



UNICORN

THE UK'S THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS TEACHER RESOURCE PACK

FOR TEACHERS WORKING WITH PUPILS IN YEARS 3 – 6



A Unicorn Production

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

Inspired by the book by Jonathan Swift

Adapted by Lulu Raczka

Directed by Jaz Woodcock-Stewart

**FROM SUN 6 MAR – SUN 17 APR 2021
FOR PUPILS IN YEARS 3 – 8**

A WONDEROUS WORLD, A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE...

This perfect family show is an adventure-filled modern adaptation of Jonathan Swift's surreal masterpiece.

Lemuel Gulliver sails away to a world of strange islands and even stranger creatures - from the tiny inhabitants of Lilliput, to the giants of Brobdingnag, and the mysterious Houyhnhnms - and embarks upon an epic adventure of survival, unexpected friendship and self-discovery.

Gulliver's fantastical imaginings are vividly brought to life using video camera, intricate table-top sets and projection alongside live performance in this playful, funny and highly inventive show that uses Swift's biting satire to explore reality and escapism, home and family, and the power of stories to transform our view of the world.

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins (approx)

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INTRODUCTION

'What's so captivating about Gulliver's Travels is how complex and nuanced it is; it's not the simple fairy tale it's often made out to be in popular retellings. It's one of those stories everybody knows, but no-one really knows. What you might expect from it isn't necessarily what it is.' **Jaz Woodcock-Stewart**

The Unicorn production of *Gulliver's Travels* is aimed at children and young people in school Years 3 to 8. The aim of this pack is to provide useful information about the production for primary teachers, as well as a series of drama activities which explore key themes, ideas and characters, and provide teachers with practical ideas to use in the classroom with their pupils before and after their visit.

Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is a savage satire depicting absurd places and the beings which inhabit them, as a way of expressing the anger and frustration with which he viewed the failings of human beings: namely, that people are petty, greedy, and self-serving. Swift's book gave his reader a distorted mirror through which to view British society and values.

The Unicorn's production will follow the story of Grace, a young girl in contemporary Britain, as she brings Gulliver's travels alive. As she journeys into strange lands, we witness the power of the imagination to take Grace to other places, escape her reality, and to search for something she needs but doesn't yet know.

The play illustrates the power of the imagination, and speaks to the transformational power of storytelling and theatre to enable us to escape our lives for a time and to reflect on who we are from a different perspective.

CPD: FRI 28 JANUARY 2021, 10AM – 4PM

There will be a **free teacher CPD day** for *Gulliver's Travels*, a chance for teachers to find out more about the show and gain practical experience of the accompanying scheme of work and classroom activities before leading them with a class. For more information or to book your place, email schools@unicorntheatre.com.

Jaz Woodcock-Stewart is co-artistic director of Antler, an associate company at Bush Theatre. She was a finalist for the RTST Sir Peter Hall Director Award 2018 and finalist for the JMK Award in 2016. She was recently on attachment at the NT Studio working on a new play, and was nominated by National Theatre as part of MITOS21, the European Theatre Network, to workshop a piece at Performance Laboratory Salzburg 2019.

For the theatre, Jaz has directed *Civilisation* (Underbelly, Yard), *Lands* (Bush Theatre), *The Bacchae* (East 15 Acting School), *Days Like This* (BAC/BeFestival), *You're So Relevant* (Five Plays, Young Vic), *If I Were Me* (Soho Theatre/Underbelly), *Where The White Stops* (as co-creator; Underbelly/Bush Theatre/UK Tour). Film includes: *Emmeline* (short) winner of BFI Future Film Award for Best Fiction. Work as a Staff/Resident/Assistant Director includes: *Book of Dust* R&D, Dir. Simon McBurney (Complicite); *Network*, Dir Ivo van Hove (National Theatre); *Lazarus*, Dir. Ivo van Hove (Kings Cross Theatre); *Shape of the Pain*, Dir. Rachel Bagshaw (R&D); *Adler and Gibb*, Dir. Tim Crouch, Karl James, Andy Smith (Royal Court tour); *Measure for Measure*, Dir. Joe Hill-Gibbins (Young Vic); *Stink Foot*, Dir. Jeff James (The Yard)

Lulu Raczka is an award-winning young playwright and Company Director of Barrel Organ Theatre. In the past she has been a contributor to Exeunt Theatre Magazine. Her plays include *Antigone* (New Diorama), *A Girl In School Uniform (Walks Into A Bar)* (New Diorama), *Some People Talk About Violence* (Summerhall/Camden People's Theatre), *Clytemnestra* from *The Iphigenia Quartet* (Gate Theatre), and *Nothing* (Summerhall/Camden People's Theatre).

She is a winner of the Sunday Times Young Playwriting Award.

The Unicorn Theatre is the UK's leading professional theatre for young audiences, dedicated to inspiring and invigorating young people of all ages, perspectives and abilities, and empowering them to explore the world – on their own terms – through theatre. Purpose-built for children and based in London, the Unicorn is one of the most prolific producing theatres in the UK, presenting 12 to 15 productions for children of all ages every year, and touring widely across the UK and beyond.

ABOUT THE PLAY

The Unicorn production of *Gulliver's Travels* will be a fresh response to the 18th century novel, bringing key elements of the book to life with a contemporary twist on Gulliver's adventures.

This non traditional production will focus on the question of why we tell stories and how we reconcile living in the sometimes difficult reality of the world by escaping into story to discover meaning in our imaginations.

Our three performers share the storytelling and the many roles imagined in this version. They tell the story of Grace, who lives in London in 2021; life at home is boring and difficult, her sister nags her about her homework and the household chores. They used to have fun together, making up dances and singing, but her sister doesn't have time for her anymore. So Grace escapes into her imagination and sets off on an adventure at sea where she gets swept off course in a huge storm. No longer in control of her life, Grace, or Gulliver, gets taken to extraordinary lands, where she encounters strange people and creatures beyond her imagining.

The story is full of humour, music, dance and amazing technical wizardry. We see the actors bring props, costumes, lights, cameras and intricate table top worlds on stage to create the strange and wonderful worlds Gulliver finds herself in.

Shipwrecked, she finds herself first in Lilliput, where the people are tiny and Gulliver is a giant. The use of multimedia, with live camera and projection will help realise this world of big and small, and enhance the concepts of power, scale, contrast and perspective in the production. Here she finds out about the conflict between the Lilliputians and the Blefuscu, who have fallen out over the right way to eat a boiled egg – should it be opened at the small end or the big end? Unable to agree on this serious matter, the two sides have been at war ever since.

Gulliver doesn't understand the different rules, customs and traditions of the places and people she comes across, but she sees that they share the same problems as people back home; hunger, poverty and inequality.

Gulliver longs to go home, but doesn't know how. She escapes Lilliput and swims to another island, Brobdingnag, where she is now tiny and the Brobdingnagians are giants. A boy discovers her in the undergrowth and persuades his mum that he can keep her. They form a close friendship; dancing and playing together. The boy's mother realises that there is money to be made from this tiny creature and takes Gulliver on a tour where she is forced to sing and dance for the giants' entertainment. She experiences what it is like to be small, insignificant and at the mercy of others.

The boy tries to help her escape, building her a boat out of twigs, but Grace isn't quite ready to go home, so she imagines an eagle which swoops down and drops her in a place called Laputa; a floating island where the people are obsessed with science and mathematical equations. Here there are laboratories where surreal experiments take place and absurd inventions are created – one scientist is working out how to make hard substances out of pillows, while another can bring famous people, like Elizabeth I, back to life so they can ask them any questions that they'd like to.

When she encounters the Strudlburgs – people who are immortal – she is urged to take a potion that will make her immortal, too. She senses that living forever is probably not that desirable, so refuses

the potion. A wise choice.

Eventually, Gulliver is helped to return home to her sister, but home still isn't a comfortable place for her; there are endless chores, her sister still doesn't have time to make up dances with her, and her mother is sick in bed. She wants to leave home, to go back to her travels and the wondrous places she has discovered. The actors tell Grace that the story is over and she needs to be home, but she grabs hold of the narrative and starts to tell the next chapter of Gulliver's travels.

The final stage of her journey takes her to the land of the Houyhnhnms, beautiful horses who sing to each other of peace, beauty, love, freedom and equality. Gulliver is entranced by the Houyhnhnms, and longs to stay with them and learn their song. But the song changes and the Houyhnhnms sing "We'll rub your hands when you are cold... Turn on the lights when you are scared... Put your drawing on the fridge."

Grace is hearing the call from home. The Houyhnhnms fade and she finds herself back home with her sister, who still wants to know whether she's done her homework. And her mother is still ill in bed. Grace reminds her sister how they used to make up dances together and shows her sister the moves. They dance together.

Then Grace realises that she should go and in and see her mother. She is scared and reluctant; her mother is ill in bed. But she goes into the bedroom and when mum asks her to tell her all about her day, she does, and it all pours out of her.

