

# 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? Give evidence for your answer.

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2. Why did Kipling write this poem?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# 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.**