Swift's purpose, the "answer" isn't a single sentence. It's an exploration of his critique of:

1. **The English government's exploitative policies:** Swift felt the English were bleeding Ireland dry, imposing unfair taxes and trade restrictions that perpetuated poverty.
2. **The apathy of the wealthy:** The rich, both Irish and English, are portrayed as indifferent to the suffering of the poor, their comfort prioritized over human lives.
3. **The ineffectiveness of existing "solutions":** Swift sarcastically dismisses previous, well-meaning but ultimately impotent, attempts to alleviate poverty, highlighting their failure to address the root causes.
4. **The dehumanization of the poor:** By treating the poor as a commodity, Swift exposes how they were already being dehumanized by the existing social structures.

A good "A Modest Proposal answer key" would guide you to recognize these underlying themes and see how the outrageous proposal serves as a magnified reflection of very real cruelties and injustices.

Deconstructing the Persona: Who is This "Author"?

One of the most brilliant aspects of "A Modest Proposal" is the persona Swift adopts: a rational, dispassionate projector proposing a seemingly practical, albeit horrific, solution. This persona is crucial to the satire. The "answer" to understanding this character is recognizing that it's a deliberate fabrication designed to highlight the absurdity of the prevailing mindset.

Questions about the narrator's tone and perspective would be answered by understanding:

1. **The mock-rationality:** The narrator uses logical, economic arguments (cost-benefit analysis, market demand) to justify cannibalism, exposing the cold, calculating nature of those who viewed the poor as mere economic burdens.
2. **The deliberate avoidance of emotional appeals:** Instead of evoking sympathy, the narrator appeals to logic, making the proposal even more chilling and impactful.
3. **The speaker's detachment:** The narrator expresses no personal distress or moral qualms about his proposal, further emphasizing the societal disconnect from true human suffering.

An effective "A Modest Proposal answer key" would help you identify how this adopted persona sharpens Swift's critique, making the reader uncomfortable and forcing introspection.

Rhetorical Devices: Swift's Arsenal of Astonishment

Swift was a master rhetorician, and "A Modest Proposal" is a textbook example of his skill. An "answer key" for this text must

delve into the literary techniques he employs to achieve his devastating effect. It's not just about knowing the terms; it's about understanding *how* Swift uses them.

Irony and Understatement: The Sarcastic Shield

Irony is the beating heart of "A Modest Proposal." The entire premise is a colossal, sustained act of verbal irony. The narrator's "modest" proposal is anything but. His calm, measured tone when discussing infanticide and cannibalism is a prime example of understatement, making the horrors even more potent.

When studying "A Modest Proposal," the "answers" related to irony and understatement would involve identifying instances where:

1. Swift says the opposite of what he means (e.g., calling his proposal "modest").
2. The narrator's calm demeanor contrasts sharply with the atrocity of his subject matter.
3. He uses seemingly reasonable language to advocate for unreasonable acts.

Sarcasm and Exaggeration: Magnifying the Madness

Swift doesn't shy away from sarcasm. He uses it to mock the perceived intelligence and compassion of the ruling class. His exaggerated statistics and the detailed culinary suggestions for preparing infants are all part of a sarcastic onslaught against indifference.

Understanding the "answer" here means recognizing how Swift

uses sarcasm to:

1. Ridicule ineffective policies and their proponents.
2. Expose the moral bankruptcy of those who profit from the suffering of others.
3. Amplify the reader's sense of outrage.

Juxtaposition: The Stark Contrast

Swift masterfully juxtaposes the horrific proposal with the mundane realities of economic discourse. He places the suffering of mothers and children alongside discussions of market prices, rent, and land ownership. This stark contrast is a powerful tool for highlighting the dehumanizing logic that pervades the society he critiques.

The "answer" to questions about juxtaposition would involve pinpointing where Swift places elements side-by-side to create a jarring and revealing effect, forcing the reader to confront the uncomfortable realities of economic disparity and its human cost.