MAKING THE PLAY

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR JAZ WOODCOCK-STEWART

WHY DID YOU WANT TO DIRECT A CONTEMPORARY ADAPTATION OF GULLIVER'S TRAVELS?

What's so captivating about *Gulliver's Travels* is how complex and nuanced it is; it's not the simple fairy tale it's often made out to be in popular retellings. It's one of those stories everybody knows, but no-one really *knows*. What you might expect from it isn't necessarily what it is. It's angry, political, and dark, and I think what appeals to me most about it for a show at the Unicorn, for young people, is that as a young person I loved all that stuff. People assume they can't handle that material, but I feel they absolutely can.

Why it's so great to be telling it on stage is that it's sort of impossible. How do you create not only one world, but a series of worlds that evolve and change every chapter? The challenge of you how you translate that to the stage for the audience's imaginations is an incredibly exciting one.

It's super, super silly as well. It completely appeals to my sense of humour. It's so surreal. There's a lot of naturalism in contemporary play-making (which I also enjoy), but *Gulliver's Travels*... Art can be anything, stories can be anything and they can take you anywhere. There are no limits.

It feels like a really good request to an audience to imagine what the world could be and what this could look like.

The headlines would be: it's cruel, it's impossible and it's mad.

HOW WILL YOUR VERSION BE DIFFERENT TO THE ORIGINAL NOVEL?

In the novel Gulliver is a man, we are making Gulliver a young woman. We didn't find any reason not to, and we felt the well-known narrative about men and adventures could do with being diversified. Girls love an adventure too.

To condense such a huge book into ninety minutes, we can't stage it all. In the book, Grace, our Gulliver figure, returns home after each section, whereas we're going to keep her away from home; this attempt to get home gives her a clear and simple objective - and a universal story that you can relate to at any age. And what happens when she gets home? Will she be satisfied? Is that the end of the story?

There is something here about art and the imagination and our need for it - even when you achieve what you want to achieve, even when you've found somewhere to belong, sometimes that's not enough - she has this yearning to return to the story. When there are difficult and painful things going on in the world, that's a place we will return to again and again.

How do you hold these two worlds, how do you keep a healthy balance between wanting to stay and wanting to go?

HOW DO YOU THINK YOU WILL CREATE THE DIFFERENT WORLDS GULLIVER TRAVELS TO – WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS FOR STAGING?

Rosanna and I are stripping the theatre right back, exposing all the walls, keeping it completely open; a blank canvas. They'll be nowhere for anyone to hide. An abyss of space, an abstract space which is huge, and our performers will look very, very small and insignificant in it.

That image does a lot to convey the emotional reality of the play; what are we all doing here? We're just these little people walking around, creating things to try and understand it all.

WILL THERE BE ANYTHING OF THE 1726 GULLIVER'S TRAVELS IN THE DESIGN?

I think there might be historical elements in different places – it might depend world to world, it might be a mix of contemporary and historic.

A key element to our design is the use of live video. Using video is very effective for the first section, a playful way of playing with scale, the big and small, but it will also be embedded throughout the show. It's fantastically useful in terms of visually symbolising, and thinking about how we tell and construct stories. It's also interesting in that a huge part of the stories we create today are in digital content, whether that be film, TV or social media. Video is the most popular way of communicating, so it's the perfect form for a show that is, amongst other things, very concerned with the nature of storytelling, with the relationship between real life and escapism.

The last part with the horses is the darkest and weirdest section, the most disturbing, but also really beautiful. It asks a question to the creative team; how do you reinvent the form that you've introduced? How do you take us somewhere completely new? Sound design and music felt like a fascinating and exciting solution. Music is so powerful; it felt right that this is the section where everyone sings. Absurd and strange and it comes at an emotional turning point in Grace's journey. As an outsider, she can't access the language, and it felt important to dig into how we make that situation clear to an audience.

HOW WILL THE FOUR ACTORS BE SHARING THE ROLES IN THE PRODUCTION?

We will have one person playing Grace throughout, and three actors multi-roling everyone else in the story. There are about thirty characters, so that's going to be very fun and very exhausting for them.

CONTEXT

SWIFT'S GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

'Swift's satirical fury is directed against almost every aspect of early 18th-century life: science, society, commerce and politics.' **Robert McCrum**

Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* was published anonymously in 1726, with the original title *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World*.

An elaborate practical joke, Swift had half of the manuscript delivered to a publisher with the promise that the other half would be provided on the payment of £200 – a huge sum at the time. The publisher paid the money without knowing who the author was.

A parody written in the tradition of the travel journal, a very popular genre at the time, *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World* claimed to be written by Lemuel Gulliver and to tell of his travels to strange lands around the world.

The book contains detailed records, maps and description of the fantastical places Gulliver visited and the beings he encountered there. Places on his travels are located on the edges of what was known and mapped of the world at the time, so for example, the land of the Houyhnhnms is shown on a map in the book as just south of Australia.

The journal is written with an observational distance. Gulliver is curious and scientific, not becoming swept up in what is happening, but instead recording in a dispassionate, factual way what he finds on his journey: *'I felt something alive moving on my left Leg ... I perceived it to be a human Creature not six Inches high, with a Bow and Arrow in his Hands, and a Quiver at his Back.'*

The book became an immediate hit and from the beginning had broad appeal, with adults appreciating the anger-fuelled satire and children enjoying the adventure and wild creations of Swift's imagination.

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

The book divides the journeys of Lemuel Gulliver, a sea captain and a surgeon, into four sections.

The ship carrying Gulliver is shipwrecked and he finds himself on Lilliput, the only survivor. This is a land where the people are only six inches high. The most famous image from the book is of the giant Gulliver being tied down by lots of tiny people. Imprisoned by the Lilliputians, Gulliver hears about their absurd customs, including the political rivalry between those who wear high heels and those who wear low heels. Meeting the king later, Gulliver hears about the fighting between the Lilliputians and the empire of Blefuscu over whether boiled eggs should be opened at the bigger or the smaller end.

Next, Gulliver travels to Brobdingnag, whose inhabitants are giants within a gigantic landscape. Now it is Gulliver who is tiny, having to fight off giant wasps. Captured by a farmer, Gulliver is exhibited as a curiosity and eventually sold to the queen. When talking to the king, he proudly describes life back home in England and the political and historical achievements of the Europeans. The king responds in

surprising way: he thinks that the people Gulliver describes sound appalling. *‘The most pernicious race of odious little vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth.’*

Gulliver then offers to make gunpowder for the king, but the king is horrified by the thought of such weaponry.

The tiny Gulliver is picked up by an eagle and dropped into the sea, where he is rescued by people his own size and taken to Laputa, whose people have eyes pointing in different directions: one inward, and the other upward. The people of Laputa study maths and music, but are so lost in thought that they do nothing practical with their knowledge. On the island of Lagado, Swift satirizes contemporary science as Gulliver describes an experiment which attempts to extract sunbeams from cucumbers.

On Glubbdubdrib, an island of sorcerers, Gulliver speaks with great men of the past and learns about the lies of history from them. In Luggnagg, he meets the Struldbrugs, a people who are immortal but still age as though they were mortal.

His last visit is to the land of the Houyhnhnms - horses who are rational and humane. They have no words for evil or deception and live a communal, harmonious life. Living alongside them are the Yahoos; brutish, greedy, and dirty, the Yahoos look like humans and display human beings’ worst traits.

The Houyhnhnms are curious about Gulliver as he looks like a Yahoo, but behaves in a more civilised way. But when Gulliver describes his people and their history to the king of the Houyhnhnms, they both see that the English are not more civilised than the Yahoos.

Gulliver returns home, having learnt from his travels the true nature of his own society. Disgusted with human beings, he chooses to spend the rest of his days with horses.

A biting satire on contemporary British politics, it is Gulliver’s failure to really see and understand what he encounters that is essential to the satire. He attempts impartiality, but his lack of awareness about the realities of his homeland becomes more and more apparent. In the land of the Houyhnhnms he is finally brought to a realisation about the nature of his own civilisation, and so returns home changed by his travels.

‘Swift’s genius is to see that pride and self-disgust are near neighbours. Gulliver begins his voyages as a prideful modern man, confident in the values of his culture; he ends as a maddened misanthrope, and, disturbingly, the unwitting object of the book’s satire.’ **John Mullan**

DRAMA ACTIVITIES

The drama activities in this pack are designed to give teachers ideas and strategies for work in the classroom through which to explore the characters, themes and setting of the play before and after a visit. They extend the imaginative reach of the play and allow children to give shape to their own thoughts, feelings and understanding in drama form.

Our teacher resources and CPD support teachers in embedding drama in their curriculum planning. Working through drama allows children to explore things that matter to them within a fictional context, draw on their prior knowledge and apply it to new situations, develop language as they give expression to new understandings and develop emotional intelligence and critical thinking as they explore things from multiple perspectives. Drama enables children to take responsibility, make decisions, solve problems and explore possibilities from within a fictional context.

