

Drama and Creative Writing exercises to use in the classroom, including extracts from the script.

1. **In Lilliput** – What is it like to be big in a small place?

You may have power but with it comes difficult decisions too. In the script, Peter Rumney writes about the various decisions Gulliver has to make.

Activities:

- From the script extract below, with dialogue between the Emperor and Gulliver, explore the pros and cons about whether Gulliver should kill the Big Enders.
- This could be set as a court room drama: the students take on roles such as Lilliputians, Blefuscans, Emperor, Gulliver. You could use string with paper clips attached to make Lilliputians puppets (see below)



- **Angel/Demon** - Have a person on either side of Gulliver, one giving him reasons not to kill and the other giving reasons of why he should kill the Blefuscans.
- **Conscience Alley** - To make the final decision, students face each other and hold up their hands to create the tunnel. The students on one side whisper reasons for Gulliver to kill and the other side reasons for him not to kill. Each student takes a turn to walk through the conscience alley and put themselves in Gulliver's shoes. What would you decide when you leave the tunnel?

Scene:

The Emperor orders Gulliver to kill the Big Enders.

Excerpt from the script:

Emperor Matter of Life and Death! Soft or Hard Egg, makes no Odds...All Boiled Eggs *must* be opened at the *Pointy* End. God's Unquestionable Will, three hundred years or more/

Gulliver Well, I see sir, still/

Emperor No discussion! Small End. Small End Only, or... the Execution Squad and Holy War. "Big End" Terrorists *must* be Destroyed Gulliver...You Must Help Eliminate All Big Enders Wot We Hate/

Gulliver But Sire/

Emperor Many Traitors fled to Enemy island in the East. Called....(*with disgust*) Blefuscu. Enormous navy. One hundred well-armed fighting ships at least, plot to sail across *our* wavy sea, destroy *our* Empire, burn *our* city, and then kill *me*... Gulliver, you must sink their fleet, kill the lot, and show no pity!/

Gulliver But... I am a doctor, your Majesty/

Emperor You're my Weapon of Mass Destruction, that's wot you are Gulliver!/

Gulliver And.. if I refuse, Your Majesty?/
Emperor If you
refuse?! You'll see what we can do to those who
Disagree. No, no Gulliver, I may be
Small, but here I Am The Law...We hang all
Big End Traitors from the nearest tree,
remember that! Full Retribution
Fall on those who dare to challenge our
Glorious Revolution/
Gulliver Majesty, it
seems a little heavy handed/
Emperor Nonsense!
Enemy fleet to be disbanded, burnt or
sunk. Remember, *I* can burn *you* out, whilst you're
snoozing in your bunk, urinating won't
work twice, see! So!... Suggestion is, You Will
Agree. Kill Big Enders, Greater Glory, End of
Exiting Story, Now Orf You Go!

2. You did not write.

Scene: Gulliver and Molly

Activity:

- Read the scene below, after Gulliver has just escaped from Lilliput. It was a lucky escape, but Gulliver did not return home.
- Imagine after Gulliver's daughter Molly, hears of his adventures in Lilliput she wrote a letter to him. What would this letter say to Gulliver?

Excerpt from the script:

Gulliver ...and I headed, as I
hoped, westwards towards England, towards my
family, and home...

Snatch of a shanty or other sea song / the Sea

At sea. Sail unfurls.

Act II Scene 1

Land of Giants

Molly

But you did not return

Father, you did not write, you did not/

Gulliver

No,

Molly... I...I was rescued...I... several
days floating I...I/

Molly

I remembered you,

Father, all those years you were away, but/

Gulliver (*Back in his own world. Waving*) Here! I'm here!! Rescued! Thank God!
Rescued!

Additional exercise:

- Perhaps Molly wrote letters and put them in bottles, never knowing whether her father would receive these letters, perhaps her father did the same. What would these letters say? Things to think about : -

Changes in Molly's life and herself?

Changes to Gulliver's life and his view of the world?

What questions might she ask her father?

What questions might Gulliver ask Molly?

3. Iambic Pentameter game

This exercise encourages pupils to engage kinaesthetically with the idea of dramatic verse, and poetic structure in general, opening wider questions about being a stranger in a foreign land.

1. Use a large number of small sponge or tennis balls to warm up with the class in an open space, ideally the hall (e.g. pass the balls swiftly around a large circle, encouraging good eye contact and generosity - no chucking - or practice catching skills)

2. In groups of about 5 children, ask each group to take 10 balls and create a line or pattern across the hall floor.
3. Look at the results together. They will *tend* to be quite cramped, but interestingly different, so ask them to have another go and use much more space on the floor.... they can cross each other's lines of balls, as long as they're respected!

But this time, ask them to do the exercise in absolute silence (very hard, but great as a collaboration exercise)

4. You can respond to each resulting line or pattern, because they can represent different linguistic structures, e.g.

Poetic structures, long and short lines, regular or irregular lines/metre, dramatic conflict, lengthy narrative, the different groupings of consonants and vowels one can use as a writer, and so on.

5. Read the Gulliver shipwreck scene, without letting the children see the written text. What do they see or hear in the story (pair work then class sharing)

Scene: Gulliver's Shipwreck-

Excerpt from the script:

Gulliver (*on deck, in his prime*) Five months out of England, and many a land in Africa and Asia encountered, a storm blew us north east of the Indies, to territories unknown. On the fifteenth November 1699, which was the beginning of summer in those foreign parts....

