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# Timeless Travels

Jonathan Swift's satirical• novel, *Gulliver's Travels*, is often described as 'universal'. This means that it is read and enjoyed by all types of readers, from children to adults. However, more than any other book in English literature, *Gulliver's Travels* raises the question of whether• a book can be appreciated and loved even if the reader does not fully understand all its levels of meaning.

Lemuel Gulliver's amazing adventures in strange lands have entertained• young readers for centuries - the book has been a children's favourite since its publication in 1726, and continues to be as popular as it ever was. However, this was not exactly what **Jonathan Swift** had in mind.

So, how can this book communicate to readers of different ages and backgrounds• over the centuries? Although neither the young readers of Swift's time nor today's teenagers can fully understand the political satire which is behind the story, or even the historical context• in which it was written, the book has a clear universal meaning and moral which they definitely appreciate•. Even the youngest readers understand and enjoy the passages• where Swift makes fun of man's stupidity, hypocrisy• and corruption•. And they also understand when Swift's gentle words cover a satirical attack on the English government and institutions. Or when he lists the meaningless reasons that countries give to go to war with each other. And, at the end, they can see how little has changed in basic human nature over the centuries.

Indeed, the real strength of Swift's masterpiece is that we can appreciate it first as young readers, and later as adults, by reading it again and finding additional•, deeper meanings.

## GLOSSARY

- **additional:** more; extra
- **appreciate:** (here) like
- **backgrounds:** (here) families, nationalities etc.
- **corruption:** dishonest actions
- **entertained:** kept (people) interested
- **historical context:** time in history
- **hypocrisy:** (here) dishonesty
- **passages:** (here) parts of text
- **satirical:** that uses satire (see box)
- **whether:** (here) if





# Satire

Satire is a literary technique which makes fun of people or institutions. The author wants to criticise his/her subject and provoke change by his/her work. Today, satire is popular in journalism. Can you think of any newspapers, magazines or websites that make fun of what is happening in the news?



# Gulliver's Travels



Lemuel Gulliver

## The Brobdingnags

King of Brobdingnag



Glumdalclitch



## The Lilliputians



## The Yahoos



## The Laputians



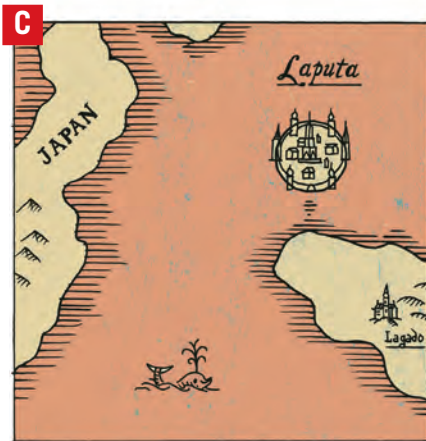
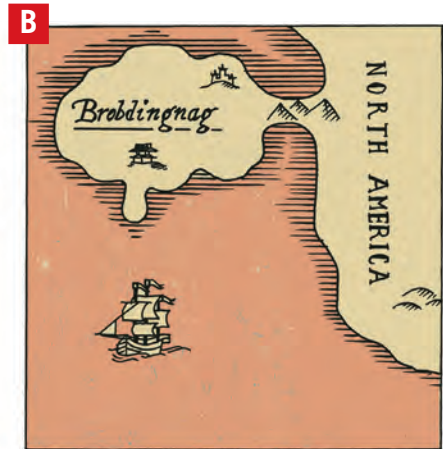
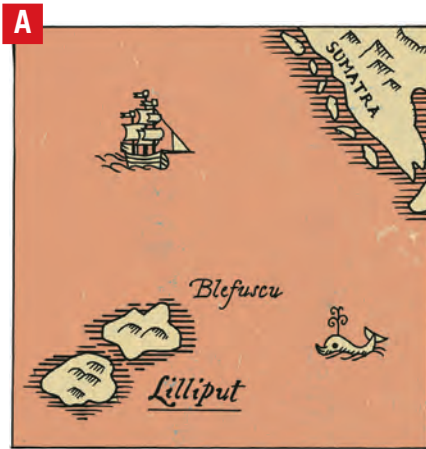
## The Houyhnhnms



# BEFORE READING

- 1 Look at the maps of Gulliver's travels and read the names of the islands he visited. Listen and number the islands in the order that Gulliver visited them. Write 1, 2, 3 and 4.

- Brobdingnag     Houyhnhnm Land  
 Lilliput     Laputa





**2 Read the descriptions of the inhabitants of the islands and answer the questions.**

**Lilliput:** A tiny man, no more than fifteen centimetres tall, was standing on my chest! Then there was another and then another. Lots of tiny people were standing on my chest.

**a** Which word means small? .....

**Brobdingnag:** I ran as fast as I could in the opposite direction. Then I saw other giants working in the fields.

**b** Which words means the people were big? .....

**Houyhnhnm Land:** We arrived at a large, clean, wooden building, like a house. I looked around for some men and women. But to my surprise there were only horses.