OVERVIEW

In this section, there are three sequences for teachers to work through with their classes. The activities are designed to build sequentially, but also to be flexible enough for you to adapt to your own classroom priorities and curriculum planning.

The drama work seeks to explore the idea central to the play; how we can travel to new places in our imaginations as a way to escape reality for a time, and find out a little more about ourselves, the world we live in and what matters to us.

Sequence One: Explorers in History is a short sequence giving children the opportunity to consider the idea of great explorers throughout time who travelled into the unknown to discover new places.

Looking at *Gulliver's Travels* in relation to the 'Age of Exploration', activities consider what it is like to discover somewhere new or to experience something for the first time.

Sequence Two: Imagined Lands is an extended drama over three separate sessions. The children are asked to imagine they are sailors and explorers who go on a journey to unknown lands. When they are shipwrecked, the explorers find themselves on strange islands where they imagine the geography of these islands, the flora and fauna, and the people or creatures who live there.

This sequence explores the pull between home and the desire for adventure and journeying into the unknown.

Sequence Three: Gulliver's Travels introduces the children to some of the characters in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and provides a brief introduction to the original story from which the Unicorn Theatre's production is adapted.

SEQUENCE ONE

EXPLORERS IN HISTORY

AIMS

To give some historical context to Swift's book of adventurers and explorers.

To consider the idea of journeying to unknown places.

To draw on children's experiences of seeing or trying something new for the first time and develop this through simple improvisation.

RESOURCES

A world map or globe, BBC film on Columbus and other explorers, images of animals, plants, food and environments from around the world (**resource one**).

STRATEGIES

Discussion, paired improvisations.

INTRODUCTION

This short sequence gives children the opportunity to consider the idea of great explorers throughout time who travelled into the unknown to discover new places.

Looking at *Gulliver's Travels* in relation to the 'Age of Exploration' activities consider what it is like to travel somewhere new or to experience something for the first time.

STAGE ONE: EXPLORERS IN HISTORY

- Explain that the play you are coming to see at the Unicorn Theatre is called *Gulliver's Travels*, and is based on the novel by Jonathan Swift, about a man who travels to strange and extraordinary places. The novel was written in 1726, and at that time, many places on earth hadn't yet been mapped, and the majority of people didn't travel, and had little idea what other places on earth were like or how other people lived.
- Introduce the idea of explorers – people who go to new places to discover what is there, to record scientific discoveries, and to map the places they visit.
- Discuss explorers who have been the first people to visit particular places; for example, deep sea explorers, explorers to the North and South Poles, and space.
 - What must it have been like to be the first human being to travel to these places?
 - What do you think the explorers were looking for on these travels?
 - Why would they go on these dangerous journeys into the unknown?

- Discuss how there was a period in European History which people called the 'Age of Discovery' or the 'Age of Exploration'. The period was between the 15th and 18th centuries, when advances in shipbuilding and new knowledge of navigation enabled Europeans to sail around the world and to discover new places they had never visited before.
- Introduce Christopher Columbus as an example of one of these explorers. He set sail from Portugal hoping to reach Asia. He knew the earth was round but thought it was smaller than it is and thought that by sailing West from the Canary Islands he would get there faster than by sailing East as he had done before. But he didn't know about the existence of the Americas. Instead of arriving in Asia he landed in the Caribbean. Look on a globe or map to see the route Columbus took and why he reached the Caribbean by accident.

A BBC film on Columbus can be watched here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/ks2-christopher-columbus/z7j3hbk>

- Discuss what you think the great explorers of this period might have been looking for and why they might go on these long and dangerous expeditions? Your discussion might include:
 - To trade with other people: buying new foods, fabrics, spices etc.
 - To map the world: to understand more about the geography of the world, different climates and environments
 - For scientific research: understanding the flora and fauna of these lands
 - For anthropological reasons: to find out about how other people live in other parts of the world
- Discuss the way in which the history of this period is bound up in the history of colonialism; where people travelled around the world for many of the reasons described above, but also in order to exploit or take the resources from the indigenous people who lived there.
- The book *Gulliver's Travels* is a satire on European culture and politics and is critical of colonialism in many ways. However, it is also a book of its time and, viewed from the 21st century, is still problematic, in terms of a Eurocentric perspective where our 'hero' visits new lands and describes the people he encounters as 'other' to himself and western Europeans.
- Explain that the Unicorn production of *Gulliver's Travels* will be different to the original; Gulliver is a young woman who sets off on an adventure at sea and then spends a lot of her time trying to get home. It is a play about escaping reality; the journey of someone trying to find herself through her imagination and travels into an imaginary land where she discovers extraordinary places and people.

STAGE TWO: EXPERIENCING NEW THINGS

- In pairs or small groups, ask the children to discuss how it feels to try something new for the first time.
 - Can they remember what it was like to try a particular food for the first time?
 - Or go to a new place that was very different from home?
- Ask them to describe the experience to each other in as much detail as possible: what they saw in a new landscape, what the weather was like, different sounds they heard, or how they experienced new tastes and smells
 - Did they enjoy their new experiences?
 - How did they compare to the food and places they are familiar with?
- Discuss the way in which exploring is about experiencing things that are unfamiliar and discovering new things. And the way in which we experience new things in relation to what we already know, so when we travel to new places, we compare them to the places we know. When we try new foods, we compare them to the foods we know.

STAGE THREE: IMPROVISATION – DESCRIBING NEW EXPERIENCES

- Introduce the idea that people who travelled the world would encounter different food, animals, plants, sea life and environments that they had never seen before, and probably had never imagined existed. For example, the potato, a food that is very common and everyday now, was probably first introduced to the UK in the 15th century, and pineapples in the 18th century. Travellers from Europe who saw giraffes or lions for the first time would have returned home and described them to their family and friends. Someone from the UK who had never travelled would never have seen a desert, a glacier or a volcano, and would not know that they existed.
- Ask the class to think about things and places they know about because of television, film and photography, but which they have not seen or experienced for themselves. It could be the Serengeti, or Mount Etna, for example, or something much closer to home; mountains in Scotland, lakes, or the sea, for example. Can they imagine a time before technology showed us these places and what it might be like to have them described to you, or to maybe only see a drawing or painting of these places?
- Move the class into pairs and ask them to label themselves A or B. Ask As to imagine that they have returned from their travels, where they saw something extraordinary on their journey, and describe this to their partner. Bs should listen to the description and show how they react when they hear about this new thing which they've never seen or heard about before, they can ask questions for clarification. As can describe what it looks like, what it feels like, and how it compares to landscapes, wild animals or foods in England.
- Provide a list or images for the As to choose from. This could include bananas, potatoes, rice, pineapples, kiwi fruit, giraffes, lions, elephants, anteaters, deserts, glaciers, volcanos, palm trees etc. You might want to provide images for the children to look at before their improvisations. Try a mixture of things that are very familiar to us – like the things on the list above – but also some extraordinary things that children might be less familiar with (**resource one**).
- Use a listening hand to 'listen in' to the paired improvisations around the room; when you open your

hand next to a pair, it acts like a microphone, and everyone can hear a snippet of their conversation.

- Swap around and ask Bs to be the traveller and A's the person who is listening to the description of the amazing things B encountered on their travels.
- Discuss how the children found this activity.
 - Did they find it easy to imagine what it might have been like to see these things for the first time?
 - What would it have been like to hear about these things without being able to see them for themselves? Would they have believed what they heard? Might they think that the traveller had exaggerated?
- You could try the paired improvisations again; this time with A's describing an imaginary creature or place that they have seen on their travels. Ask them to be as wild and imaginative as they can be.
- Or choose one child to be the traveller describing to the whole class the thing they have seen on their travels; the rest of the class can ask questions and the traveller's job is to describe what they have seen in as much detail as they can.

STAGE FOUR: REFLECTION

- Finish this session by discussing what it must have been like for explorers in that time to travel to places they didn't know existed and how different it is in the 21st century when we can see so much of the world and the universe in film and photographs.
- You could look at early descriptions of animals, plant life and places that people recorded on their travels, or at early maps of the world before there was highly accurate mapping (**resource two**).

SEQUENCE TWO

IMAGINED LANDS

AIMS

To develop a whole class drama as sailors and explorers setting out into the unknown.

To provide a structure within which the children can create imagined worlds.

RESOURCES

Environments text (**resource three**), crew advert (**resource four**), map of the world, image of a sailing ship (**resource four**), map of the unexplored islands (**resource five**), paper and pencils, large paper or interactive whiteboard.

STRATEGIES

STOP/GO, discussion, the listening hand, whole class improvisation with teacher in role, drawing maps, short scene-making, teacher narration.

INTRODUCTION

This is an extended drama broken down over three separate sessions. The children are asked to imagine they are sailors and explorers who go on a journey to unknown lands.

When they are ship wrecked the explorers find themselves on strange islands where they imagine the geography of these lands, the flora and fauna, and the people or creatures who live there.