The Historical and Social Context: The "Why" Behind the "What"

No "A Modest Proposal answer key" would be complete without a deep dive into the historical and social milieu in which it was written. Swift wasn't writing in a vacuum. His "proposal" was a response to specific, tangible problems.

The State of Ireland: Colonial

Exploitation and Poverty

In the early 18th century, Ireland was a colony of England, subject to a series of oppressive laws and economic policies. The Penal Laws discriminated against Catholics, limiting their land ownership and political power. English landlords often owned vast estates, and Irish tenants lived in perpetual poverty. The export of resources from Ireland to England further exacerbated the economic hardship. Swift, though an Anglo-Irishman himself, was a fierce advocate for Ireland.

Answering questions about this context would involve understanding:

1. The nature of Anglo-Irish relations at the time.
2. The impact of mercantilist policies on the Irish economy.
3. The widespread destitution, famine, and disease that plagued the Irish populace.

Swift's Earlier Writings and "Solutions"

It's also important to note that "A Modest Proposal" wasn't Swift's first attempt to address Ireland's plight. He had previously written more straightforward, albeit still forceful, pamphlets and essays advocating for reform. The brilliance of "A Modest Proposal" lies in its sarcastic abandonment of these more direct methods. The "answer" here is recognizing that Swift had exhausted conventional arguments and resorted to a shocking exaggeration to jolt his audience into action.

The Target Audience: Who Was Swift Trying to Reach?

Swift's primary audience was the educated elite – the English government officials, the Anglo-Irish aristocracy, and the landed gentry. He aimed to shock them out of their complacency and indifference. The "answer" regarding the audience is that Swift deliberately used a tone and subject matter that would provoke a strong reaction from those who held the power to enact change, or at least, to feel the sting of his condemnation.

Beyond the Literal: The Enduring Power of 'A Modest Proposal'

Ultimately, the most profound "answer" to understanding "A Modest Proposal" is to grasp its enduring relevance. While the specific context of 18th-century Ireland might seem distant, the themes of social injustice, economic inequality, governmental apathy, and the dehumanization of marginalized populations are tragically timeless.

The true "A Modest Proposal answer key" is not a document you find at the back of a textbook. It's the intellectual and emotional journey you undertake as you grapple with Swift's daring work. It's about recognizing the razor-sharp wit, the devastating indictment, and the profound human empathy that, paradoxically, lies beneath the surface of his most audacious and grotesque "proposal." It's about learning to read between the lines, to question the presented logic, and to ultimately be moved to consider the real-world consequences of societal neglect and exploitation. And that, dear reader, is a lesson far more valuable than any simple answer sheet could ever provide.

Understanding the Core of a Modest Proposal Answer Key

At its essence, a modest proposal answer key is not merely a set of correct responses but a thoughtful framework designed to guide interpretation, analysis, and application in complex communication and strategic contexts. Rooted in the historical concept of Jonathan Swift’s satirical essay “A Modest Proposal,” which called for radical solutions to societal ills, the modern interpretation extends beyond irony to embody structured clarity. An answer key in this context serves as a compass—helping writers, strategists, and communicators distill meaning from nuanced ideas, ensuring that responses are both precise and purposeful. This approach transforms abstract or provocative content into actionable insights, bridging the gap between intention and understanding.

Key Insights Behind Its Structure and Purpose

The foundation of an effective answer key lies in its ability to decode layered meaning. It identifies core themes, evaluates intent, and highlights contextual relevance, allowing users to navigate ambiguity with confidence. Rather than prescribing rigid answers, it encourages critical thinking by framing responses that acknowledge complexity. For instance, in analyzing a controversial topic or interpreting a provocative statement, the answer key emphasizes tone, audience awareness, and cultural sensitivity—factors vital for responsible communication. It also

promotes consistency, ensuring that varied perspectives align with overarching goals, whether in academic writing, corporate messaging, or public discourse. This structured guidance transforms ambiguous prompts into focused, impactful outputs.

