



Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift

Before reading

- 1 Elicit the names of any different styles and types of writing and write them on the board. Ask students to read the *About the author* section, then explain that Jonathan Swift was not just a novelist but also wrote other types of material and used particular styles. Read the list of writing types and styles and ask students to match them with the definitions. They can check answers in pairs before checking as a class.

Answers

1 c 2 d 3 a 4 e 5 b

i CULTURAL INFORMATION

In the 17th century, Ireland had many problems. It had been controlled by England for over 500 years and was a very poor country. Jonathan Swift felt strongly about this and the satire in his writing is a criticism of what happened to his country. *Gulliver's Travels* was not written primarily to entertain; Swift wrote it to criticise key people of the time, such as politicians, philosophers and scientists. Each part of the story represents something different from the time: the people of Lilliput represent everything that Swift felt was wrong about the English – their meanness, small-mindedness, and corruption. Unfortunately, *Gulliver's Travels* did not have the reaction Swift wanted – it was adapted into a children's book and lost most of the original satire in the process. It was also extremely popular with the very people it criticised.

- 2 Read aloud the first line of the excerpt. In pairs, students discuss what they think the palace might look like. Point out that there are no right or wrong answers here: this is just a prediction activity.

Answers

Students' own answers

While reading

- 1 Before students read the text, refer them to the *Vocabulary focus* for help with words they may not know. Students read the text and write complete sentences to answer the questions. They can check answers in pairs before checking as a class.

Answers

- 1 The palace is in the centre of the city at the crossroads of two main streets. It is surrounded by a tall wall which encloses courtyards.
 - 2 Gulliver wanted to get to the palace to see the royal apartments.
 - 3 It was difficult because there were walls and buildings which were too high for Gulliver to walk over without risking knocking down a wall.
 - 4 Gulliver cut down lots of trees to make stools. The stools were for him to use as a way of getting himself over the walls.
 - 5 Yes, he was successful. He was able to reach the palace and the royal apartments.
- 2 Ask students to look at the text again to find the words which describe the features of the places in the text.

Answers

- 1 walls, court, apartments, roof, windows
- 2 'step over this wall'; 'great gates ... were but eighteen inches high'; 'stepped over the building very conveniently from one stool to the other'; 'lying down upon my side, I applied my face to the windows of the middle stories ...'
- 3 Check students remember the meaning of *splendid* (beautiful, lovely) and ask them to imagine what the apartments look like. Working individually, they write three sentences to describe them. Encourage them to use lots of adjectives in their descriptions. Nominate different students to read their sentences to the class.

Answers

Students' own answers

FAST FINISHERS

Students focus on the description of the palace, walls and courtyard. They draw a picture of what they think the palace looks like.



After reading

- 1 Explain to the students that they are going to think a little more about the satire used in the text. Read the questions and put students into groups to discuss the answers. For the first question remind them that Lilliput is very small.

Possible answers

- 1 Gulliver doesn't really need permission to step over the wall – the wall is small and the idea of him getting permission from someone who is so much smaller than him is amusing. The second sentence is also amusing because of the size issue. The emperor thinks his palace is magnificent, but it is tiny.
- 2 The obvious difference is that Lilliput is much smaller than where Gulliver comes from, but apart from that the two places are possibly very similar. The layout of the town and the design of the buildings are probably similar. It has a ruler too (the emperor), which his own country presumably does also.
- 2 Explain that students are now going to imagine that they are on a voyage similar to Gulliver's and they arrive at an unusual place. Working in small groups, they brainstorm things that are different to their own country, as well as things that are similar. Refer them to the ideas given to help them, but remind them to use their own ideas too. Explain that the place could have one main big difference like Lilliput (i.e. that it is so small), or it could have several differences – it is their choice. They should make notes in the table provided. Encourage students to be as creative as possible.
- 3 Students work alone to write a short paragraph describing their arrival in the place and the place itself. They should use lots of adjectives in their description to describe the similarities and differences.