This sequence examines the pull between home and the desire for adventure and journeying into the unknown.

SESSION ONE – HOME AND AWAY

STAGE ONE: STOP/GO – ENVIRONMENTS

- Ask children to find a space in the room and explain that we are going to imagine travelling to new environments. Start with a simple game of STOP/GO, with children moving around the space and stopping and starting when you say.
- When you have established focus with the class, explain that as you describe different places, they should try and imagine they are moving through these landscapes (below and **resource three**).

You are in a desert. It's very hot and dry, there is sand underneath your feet, and it is hard to walk as your feet sink into the dry sand. The sand dunes stretch out for miles; you can see nothing beyond them. You see something on the ground – you pick it up and put it in your pocket.

Now the ground underneath your feet gets wetter and muddier, the air becomes moist, there are tufts of grass, plants, and pools of water all around. You have entered a swamp. It becomes even

harder to walk, as the earth squelches under your feet and you have to work hard to not sink into the mud. You look down and see an insect – nothing like anything you’ve seen before. You make a drawing of it and put the drawing in your pocket.

As you walk, there are more and more trees growing around you, and the ground is firm under your feet. You are in the heart of a forest, with trees all around you, you look up and can see birds and other creatures up in the trees. You hear something behind you. You turn and see a creature disappearing into the trees. STOP the children and ask some to describe the creature they have just glimpsed. Is it like any creature they have seen before? How big was it? Was it furry, or scaly? How did it move?

As you continue you find a path out of the forest and then find yourself in a city – it is like no city you have ever seen before. Is it an ancient city, or a very modern city? What are the buildings like around you? What are they made out of? It is early morning and there are no people around. I wonder what kind of people live here?

You continue walking out of the city and uphill. You look back down into the city behind you. The air changes and becomes fresher and clearer. It’s colder, and the hills turn into mountains. You climb to the highest point of the mountain and look all around you. What do you see?

In the distance you see a huge expanse of water. It is the sea. You decide to take your shoes off, feeling the spongy, rich moss of the mountains under your feet, and you run (the children should run on the spot) all the way down the mountains, dodging trees and rocks. You feel the ground change underneath you, from rich and earthy to dustier, and finally sand. As you reach the tide, you throw yourself into the ocean, feeling the cool waves over your skin. You take a deep breath and swim underwater, seeing lots of different things on the sea bed... Like? (Take suggestions from your group). You collect something in your hand and swim to the surface, and finally rest from your long journey on your back on the beach.

You sit up, feeling the sun on your face, and you take the drawings and items you’ve collected out from your pocket, and look at them.

- Gather the children into a circle and ask them to share what they have collected from their explorations. *What did they find in the desert? Can they describe the insect that they drew in the swamp? What creatures did they think they glimpsed in the forest? What was the city like that they visited? What did they collect under the sea?*
- Discuss what the children enjoyed in their imaginary explorations. *What was it like to discover new and different kinds of environments? How easy did they find it to imagine places that they haven’t experienced for themselves?*

STAGE TWO: HOME

- Discuss with the children what that idea of home means to them. Consider that for some people who have had to move a lot, or are not settled right now, that home might mean a feeling, or a person, or a particular food. Ask the people to think about:
 - When do you feel most at home?
 - What are you doing?
 - Is there anyone there with you?
 - Is there a smell that you associate with home?
 - What do you eat?
 - What sounds do you hear in the background?
 - What do you see around you?
 - What does it feel like to be home?
 - What would you miss the most if you had to leave home for a long time?
- Write up all the words that you come up with together that describe what home feels like and means to you. Then move the children into pairs, and ask them to take it in turns to be a guide for the other, showing them around their home, pointing out the important things that makes it our home.
- Alternatively, children could create drawings that show what home means to them. You can model this for them first; create a drawing which shows some of the things that make home for you.
- Gulliver leaves home for adventure and to explore the world. Discuss all the different reasons you can think of why someone might leave home – some reasons will be by choice, others because the person has to leave. Write all the reasons up on large paper or an interactive whiteboard so that you can consider them as you add to the list.
- *What do they imagine it would feel like to leave home for a long time?* Think about this question in relation to the different reasons you have identified.
- Explain that in the play, Grace leaves home partly because she is bored and restless and her home life is difficult right now. She is searching for something, but she doesn't know what. Think about what it means to not know what it is you are looking for.

STAGE THREE: EXPLORERS

- Explain that you are going to explore the idea of people who agree to go on long journeys to new places. Think back to the work you did around explorers in the 15th to 18th centuries, and the kind of people who might go on those ships travelling into the unknown.
- First discuss in pairs and then feedback as whole group:
 - Why might someone be an explorer?
 - Why might they go somewhere no-one from their country has been before?
 - What might they be looking for?
 - What might they have to be prepared for?
 - What kind of things might be unexpected?
- Explain that on the expeditions many of the people on board the ships went because they needed a

job – some would go because of their spirit of adventure and curiosity, others because they needed to earn money to support themselves and their families.

- Write up your ideas as a whole class so that they are there to refer to as you develop the drama work going forward.
- Now discuss:
 - What kind of people do we imagine explorers might be?
 - What kind of temperament or skills might they need?
 - What kind of personalities might they have?

STAGE FOUR: CREW RECRUITMENT

- Ask children to read the following advertisement (below and **resource four**) in small groups of four or five children. You may want to read the advertisement to younger age groups and discuss any new vocabulary together.

It reads:

Do you want to join us on an exciting expedition to discover new worlds? We are looking for crew for our ship; those who have experience at sea – or are willing to learn. The journey by sea may take many months. We are going to discover places where – as far as we know – no human has visited before.

While on our travels into the unknown we will want people to record what we find: cartographers – those who can draw maps showing the landscape of these new places; people interested in recording plant life and wildlife in these new lands; geographers; those interested in different environments and the weather systems that have shaped them.

We need people who are ready for an adventure and who are prepared to step into the unknown.

- Ask children to feed back on the following from the advert:
 - What is the advertisement looking for?
 - What roles are they looking for people to fill?
 - What kind of people are they looking for - what kind of skills or temperaments do they want from recruits?

STAGE FIVE: PAIRED IMPROVISATIONS

- Ask the children to imagine they are someone who has decided they might want to apply to join the expedition, and to think of the reasons they would like to go.
- Now ask them to come up with two strengths each that they have which would make them right for the job. *What qualities or skills do they have that might be useful on such an expedition?*
- Now think of one weakness they have, or something they will find difficult on such a trip, for example: they can't swim; they like time on their own; they're frightened of insects, etc.

- Finally, ask them to imagine what their character will miss most about home – something that will make it hard to leave for a long time.
- Ask them to imagine that they are meeting with their friend to discuss whether they should apply to the advert and go on the journey into the unknown; they haven't made their final decision. Improvise the discussion they have when they talk about why they want to go, why they'd be right for the job, what they will miss from home, and what they will find difficult if they do go.
- Use a listening hand to 'listen in' to the paired improvisations around the room; when you open your hand next to a pair, it acts like a microphone, and everyone can hear a snippet of their conversation.
- Alternatively, you could 'hot seat' the pairs. Ask them to sit side by side in the hot seat and, as a class, question them about their decision to apply to go on the expedition; the things they are looking forward to, and the things that might concern them about going on such a journey.
- Finish by discussing what they showed in their drama work: the type of people who would apply to the advert and those that wouldn't, and the many different reasons for their decisions. Explain that in the following work, you would like them to imagine that they are people who have decided to apply.
- For those children who were leaning towards not applying in their improvisations, ask them to consider a reason why they would apply despite not really wanting to go - the most likely reason is that they and their family need the money, but they may think of others.

STAGE SIX: IN ROLE MEETING PROSPECTIVE CREW

- Create a space in the hall which can serve as a meeting room for those who have applied to join the crew of the expedition into the unknown; benches or chairs in a semi-circle works well. Have a map of the world up on the wall to refer to (you could also have a picture of the ship that you will be travelling on; see **resource five**).
- Explain that you will soon go into role as the leader of the expedition – the person who wrote the job advert – and that you would like them to take on the role of the people who have applied to join the expedition.
- Ask them to take up a position in the meeting room and imagine they are waiting to hear whether they will be accepted or not; ask them to think about how they are feeling and how this might show in their body language and facial expressions. Ask them to remember what they had decided were their strengths and weaknesses, and what they had decided about why they were prepared to leave home for such a long time to travel into the unknown.
- Enter the meeting in role as the captain of the ship and leader of the expedition.
- Welcome them to the meeting and explain that before confirming their success in applying to join the expedition, you want to make sure that they are clear about what they are taking on, and give them the opportunity to ask questions about the voyage.
- Use the outline script (below and **resource six**) as a guideline for this part of the in role work. This isn't intended to be followed fully, but to give you an idea of the kind of information to impart and

questions to ask the children in role. Try to balance information-giving as the captain with asking questions of the children in role as potential crew, and giving them the chance to ask questions. Try to build on and develop what is of interest to them within the drama, and extending and challenging their thinking from within the role.

