

READING

Jonathan Swift

Jonathan Swift was an Irish writer. He is one of the most famous satirists in the English language.

Swift was born on November 30, 1667. His father died just two months before he was born. Jonathan Swift lived with his uncle, Godwin Swift. He studied at Kilkenny Grammar School, which was perhaps the best school in Ireland at the time. There he became friends with William Congreve, the future poet and dramatist.

When he was fourteen, Swift started studying at Trinity College in Dublin. After finishing his studies, he moved to England where he worked for Sir William Temple, a famous politician. Swift was his assistant for ten years. During this time, he met Esther Johnson, who was only eight years old at the time. They became lifelong friends. Some people think that they later became secretly married.

In 1699, Swift returned to Ireland and worked as a priest just twenty miles outside of Dublin. For the next ten years, he gardened, preached, wrote and worked on his house. In 1710, he moved to London and became the editor of the *Examiner*. However, he returned to Ireland in 1713.

In 1726, Swift published his most famous book, *Gulliver's Travels*. It is the most brilliant of his satires and it was an immediate success. The hero of the book is Lemuel Gulliver, who visits various strange countries. For example, Book I takes Gulliver to the Lilliputans, who are only about 15 centimetres tall, and Book II takes him to Brobdingnag, which is inhabited by giants. In the last book, Gulliver visits a country ruled by intelligent horses.

Not long after the publication of *Gulliver's Travels*, Esther Johnson fell ill. She died in January 1728. Jonathan Swift himself died on October 19, 1745. He was laid to rest next to Esther Johnson inside Dublin's St. Patrick's Cathedral.

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 Who was Godwin Swift? _____
- 2 How old was Jonathan Swift when he started studying at Trinity College? _____
- 3 Who did Swift work for when he first came to London? _____
- 4 How old was Esther Johnson when Swift met her? _____
- 5 When did Swift publish *Gulliver's Travels*? _____
- 6 How tall are the Lilliputans? _____
- 7 When did Esther Johnson die? _____

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Jonathan Swift was born after the death of his father. _____
- 2 Jonathan Swift had a very good education. _____
- 3 In 1699, Jonathan Swift moved from England to Ireland and worked as a priest in Dublin. _____
- 4 In 1710, Jonathan Swift moved from Ireland to England and worked there as a journalist. _____
- 5 *Gulliver's Travels* became popular immediately after its publication. _____
- 6 The people who live in Brobdingnag are very tall. _____
- 7 In the last book, Gulliver visits a country inhabited by intelligent dogs. _____

KEY

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 Who was Godwin Swift? **Jonathan Swift's uncle**
- 2 How old was Jonathan Swift when he started studying at Trinity College? **14**
- 3 Who did Swift work for when he first came to London? **for Sir William Temple**
- 4 How old was Esther Johnson when Swift met her? **8**
- 5 When did Swift publish *Gulliver's Travels*? **in 1726**
- 6 How tall are the Lilliputians? **about 15 centimetres**
- 7 When did Esther Johnson die? **in 1728**

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Jonathan Swift was born after the death of his father. **T**
- 2 Jonathan Swift had a very good education. **T**
- 3 In 1699, Jonathan Swift moved from England to Ireland and worked as a priest in Dublin. **F (he worked as a priest 20 miles outside of Dublin)**
- 4 In 1710, Jonathan Swift moved from Ireland to England and worked there as a journalist. **T (he worked as the editor of the *Examiner*)**
- 5 *Gulliver's Travels* became popular immediately after its publication. **T**
- 6 The people who live in Brobdingnag are very tall. **T (they are giants)**
- 7 In the last book, Gulliver visits a country inhabited by intelligent dogs. **F (it is inhabited by intelligent horses)**