If—

**Reading Guide:**

1. Read the poem once without marking anything.
2. Paraphrase every 2 lines.
3. Illustrate a scene.
4. Determine the tone in each stanza and underline context.

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,

**Vocabulary Spotlights:**

**Impostor**: a person who pretends to be someone else

**Knaves:** a dishonest person

**Allowance:** the act of allowing something to happen

**Heap**: large group of something

**Sinew**: tendon that connects muscle to bones

**Virtue:** belief in good behavior

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 impostors 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!

After reading question:

The poet, Rudyard Kipling wrote this poem mainly for his son. What message do you think he was trying to get across to his son?

Why is this an important message for everyone to learn?

How can the message in this poem help you?

**Reading Guide:**

1. Read the poem once without marking anything.
2. Summarize each stanza.
3. Identify the tone and underline context use to create the tone.
4. Illustrate what you feel is the most important stanza in the poem and explain why.

If—

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:

**Vocabulary Spotlights:**

**Knaves:** a dishonest person

**Sinew**: tendon that connects muscle to bones

**Virtue:** belief in good behavior

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 impostors 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,

**After reading questions:**

1. What do you think this poem is about?

2. What feelings do the poem awaken in you?

3. How can you use the message of this poem in your life?

?

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—

**Reading Guide:**

1. Read the poem once through without marking anything.

2. Read for the Language: Red Colored Pencil or Pen Circle unfamiliar words and define.Circle words strong in connotation and indicate (+ or -)

3. Read for Imagery/Sensory Language: Blue Colored Pencil or Pen Underline images that appeal to the senses. Illustrate those images in the margins.

4. Read for Mood: Green Colored Pencil or Pen Identify the mood. Underline words that create the mood.

5. Read for Figurative Language and other Poetic Devices: Orange Colored Pencil or Pen Underline examples, identify the type and explain significance or meaning.

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 impostors 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,

**After reading questions:**

1. Each stanza in the poem deals with a different aspect of life. What are the different aspects of life?
2. What themes are addressed in each stanza?
3. What is the poet’s belief about morality? Is that true in today’s society? Why or why not?
4. Choose a piece of art from the folder that you feel captures the essence of this poem. Explain why you chose the image and how it relates to the poem.

    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!

Pre-Reading Vocabulary

Imposter

Knaves

Pitch-n-Toss

Sinew

Virtue

Foes

What pattern do you find in the poem? What effect does it create?

Each stanza in “If” deals with a different aspect of life. What are the different aspects of life?

What themes are addressed in each stanza?

What is the poet’s belief about morality? Is that still true in today’s society? Why or why not?

Find examples of:

Metaphor

Personification

Alliteration

Symbolism

Give a summary of the poem.

Draw a picture of stanza \_\_\_\_\_.

Paraphrase by verse

If you can

1) remain calm when everyone near you is not calm, and they are holding you responsible for the problem; have confidence that you are acting correctly when everyone thinks you are wrong, and at the same time, understand their doubts;

2) be patient, and can tolerate lies being told about you (you don’t lie) and being hated; not hate anybody yourself; not try to look or sound too good;

3) dream but not just dream; instead, be realistic and be goal oriented; function in both

good situations and bad and realize that you will have both throughout your life;

4) tolerate the fact that people have twisted your words or wrecked your projects; rebuild

your projects and rebuild your life again when necessary;

5) risk everything you have, lose it and then start all over again (without complaint);

6) not give up when you feel weakened physically and mentally; hang in there;

7) resist being corrupted by ordinary people or by people in high positions; not be hurt by either enemies or friends, value everyone, but not any one person too much;

8) make the most of every minute of life; then you will be an honorable and trustworthy human being.

IF - RUDYARD KIPLING

Rudyard Kipling’s “If” is perhaps his most famous poem. Kipling composed the poem in 1909 while living in Great Britain. It was first published in 1910 in Kipling’s collection

“If” attracted immediate nationwide attention in Britain, and it was quickly adopted as a popular anthem.

“If” is a didactic poem, a work meant to give instruction. In this case, “If” serves as an instruction in several specific traits of a good leader. Kipling offers this instruction not through listing specific characteristics, but by providing concrete illustrations of the complex actions a man should or should not take which would reflect these characteristics.