Thank you all for your applications; I was very impressed by the skills and strong character you demonstrated. However, before finally agreeing to bring you on the journey of a lifetime, I want to make sure you're right for the job and give you the opportunity to withdraw – you may decide this trip is not for you.

This is a journey of discovery; we will be travelling to places unmapped by humans. Until very recently, no-one knew that this series of small Islands existed, we thought that this area (indicate on map) was just ocean. But the great explorer Captain Wainwright spotted the islands as they were sailing back home from their travels. They weren't able to stop – they would have run out of supplies, and didn't know if they would be able to find food or fresh water on the islands. Plus, many of the crew were keen to get home to their families and friends.

*However, as they sailed past the islands on their ship, they were able to make out a few features of the islands and to plot them on this very rough map (Create a rough map of the Islands based on **resource six**). The islands all looked very different; one was covered in dark forest, one looked to be very swamp-like, one was mountainous, one looked like a desert, and one looked green and lush and seemed to have a huge lake at its centre. They saw a sixth island in the distance and weren't sure if they could see a city built on it – it could have been a dramatic series of rocks and mountains. It was too far away to tell.*

So this is a journey of discovery, into the unknown. We do not know what we will find.

The journey will be long – you will be spending months at sea:

- *How will you cope?*
- *Have you got experience of such long expeditions?*
- *What skills will you bring with you?*
- *How will you deal with weeks at sea?*
- *What do you think the challenges will be?*
- *Remind me of what you said your strengths are for this kind of expedition.*
- *We all have weaknesses, and on a journey of this nature it is wise to acknowledge them; what did you identify as your weaknesses, and how might you overcome them?*

Use this part of the discussion to acknowledge people's differences and how important these will be on the journey. One of the greatest challenges of such a journey is how to live together in a way that supports each other, and makes the best of each individual's potential.

What questions do you have about the journey?

We need to remember that when we visit these islands we must be respectful; we don't want to disrupt or affect the ecosystems on these lands.

We don't think the Islands are inhabited, but we must be prepared for everything. If we do encounter people, we must make it clear we come in peace – how could we do that?

I know some of you are experts: at map making, at botanical science, at zoology – the study of animals - and at geography. We want to record everything you discover along the way.

- *What do you hope to find?*
- *What are you worried about?*
- *How will you cope with the unexpected?*

- Finish the in role improvisation by congratulating them, and telling them that they have been successful.

Well done! You have demonstrated that you have what it takes to join the crew on this once in a lifetime voyage.

We set sail tomorrow. You must go home and pack a very small bag with a few essentials, and say goodbye to your loved ones.

SESSION TWO – THE JOURNEY TO NEW LANDS

STAGE ONE: CAPTAIN'S COMING

- Begin with a game of Captain's Coming as a way of bringing life to what it might be like on board a sailing ship.
- First find out what experience children have had of going on a ship or a boat, or if they have seen any films or television programmes about life on the seas. Have the image of an old sailing ship from the in-role section to refer to before you begin.
- Ask the children to find a space in the room and explain the rules. When you call out certain instructions, the children should respond as quickly as possible with the actions described below:
 - Bow: all move to the front, or bow, of the ship
 - Stern: move to the back of the ship
 - Port: move to the left side (facing the bow)
 - Starboard: move to the right side
 - Climb the rigging: mime climbing the rigging to the top of the mast
 - Raise the main sail: in trios, mime pulling the ropes which raise the sails
 - Land ahoy: show a person in the crow's nest with a telescope seeing land in the distance
 - Scrub the deck: on hands and knees mime scrubbing the deck
 - Lifeboat: in groups of five or six, show rowing a lifeboat (and imagine the ship sinking as they get away)
 - Captain's coming: stand to attention, saluting. When the captain says 'at ease' they can relax
 - Practicing knots: sit down and mime practicing tying rope knots

- Information about life at sea in the Age of Exploration can be found online:

<https://www.history.co.uk/shows/mankind-the-story-of-all-of-us/articles/the-age-of-exploration>

<https://www.newworldexploration.com/explorers-theses-blog/life-at-sea-in-the-16th-century>

<https://www.lcps.org/cms/lib4/VA01000195/Centricity/Domain/4153/Life%20on%20ships.pdf>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sailing_ship#/media/File:Running_Rigging-Square-rigged_ship--Biddlecombe.jpg

STAGE TWO: LEAVING

- Ask children to find their own space in the room, and to imagine they are packing their bag for the long journey. They only have a small canvas bag with space for a few things; a change of clothes, something to remind them of home, something that might keep them going on the long weeks and months on board ship, something that might be useful when they reach the islands. Remind them that this is a time before there was modern technology, so there would be no photographs, tablets or phones.
- Ask them to imagine there is someone they are leaving behind to whom it will be hard to say goodbye; it could be a friend, a sibling or another relative. Give everyone a piece of paper and pencil and ask them to leave a note behind for them. *What would they say to them about why they're going on the journey, and to reassure them?* Remind them to draw on the reasons for leaving they explored in the previous drama work.
- Ask the children to choose one sentence they have written that they would be happy to read out, and go around the class hearing something from everyone.
- Get the children up into the space and ask them to imagine they have arrived on the quay ready to board the ship; they can see it in the harbor with its tall masts and sails. Explain that before they can set sail, they need to load the ship.
- Create two straight lines of crew from the quay up the gangplank to the ship, and begin to mime passing boxes and sacks of food along the chain, from one to the other, into the ship's hold; first the ship's biscuits, sacks of grain, cured meats, salt for preserving, and oranges. Now begin to roll barrels of water and rum into the hold. Hoist the sail and check wind direction.
- Sea shanties can be played during this activity. A sea shanty, chantey, or chanty is a type of work song that was once commonly sung to accompany labor on board large sailing vessels.

STAGE THREE: ON BOARD THE SHIP

- Move the class into groups of four or five, and ask them to create three still images of the journey:

Image one

Day 3 of the journey. Everything is going well. Show what they are doing on board the ship.

Image two

Day 17. There is a terrible storm. Show what everyone is doing in the storm.

Image three

Day 56. The ship is becalmed - there has been no wind for eight days and the ship hasn't moved. It is very hot, and the captain has said they have to be careful with food and water rations, as they

don't know how long they will be stuck. They are in the middle of the ocean; there is no sight of land anywhere near.

- When they have created their three images, ask them to bring each one to life for a few seconds, using slow motion movement for images one and two. In image three, ask them to give each character one line of dialogue to create a short scene. *How will they create the atmosphere of being stuck for days in the heat? What do they talk about? What do they imagine might happen to them?*
- Ask them to run through and rehearse their scenes, finding a way to move from one image to the next. Find some music to underscore and play it while they are rehearsing.
- See the groups' scenes, and discuss what they think life might have been like for sailors who went on long sea journeys like this.

STAGE FOUR: BECALMED

- Ask the children to gather round and explain that you want them to imagine that the ship is still becalmed and that it is now day 57. The Captain has gathered all the crew onto deck to speak to them.
- Use the suggested script (below and **resource eight**) to speak to them in role as the captain.

I know the ship hasn't moved for nine days and we need to be careful about rations. We need to reduce our rations so that the food will last until we get to the islands, when hopefully we can get more food and water. So half a cup of water in the morning and another in the evening. How is everybody feeling? Do any of you regret coming on the expedition? Home must feel a very long way away.

It is important that we keep our spirits up and look after each other – people can get argumentative when hungry, anxious and worried about what might happen. What can we do to make sure everyone is alright?

Let's remember why you wanted to come on this journey in the first place.

Draw on the earlier work on why they wanted to travel, the kind of people they are and the strength, skills and resources they have. The fact that they are curious, restless, adventurous, and what they are looking forward to when they arrive at the islands.

Go on to introduce some rumours that have been heard about the island:

Before we set sail, I spoke to a sailor who said they heard from another sailor that they had actually landed on some of the islands, and that there, they found people who are only 6 inches tall, and another place where the people were 20 feet tall. I don't believe it – sailors love to tell a tall tale – they like to boast about what they've seen.

Did any of you hear any rumours about the Islands? I'm sure it's all make believe!

Hear from the children in role as sailors about some of the rumours they have heard about the islands. As you hear back from them about their rumours, you can add in more from the story:

He also said something about an Island with singing horses who live in peace and kindness – sounds a bit far-fetched to me. Oh yes, and another they described as an island floating in mid-air where the people are obsessed with maths and science and spend all their days doing equations, but they can't do anything practical like boil an egg or tie their own shoe laces!

Bring the in role improvisation to an end:

Well I don't believe a word of it, but at least it has kept us entertained while we are stuck in the middle of the sea. Hang on (lick finger and put it to the wind)! I think I can feel a breeze - the wind is picking up. Hoist the main sail! We need to catch that wind and be on our way.

