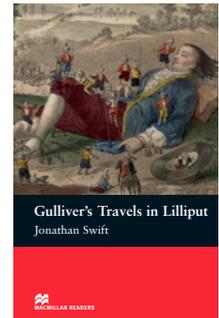




Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift

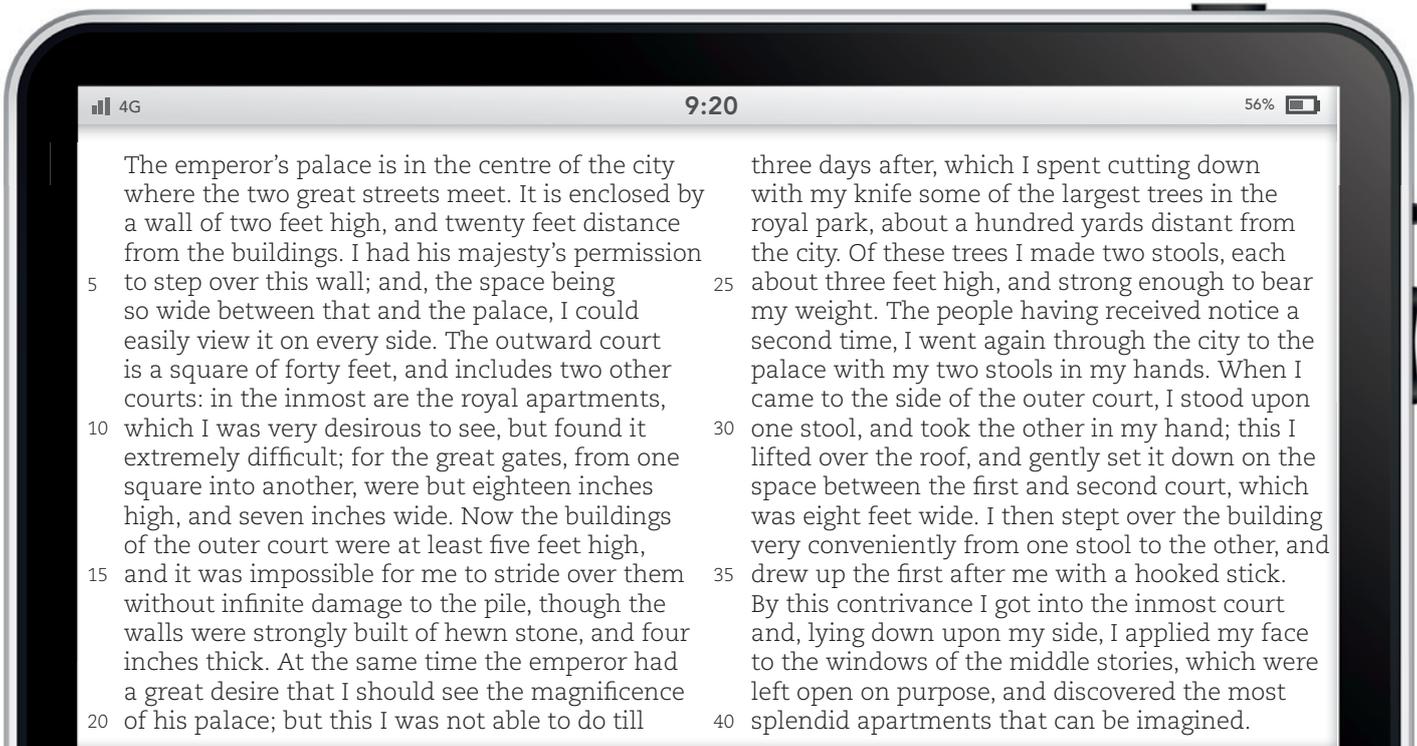
ABOUT THE STORY

Gulliver's Travels is a book in four parts. The first part, *A Voyage to Lilliput*, tells the story of a traveller called Gulliver and a voyage he takes. During the voyage, his ship is wrecked in a storm. He wakes up on an island called Lilliput which is inhabited by very small people (the Lilliputians), who are less than six inches (15 cm) tall. They have the same characteristics as the people from Gulliver's homeland – they are mean, vicious, corrupt, greedy and jealous. The Kingdom of Lilliput and the people who rule it is a satirical representation of the United Kingdom and the government of the time. In the extract below, Gulliver describes seeing the emperor's palace for the first time.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jonathan Swift was an Irish novelist who lived from 1667–1745. After finishing university in Dublin, he moved to England and became politically active, working closely with members of the English government. After the government lost power, Swift couldn't find work, so he returned to Ireland. At that time, Ireland had many social and economic problems. Swift interested in these problems and started writing about them in his novels, in the form of satire. *Gulliver's Travels*, published in 1726, is his most famous satire, in which he makes fun of the governments of the time, as well as the problems that were present in both Ireland and England.



VOCABULARY FOCUS

- enclosed (line 2):** surrounded
- desirous (line 10):** if you are desirous of something you want to have or do it
- inches (line 12):** British measurement of length. One inch is equivalent to 2.54 cm.
- stride (line 15):** walk with long steps
- pile (line 16):** a large amount of something
- hewn (line 17):** rock or wood cut into a rough shape
- yards (line 23):** British measurement of length. One yard is equivalent to 0.9 m.
- stools (line 24):** seats that have legs but no support for your back or arms
- feet (line 25):** British measurement of length. One foot is equivalent to 0.3 m.
- bear (line 25):** support
- stept (line 33):** old-English spelling of stepped
- hooked stick (line 35):** a stick with a curved end
- contrivance (line 36):** invention
- inmost (line 36):** in the centre
- applied (line 37):** put something on a surface
- splendid (line 40):** beautiful, lovely



Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift

Before reading

1 Jonathan Swift wrote different types of material using different styles. Match the different types of writing (1–5) with their definitions (a–e).

- 1 novels
- 2 satire
- 3 essays
- 4 propaganda
- 5 poems

- a Short pieces of writing about a particular subject.
- b These often have lines that rhyme.
- c Long pieces of fictional writing.
- d This uses humour to criticise people or issues, especially political issues.
- e This tries to convince you to think in a certain way.

2 Read the first line of the excerpt: *The emperor's palace is in the centre of the city where the two great streets meet.* In pairs, discuss what you think the palace might look like. What is inside it? Who lives there?

While reading

1 Read the text. Answer the questions in your own words.

- 1 Describe the location of the palace.
.....
.....
- 2 What did Gulliver want to do most?
.....
.....
- 3 Why was it difficult for Gulliver to see the royal apartments?
.....
.....
- 4 Why did Gulliver cut down so many trees?
.....
.....
- 5 Was he successful in his plan?
.....
.....

2 Find words in the excerpt which describe these features of the places in the text.

- 1 Words which describe the palace as a building.
.....
- 2 Words which describe Lilliput as a very small place.
.....

3 Gulliver is finally able to see the 'splendid apartments'. Based on the information already given about the palace in the text, what do you think these look like? Write three sentences to describe them.

.....

.....

.....

After reading

1 Work in a small group. Discuss these questions.

1 What is amusing about these two sentences from the text?

I had his majesty's permission to step over this wall ...

At the same time the emperor had a great desire that I should see the magnificence of his palace ...

2 What do you think are the similarities and differences between Lilliput and where Gulliver comes from?

2 Work in the same group. Imagine you are on a voyage and arrive at a place that is different to your own society. Discuss what some of the key differences might be, as well as things that are similar, and make notes in the table. Use some of the ideas below to help you, as well as your own ideas.

physical surroundings • the people • transport
language • the government

Differences	Similarities

3 Now write a short paragraph describing arriving at the place. Say what is similar and different to your own society.