

BASIC

WORKSHEETS

- ❖ Why does the writer, Jonathan Swift, change the size of Gulliver in « **GULLIVER'S TRAVELS** » ?
 - What is he trying to tell us ?

- ❖ Write one page on one of the adventures Gulliver has in « **GULLIVER'S TRAVELS** ». Why did you choose this story ?

- ❖ After you have seen the theatre production, write a half-page criticism of the play. How did the play differ from the book ? How would you have presented the story of Gulliver on stage ?

WORK SHEETS
« GULLIVER'S TRAVELS »
An adaptation of the book by Jonathan Swift

1) **GULLIVER'S TRAVELS is :**

- ❖ A romance novel
- ❖ A science fiction novel
- ❖ A satire on the nature of man

2) **Why does Gulliver leave his ship ?**

- ❖ He wants to go for a swim
- ❖ He is the victim of a mutiny
- ❖ He wants to meet new people

3) **Which is Gulliver's biggest fault ?**

- ❖ Stupidity
- ❖ Pride
- ❖ He tells lies

4) **Gulliver visits :**

- ❖ Lilliput
- ❖ Lollyput
- ❖ Lillypat

5) **The excuse for the war with the people of Brobdignag is over :**

- ❖ how to eat an egg
- ❖ how to boil an egg
- ❖ land

6) **How did Gulliver get to the land of Brobdinag ?**

- ❖ He flew
- ❖ He swam
- ❖ He took a train

7) When Gulliver is in Brogdinag, he is :

- ❖ still a giant
- ❖ small like a monkey
- ❖ human sized

8) There, Gulliver is put to work, selling :

- ❖ onions
- ❖ eggs
- ❖ monkeys

9) In the play, Gulliver arrives at the Palace, which is in fact :

- ❖ a zoo
- ❖ the bank
- ❖ a farm

10) Gulliver visits some scientists who refuse to educate :

- ❖ themselves
- ❖ their children
- ❖ women

11) In the book, who says « When I thought of my family, my friends, my countrymen, or human race in general I considered them as they really were, Yahoos in shape and disposition »

- ❖ The King of Laputa
- ❖ Gulliver
- ❖ The Sorrel Nag

12) Who does Gulliver describe as « the most filthy, noisome, and deformed animals which nature ever produced » ?

- ❖ The Yahoos
- ❖ The Lilliputians
- ❖ The Houyhnhnms

ADVANCED

WORKSHEETS

While surfing the net a wealth, we found a wealth of suggested essays :

- ❖ Write an essay on satire in Jonathan Swift's « **GULLIVER'S TRAVELS** »
- ❖ Compare Jonathan Swift's « **GULLIVER'S TRAVELS** » with Voltaire's *Candide* in reference to Satire.
- ❖ Satire ridicules a subject in order to make a comment or criticism about it. Based on the specific historical references and the additional details on the government and monarchs in « **GULLIVER'S TRAVELS** », write an essay that summarizes and explains the satire's commentary and/or criticism of the British government.
 - Your analysis should explain the overall message that the text communicates about society.
 - Your essay should make specific references to details in the text that support your interpretation.
 - Be sure to provide documentation for quotations from the text as well as from outside resources you have consulted for historical information.

Taken from Spark notes (www.sparknotes.com)

Themes

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.

Might Versus Right

Gulliver's Travels implicitly poses the question of whether physical power or moral righteousness should be the governing factor in social life. Gulliver experiences the advantages of physical might both as one who has it, as a giant in Lilliput where he can defeat the Blefusudian navy by virtue of his immense size, and as one who does not have it, as a miniature visitor to Brobdingnag where he is harassed by the hugeness of everything from insects to household pets. His first encounter with another society is one of entrapment, when he is physically tied down by the Lilliputians; later, in Brobdingnag, he is enslaved by a farmer. He also observes physical force used against others, as with the Houyhnhnms' chaining up of the Yahoos.