STAGE FIVE: THROWN OVERBOARD

- Bring the class together and narrate the next part of the story. Tell them that the winds picked up and they could continue on their way, but then the winds became stronger and stronger. Read the text extract from the play (below and **resource nine**). The text is from the first draft of the play and the whole of this may not be in the final production.

A Storm.

-

The Captain changes direction

The sailors are all on deck –

They try and steer away –

Try and save the ship

But it's too hard

The waves are strong

And they get swept overboard.

At first

It's freezing

The water is so cold

They can't even think

It's colder than they've ever been

And they're so terrified they can barely breathe

But now

They're thinking again

That isn't good

Because they're thinking about how they can't see the ship

And if they –

A person

About a hundred times smaller than the ship can't see the ship

Then the ship –

A hundred times bigger than them –

Definitely cannot see them

After they thought about this

They start thinking about everything that can kill them here.

Sharks –

Whales that could swallow you whole –

*And suddenly
They stop swimming
And they start sinking
And as they sink under water –
They start thinking about home*

- In pairs, ask the children to discuss what they have heard, and how the crew responded when they were thrown overboard.
 - What would it be like to be alone in the water like that?
 - What were the thoughts going through their heads as they felt themselves sinking under the waves?

SESSION THREE – DISCOVERING THE ISLANDS

STAGE ONE: MAPPING THE ISLAND

- Explain that each person found that they had been washed up onto a small island, and that when they looked around on the shore they saw others had been washed up too.
- Move the class into six groups and explain that each group has landed on one of the islands that the captain described to them when they first agreed to come on the expedition.
- On the sea shore are also some boxes and their small canvas bags from the ship, which contain some of the equipment they would need to map and to record what they find on the islands.
- Allocate each group a different island; one is covered in **swamp land**, another is almost completely **desert**, one is built up like a **city**, one **lush and green** with a huge **lake**, one has a deep, dense **forest**, and another is covered in **mountains**.
- In their different groups, provide children with coloured pencils and an outline of their island (based on **resource seven**). Explain that on their first day there they explore the island and discover a strange plant or fruit that grows in this environment – something they had never seen before. Ask them to make a detailed sketch of this.
- As they continue to explore, they discover insects and small creatures – again, nothing like anything they had seen before. They need to record them so that if they are rescued they can share their discoveries back home. Again make a detailed drawing of these and add to their maps, showing where they found them.
- Ask them if there were any other geographical features they find when exploring their island and add them to the map, along with any description of the kind of weather they observe.
- Share back the maps and ask children to describe what they found.
- Now ask them to add one more thing to their maps; explain that when they are exploring the island, they find signs of people or creatures who lived there. The first thing they come across are their dwellings – the places they lived. Ask them to add a drawing of the kind of place the inhabitants of the Island live in; it could be a cave, a floating house, a tree house, a caravan, a fancy mansion, a

super-modern block of flats – whatever they imagine they might find in this place.

STAGE TWO: MEETING THE INHABITANTS

- In their groups, ask the children to decide what kind of people or beings live on this island; they are different to any human beings or creatures they have met before. Perhaps they are like the people that they had heard rumours of while becalmed on the ship, or perhaps they are completely different.
- Are they giants? Are they tiny? Can they fly? Do they live in the water?
- When they have decided a few things about the inhabitants of the island, ask them to create a still image of the moment when the explorers first see them. *What are the creatures doing? Where are the explorers when they observe them?*
- Now ask them to create a second image when the explorers meet the island's inhabitants, and show the way in which they approach each other.
- Having created their second still image, use this now as a starting point to make a short scene. Ask children to consider the following in their scene creation:
 - How can the explorers show they are not a threat?
 - Do the people or creatures of this island trust the explorers?
 - What is important to these people or creatures and how can you tell?
 - They find they speak the same language. What do they say to each other?
- Ask the groups to piece their first still image and scene together and rehearse it, ready to show to the rest of the class. Before they perform, they may need to describe things to the audience which cannot be seen – for example, if their people are tiny compared to the explorers, or if they have seven eyes, or are covered in scales. Help the groups decide what they might need to describe to help the audience imagine more clearly what is happening in their scenes.

STAGE THREE: SHARING WORLDS

- Ask the groups to now imagine that the explorers and people or creatures of the islands have spent some time getting to know each other. The people of the islands have shown the explorers how they live. In their groups, ask them to create a short scene which shows the explorers being shown something about their way of life that they will remember forever.
- Now ask them to add some dialogue into their scene when the explorers explain to the people or creatures what it is like back home in England.
- See the group's scenes and discuss what they liked about the different ways of life they had imagined for the island people or creatures.

STAGE FOUR: TO LEAVE OR STAY?

- Explain that the more time the explorers spend on the island, the more they like it there, and it starts to feel like home to them. Discuss in their groups: *Why do they like it on the island? What is good*

about being there? What makes it feel like home? What makes somewhere feel like home? Does home have to be where you are from? Or can you feel 'at home' in other places?

- In their groups, ask them to imagine that the explorers have discovered a way to get home and decide whether they want to take it. Do they decide to stay or go home? They don't all need to decide the same thing.
- Create a short scene showing what the explorers decide to do, and if they do decide to leave, how they left the island and said goodbye to its people or creatures.

STAGE FIVE: RETURNING HOME

- Ask the children to imagine what it was like for those explorers who decided to return home. In pairs, ask them to improvise a scene where the explorer describes their adventures to a friend or family member. *How do they describe the journey and the island and people or creatures that they found there? What questions does their friend or relative have for them? Do they believe them?*
- Use the listening hand to hear some of these paired conversations.
- Swap over so that each person has the opportunity to be the explorer and their friend or relative.
- Discuss how different it felt being the person who went on the adventure and the person who remained at home. *How does the explorer feel now that they are back home? Does home feel different to them now? Have they been changed by their travels? What have they brought back from their travels with them?*

SEQUENCE THREE

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

AIMS

To familiarise the children with the names of some of the unusual characters they will see in the Unicorn production.

To explore the overarching story and key episodes in *Gulliver's Travels*.

RESOURCES

Character names (**resource ten**), character descriptions (**resource eleven**), Story Whoosh script (**resource twelve**).

STRATEGIES

Movement work, fruit bowl, Story Whoosh.

INTRODUCTION

This short sequence introduces the children to some of the characters in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and provides a brief introduction to the original story from which the Unicorn Theatre's production is adapted.

STAGE ONE: FRUIT BOWL

- Seat the children in a circle; using chairs is ideal, but this game can still be played sitting on the floor.
- Introduce the names of the characters (**resource ten**) in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, explaining that they are made up characters, and some of the names are very difficult to say.
- Go around the circle and give everyone a name in turn to remember.
- Now describe each character in turn (below and **resource eleven**) and together find a physical action and way of moving for each one.
 - **Lilliputians**: people who are only six inches tall
 - **Brobdingnagians**: giants, over 20 feet tall
 - **Laputians**: people with one eye looking inward and one eye looking to the sky, they spend all their time working out mathematical equations so never look where they are going
 - **Glubdubdribians**: sorcerers and magicians who can bring people from history back to life
 - **Struldbrugs**: people who will live for ever, but continue to age, getting older and older and older
 - **Houyhnhnms**: horses who are peaceful and kind, they love music
- Now explain that when you call out the name of one of these peoples or creatures, they need to move across the circle in their specific way of moving, and find a new space to stand on the other side.

- When you say '*Gulliver's Travels*', everyone should move across the circle as their character at the same time.

STAGE TWO: STOP/GO

- Ask the children to move around the room on their own, keeping evenly spread across the space and not moving too quickly or too slowly, finding a common pace.
- When you say STOP, children should stop as still as a statue wherever they are in the room; when you say GO, they should move off again. Play this game until you have established a focus and discipline before moving onto the next stage.
- Now explain that when you say STOP, you will call a number and they must form a group of that number, and in this group create a freeze frame/still image over a ten second count from you of one of the following:
 - **Groups of 6:** on board the ship in the middle of a storm
 - **Individual:** in the sea, sinking under the waves
 - **Groups of five:** Gulliver being tied down by tiny Lilliputians
 - **Groups of four:** Gulliver looking at a giant melon which is taller than they are
 - **Groups of four:** Gulliver being chased by giant wasps
 - **Groups of three:** Gulliver singing and dancing for the giant king and queen
 - **Pairs:** Gulliver meeting a Struldbrug (someone who lives forever but gets older and older)

STAGE THREE: STORY WHOOSH – GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

A Story Whoosh is a way of acting out a story with the whole class which allows you to see the narrative line, the action, and the characters in broad brushstrokes. It is important to go around the circle with each child taking part in turn, making it an inclusive and accessible activity in which all the children contribute to telling the story. The teacher takes an active role as narrator/director, and supports the children in the creation of the images.

