



Gulliver's Travels

Author: Jonathan Swift (1667–1745)

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Information about assessment and curriculum links can be found at the end of these Teaching Notes.

Synopsis

Lemuel Gulliver is a traveller who sails to many strange lands. After a shipwreck, he lands in Lilliput. After being captured he is guaranteed freedom if he helps the Lilliputians to fight the Blefuscans. Next, he visits Brobdingnag, a land of giants. He is kept in a little box and looked after by a farmer's daughter, Glumdalclitch. The king of Brobdingnag, after learning about Gulliver's country, concludes that humans are very unpleasant. Other adventures include meeting the Laputans on a flying island and encountering a race of dignified horses, called Houyhnhnms, who make Gulliver rethink his feelings towards humans. He eventually returns home, spending most of his time with his horses.

Social and historical context

Through devising many different lands and societies, Jonathan Swift holds up a satirical mirror to the European way of life in the early eighteenth century. On his travels Gulliver encounters extremes such as petty politics and violent warfare, as well as alternatives such as peaceful societies with little need for laws to regulate behaviour. The book challenges readers' assumptions of what is right and wrong, as we see Gulliver learn important lessons from each place that he visits.

Group or guided reading

Introducing the book

- *(Predicting, Questioning)* Discuss the front cover. What do children think is going on in the picture? Model some questions to think about such as: *Why do you think that the large person is being held down? Is he a giant or are the smaller people particularly small? What questions can the children generate from the front cover? Look at the list of chapter titles. What conclusions can the children draw about the story?*

During reading

- Prior to the guided reading session ask the children to read Chapters 1–3 independently.
- *(Clarifying, Summarising)* Ask the children what they have understood of the story so far. What do they feel about Gulliver and the Lilliputians?
- *(Clarifying)* Read Chapters 4–6 with the children. Discuss how the author has forced the reader to see the story from a different point of view by reversing the scenario and making Gulliver the tiny person in a giant land.
- Ask the children to gather vocabulary relating to the emotions and responses of the characters, e.g. 'overjoyed' on page 31. It would be helpful to have a picture of Gulliver and one of a giant, e.g. Glumdalclitch. Children can then arrange their chosen words around those pictures. Encourage children to add more descriptive words using a thesaurus.



Classics

Independent reading

- (*Imagining*) Ask the children to read to the end of the book. As they are reading ask them to try to plot a map of Gulliver's journey across the world. Encourage them to consider how the other people that he meets feel about Gulliver.

Assessment: Check that children:

- can identify the relationships between the characters
- can consider different points of view about the main character.

Returning and responding to the text

Objective: Understand underlying themes, causes and points of view.

- (*Deducing*) Having read the whole book, discuss with the children what the main issues of the story might be. Can they pick out the key themes? Do they understand how the author has tried to poke fun at the systems that exist in England? Can they draw conclusions about the author's beliefs about war? Ask the children to consider why this book may have been particularly influential.

Assessment:

- Can the children identify and comment on the writer's purpose and viewpoint?
- Can the children relate the text to its social and historical background? Can they explain why the story might have been influential?

Speaking, listening and drama activities

Objective: Use a range of oral techniques to present persuasive arguments and engaging narratives.

- (*Imagining, Questioning*) Imagine that Gulliver decided to stay and stand trial in Lilliput. Ask the children to take on different roles and carry out the court case for Gulliver. Emphasise the importance of children stating their point of view clearly and considering their audience. Encourage the rest of the group to ask appropriate questions to elicit the information they need to make a decision about the case.

Writing activities

Objective: Use paragraphs to achieve pace and emphasis.

- Re-read pages 41–44. Discuss the different inventions with the children.
- Invite the children to work with a partner to discuss different ideas for zany inventions that could never work.
- Ask them to write an explanation for their crazy invention including an introductory paragraph and a conclusion.

Assessment:

- Can the children organise ideas in a sequence of paragraphs, and include an introduction matched to purpose and a fitting conclusion?

Whole class reads

Books on a similar theme:

- *The Poppykettle Papers* by Robert Ingpen and Michael Lawrence



Classics

- *The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde
- *The Iron Man* by Ted Hughes

Cross-curricular links

Geography

- Make maps of Gulliver's journeys.

Design & Technology

- Create a home for Gulliver in a shoebox.

History

- Undertake a class project on 18th century Britain. Different groups could be assigned a key topic such as government, laws, clothing, family life, and so on.