**c** Which word describe Gulliver's feelings? .....

**Laputa:** The people on the island were incredibly strange. They wore the strangest clothes.

**d** Which word means not normal? .....

**3 Match the names to the pictures.**


- 1** Lilliputians                      **2** Brobdingnags  
**3** Houyhnhnms                    **4** Laputians







## 1 My name is Gulliver

 Dear reader, my name is Lemuel Gulliver. I live in London, with my wife and children. I have travelled all over the world and I have had the most incredible adventures. I have seen things that you will find difficult to believe: people no bigger than this book; other people taller than the tallest tree; a country in the clouds above us; and animals more civilised than humans.

I want to talk about my adventures, tell you about the mysteries and dangers that surround us. You may think that I am exaggerating or that I am mad<sup>•</sup>. But please remember, as you read, that I am an honest man and that my words are true.

I studied medicine at Cambridge University and got a job as a doctor on a ship called *The Antelope*. In May 1699 we left England for the South Seas<sup>•</sup>. The journey went well until a violent storm<sup>•</sup> sent us completely off course<sup>•</sup> and we found ourselves somewhere in the East Indies. Here, our ship hit some rocks<sup>•</sup>. The rocks wrecked<sup>•</sup> the ship and we had no choice but to abandon it. As I threw myself into the sea I thought that this was the end.

But luck was with me. I can swim quite well and I did not want to end my days without a fight. I swam and swam until I saw land.


I arrived on the beach, alone and exhausted<sup>•</sup> and fell down and slept.

### GLOSSARY

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- **exhausted:** very tired
- **mad:** crazy; not normal
- **off course:** in the wrong direction



- **rocks:** 
- **South Seas:** sea in South-East Asia
- **storm:** very bad weather
- **wrecked:** broke

## AFTER READING VOCABULARY

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### 1 Use FIVE of the words in the box to complete the sentences.

feathers    mess    saucer    ladders  
unfair    size    rocks    refined

- a The Lilliputians climbed up Gulliver's body using .....
- b The emperor of Lilliput wore a big hat decorated with .....
- c The floating island was shaped like a ..... and was concave in the middle.
- d Gulliver was very similar to the Yahoos, yet much more .....
- e Beside Gulliver, the rats on Brobdingnag were the ..... of elephants.

### 2 Make three sentences with the words left out in Exercise 1

### 3 Complete the sentences with *something*, *everything*, or *nothing*. Some of them can be used more than once.

- a ..... seemed well and peaceful in Lilliput, with no problems for the people.
- b The queen gave me a little box to live in and ..... I needed.
- c I felt the box being pulled by .....
- d From my window I saw ..... but then I heard voices.
- e But not ..... was bad on Brobdingnag.
- f There was ..... practical in Laputians' way of doing things.
- g The servants' job was to tap their masters on their mouths or ears when they needed to speak or to listen to .....
- h ..... fascinated Gulliver more than adventures.

## **K** A2 Key English Test Reading and Writing Part 4

**1** For each of the following sentences from the book, choose the best word (A, B, or C) to fill in the gaps.

- 1 On 3rd June 1706, I was ..... again back with my family.
- 2 It ..... some time, but I finally convinced my wife that it was a good idea.
- 3 Then my dinner arrived, beautifully cut ..... mathematical symbols.
- 4 The rocks wrecked the ship and we had ..... choice but to abandon it.
- 5 ..... I always live my life in this strange way, always feeling different?
- 6 When I looked carefully I saw that, in fact, they were exactly like humans – they were ..... own kind.
- 7 I stayed at home for five months, ..... was a long time for me.
- 8 After lying ..... for a while, I realised that I was very, very hungry.
- 9 ‘Common sense! Don’t the people who govern your country have ..... of this?’
- 10 Time passed and I ..... more and more homesick.

- |    |                  |                 |                  |
|----|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1  | <b>A</b> once    | <b>B</b> always | <b>C</b> finally |
| 2  | <b>A</b> was     | <b>B</b> took   | <b>C</b> passed  |
| 3  | <b>A</b> between | <b>B</b> by     | <b>C</b> into    |
| 4  | <b>A</b> no      | <b>B</b> the    | <b>C</b> little  |
| 5  | <b>A</b> Do      | <b>B</b> Must   | <b>C</b> Should  |
| 6  | <b>A</b> their   | <b>B</b> my     | <b>C</b> an      |
| 7  | <b>A</b> and     | <b>B</b> but    | <b>C</b> which   |
| 8  | <b>A</b> still   | <b>B</b> in     | <b>C</b> here    |
| 9  | <b>A</b> any     | <b>B</b> some   | <b>C</b> little  |
| 10 | <b>A</b> had     | <b>B</b> went   | <b>C</b> grew    |