- Organise the class into a circle and explain that you are going to act out the story of *Gulliver's Travels* together using a Story Whoosh.
- Read out each moment of the Story Whoosh (**resource twelve**) and ask the children in turn to come into the middle and make an image showing what is happening. The words in bold indicate when you need to add people to make a new element of the image.
- When you say '*Whoosh!*' that group of actors is whooshed back into their places in the circle, and the next children in turn will step in to act out the next episode of the story.
- Discuss what in the story the children enjoyed, found interesting and what questions they have about the story.
- Explain that when they come to the Unicorn to see the play it will be a new, contemporary version of the story. In this version, Gulliver will be a young girl who goes on her travels and visits strange places and people. Discuss what the children are looking forward to seeing, and how they imagine the Unicorn might create the tiny people of Lilliput and the giants of Brobdingnag on stage.

RESOURCE ONE

You can search for representations of extraordinary creatures online very easily - here are some to get you started.

https://www.neprimateconservancy.org/uploads/1/5/3/8/15380094/editor/1460488_74.jpg

<https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/images/ic/640x360/p04gblmy.jpg>

https://secure.i.telegraph.co.uk/multimedia/archive/02709/AXOLOTL_2709150b.jpg

<https://steemitimages.com/640x0/https://cdn.steemitimages.com/DQmNxgvbHdHrBW1DAy4FEcKpKNJ3tgFnSGGphAeUBwfh3e/image.png>

<https://sonidosdeanimales.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/camaleon-500x375.jpg>

<https://sonidosdeanimales.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/camaleon-500x375.jpg>

<https://i.ytimg.com/vi/nxZHLf6T4-M/maxresdefault.jpg>

RESOURCE TWO

A website with early maps and drawings of wildlife encountered on voyages.

<https://www.bl.uk/the-voyages-of-captain-james-cook/collection-items>

RESOURCE THREE

ENVIRONMENTS TEXT

You are in a desert. It's very hot and dry, there is sand underneath your feet, and it is hard to walk as your feet sink into the dry sand. The sand dunes stretch out for miles; you can see nothing beyond them. You see something on the ground – you pick it up and put it in your pocket.

Now the ground underneath your feet gets wetter and muddier, the air becomes moist, there are tufts of grass, plants, and pools of water all around. You have entered a swamp. It becomes even harder to walk, as the earth squelches under your feet and you have to work hard to not sink into the mud, to find firm ground to walk on. You look down and see an insect – nothing like anything you've seen before. You make a drawing of it and put the drawing in your pocket.

As you walk, there are more and more trees growing around you, and the ground is firm under your feet. You are in the heart of a forest, with trees all around you, you look up and can see birds and other creatures up in the trees. You hear something behind you. You turn and see a creature disappearing into the trees. *(Stop the children and ask some to describe the creature they have just glimpsed.)* Is it like any creature they have seen before? How big was it? Was it furry, or scaly? How did it move?

As you continue you find a path out of the forest and then find yourself in a city – it is like no city you have ever seen before. Is it an ancient city, or a very modern city? What are the buildings like around you? What are they made out of? It is early morning and there are no people around. I wonder what kind of people live here?

You continue walking out of the city and uphill. You look back down into the city behind you. The air changes and becomes fresher and clearer. It's colder, and the hills turn into mountains. You climb to the highest point of the mountain and look all around you. What do you see?

In the distance, you see a huge expanse of water. It is the sea. You decide to take your shoes off, feeling the spongy, rich moss of the mountains under your feet, and you run (*the children should run on the spot*) all the way down the mountains, dodging trees and rocks. You feel the ground change underneath you, from rich and earthy to dustier, and finally sand. As you reach the tide, you throw yourself into the ocean, feeling the cool waves over your skin. You take a deep breath and swim underwater, seeing lots of different things on the sea bed... Like? (*Take suggestions of what you see from your group*). You collect something in your hand and swim to the surface, and finally rest from your long journey on your back on the beach.

You sit up, feeling the sun on your face, and you take the drawings and items you've collected out from your pocket, and look at them.

RESOURCE FOUR

CREW ADVERT

Do you want to join us on an exciting expedition to discover new worlds? We are looking for crew for our ship; those who have experience at sea – or are willing to learn. The journey by sea may take many months. We are going to discover places where – as far as we know – no human has visited before.

While on our travels into the unknown we will want people to record what we find; cartographers – those who can draw maps showing the landscape of these new places; people interested in recording plant life and wildlife in these new lands. Geographers; those interested in different environments and the weather systems that have shaped them.

We need people who are ready for an adventure and who are prepared to step into the unknown.

RESOURCE FIVE

Images of sailing ships

<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/50/d0/51/50d0517e379645994caeaf64f2513a5f.jpg>

https://www-labs.iro.umontreal.ca/~vaucher/History/Ships_Discovery/Ships/Gotheborg.jpg

RESOURCE SIX

Thank you all for your applications; I was very impressed by the skills and strong character you demonstrated. However, before finally agreeing to bring you on the journey of a lifetime, I want to make sure you're right for the job and give you the opportunity to withdraw – you may decide this trip is not for you.

This is a journey of discovery; we will be travelling to places unmapped by humans. Until very recently, no-one knew that this series of small Islands existed, we thought that this area (*indicate on map*) was just ocean. But the great explorer Captain Wainwright spotted the islands as they were sailing back from (???), heading home from their travels. They weren't able to stop – they would have run out of supplies, and didn't know if they would be able to find food or fresh water on the islands. Plus, many of the crew were keen to get home to their families and friends.

However, as they sailed past the islands on their ship, they were able to make out a few features of the islands and to plot them on this very rough map (*Create a rough map of the Islands based on **resource six***). The islands all looked very different; one was covered in dark forest, one looked to be very swamp-like, one was mountainous, one looked like a desert, and one looked green and lush and seemed to have a huge lake at its centre. They saw a sixth island in the distance and weren't sure if they could see a city built on it – it could have been a dramatic series of rocks and mountains. It was too far away to tell.

So this is a journey of discovery, into the unknown. We do not know what we will find.

The journey will be long – you will be spending months at sea:

- How will you cope?
- Have you got experience of such long expeditions?
- What skills will you bring with you?
- How will you deal with weeks at sea?
- What do you think the challenges will be?
- Remind me of what you said your strengths are for this kind of expedition.

- We all have weaknesses, and on a journey of this nature it is wise to acknowledge them; what did you identify as your weaknesses, and how might you overcome them?

(Use this part of the discussion to acknowledge people's differences and how important these will be on the journey. One of the greatest challenges of such a journey is how to live together in a way that supports each other, and makes the best of each individual's potential.)

What questions do you have about the journey?

We need to remember that when we visit these islands we must be respectful; we don't want to disrupt or affect the ecosystems on these lands.

We don't think the Islands are inhabited, but we must be prepared for everything. If we do encounter people, we must make it clear we come in peace – how could we do that?

I know some of you are experts; at map making, at botanical science, at zoology – the study of animals - and at geography. We want to record everything you discover along the way.

- What do you hope to find?
- What are you worried about?
- How will you cope with the unexpected?

(Finish the in role improvisation by congratulating them, and telling them that they have been successful.)

Well done! You have demonstrated that you have what it takes to join the crew on this once in a lifetime voyage.

We set sail tomorrow. You must go home and pack a very small bag with a few essentials, and say goodbye to your loved ones.

RESOURCE EIGHT

I know the ship hasn't moved for nine days and we need to be careful about rations. We need to reduce our rations so that the food will last until we get to the islands, when hopefully we can get more food and water. So half a cup of water in the morning and another in the evening.

How is everybody feeling? · Do any of you regret coming on the expedition? Home must feel a very long way away.

It is important that we keep our spirits up and look after each other – people can get argumentative when hungry, anxious and worried about what might happen. What can we do to make sure everyone is alright? ·

Let's remember why you wanted to come on this journey in the first place.

(Draw on the earlier work on why they wanted to travel, the kind of people they are and the strength, skills and resources they have. The fact that they are curious, restless, adventurous, and what they are looking forward to when they arrive at the islands.