Applications Across Disciplines and Contexts

The versatility of a modest proposal answer key makes it invaluable across diverse fields. In education, it supports students in refining essays and debates by clarifying expectations and encouraging depth over surface-level answers. For marketers, it aids in crafting messaging that resonates with target demographics by aligning tone and content with audience values. In public policy and journalism, it serves as a tool to assess responses to societal challenges, ensuring that proposed solutions are both realistic and ethically grounded. Writers, too, benefit from its framework, using it to test narrative coherence, refine arguments, and strengthen persuasive power. Whether in creative writing, strategic planning, or media analysis, the answer key acts as a bridge between idea and execution.

Benefits for Communication and Strategic Thinking

Employing a modest proposal answer key fosters precision, empathy, and strategic alignment. It sharpens communication by encouraging clarity of purpose and audience adaptation, reducing misinterpretation and enhancing engagement. In decision-making, it promotes holistic evaluation—balancing creativity with feasibility and innovation with responsibility. For individuals and

organizations alike, it cultivates a mindset of thoughtful response, where every word is intentional and every perspective measured. This not only improves immediate outcomes but also builds long-term credibility and trust, essential in an era where authenticity and clarity define influence.

Future Outlook: Evolution in a Dynamic Communication Landscape

As digital discourse grows more complex and globalized, the role of a modest proposal answer key is poised to expand. With the rise of AI-driven content creation and real-time feedback loops, such frameworks will become critical in maintaining authenticity and strategic intent. They will evolve to integrate adaptive learning, enabling dynamic responses that reflect shifting cultural norms and technological advances. Moreover, as cross-cultural communication intensifies, the answer key's emphasis on context and sensitivity will empower more inclusive, responsible dialogue. Ultimately, this concept will continue to shape how we interpret, construct, and refine messages—ensuring that even in a fast-paced world, thoughtful communication remains grounded in clarity and purpose.

Deconstructing Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal": An

Analytical Deep Dive into the Answer Key of Satire

Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People From Being a Burthen to Their Parents or Country; and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick," published anonymously in 1729, remains one of the most potent and unsettling pieces of satirical literature ever penned. Far from a genuine solution to the dire poverty plaguing Ireland, it is a masterful indictment of a callous and indifferent British ruling class. To understand "A Modest Proposal," however, requires more than just reading the text; it demands an engagement with its underlying mechanisms – the "answer key" to its biting sarcasm and the reasons for its enduring relevance. This article delves into the analytical framework necessary to unlock Swift's intentions, exploring the context, rhetorical devices, and thematic underpinnings that constitute the true answer key to this seminal work.

The Crucial Context: Ireland Under British Rule

To truly grasp the impact and meaning of Swift's "modest proposal," one must first understand the harrowing socio-political landscape of 18th-century Ireland. The island was effectively a British colony, subjected to oppressive economic policies and political disenfranchisement by the English Parliament. The Penal Laws severely restricted the rights and opportunities of the Catholic majority, while Protestant Anglo-Irish landlords often held vast estates, leaving the native population in abject poverty. Famines were a recurring tragedy, exacerbated by the export of

food to Britain while Irish citizens starved. Landlords demanded exorbitant rents, driving tenants to desperation. The wealthy elite, both Irish and British, seemed remarkably unconcerned with the plight of the poor. This pervasive atmosphere of neglect and suffering is the fertile ground from which Swift's proposal springs. Without this crucial historical backdrop, his "solution" appears simply monstrous, rather than the searing critique it is. The answer key here lies in recognizing that Swift is not proposing cannibalism as a viable economic strategy, but rather highlighting the dehumanizing policies that were, in effect, already treating the poor as less than human.

Unpacking the Satirical Masterpiece: The Rhetorical Ingenuity

Swift's genius lies in his adoption of a persona – a seemingly rational, dispassionate proposer – who presents his horrifying plan with meticulous detail and economic logic. This is the core of his satire. He doesn't condemn the suffering directly; instead, he adopts the detached, calculating language of the very oppressors he seeks to expose.