A sudden call from the rigging. More calls ...our Look Out spies a rock, within a
Sound etc gunshot's distance of the ship! But the wind
being so strong, we are driven directly
onto the rock, we strike, our vessel
splits in two, and we begin to sink.

The on-stage ship is breaking apart

Six of our crew, and I am one, let down

Gulliver making his way downstage to 'narration' position. He rows.

our lifeboat into the ocean, and row three
long leagues till we are fit to drop. Spent with
labour now, we entrust our souls to the

More calls

mercy of the savage sea, until we are
overcome by wind and wave. What becomes

More calls, fainter

of my companions I cannot tell -
but I conclude they all are lost...

Sound: Surf breaking

...I swim as

fortune directs me, pushed by the wind and
tide, till, almost gone and failing fast, I
find myself at last within my depth, the storm
abated and much calmed. Staggering through the

Gulliver making his way upstage again making a giant shadow

shallows near enough a mile, I reach the
shore, where, spying no inhabitants of
any sort, I sink to my knees, lie down and
sleep a sleep sounder than any I have
ever known, before or since...

6. Read the text again, this time allowing them to look at the text as well.

- What do they notice about the structure of the language? (iambic pentameter)
- How might this kind of language help an actor to play his or her part?

- What might be easy or difficult about reading such poetic language whilst being 'truthful'? Can they try it?
 - What kinds of literary devices have been used (alliteration, assonance etc.
 - How have feelings of confidence, despair, or exhaustion been achieved in the language?
 - Why is there only one metaphor in the whole piece? Can they identify it? ('savage sea'). Why is it placed where it is and what does this do to our understanding of Gulliver's physical feelings or his emotions? Do they think the writer deliberately made a choice to do this, or was it instinctive/accidental?
 - Can they compare this with a piece of Shakespeare?
 - Can they draw the island Gulliver is beached on? What is strange about it?
 - What must it be like to be shipwrecked or abandoned on an unknown shore?
 - What must it be like to arrive as a newcomer to a land you don't know?
 - Have they ever experienced something *like* this?
 - Do they know of others who have?
7. Write a 3 line poem with a specific number of syllables (e.g. a haiku 5/7/5) or words (which is easier)
 8. Try other structures
 9. Try writing a speech or dialogue in iambic pentameter

4. A gift for Gulliver

Activities:

- Using this [link](#) you can learn how to make a simple paper boat to set Gulliver a-sail on his journeys.

- To be strong enough to go on these journeys perhaps you could present a gift to Gulliver of something he might take with him on his journey (something he can carry in his mind/heart) to help him maintain his free spirit. Possibly these are the kind of gifts we might also take with us through our own journeys?

Using the paper boats you can write to Gulliver and set him sail on his journey, sending him these wishes/gifts. This could make a nice display.

5. Creating an island (guided journey) draw the island.

In small groups consider:

- If you were the Emperor of an island, what jobs would people have on the island and what would your rules be? List your rules.
- How would you welcome Gulliver to this island, would you adapt/change any of your rules and why? What size would Gulliver be compared to you?
- Do you have a welcoming ritual? Develop this with your group.

6. Yahoo or Human -what's the difference?

Swift describes the Yahoos and unthinking, unfeeling creatures who are more like beasts than humans.

Scene: Gulliver meets the Houthnhnms and Yahoos

Excerpt from the script:

Gulliver	I am no beast. No. No! I am a man! I am an Englishman!/
Stallion/Mare	You are Yahoo/
Gulliver	And you Master, Mistress?/
Stallion	We are Houyhnhnm/
Mare	Houyhnhnm rule this

land. You are a beast of
burden. Yes, you are an
animal, un-civilised,
dangerous/

Gulliver I am a man/

Mare You are no more than this...

Mare makes Yahoo III raise its head, revealing it as more human.

Gulliver forces himself to investigate. He is repulsed.

Yahoo III Yahoo..Yahoo/

Gulliver No! It was a human thing, not so very
different from you or I, and yet, all the
difference in the world, this sad and
hopeless creature, tethered to its mistress like a
dog, this stinking, vacant/

Yahoo III *(at Gulliver)* Yahoo! Yahoo! Yahoo!

Gulliver *(standing tall)* No, I am a man, not a Yahoo/

Mare Yahoo/

Stallion He is Yahoo of a
different sort. Unusual.
We are much surprised.
But still a beast, still
Yahoo. An interesting
Yahoo/

Gulliver I am much more than these Yahoos,
I speak, I reason, I can feel, I dream,
I dream of home, I dream of Glumdalclitch/

Mare Yahoo/

Gulliver I could publish poetry if I

wished, govern others, make the law, yes (*as if he remembers*) I

was, I am a surgeon, saving people's lives,
I am a man, human not yahoo/...

Mare (*Exiting with the Yahoo III*) Yahoo. Human yahoo...

Gulliver (*to himself*) I am, surely, more than Yahoo...

What do you think the Yahoo was trying to communicate to Gulliver?

Do you think the Yahoo wants to see if Gulliver is the same as him, and if so why?

Swift describes the Houyhnhnm as 'noble and civilised beings who are appalled by the behaviour of humans' (Insert Sue's horse design)

In our version,

The Houyhnhnm says of Gulliver in the script:-

Gulliver, your
feet and skin are
different but
inside you are
yahoo, yahoo, your
ya-human lives distress us/

Gulliver says at the end the end of the play

I have returned Molly,
Human and
not human,
I know not what I am,
I am
Houyhnhnm
And I am Yahoo,
I am
All things fine
And all things terrible

Why does Gulliver think he is both Yahoo and Houyhnhnm?
Do you agree with him?