But alongside the use of physical force, there are also many claims to power based on moral correctness. The whole point of the egg controversy that has set Lilliput against Blefuscu is not merely a cultural difference but, instead, a religious and moral issue related to the proper interpretation of a passage in their holy book. This difference of opinion seems to justify, in their eyes at least, the warfare it has sparked. Similarly, the use of physical force against the Yahoos is justified for the Houyhnhnms by their sense of moral superiority: they are cleaner, better behaved, and more rational. But overall, the novel tends to show that claims to rule on the basis of moral righteousness are often just as arbitrary as, and sometimes simply disguises for, simple physical subjugation. The Laputans keep the lower land of Balnibarbi in check through force because they believe themselves to be more rational, even though we might see them as absurd and unpleasant. Similarly, the ruling elite of Balnibarbi believes itself to be in the right in driving Lord Munodi from power, although we perceive that Munodi is the rational party. Claims to moral superiority are, in the end, as hard to justify as the random use of physical force to dominate others.

The Individual Versus Society

Like many narratives about voyages to nonexistent lands, Gulliver's Travels explores the idea of utopia—an imaginary model of the ideal community. The idea of a utopia is an ancient one, going back at least as far as the description in Plato's Republic of a city-state governed by the wise and expressed most famously in English by Thomas More's Utopia. Swift nods to both works in his own narrative, though his attitude toward utopia is much more skeptical, and one of the main aspects he points out about famous historical utopias is the tendency to privilege the collective group over the individual. The children of Plato's Republic are raised communally, with no knowledge of their biological parents, in the understanding that this system enhances social fairness. Swift has the Lilliputians similarly raise their offspring collectively, but its results are not exactly utopian, since Lilliput is torn by conspiracies, jealousies, and backstabbing.

The Houyhnhnms also practice strict family planning, dictating that the parents of two females should exchange a child with a family of two males, so that the male-to-female ratio is perfectly maintained. Indeed, they come closer to the utopian ideal than the Lilliputians in their wisdom and rational simplicity. But there is something unsettling about the Houyhnhnms' indistinct personalities and about how they are the only social group that Gulliver encounters who do not have proper names. Despite minor physical differences, they are all so good and rational that they are more or less interchangeable, without individual identities. In their absolute fusion with their society and lack of individuality, they are in a sense the exact opposite of Gulliver, who has hardly any sense of belonging to his native society and exists only as an individual eternally wandering the seas. Gulliver's intense grief when forced to leave the Houyhnhnms may have something to do with his longing for union with a community in which he can lose his human identity. In any case, such a union is impossible for him, since he is not a horse, and all the other societies he visits make him feel alienated as well.

Gulliver's Travels could in fact be described as one of the first novels of modern alienation, focusing on an individual's repeated failures to integrate into societies to which he does not belong. England itself is not much of a homeland for Gulliver, and, with his surgeon's business unprofitable and his father's estate insufficient to support him, he may be right to feel alienated from it. He never speaks fondly or nostalgically about England, and every time he returns home, he is quick to leave again. Gulliver never complains explicitly about feeling lonely, but the embittered and antisocial misanthrope we see at the end of the novel is clearly a profoundly isolated individual. Thus, if Swift's satire mocks the excesses of communal life, it may also mock the excesses of individualism in its portrait of a miserable and lonely Gulliver talking to his horses at home in England.