The Persona of the "Projector"

The speaker in "A Modest Proposal" is not Swift himself, but a hypothetical "projector" – an Enlightenment-era term for someone proposing innovative (and often outlandish) schemes. This projector's calm, reasoned tone, devoid of any apparent moral qualms, is what makes the proposal so disturbing. He meticulously calculates the financial benefits of his plan, considering everything from the cost of raising a child to the market value of their flesh. This feigned rationality serves to mirror the cold, utilitarian logic that Swift saw as dominating British policy towards Ireland. The

answer key is in recognizing that Swift is mocking the detached, economic-driven decision-making that ignored human suffering.

The Power of Understatement and Exaggeration

Swift masterfully employs both understatement and exaggeration to achieve his satirical effect. The very idea of cannibalism, presented as a practical solution, is an extreme exaggeration. Yet, the accompanying details – the methods of cooking, the types of dishes, the potential export markets – are presented with an almost mundane understatement. This juxtaposition amplifies the absurdity and horror of the proposal. The language itself becomes a weapon, mimicking the disingenuous rhetoric of those who proposed "solutions" that were, in reality, detrimental to the Irish populace. The answer key here is in understanding how Swift weaponizes seemingly innocuous details to magnify the horror of his central premise.

The Use of Logical Fallacies (for Effect)

While presenting his plan with a veneer of logic, the projector unknowingly employs a series of logical fallacies. His arguments often stem from faulty premises and lead to unjustifiable conclusions. For instance, he dismisses more humane solutions, such as encouraging domestic trade or improving the condition of tenant farmers, as impractical or insufficient. This feigned rational discourse is a powerful tool for Swift, as it exposes the flawed reasoning and self-serving justifications used by the ruling class. The answer key is in identifying these fallacies, which reveal the moral bankruptcy of the proposed system.

Thematic Exploration: Beyond

Cannibalism

While the literal proposal of eating children is shocking, the deeper thematic concerns of "A Modest Proposal" are far more profound and enduring. Swift's essay is a searing commentary on a multitude of societal ills.

Dehumanization and the Value of Human Life

At its heart, "A Modest Proposal" is a powerful exploration of dehumanization. By treating impoverished children as mere commodities to be harvested and sold, Swift exposes how the ruling class had effectively stripped them of their humanity. The essay forces the reader to confront the question of what constitutes a life of value and who gets to decide. The answer key lies in the stark contrast between the "value" assigned to a child's life as food and the utter disregard for their actual well-being and potential.

Economic Exploitation and Social Inequality

Swift's critique of British economic policy is central to the essay. The relentless exploitation of Irish resources and labor, leading to widespread poverty and famine, is implicitly condemned. The projector's focus on economic gain, devoid of any ethical considerations, mirrors the exploitative practices that Swift observed. The essay serves as a stark reminder of the devastating consequences of unchecked capitalism and extreme social inequality. The answer key here is the recognition that the proposal is a hyperbolic representation of existing economic exploitation.

The Failure of Philanthropy and Political Action

"A Modest Proposal" also implicitly criticizes the ineffectiveness of existing charitable efforts and political discourse surrounding poverty. Swift, having engaged in such efforts himself, was acutely

aware of their limitations. By presenting his outrageous "solution," he suggests that the prevailing approaches were so inadequate that only something as shocking as cannibalism could truly capture the scale of the problem and provoke a reaction. The answer key is in understanding Swift's frustration with the ineffectual nature of conventional problem-solving.

The Nature of Empathy and Moral Responsibility

The essay is a profound call for empathy and a challenge to moral complacency. Swift forces readers to confront their own potential for indifference in the face of suffering. By engaging with the disturbing logic of the projector, readers are compelled to examine their own reactions and to consider their moral responsibilities towards the less fortunate. The answer key is in the emotional and intellectual response the reader has, prompting a deeper reflection on empathy.

The Enduring Relevance of "A Modest Proposal"

Centuries after its publication, "A Modest Proposal" continues to resonate because the issues it addresses – poverty, exploitation, dehumanization, and the callousness of power – remain tragically relevant. While the specific historical context has evolved, the underlying human tendencies and societal structures that Swift critiqued are still very much present.

