

If By Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And-which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!

If By Rudyard Kipling

Answer in full sentences.

1. Who is the poem written for? How do you know this?

2. What is the meaning of the phrase '...keep your head...'?

a. Don't let your head fall off

b. Stay calm

c. Don't lose important possessions

d. Keep yourself safe

3. Which two nouns are personified in verse 2?

4. What does the poet go on to describe them as?

5. Write down any direct speech within the poem.

6. What are the opposite of 'loving friends'?

7. How would you describe the poet? Explain your answer.

If By Rudyard Kipling **Answers**

1. Who is the poem written for? How do you know this?

The poem is written for the poet's son because the last line says 'And-which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!'

2. What is the meaning of the phrase '...keep your head...'?

b. Stay calm

3. Which two nouns are personified in verse 2?

The two nouns which are personified in verse 2 are 'Triumph' and 'Disaster'.

4. What does the poet go on to describe them as?

The poet describes them as 'imposters' in the following line.

5. Write down any direct speech within the poem.

'Hold on!' on line 24 is the only speech within the poem.

6. What are the opposite of 'loving friends'?

The opposite of 'loving friends' are foes (line 27).

7. How would you describe the poet? Explain your answer.

Own answers.

If By Rudyard Kipling

Answer in full sentences.

1. Who is the poem written for? Give evidence for your answer.

2. Why did Kipling write this poem?

3. Explain the phrase '...keep your head...'

4. What does the poet mean here? 'And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:'

5. Which poetic device is used in lines 11 and 12? Explain your answer.

6. Explain the phrase '...breathe a word...'

7. Which do you think is the best piece of advice? Why?

8. How do you feel having read the poem? Why did it make you feel that way?

If By Rudyard Kipling **Answers**

1. Who is the poem written for? How do you know this?

The poem is written for the poet's son because the last line says 'And-which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!'

2. Why did Kipling write this poem?

Kipling wrote this poem to give his son important words of advice.

3. Explain the phrase '...keep your head...'

The phrase means to keep calm/level-headed.

4. What does the poet mean here? 'And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:'

The poet could mean that we mustn't place too much importance on our looks or speak as if we know best all the time.

5. Which poetic device is used in lines 11 and 12? Explain your answer.

Personification is used in lines 11 and 12. The words 'Triumph' and 'Disaster' are given capital letters which suggests that they are names. They are also referred to as being 'imposters' on the next line.

6. Explain the phrase '...breathe a word...'

This phrase is another way of expressing the word 'say'.

7. Which do you think is the best piece of advice? Why?

Own answers.

8. How do you feel having read the poem? Why did it make you feel that way?

Own answers.

If By Rudyard Kipling

Answer in full sentences.

1. Who is the poem written for? Give evidence for your answer.

2. Why did Kipling write this poem?

3. Explain the phrase '...keep your head...'

4. Which quality is the poet writing about in line 5?

5. Explain the phrase '...don't deal in lies,'.

6. Which poetic device is used in lines 11 and 12? Explain your answer.

7. What might the word 'knaves' mean?

8. Summarise the meaning behind lines 21-24.

9. Explain your understanding of the following line: 'Or walk with Kings – nor lose the common touch,'.

10. What did the poet mean when he wrote the following lines? Explain your reasoning.

'If you can fill the unforgiving minute

With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,'

11. Which do you think is the best piece of advice? Explain your reasoning.

12. Write a new piece of advice which would be appropriate to add to the poem.

If By Rudyard Kipling Answers

1. Who is the poem written for? How do you know this?

The poem is written for the poet's son because the last line says 'And-which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!'

2. Why did Kipling write this poem?

Kipling wrote this poem to give his son important words of advice.

3. Explain the phrase '...keep your head...'

The phrase means to keep calm/level-headed.

4. Which quality is the poet writing about in line 5?

The poet is writing about having patience.

5. Explain the phrase '...don't deal in lies,'.

This phrase expresses the importance of not telling lies.

6. Which poetic device is used in lines 11 and 12? Explain your answer.

Personification is used in lines 11 and 12. The words 'Triumph' and 'Disaster' are given capital letters which suggests that they are names. They are also referred to as being 'imposters' on the next line.

7. What might the word 'knaves' mean?

The word knave means a dishonest man.

8. Summarise the meaning behind lines 21-24.

The poet is saying that when you feel as if you can't go on, you must tell yourself to 'Hold on!' and not give up.

9. Explain your understanding of the following line:

'Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch,'

The poet could be saying that if his son was to spend time with people as important as royalty, then he mustn't start believing that he is better than ordinary people.

10. What did the poet mean when he wrote the following lines? Explain your reasoning.

'If you can fill the unforgiving minute

With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,'

The poet is saying that you must make the most of every minute of your life. The poet describes the minute as 'unforgiving' as time isn't ever given back to you.

11. Which do you think is the best piece of advice? Explain your reasoning.

Own answers.

12. Write a new piece of advice which would be appropriate to add to the poem.

Own answers.