If Summary

Stanza 1

The first stanza of “If” illustrates the practice of self-confidence and expresses that, in being confident; the reader must have the courage to face unpopularity and disagreement. This stanza also, however, advises against a self-confidence that does not allow for the consideration of opposing ideas. In exhorting the reader to both ignore doubt and make allowance for doubt (lines 3 and 4), Kipling creates a paradox (the combination of mutually exclusive ideas that, while seemingly contradictory, serve to make a point in their contradiction) that is characteristic of the tone of the entire poem.

Line 5 advises patience, line 6 advises honesty, and line 7 advises fortitude of character. These three lines, along with the first four lines of the poem, share a common thread: they provide instruction in the maintenance of righteous behavior in the face of unrighteousness. However, in line 8, Kipling is quick to qualify his advice, telling the reader “yet don’t look too good, nor talk too wise.” That is, in behaving righteously, a person must avoid smugness.

CENTRAL IDEA:

The central idea of this poem is that success comes from self-control and a true sense of the values of things. In extremes lies danger. A man must not lose heart because of doubts or opposition, yet he must do his best to see the grounds for both. He must not be deceived into thinking either triumph or disaster final; he must use each wisely--and push on. In all things he must hold to the golden mean. If he does, he will own the world, and even better, for his personal reward he will attain the full stature of manhood.

SYNOPSIS

“If” is a didactic poem, a work meant to give instruction. “If” gives an instruction in cultivating several specific traits of a good leader. Kipling offers this instruction not through listing specific characteristics, but by providing concrete illustrations of the complex actions a man should or should not take which would reflect these characteristics. The poem is about moral lessons and conduct. It contains advice from a father to a son on how to grow up to be a better person and a true man. He reminds his son that he will be a Man if he can hold on to his values and not be swayed by others. If he follows his advice, he will have a rewarding and enriching life. He will have everything he can wish for.

**Poetry Analysis:**

The power of self-confidence within the first four lines of the poem takes on an air equivalent to that of Socrates it his detachment from criticism:

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,

Here is the real measure of individuality and self-worth the power to reject bitterness in the face of other people's wrath. The overwhelming reference to "you" or "your" which is used seven times within these four lines really has the affect of breaking out of the poem and speaking to the reader directly. There is a Jesus-like forgiveness within the last line of forgiving your foes, it is a higher understanding of how the world works, it grasps at the truth of human nature and makes "allowance" at the folly of others, not for their sake, but for your own.

Patience as a virtue and the correct way to speak and feel is of interest in the next four lines:

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:

Here patience is both taken as patience with others and with the world at large. True understanding is patience, and with dealing with others in the correct manner. The negativity of "hate" and "lying" are rejected absolutely by those who would seek to view the ways of the world from an open philosophic way of thinking. At the close of the poem the narrator warns though against the error of arrogance with such self-confidence and wisdom.

It is hard to ignore the conservative message that is evident within the whole of the next stanza:

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 impostors 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:

Once again the words are noble enough, at the start the narrator praises dreams and longings but warns against becoming blinded with those wants. Interestingly, the knowledge of the god-like narrator warns against the personified (note the capitalization) "Triumph and Disaster" realizing both of them as "impostors," or of little importance in the grand scheme of things.

The last two lines could be read somewhat as a conservative message (knowing the authors politics) with the idea of continuation and hard work in adversity, of course it is always dangerous to attach the author with the poem in such a way, though it remains positive and uplifting.This idea is also continued within the next lines:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it all on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breath a word about your loss;

The attitude of never giving up and working hard certainly could be read as an element of the conservative methodology, however the determination and message of striving is there for all to adhere to regardless of political vision. It is also much more than the method of a continuation in the face of adversity, it is about the way this is done and never breathing "a word about your loss" shows the utmost element of self-dignity.

Of course the message of the poem throughout is also holding the tension that will be finally released within the last line. The poem is
essentially and extended sentence with the object only released at the end. Before this however there is more tension and dignity to be
wound-up within the message of the poem in the next stanza:

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;

Of importance in this section is the message of not becoming corrupted by the machinations of status, the individual not placing importance above anyone else, but showing ultimate humility. Obviously "Kings" is contrasted with "common" in order to cover all the strata of society in the same way as "foes" and "friends" is within the next line. The argument of treating a foe with the same humility as a friend and not allowing them to hurt you falls back to the self-confidence factor at the start of the poem.

In the last section of the poem the tension built-up throughout is finally released:

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!

The last line is also the realization of the passing down of knowledge and wisdom from father to son, and it is the first time that we as readers realize that the poem is not directly addressed to them, but to a younger figure.

