

LITERATURE 1A

TEACHER'S NOTES

AUTHOR	Jonathan Swift
TITLE	<i>Gulliver's Travels</i> (Chapters 1 & 6)
THEMES	Challenges, reactions to situations, uncomfortable feelings, nomadic people, bringing up children
WRITING	A letter
THINK STYLE	Satire

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) was born in Dublin, Ireland. His works include *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), *The Battle of the Books* (1704) and *A Modest Proposal* (1729).

Jonathan Swift grew up in Ireland but moved to England to be the secretary to an English politician. He was deeply religious and trained to become a chaplain of the Church. His novels were popular until the government changed, and then he was criticised. He returned to Ireland and wrote satires criticising the English, who wanted more and more power over the Irish. His most famous work, *Gulliver's Travels*, is a parody (an exaggerated version) of the travel writing genre that was popular at the time. It was also very controversial: When it was first published in 1726, large parts were missing. It didn't appear as a whole book until ten years later.

INTRODUCTION

Ask students if they have heard of Jonathan Swift or *Gulliver's Travels*. They may have watched the film version. Write any ideas on the board in note form. Use the information in the *About the author* box to provide an introduction. Depending on the class, it may be appropriate to use L1 at this stage.

START THINKING ...

- 1 Organise the class into pairs. Set a time limit of a few minutes for students to discuss the questions. Then ask students for their opinions. Encourage them to back up their answers with examples. For example, 'To fit in in a different country, you can try to learn the language, try the local food and talk to people who live there.'
- 2 Find an illustration or image from the film of *Gulliver's Travels* and show it to the students. Ask them to describe what they see and what they think the story is about.

Draw students' attention to the text at the top right-hand side of the page which 'sets the scene' and clarify understanding. Play the audio.

Optional extension

Ask some comprehension questions to check general understanding of the text.

- 3 When students have read and listened to the text once, allow time to match the words in bold to the definitions. Tell them they may need to change the part of speech (form of verb, noun, etc.) to the base form to fit the glossary. Point out that making a glossary of unknown words in a text is a good way to learn vocabulary. Ask individual students for answers.

Answers

1 inclined to 2 astonishment 3 spy 4 posture
5 vessel 6 happen to 7 perceive 8 reckon
9 struggle 10 manner

- 4 Students read through the questions. Check for understanding and remind them to refer closely to the text to find the answers.

Answers

1 There was a storm and the wind pushed the boat onto a rock. 2 league, mile 3 They probably died. 4 He slept soundly / very well. 5 He heard a noise. 6 They were much shorter than other humans.

- 5 Students read the text again. Discuss the questions and answers with the class.

Suggested answers

1 It's in the Southern Hemisphere. In the Southern Hemisphere it is summer in November, but in the Northern Hemisphere it is winter. 2 Because when Gulliver tries to put his feet down, he can't touch the bottom of the sea. 3 He might have thought that it was a spider or an insect. 4 The creature admires Gulliver, probably because of his size.

- 6 Read through the sentences one at a time to check comprehension of any unknown vocabulary. Students complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in the glossary. Ask students for answers.

Answers

1 happened to 2 manner 3 vessel 4 astonishment
5 postures 6 spy

Optional extension

Point out that these facts all relate to the themes of exploration, travel, and tribes which appear in the book. Ask them to imagine what life was like when people travelled by ship and came across different people and new, undiscovered places. Ask students which facts they find interesting or surprising and why.

- 7 Ask students to read the text again and to underline five more words that are new to them. Ask them to write the words in sentences. They then read their sentences in pairs and correct each other's mistakes.

ROLE PLAY

- 8 Organise the class into pairs. Read the instructions and check that students understand what they are going to do. Ask a student to read the first part of the conversation. Brainstorm ideas and phrases on the board. Set students a time limit of 5–10 minutes to prepare their role plays. Monitor and offer support, and encourage students to write their scripts. Encourage as many pairs as possible to perform their role plays. Consider asking groups to perform to each other. The ‘audience’ group can monitor language use and make corrections if necessary. This can also be done as a full-class exercise.

LISTENING

- 9 Before listening, explain that students are going to hear an extract from later in the story. We learn that Gulliver is stranded in a strange country called Lilliput, and the inhabitants of this land are called Lilliputians. He is writing about their culture and customs. Play the recording twice. The first time, encourage students to listen without taking notes. The second time, they tick the two topics that are not mentioned.

Answers

work, transport

- 10 Students read through the questions. Encourage students to answer from memory. Play the recording again for students to complete their answers and to check.

Answers

1 T 2 DS 3 F 4 T 5 DS 6 F

AUDIO SCRIPT (abridged from Chapter 6)

I shall say but little at present of their learning, which, for many ages, hath flourished in all its branches among them: but their manner of writing is very peculiar, being neither from the left to the right like the Europeans; nor from the right to the left, like the Arabians; nor from up to down, like the Chinese, but aslant, from one corner of the paper to the other, like ladies in England.

They bury their dead with their heads directly downwards, because they hold an opinion, that in eleven thousand moons they are all to rise again, in which period the earth (which they conceive to be flat) will turn upside down, and by this means they shall, at the resurrection, be found ready, standing on their feet. The learned among them confess the absurdity of this doctrine, but the practice still continues, in compliance to the vulgar.

[...]

Their notions relating to the duties of parents and children differ extremely from ours. Their opinion is, that parents are the last of all others to be trusted with the education of their own children; and, therefore, they have, in every town, public nurseries, where all parents, except cottagers and labourers, are obliged to send their infants of both sexes to be reared and educated, when they come to the age of twenty moons, at which time they are supposed to have some rudiments of docility. These schools are of several kinds, suited to different qualities, and to both sexes. They have certain professors, well skilled in preparing children for such a condition of life as befits the rank of their parents, and their own capacities as well as inclinations. I shall first say something of the male nurseries, and then of the female.



CRITICAL THINKING

Ask the students, ‘What does “Never judge a book by its cover” mean?’ Elicit that it means that first impressions are not always accurate and we can’t tell what someone is like just by spending a short time with them. Ask them what they think Gulliver’s first impressions of the creatures are and what he thinks their society is like. Students write notes individually and then work in small groups to compare their ideas. Bring their ideas together on the board and discuss as a class.

WRITING

- 11 Read through the *Writing skills* box. Ask students to give examples of phrases used to start and end letters in English (*Dear ...*, *Hi ...*, *Love from ...*, *Best wishes*). Remind them to choose the phrases carefully as some are formal and some are informal. Ask students to brainstorm ideas for each paragraph and make notes. They could compare their ideas in pairs. Students can then write their letter in class or for homework. Students then swap their letter with a partner. They read each other’s work and highlight any mistakes. They assess whether the student has answered the question fully and whether they have followed the steps. They then return the letter to the original student who looks at the comments and redrafts their work. Ask some students to read their letters out loud to the class.

THINK STYLE

Satire

- 12 Read and check that students understand the meaning of *satire* (using humour or exaggeration to criticise other people’s behaviour and make them look ridiculous – especially politicians, governments and social situations). Ask them to think of any other novels or films that use satire that they know. Write any ideas on the board. Then ask them if they agree or disagree with the suggestions. Some examples of satirical novels include *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller and *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. They could either present their ideas to the class or write a paragraph about their satirical novel which you could collate for them to look at later.

Optional extension

Students could think of a fictional journey to a fictional country and make notes on the events. Remind them that in a satire, they should remain as positive as they can be when talking about things that go wrong.

Additional reading or internet research topics

- *Gulliver’s Travels* themes
- The life of Jonathan Swift