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 **Prestwick House**
Activity Pack
Literature Made Fun!



Gulliver's Travels
BY JONATHAN SWIFT


Prestwick House

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All references come from the Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Classics edition of *Gulliver's Travels*, copyright 2005.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**Swift's Contemporaries**

Objective: Researching the author's contemporaries to lend context to the story

Activity

By researching other writers' work during Jonathan Swift's lifetime (1667 – 1745), you will be able to understand the literary environment in which he was writing. Very few of the writers listed in the following chart wrote major satirical prose works like Swift's, since satire was still in its infancy.

Research and make notations about each of the writers on the chart. Record each writer's year of birth and death, country of origin field(s), and major literary works. The first has been completed for you.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part I: Chapters I – IV**Found Poem****Objective:** Writing a “Found Poem”**Activity**

Jonathan Swift was as well known for his poetry as he was for his satire. Like his prose, his poetry is written with rich language and satisfying rhythm. In this activity, you will assume the role of poet and write a found poem.

A “found” poem is a poem made up entirely of phrases, sentences, or quotations found in the text. Review Chapters I – IV of *Gulliver's Travels*, and create a found poem of your own. One of the best parts of writing a found poem is that it gives you the opportunity to interpret the text in any way you choose. Therefore, your poem may provide details about the plot or characters, or it may be totally unrelated.

Your poem should be at least ten lines long. The lines do not need to rhyme, but they certainly may. You can arrange the phrases in any way you like and change the punctuation, but do not deviate from Swift's actual words. Give the poem a title, which may or may not come from the story. An example, taken entirely from Chapters I – IV follows:

Liberty

I sat on the ground
By the door of my house,
Great Empire of the Universe,
Both my eyes to the sun.
You dropped from the moon,
Or the stars, gold
With diamonds.

I lay on the ground
Many beds of flowers,
A continued garden, the length
Of my chain. I could
Easily free myself...
To bed with
Grief and pain.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part I: Chapters V – VIII**Twitter Summary**

Objectives: Summarizing the main events or ideas from the story
Writing a “Twitter” summary

Activity

Twitter is an Internet website that allows people to share what they are doing with their friends and family in 140 characters or less. The character limit forces people to communicate their ideas without using unnecessary words and details.

Pretend that you have a Twitter account, and write a summary of a chapter from Chapters V – VIII. Remember, spaces count as characters, so you need to focus on only the major plot points.

Example:

Educated but petty Lilliputians want to blind Gulliver, who flees to enemy isle of Blefusco and then to England.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part I: Chapters I – VIII

Satire Illustration

Objective: Illustrating a satirical idea

Activity

Jonathan Swift begins his narrative about Gulliver's adventures in fictional lands by satirizing politics and war. The island nation of Lilliput represents England. The Tramecksan, representing the Tories, and the Slamecksan, representing the Whigs, are political parties vying for power on the island. They are distinguishable by the high and low heels, respectively, on their shoes. Each faction thinks its heels are the right height, and, therefore, superior to the other's heels. Their absurd battle threatens the country's internal stability.

Meanwhile, the external trouble comes from Lilliput's neighboring island Blefuscu, which represents France. The Lilliputians and the Blefuscudians disagree on the right way to crack an egg. Their common religious book advises, "That all true believers break their eggs at the convenient end." The trouble is that the two countries cannot agree on which end that is. Their ongoing battle represents England's religious battle between the Catholics and the Protestants.

Because of Swift's ability to simplify complicated ideas even as he mocks them, *Gulliver's Travels* is often mistaken for a children's book. Imagine you are an artist asked to create an illustration for Part I aimed at children between the ages of four and eight. Your illustration must represent one of the two conflicts in Lilliput. You may use computer graphics, create a collage of collected images, draw free hand, or use any technique and materials available to you.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Part IV: Chapters I – VI**Venn Diagram**

Objective: Using a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast characteristics

Activity

A Venn diagram visually organizes the similarities and the differences between two people or two things. The Houyhnhnms are very different from the Yahoos.

Using the following words, fill in the Venn diagram to compare and contrast the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos. In the center area that both types of characters share, write their similarities, if any. On the left side, write the traits of the Houyhnhnms; on the right side, write those of the Yahoos. We have provided a few traits to get you started.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Evaluation Chart

Objective: Evaluating and critiquing the story

Activity

Now that you have finished the story, you can evaluate it to determine its merit as a work of literature. Using the Evaluation Chart provided, rate *Gulliver's Travels* in the following areas. Consider the questions in each area to assist you in your evaluation.

Plot:

- Did the story maintain your interest?
- Was the pace of the plot appropriate for the story, or was it too fast or too slow?
- Within the fictional context of the plot, was the story believable?
- Did you notice any holes in the plot, or were there any unanswered questions?

Characters:

- Were the characters easy for you to relate to?
- Were the characters well defined?
- Were they consistent throughout the story?

Themes and Motifs:

- Were there any themes and/or motifs in the story?
- Did the writer present a clear message about those themes and motifs? Were they well developed?

Style:

- Did the narrator have a unique and consistent voice throughout the novel?
- Did the writer frequently employ literary devices?
- Did the writer's tone help maintain your interest in the story?

Relevance to the 21st Century:

- Do you think the message of the story is as relevant to readers today?

Suitability for High School:

- Do you think a young adult can learn anything from this novel?