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Gulliver's Travels (Oxford Level 16) curriculum coverage chart

Links to Oxford Reading Criterion Scale:

- Can use inference and deduction skills to discuss messages, moods, feelings and attitudes using the clues from the text. (D) [ORCS Standard 6, 8]
- Can identify the point of view from which a story is told. (D) [ORCS Standard 6, 9]
- Can discuss how a text may affect the reader and refer back to the text to back up a point of view. (E) [ORCS Standard 6, 13]
- Can read between the lines, using clues from action, dialogue and description to interpret meaning and explain how and why characters are acting, thinking or feeling. (D) [ORCS Standard 6, 18]

Comprehension strategies

- Comprehension strategies are taught throughout the Teaching Notes to enable pupils to understand what they are reading in books they can read independently. In these Teaching Notes the following strategies are taught:

Predicting, Questioning, Clarifying, Summarising, Imagining, Deducing

ENGLAND The National Curriculum in England: Years 5–6

Spoken language	<p>Pupils should be taught to ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge (SpokLang.2)</p> <p>Pupils should be taught to articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions (SpokLang.4)</p> <p>Pupils should be taught to maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments (SpokLang.6)</p> <p>Pupils should be taught to use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas (SpokLang.7)</p>
Reading: Comprehension	<p>Pupils should be taught to maintain positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence (Y5/6 ReadComp.2iii)</p> <p>Pupils should be taught to maintain positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by discussing and evaluating how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader (Y5/6 ReadComp.3)</p> <p>Pupils are taught to participate in discussions about books that are read to them and those they can read for themselves, building on their own and others' ideas and challenging views courteously (Y5/6 ReadComp.6)</p>
Writing: Composition	<p>Pupils should be taught to plan their writing by noting and developing initial ideas, drawing on reading and research where necessary (Y5/6 WritComp.1ii)</p> <p>Pupils should be taught to draft and write by using further organisational and presentational devices to structure text and to guide the reader (Y5/6 WritComp.2v)</p>

SCOTLAND Curriculum for Excellence: Literacy and English experiences and outcomes – Second level

Listening and talking	<p>When I engage with others, I can respond in ways appropriate to my role, show that I value others' contributions and use these to build on thinking (LIT 2-02a)</p> <p>I can show my understanding of what I listen to or watch by responding to literal, inferential, evaluative and other types of questions, and by asking different kinds of questions of my own (LIT 2-07a)</p> <p>When listening and talking with others for different purposes: I can clarify points by asking questions or by asking others to say more; I can share information, experiences and opinions (LIT 2-09a)</p>
Reading	<p>To show my understanding, I can respond to literal, inferential and evaluative questions and other close reading tasks and can create different kinds of questions of my own (ENG 2-17a)</p> <p>To help me develop an informed view, I can [...] recognise when I am being influenced, and have assessed how useful and believable my sources are (LIT 2-18a) ... and [...] discuss the writer's style and other features appropriate to genre (LIT 2-19a)</p>
Writing	<p>By considering the type of text I am creating, I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in an appropriate way for my purpose and use suitable vocabulary for my audience (LIT 2-26a)</p>

WALES Programme of Study for English: Year 5

Oracy	Learners are able to build on and develop the ideas of others in group discussions, e.g. by asking questions to explore further, offering more ideas (Y5_OracColl.3) Learners are able to listen to others, asking questions and responding to both the content and the speakers' viewpoints (Y5_OracList.2) Learners are able to explain information and ideas, exploring and using ways to be convincing, e.g. use of vocabulary, gesture, visual aids (Y5_OracSpea.1)
Reading	Learners are able to show understanding of main ideas and significant details in texts, e.g. mindmapping showing hierarchy of ideas, flowchart identifying a process (Y5_ReadComp.1) Learners are able to infer meaning which is not explicitly stated, e.g. what happens next?, why did he/she do that? (Y5_ReadComp.2)
Writing	Learners are able to use techniques in planning writing, e.g. mindmapping, sequencing, placemat activities (Y5_WritMean.3) Learners are able to use paragraphs, which have a main idea and related details (Y5_WritStru.3)

NORTHERN IRELAND Levels of Progression in Communication across the curriculum: Primary Level 4

Talking and listening	Pupils can develop a role (L4_com_talk.1ii) Pupils can make relevant contributions to discussions (L4_com_talk.2i) Pupils can ask questions about others' points of view and respond appropriately (L4_com_talk.2ii) Pupils can explain information, ideas and opinions clearly (L4_com_talk.3i)
Reading	Pupils can show understanding by identifying and summarising information (L4_com_read.1i) Pupils can understand explicit meanings and recognise some implicit meanings (L4_com_read.4ii)
Writing	Pupils can plan and make use of planning (L4_com_writ.1i) Pupils can structure writing, including using paragraphs (L4_com_writ.2ii)