

Study Questions for Gulliver's Travels

Part 1 – Lilliput

1. Dr. Bates has been “pressing Mary for an answer”. What does he want to know from her?
2. Before finding Gulliver, what was the best thing that Clustril and Drunlo had ever found on the beach?
3. How long has Gulliver been away from home?
4. How does one achieve promotion in Lilliputian society? (Does this make any sense? How else would you determine who's worthy?)
 - 4b. What is Swift's real point here?
5. What have the Big-enders and the Little-enders been fighting about? (How many people have died rather than submit?)
 - 5b. What is Swift's real point here?
6. How does Gulliver save the Queen, yet get himself in trouble at the same time?
7. What does the Emperor decide should be done to him?
8. Why does the Emperor “miss his mother dreadfully”?
9. What gift does Gulliver leave for Clustril?
10. Where does Doctor Bates arrange for Gulliver to be sent?
 - 10b. What modern word for upset and chaos have we derived from that institution?

Part 2 – Brobdingnag

11. What job does Gulliver do for Farmer Grultrud?
12. Who goes with Gulliver to the Court of Brobdingnag?
13. How is wealth distributed in Brobdingnag?
14. Gulliver's Lectures on England
 - a) How do people get to be government officials in England?
 - b) Why don't they need much knowledge?
 - c) What criticism does the Queen make of English lawyers?
15. What attitude on the part of Swift towards the British government is evident in questions 13 & 14?

16. How does Grildrig try to get his revenge on Gulliver?

17. How does Gulliver hope to win himself back into the Queen's good graces? Does his plan work?

Part 3 – Laputa, the Academy, Glubbudrib and the Struldbruggs

18. How do you get the attention of one of the wisemen of Laputa?

19. What event are they getting ready to celebrate at the party?

20. What criticism is Swift making of the intellectuals at the Academy, like the Professor of Language and the Professor of Sunlight?

21. How did Alexander the Great die? What does he have in common with a lot of the other “great men of history” called back by the Sorcerer?

22. What point is Swift making with this episode?

23. What gift do the Struldbruggs offer Gulliver?

24. What medication is Gulliver being given in the hospital?

Part 4 – The Houyhnhnms

25. There are several things for which the Houyhnhnms do not have words. What single English word is translated as “the thing which is not”?

26. Why, does Gulliver tell the Houyhnhnms, are clothes so important?

a)

b)

c)

27. What “thing which is not” does Gulliver tell to the Houyhnhnms? Why?

28. What does Gulliver feel he lost while with the Houyhnhnms?

29. Why doesn't Gulliver want his wife to touch him?

30. What is the one thing that Gulliver still cannot tolerate in people?