

Gulliver's Travels

READING

LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
C1_4027R_EN

LANGUAGE
English



lingoda

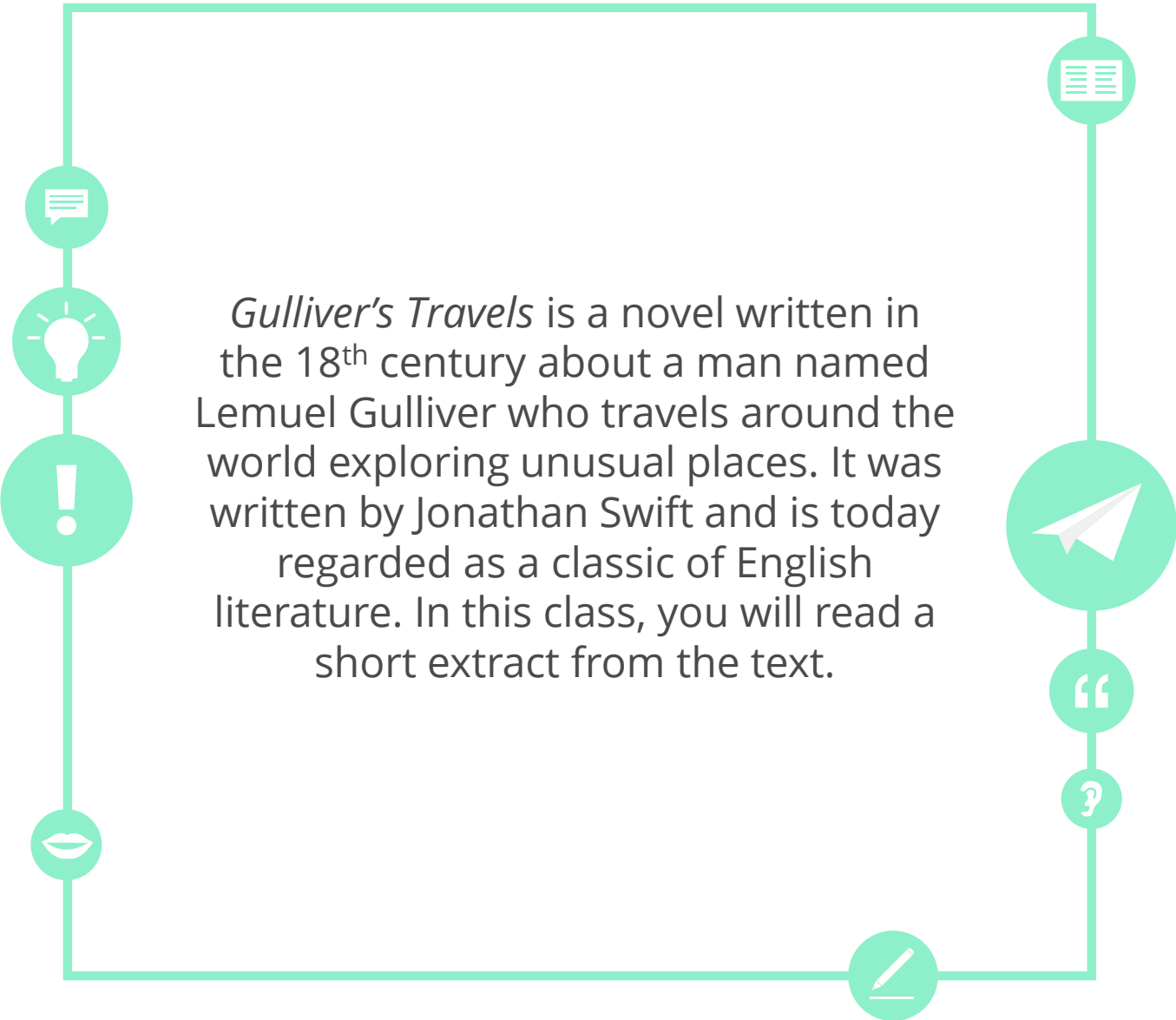




Goals

- Can read and understand a literary excerpt from Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels".
- Can evaluate how people and places are described in the text and how the author explores the theme of science.





