

# Introduction

**G***ulliver's Travels — A Voyage to Lilliput* is a story about adventures in a strange land. It is set in the eighteenth century.

In the story the main character is Gulliver, a ship's doctor. A great storm destroys the ship he is travelling on. Gulliver has to swim to save his life. He finds himself in a land where the people are no more than six inches tall and he is seen as a dangerous giant!

The story is told by Gulliver, and is written like a travel diary. He describes his adventures in the strange land of Lilliput.

*A Voyage to Lilliput* is the first book of *Gulliver's Travels*, a four-part story that was first published as *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World*. You can read the second part, *Gulliver's Travels — Further Voyages* in Level 3 of this series.

*Gulliver's Travels — A Voyage to Lilliput* is a very popular adventure story for young people, but it also has hidden meanings. It is a satire, an entertaining political story. It was written to make fun of the leaders, life, and even religion, at the time.

Read on to find out more about Gulliver's adventures in Lilliput.

## About Jonathan Swift

Jonathan Swift was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1667. His father died before he was born. Swift did not pay much attention to his school work, but he liked to read. He read a lot about things that he was interested in.

He is most famous for writing satires. Besides *Gulliver's Travels*, he also wrote shorter stories such as *A Tale of a Tub* and *A Modest Proposal*. In *A Modest Proposal* he writes a funny and, some say, horrible story. The story says that there are too many people in the world, and not enough food to feed them. Swift suggests a way to solve this problem. He suggests that the babies of poor people could be sold as food for rich people!

Because of this and other stories, people said that Swift hated mankind, and perhaps he was mad. What do you think?

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## A Ship's Doctor

### A student of medicine

**M**y father had five sons. I was the third. When I was fourteen he sent me to Cambridge to study. I was there for three years. Then he did not have enough money to pay my teachers any longer, so I went to London. 5

I wanted to be a doctor. In London I studied medicine with a famous doctor, Dr James Bates. While I was studying I worked for him, too, so my father did not have to pay him any money. There was one other thing I wanted to do very much. I hoped to travel and visit foreign lands some day. 10

I loved reading. Of course, I liked to read about being a doctor. But I also read about science, mathematics, and engineering, which means knowing how to build machines. Best of all, I liked reading about foreign countries, and the way people lived in other lands. When I had enough money, I bought books. But Dr Bates did not pay me much, so I could not buy many! 15

After four years I went home to see my family. I had a pleasant surprise. My father and my uncle gave me forty pounds. Also they promised to send me thirty pounds each year while I learnt more about medicine. That does not seem to be much money these days, but in those days it was a lot. 20

So, at last, I had enough money to do what I wanted. I left Dr Bates and went to study at Leyden in Holland for two years. I still wanted to travel, so I learnt many things which I could use on long sea journeys, or 'voyages' as they are called. 25 30