Modern Parallels and Echoes

We can see echoes of Swift's satire in contemporary discussions about issues such as income inequality, the exploitation of labor in developing countries, and the often-unfeeling rhetoric surrounding social welfare programs. Whenever a particular group is reduced to

statistics or economic factors, devoid of their inherent humanity, Swift's ghost seems to loom. The answer key to its modern relevance lies in identifying these parallel situations where human beings are treated as mere economic units.

The Power of Satire as a Tool for Social Commentary

"A Modest Proposal" stands as a testament to the enduring power of satire as a tool for social and political commentary. Swift's ability to shock and provoke, to use humor to highlight profound truths, demonstrates how art can effectively challenge societal norms and expose hypocrisy. The essay's longevity is a testament to the fact that its message, delivered through a radical and unforgettable lens, continues to stimulate thought and debate. The answer key to its lasting power is its ability to provoke and to make readers think critically.

Conclusion: The "Answer Key" is a Call to Consciousness

Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" is not a puzzle to be solved with a simple, definitive answer. Instead, its "answer key" is a multi-faceted understanding of its historical context, its brilliant use of satire and rhetorical devices, and its profound exploration of enduring human and societal issues. The essay's true brilliance lies not in the shock value of its proposal, but in its ability to force readers to confront uncomfortable truths about themselves and the societies they inhabit. It is a call to consciousness, a demand for empathy, and a stark warning against the dangers of unchecked power and indifference. By deconstructing its layers of irony and exposing the rotten core of the social conditions it critiques, we unlock the enduring power of Swift's masterpiece and find the vital "answer key" for our own critical engagement with the world. The

ongoing relevance of "A Modest Proposal" ensures that its analytical examination remains a crucial exercise for anyone seeking to understand the complexities of social justice and the power of human expression.

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Questions & Answers About a modest proposal answer key

N o	Question	Answer
1	What is the central, shocking 'solution' proposed in Jonathan Swift's 'A Modest Proposal'?	Swift's central proposal is for the wealthy landlords of Ireland to raise and cook their own impoverished children as a food source to alleviate poverty and overpopulation.
2	Is 'A Modest Proposal' meant to be taken literally, or is it satire?	'A Modest Proposal' is a masterful work of satire. Swift uses extreme irony to criticize the indifference of the English ruling class towards the suffering of the Irish poor.
3	What societal issues was Jonathan Swift actually trying to address with his proposal?	Swift aimed to highlight the dire poverty in Ireland, the exploitative economic policies of the English, the callousness of the wealthy, and the lack of effective solutions from the Irish themselves.
4	Who is the intended audience for 'A Modest Proposal'?	The primary audience is the English ruling class and the Anglo-Irish aristocracy. Swift's scathing critique is directed at those who had the power to enact real change but chose not to.
5	Why did Swift choose such a shocking premise for his essay?	The extreme and horrifying nature of the proposal is designed to shock the reader into recognizing the equally horrific reality of the suffering Swift describes. It's a rhetorical device to grab attention.

6	What other 'solutions' does Swift briefly dismiss before presenting his 'modest' one?	Swift sarcastically mentions several other impractical or ineffective solutions, such as taxing absentee landlords, encouraging Irish trade, and promoting nationalistic pride, to contrast them with his 'ingenious' culinary idea.
7	What does Swift mean by 'rational' and 'modest' in the title?	The terms are deeply ironic. Swift uses 'rational' to mock the cold, calculating logic often applied to social problems by economists, and 'modest' to highlight the utter immodesty and barbarity of his actual suggestion.
8	What is the lasting impact or significance of 'A Modest Proposal'?	It remains a powerful example of satirical writing, demonstrating how extreme irony can expose uncomfortable truths and provoke thought about social injustice, economic inequality, and human apathy.
9	Beyond cannibalism, what other economic or social benefits does Swift claim his proposal would yield?	Swift claims his proposal would reduce the number of Papists, lighten the burden of parents, improve the markets for landlords, encourage mothers to work, and produce a delicacy for taverns and at 'all the great tables'.

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