Go on to introduce some rumors that have been heard about the island:)

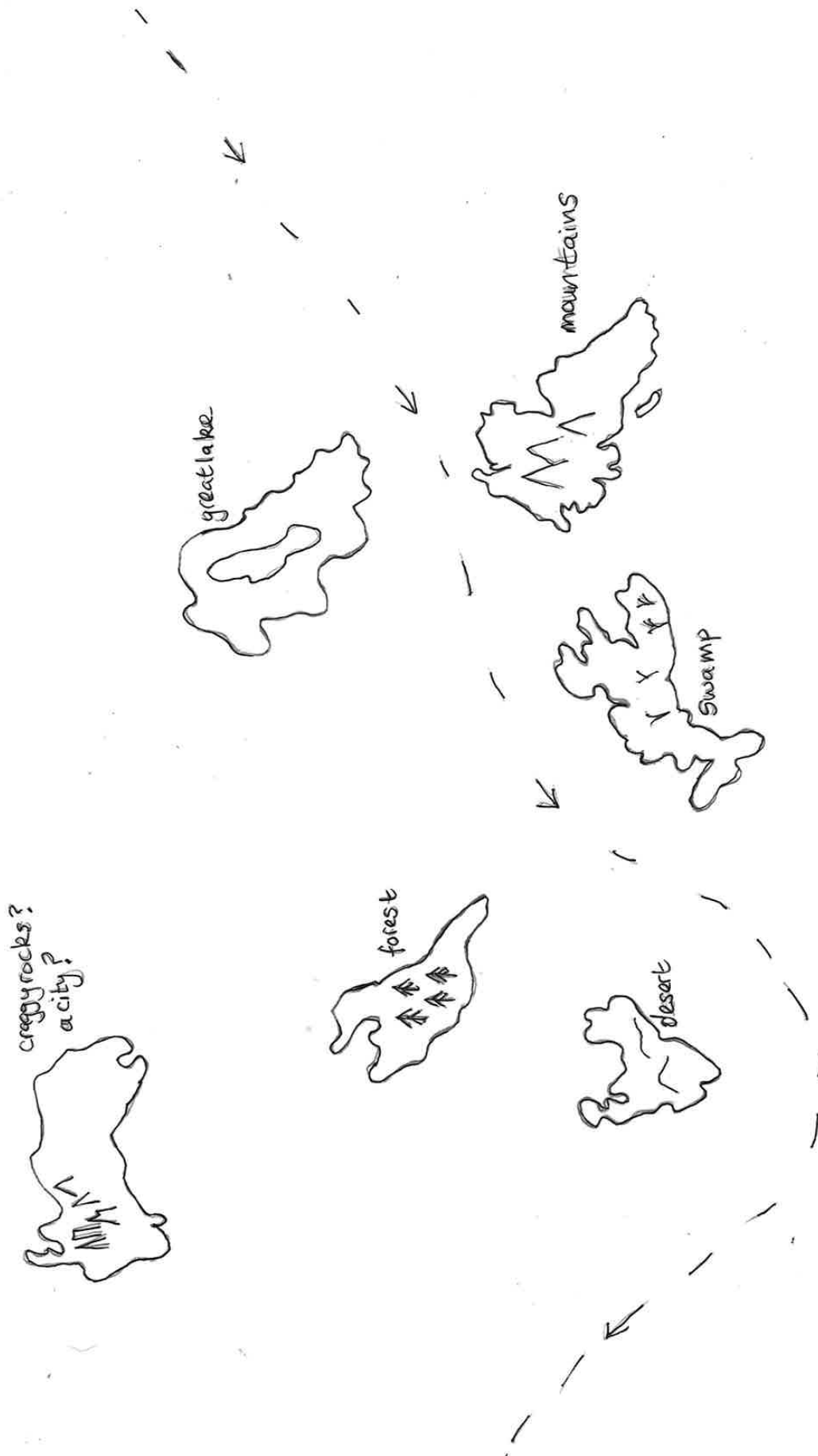
Before we set sail, I spoke to a sailor who said they heard from another sailor that they had actually landed on some of the islands, and that there, they found people who are only 6 inches tall, and another place where the people were 20 feet tall. I don't believe it – sailors love to tell a tall tale – they like to boast about what they've seen.

Did any of you hear any rumours about the Islands? I'm sure it's all make believe!

(Hear from the children in role as sailors about some of the rumours they have heard about the islands. As you hear back from them about their rumours, you can add in more from the story:)

He also said something about an Island with singing horses who live in peace and

RESOURCE SEVEN



kindness – sounds a bit far-fetched to me. Oh yes, and another they described as an island floating in mid-air where the people are obsessed with maths and science and spend all their days doing equations, but they can't do anything practical like boil an egg or tie their own shoe laces!

(Bring the in role improvisation to an end:)

Well I don't believe a word of it, but at least it has kept us entertained while we are stuck in the middle of the sea. Hang on *(lick finger and put it to the wind)*! I think I can feel a breeze - the wind is picking up. Hoist the main sail! We need to catch that wind and be on our way.

RESOURCE NINE

A Storm.

-

The Captain changes direction

The sailors are all on deck -

They try and steer away -

Try and save the ship

...

But it's too hard

The waves are strong

And they get swept overboard.

...

At first

It's freezing

The water is so cold

They can't even think

It's too cold

And they're so terrified they can barely breathe

But now

They're thinking again

That isn't good

Because they're thinking about how they can't see the ship

And if they -

A person

About a hundred times smaller than the ship can't see the ship

Then the ship -

A hundred times bigger than them -

Definitely cannot see them

After they thought about this

They start thinking about everything that can kill them here.

Sharks -

Whales that could swallow you whole -



And suddenly
They stop swimming
And they start sinking
And as they sink under water –
They start thinking about home

RESOURCE TEN

Lilliputians

Brobdingnagians

Laputians

Glubdubdrib

Struldbrugs

Houyhnhnms

RESOURCE ELEVEN

Lilliputians: people who are only six inches tall

Brogbdingnag: giants, over 20 feet tall

Laputians: people with one eye looking inward and one eye looking to the sky, they spend all their time working out mathematical equations so never look where they are going

Glubdubdrib: sorcerers and magicians who can bring people from history back to life

Struldbругs: people who will live for ever, but continue to age, getting older and older and older

Houymhmns: horses who are peaceful and kind, they love music

RESOURCE TWELVE

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS STORY WHOOSH

This is a story about a traveller explorer **Lemuel Gulliver**. A surgeon and sea captain.

He sets sail to explore the world with his **crew**.

As they are sailing across the seas there is a terrible storm, the ship is overturned and Gulliver is the only one who survives the shipwreck. As the rest drown, Gulliver is washed up on the shore of an Island.

Whoosh

Gulliver lies unconscious on the island of Lilliput where the people; the **Lilliputians** are only six inches tall. While he is unconscious, they bind him to the ground with great ropes. When he awakes, he is surrounded by tiny people.

Whoosh

Gulliver is imprisoned on Lilliput where he is visited by the **King**, and hears all about the rivalry in Lilliput between **those who wear high heels and those who wear low heels**.

(In pairs, around the circle, discuss what you might say to someone if you were arguing about how it is important to only ever wear high heels or low heels. Feed these back and see that moment acted out in the Story Whoosh.)

Whoosh

Gulliver also hears people arguing over the important issue of whether you should open an egg at the small or the large end.

(In pairs around the circle, ask the children to improvise disagreeing about which end you should open a boiled egg; one arguing for the flat end, the other for the pointy end.)

Whoosh

Gulliver escapes Lilliput by swimming to Brobdingnag, a land of giants.

Whoosh

On Brobdingnag, **Gulliver** is found by a **(giant) boy** – the boy's mother decides to make some money from the tiny creature and exhibits him as a curiosity. **The giants** come and pay money to the mother to see the tiny Gulliver dance and sing for them.

The queen arrives to see the tiny person dancing and insists the mother sell Gulliver to her – which she does, reluctantly.

Whoosh

But one day an **eagle** swoops down and carries **Gulliver** off in his claws, and then drops him in the sea.

Whoosh

Gulliver is rescued from the sea by **people** his own size and taken to Laputa. The **Laputians** have one eye looking inward, and one eye looking to the sky.

The Laputians study all the time, reading mathematical equations and doing scientific experiments.

Whoosh

Gulliver travels to the island of Glubbubdrib, an island of **sorcerers and magicians** who can bring people back to life for 24 hours. Gulliver chooses to bring **Queen Elizabeth I** back to life.

(Ask the class what questions they might want to ask Elizabeth if they could.)

And he asks her some questions about her life and times.

And there he meets the **Struldbrugs** – people who will live for ever, but continue to age – getting older and older and older.

The magicians offer Gulliver a potion that will make him immortal like the Struldbrugs, but he says no, thank you.

Whoosh

In the final land **Gulliver** visits, he meets the **Houyhnhnms**; they love music and sing '*We believe in beauty, in kindness and goodness, and truth, and in freedom, and equality, and love, and hope.*'

Gulliver thinks they are the most wonderful creatures, and he wants to stay with them forever.

But in this land there are also **Yahoos** – who look like humans, but humans without imaginations. At first the Houyhnhnms think Gulliver is a Yahoo because he looks like them, but then they realise he is different and allows him to stay with them.

But eventually, Gulliver realises he needs to go home.

Whoosh

When **Gulliver** arrives back at home, he looks around him at how **humans** behave and decides that he would rather live the rest of his life with **horses**, and never be with people again.

Whoosh



THE UK'S THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

A Unicorn Production

Inspired by the book by Jonathan Swift

Adapted by Lulu Raczka

Directed by Jaz Woodcock-Stewart

Set and costume design by Rosanna Vize

Lighting design by Jess Bernberg

Sound design and composition by Ben Ringham

AV design by Jack Phelan

Resource pack written by Catherine Greenwood and Lucy Dear

UNICORN THEATRE, 147 TOOLEY STREET, LONDON SE1 2HZ  LONDON BRIDGE
020 7645 0560 · UNICORNTHEATRE.COM



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