Gulliver's Travels is a novel written in the 18th century about a man named Lemuel Gulliver who travels around the world exploring unusual places. It was written by Jonathan Swift and is today regarded as a classic of English literature. In this class, you will read a short extract from the text.



Classics in English literature

Gulliver's Travels is often described as an English literature classic. What makes a book a classic? What other classics of English literature do you know of? Have you read any of these books?





Talking about travel

**Have you ever read
any travel or
adventure writing
before, either fiction
or non-fiction? What
was it like?**



Gulliver's Travels

Gulliver's Travels was first published in 1727 and is a first-person account of a man named Gulliver who explores remote and unusual corners of the world. The following excerpt is from a section of the book where Gulliver travels to Laputa, a flying island, and other countries ruled by the Laputan monarchy.



Gulliver's Travels



The flying or floating island is exactly circular, its **diameter** 7837 yards, or about four miles and a half, containing ten thousand acres. It is three hundred yards thick. The bottom, or under-surface, which appears to those who view it below, is one even plate of **adamant**, shooting up to the height of about two hundred yards.



Gulliver's Travels



Above it lie several minerals in their usual order, and over all is a coat of rich **mould**, ten or twelve feet deep. The upper surface slopes downward from the edge to the centre, causing all the dews and rains that fall upon the island to run in small **rivulets** toward the middle. In the middle, they are emptied into four large basins, each of about half a mile in circuit, and two hundred yards away from the centre. The water in these basins is continually **evaporated** by the sun in the daytime, which effectively prevents their overflowing. As it is in the power of the King to raise the island above the region of clouds and vapours, he can prevent the falling of **dews** and rain whenever he pleases.



Gulliver's Travels

The island is under the care of certain **astronomers**, who, from time to time, give it such positions as the monarch directs. These astronomers spend the greatest part of their lives in observing the **celestial bodies**, which they do with the assistance of telescopes, which far **excel** ours in advancement. For, although their largest telescopes do not **exceed** three feet, they **magnify** to a much greater degree than our own, and show the stars with greater clarity. This advantage has enabled them to extend their discoveries much further than our astronomers in Europe. They have made a catalogue of ten thousand fixed stars, whereas the largest of our star catalogues does not contain above one third of that number.

They have observed ninety-three different comets, and settled their locations with great exactness. If their observations are true (and they affirm them with great confidence), publishing their research would be of huge benefit. Our own theory of comets, which at present is **lacking**, could be greatly enhanced with this knowledge.



Match the new vocabulary with the pictures

1. mould

2. to evaporate

3. dew

4. adamant

5. rivulet

6. diameter

A



C



E



B



D



F





Check your understanding of the new vocabulary. Can you give a brief definition of each word?

celestial body

lacking

to magnify

to excel

astronomer

to exceed



Check your understanding!

You read a very detailed description of the floating island which Gulliver visited. Can you describe the island again to your teacher? Would you like to live on an island like this? Include information about the island that links to the notes on the cards below.



a diameter of
7837 yards

the thickness

a coat of rich
mould

dews and rains

the sun

power of the
monarch



The astronomers



Would you like to work as an astronomer on the floating island? Why or why not? Describe their duties and work as outlined in the text.



Thinking about the writing

**What do you think of
the way the text is
written? Does it strike
you as very exact and
scientific? What kind of
effect does that have?
Do you like it so far?**

scientific?

exact?

realistic?

boring?



Thinking about science

**The text goes into a lot of geographical and astronomical detail.
Discuss the following questions with this in mind.**



1

What do you think the narrator's attitude towards science is?

2

What kind of technology does the island have? Think especially of the astronomers.

3

How does the narrator compare the island's technology and scientific knowledge with Europe's?



Gulliver's Travels

Later that week, I was invited to see the grand Academy of Lagado. This academy is not an entire single building, but a continuation of several houses on both sides of a street. Growing **dilapidated**, these houses were purchased and given a use.

I was received very kindly by the warden, and spent many days at the academy. In every room is one or more projectors; although I lost count, there were no fewer than five hundred rooms.



