Reading Skills- Active Questioning

Passage from *A Modest Proposal* by Jonathan Swift

It is a melancholy object to those who walk through this great town or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin doors crowded with beggars of the female-sex, followed by three, four, or six children all in rags . . . Whoever could find out a fair, cheap and easy method of making these children sound, useful members of the commonwealth would deserve so well of the public as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation . . .

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked or broiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricasse or a ragout.

I do therefore humbly offer it to public consideration that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part be males, which is more than we allow sheep, black cattle, or swine . . .

1. **Literal Level of the Main Idea** – What is the main idea of the first paragraph?

2. **Literal Detail Level** – What example is used to support the idea that poverty exists?

3. **Evaluative Level** – How effective is the author’s cold, detached use of words like “computed” and “breed”?

4. **Inferential Level** – Is the author really proposing to use children as food?

5. **Applied Level** – Can you relate the theme to present-day events?