

Gulliver's Travels

by Jonathan Swift

Jonathan Swift's sharp satirical fantasy takes ship's surgeon Lemuel Gulliver to four extraordinary lands as biting commentary on human nature, politics, and the absurdities of civilization.

Rank #15

Power Words

#	WORD	DEFINITION
1	abominable	adj. nasty and disgusting <i>"The master Houyhnhnm declared war an abominable practice, unable to conceive why rational creatures would choose it."</i>
1	condescending	adj. showing that you feel superior to others. <i>"The Emperor received Gulliver in a condescending manner, inspecting him as one might examine a curious insect."</i>
1	contemptible	adj. deserving of or viewed with contempt; disgraceful; dishonorable <i>"The Houyhnhnms found human warfare so contemptible that they could scarcely believe Gulliver's calm descriptions of it."</i>
1	degenerate	v. to decline in quality or strength. <i>"Swift suggests that civilized societies degenerate precisely when they mistake clever argument for genuine moral virtue."</i>
1	diminish	v. to make or become smaller or less. <i>"Each voyage seemed to diminish Gulliver's faith in humanity, until he preferred the company of horses to men."</i>
1	diminutive	adj. very small in size or amount. <i>"The diminutive Lilliputian soldiers marched in formation beneath Gulliver's outstretched hand, proud of their tiny discipline."</i>
1	exaggerate	v. to make something seem larger or more important than it really is. <i>"Gulliver did not need to exaggerate the cruelties of European civilization — the plain facts horrified his hosts."</i>
1	irrational	adj. not based on reason or logic. <i>"The Yahoos were irrational and filthy, yet Gulliver could not deny a troubling resemblance to his own kind."</i>
1	methodically	adv. in an orderly and systematic way. <i>"Gulliver methodically catalogued the vices of European kings, presenting each atrocity with the detachment of a naturalist."</i>
1	ostentatiously	adv. extravagantly showy or ornate <i>"The courtiers ostentatiously displayed their skill with rope-dancing, competing for titles that carried no practical meaning."</i>
1	pompously	adv. having a feeling of superiority that shows itself in an overbearing attitude <i>"The Lilliputian ministers pompously debated which end of an egg ought properly to be broken first."</i>
1	preposterous	adj. something that is absurd or ridiculous. <i>"The flying island of Laputa seemed preposterous, yet its absurdity mirrored the futility of purely theoretical learning."</i>
1	satirical	adj. exposing human folly to ridicule <i>"Swift's satirical portrait of the Lilliputian court left no doubt that he meant to skewer English politics."</i>
1	scrupulously	adv. 1 marked by close attention to the smallest detail; 2 acting in a correct and honest manner <i>"Gulliver scrupulously recorded every custom he observed, presenting the most barbarous practices in the driest possible prose."</i>
1	tyrannical	adj. 1 of or relating to or associated with or resembling a dictatorship; 2 marked by unjust severity or arbitrary behavior <i>"The tyrannical demands of the Lilliputian Emperor grew bolder with every concession Gulliver was willing to make."</i>