Gulliver's Travels

The first man I saw was of a **meagre** aspect, with sooty hands and face, his hair and beard long, ragged, and **singed** in several places. His clothes, shirt, and skin, were all of the same colour. He had been working for eight years on a project of extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers. These sunbeams were put in sealed phials, and let out to warm the air in raw, colder summers. He told me that within another eight years, he would be able to supply the governor's gardens with sunshine, at a reasonable rate.





Gulliver's Travels

The sunbeam researcher complained that his cucumber stock was low, and **entreated** me to help him out. I made him a small present, for my lord had furnished me with money for that purpose, knowing their practice of begging from university visitors.

I saw another researcher at work converting heated ice into gunpowder; who likewise showed me a **treatise** he had written concerning the **malleability** of fire, which he intended to publish.





Gulliver's Travels

There was a most **ingenious** architect, who had invented a new method for building houses, by beginning at the roof, and working downward to the foundation. He justified this process to me, by explaining the similar practice of those two **prudent** insects, the bee and the spider.



Gulliver's Travels



There was a man born blind, who had several apprentices in his own condition: their employment was to mix colours for painters, which their master taught them to distinguish by feeling and smelling. It was indeed my misfortune to find them at that time not very perfect in their lessons, and the professor himself happened to be generally mistaken. This artist is much encouraged and **esteemed** by the whole fraternity.



New vocabulary

dilapidated

meagre

singed

to entreat

treatise

malleability

ingenious

prudent

esteemed



Match each new word from the previous slide to its definition below

1. A piece of writing, usually academic and formal in tone, on a given subject.
2. Fallen into disrepair, old and shabby.
3. A word to describe something particularly clever and intelligent, innovative
4. A quality in something which means it can be easily bent and manipulated.
5. Well respected, held in high regard.
6. Wise, cautious, careful.
7. Slightly burnt, a little bit black in places.
8. Not quite enough, a small amount.
9. To try to persuade someone to do something.



Thinking about the text

Answer the following questions thinking about the section of text you just read.

1. What is the narrator's attitude towards the university? Can you tell?
2. How are buildings and people described? Talk about the description of the cucumber researcher.
3. What do you think of the researchers at the Laputian Academy? What kinds of projects are they working on? Do they seem worthwhile to you?
4. Do you think the narrator's attitude towards the island's science and technology has changed?



The use of satire in Gulliver's Travels

Read the description of satire below. Now reflect on the text. What examples of the elements of satire can you find in Gulliver's Travels? What do you think Swift might be trying to say about the island's attitude towards science and technology?



Satire is the use of humour – especially exaggeration, irony or ridicule – to criticise or expose people or their behaviour. One of the most famous examples of satire in the English language is in Jonathan Swift's book, Gulliver's Travels.





Anecdotes and exaggeration

Writers use exaggeration in satire but sometimes people also exaggerate when they tell anecdotes to make the story seem more exciting, scary, impressive, etc. Role play telling the anecdotes below to your teacher and exaggerate the stories to make your story more impressive!



You went fishing and caught a very big fish.

You stayed in an unpleasant and not very clean hotel on holiday.

You visited a colleague's home and it was very luxurious.

You got lost and took a while to get home.



Setting the scene

Look at the pictures below. Imagine you are a writer. How would you describe each scene to your readers? Remember to think about the five senses when making your descriptions: taste, touch, smell, sight and hearing. You can use the sample sentences to help you if you like!

It was a cold and snowy morning...



The little cable car sailed higher and higher...



I had never seen such a beautiful sight...



The sun had gone down and we sat in darkness on the beach...





You are Gulliver!

Now imagine you are Gulliver and you have just returned home from your amazing adventures around the world.

Tell your friend (your teacher) all about your travels, especially the details of the floating island.

- You will also want to describe how you felt on your travels, the sounds and smells as well as the sights. Use your descriptions in the last activity to help you.
- Remember to describe the different researchers at the university. Use as many adjectives as you can think of!
- You can exaggerate to make your anecdotes especially impressive!