The Limits of Human Understanding

The idea that humans are not meant to know everything and that all understanding has a natural limit is important in *Gulliver's Travels*. Swift singles out theoretical knowledge in particular for attack: his portrait of the disagreeable and self-centered Laputans, who show blatant contempt for those who are not sunk in private theorizing, is a clear satire against those who pride themselves on knowledge above all else. Practical knowledge is also satirized when it does not produce results, as in the academy of Balnibarbi, where the experiments for extracting sunbeams from cucumbers amount to nothing. Swift insists that there is a realm of understanding into which humans are simply not supposed to venture. Thus his depictions of rational societies, like Brobdingnag and Houyhnhnmland, emphasize not these people's knowledge or understanding of abstract ideas but their ability to live their lives in a wise and steady way. The Brobdingnagian king knows shockingly little about the abstractions of political science, yet his country seems prosperous and well governed. Similarly, the Houyhnhnms know little about arcane subjects like astronomy, though they know how long a month is by observing the moon, since that knowledge has a practical effect on their well-being. Aspiring to higher fields of knowledge would be meaningless to them and would interfere with their happiness. In such contexts, it appears that living a happy and well-ordered life seems to be the very thing for which Swift thinks knowledge is useful.

Swift also emphasizes the importance of self-understanding. Gulliver is initially remarkably lacking in self-reflection and self-awareness. He makes no mention of his emotions, passions, dreams, or aspirations, and he shows no interest in describing his own psychology to us. Accordingly, he may strike us as frustratingly hollow or empty, though it is likely that his personal emptiness is part of the overall meaning of the novel. By the end, he has come close to a kind of twisted self-knowledge in his deranged belief that he is a Yahoo. His revulsion with the human condition, shown in his shabby treatment of the generous Don Pedro, extends to himself as well, so that he ends the novel in a thinly disguised state of self-hatred. Swift may thus be saying that self-knowledge has its necessary limits just as theoretical knowledge does, and that if we look too closely at ourselves we might not be able to carry on living happily.

« **Les Voyages de Gulliver** (en anglais *Gulliver's Travels*) est un roman satirique écrit par [Jonathan Swift](#) en 1721. Une version [censurée](#) et modifiée par son éditeur paraît pour la première fois en 1726 ; ce n'est qu'en 1735 qu'il paraîtra en version complète. Il apparaît pour la première fois en français sous le titre **Voyages du capitaine Lemuel Gulliver** au [xviii^e siècle](#), par l'[abbé Desfontaines](#).

Ces récits, très riches, mêlent, en les relativisant, critique et raison, [folie](#) et pamphlet, [fantastique](#) et [science-fiction](#). En ce sens, Swift amorce l'[ère des Lumières](#) et précède [Oscar Wilde](#), [Lewis Carroll](#), mais aussi [Edgar Allan Poe](#). »

http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les_Voyages_de_Gulliver

Adaptations cinématographiques et télévisuelles[[] :

Dès 1902 : le film est adapté une première fois au cinéma muet avec *Le Voyage de Gulliver à Lilliput et chez les géants* de [Georges Méliès](#) ¹. Plusieurs adaptations suivront depuis lors. Dont, entre autres :

- 1934 : *Gulliver Mickey* de [Walt Disney](#)
 - 1935 : *Le Nouveau Gulliver* film d'animation russe d'[Alexandre Ptouchko](#)
 - 1939 : *Les Voyages de Gulliver (Gulliver's Travels)* de [Dave Fleischer](#)
 - 1960 : *Les Voyages de Gulliver (film, 1960) (The 3 Worlds of Gulliver)* de [Jack Sher](#) avec [Kerwin Mathews](#)
 - 1965 : *Garibâ no uchû ryokô* (en kanji : ガリバーの宇宙旅行, littéralement « Les voyages de Gulliver dans l'espace ») est un film d'animation japonais réalisé par [Masao Kuroda](#) et [Sanae Yamamoto](#)
 - 1968 : *Les Aventures de Gulliver (The Adventures of Gulliver)* : série télévisée d'animation de [Hanna-Barbera](#)²
 - 1977 : *Gulliver's Travels* de [Peter R. Hunt](#) mélange animation et acteurs³
 - 1996 : *Les Voyages de Gulliver (Gulliver's Travels)* téléfilm en 2 parties⁴
 - 2010 : *Les Voyages de Gulliver*, avec [Jack Black](#) dans le rôle de Lemuel Gulliver
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