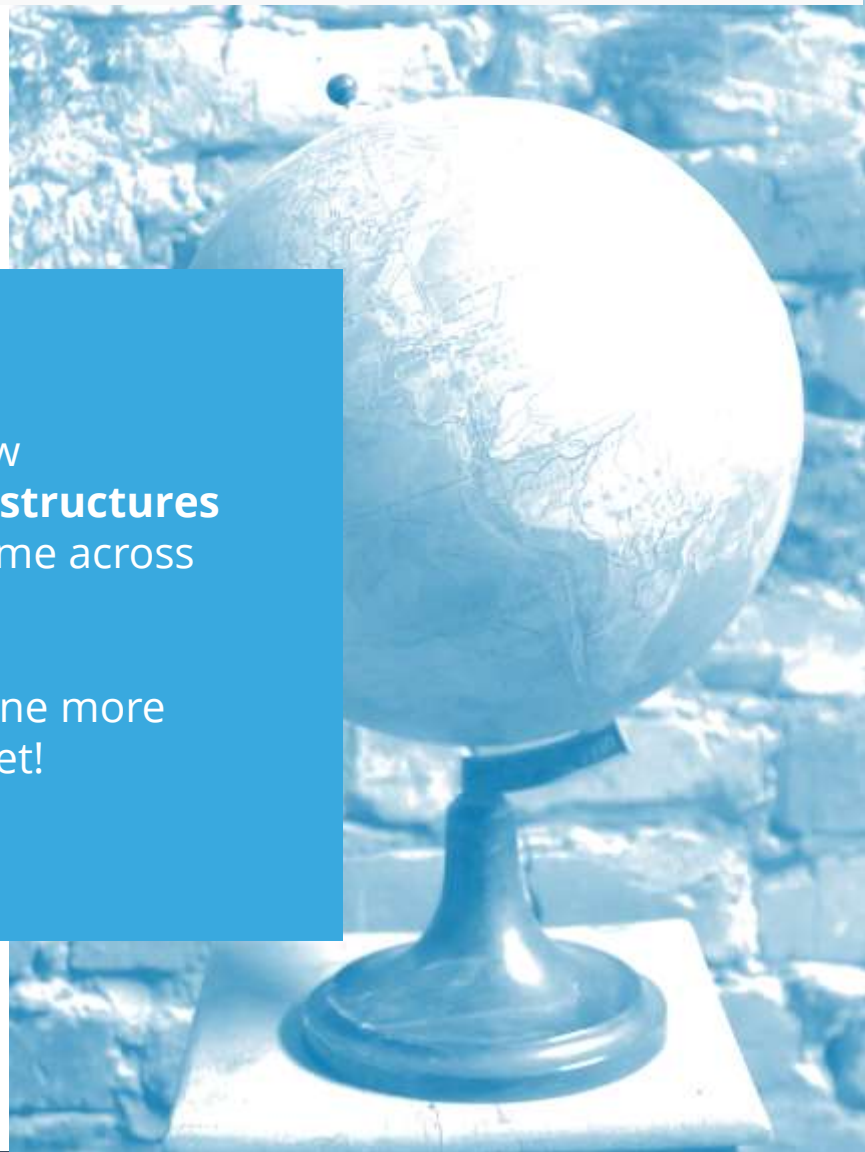




Reflect on this lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





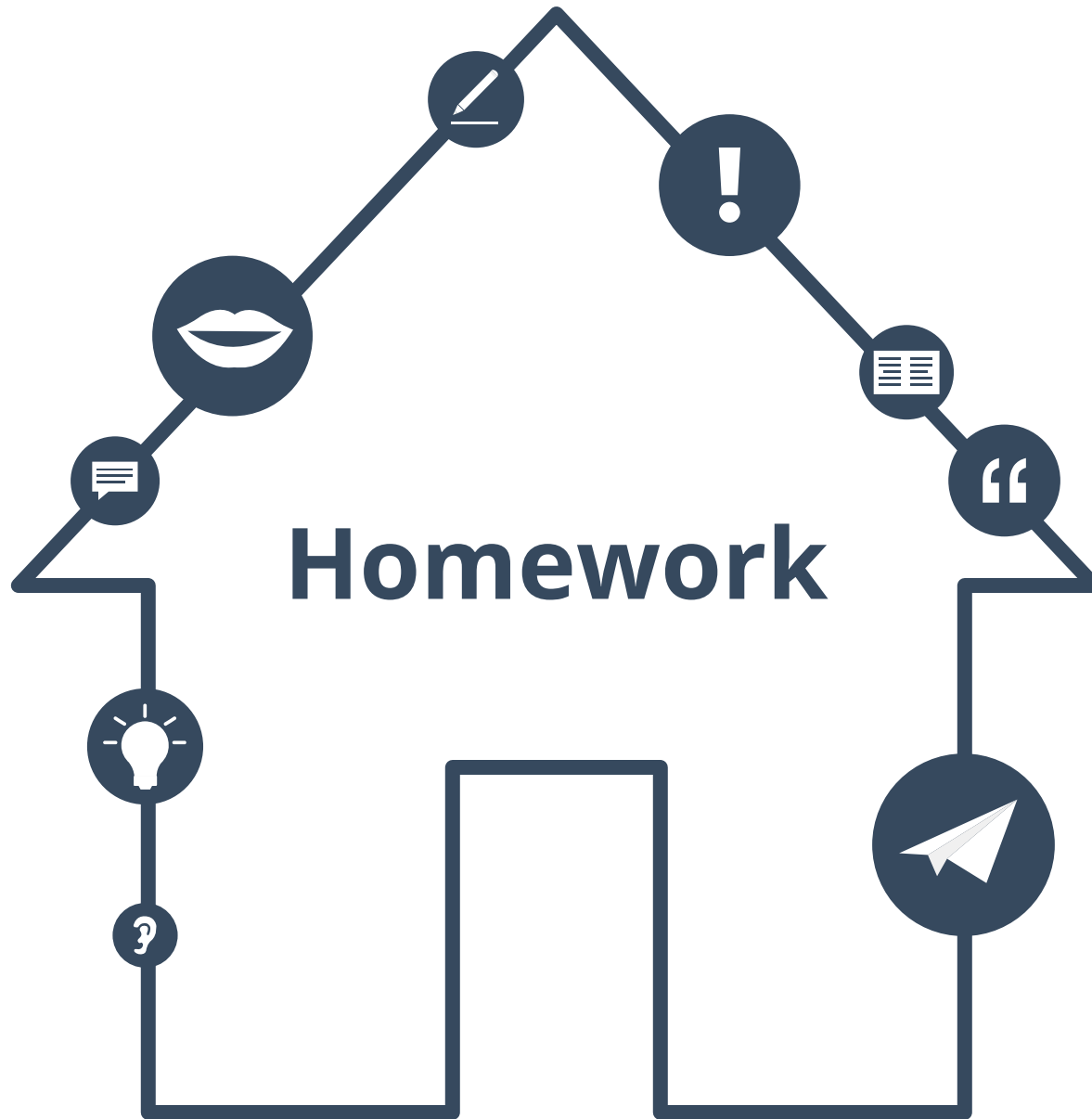
Answer key

Activity p. 22

1 – treatise, 2 – dilapidated, 3 – ingenious, 4 – malleability, 5 – esteemed, 6 – prudent,
7 – singed, 8 – meagre, 9 – to entreat.

1E, 2D, 3F, 4C, 5B, 6A

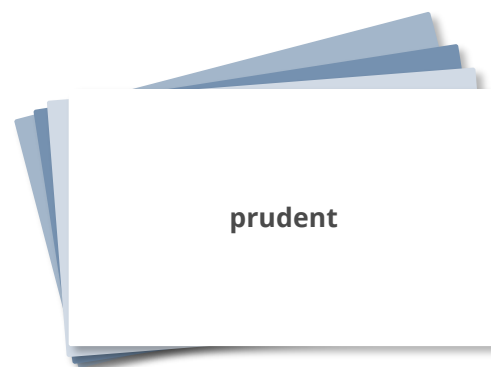
Activity p. 10





Homework evaluation activity

Go back through the lesson and make flashcards of the most useful vocabulary. Include the definition on the back!





Homework writing activity

Write a short paragraph on what you discussed about the text, science, technology and satire.

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