This gives the poem an extra element of humility, and as readers we unconsciously care for this younger child and hope he prospers under such guidance, as we do ourselves.

Overall in the poem there is much truth and wisdom within these motivational words that seems tap into a core within the reader, expanding virtue and knowledge. True words are often softly spoken and the gentleness and confidence which meet the reader in the lines of the poem come across both reverent and admirable. The obvious humanity which Kipling breached within the whole poem stirs within the reader thoughts of a higher nature than the pettiness that surrounds daily life, it is just a shame that most people don't act upon the meaning carried within the Kipling's verse, for then we could truly ask "what if?"

FIGURES OF SPEECH-

The poem is straightforward and written in simple language. The key word “If” is repeated to emphasize that we need to work hard to reap the rewards of life.

A)Personification

-Dreams: masters who can control our lives. In this case, dreams assume a human role/quality, that of being a master.

-Triumph and disaster are imposters who can lead us astray. Success is personified as “Triumph” and can make us complacent. Failure is personified as “Disaster”. It can influence us to believe that failure is permanent.

-Will is personified as a person who encourages us not to give up.

b) Metaphor

-Unforgiving minutes refer to time that waits for no man, it is like a race where every second is important.

-Worn out tools refer to the feeling of total exhaustion that can force someone to give up.

-Make one heap of all your winnings is compared to a pile of money won at the gambling table.

-Walk with Kings means to socialize with important people.

-Talk with crowds refers to mixing with all kinds of people.

c) Symbol

A symbol represents an idea

-Knaves represent scoundrels, liars or conmen.

-Crowds symbolize the common folk/people.

-Kings represent the important people in society.

-Common touch represents humility.

Paraphrase by verse

If you can

1) remain calm when everyone near you is not calm, and they are holding you responsible for the problem; have confidence that you are acting correctly when everyone thinks you are wrong, and at the same time, understand their doubts;

2) be patient, and can tolerate lies being told about you (you don’t lie) and being hated; not hate anybody yourself; not try to look or sound too good;

3) dream but not just dream; instead, be realistic and be goal oriented; function in both

good situations and bad and realize that you will have both throughout your life;

4) tolerate the fact that people have twisted your words or wrecked your projects; rebuild

your projects and rebuild your life again when necessary;

5) risk everything you have, lose it and then start all over again (without complaint);

6) not give up when you feel weakened physically and mentally; hang in there;

7) resist being corrupted by ordinary people or by people in high positions; not be hurt by either enemies or friends, value everyone, but not any one person too much;

8) make the most of every minute of life; then you will be an honorable and trustworthy human being.

                                               Glossary

Verse 3  Triumph and Disaster — victory, and an event that causes great damage

Verse 4  knaves — an old-fashioned word for dishonest men

Verse 4  build ‘em up — build them up; rebuild the broken parts of your life

Verse 6  sinew — a part of your body that connects a muscle to a bone; in a literary meaning, something that gives strength or support

Comprehension practice

1. Check all the statements that are true, according to the poem.

a.You should always be calm.

b. You should neither lie nor hate.

c.  Always look your best and speak in a very wise manner.

d.  It’s all right to dream but act on reality.

e.  Realize that you will have both good and bad in your life.

f. Even if someone hurts you badly, get up and start over.

g. When you feel stressed, take some time off.

h.  Adopt the ways of people in higher social positions.

i.  If you follow these rules, you’ll be a success in life.

2. Check all the statements that are true by inference.

j. If you lost all your money in a stock market crash, you would remain calm.

k. If people hated you, you would hate them in return.

l.  If you faced triumph or if you faced disaster, you would deal with the situation.

m. If you lost everything, you could never start over.

n.If you lost your strength, you would regain it.

 o.If you associated with bad people, you would adopt their bad habits.

p. If you could follow this advice, you would be a strong and excellent man.

Poem Questions

1.What does this poem remind you of in your life? :

This poem reminds me of when I was a small boy how it was difficult to start to grow up. It makes me remember what a change it was to do things on my own, and it took me a very long time to be independent and start to mature. It also makes me think about how much farther I have to develop in order to completely grow up.

This poem reminds me of when i was younger in life and everything was still new to me. It reminds me of learning new things and experiencing things for the first time. It brings back memories and yet makes me wonder what the future holds.

2.What feelings does the poem awaken in you? How do your feelings connect with those of the poet?

This poem awakens a variety of feelings within me such as inspiration and the feeling of happiness. It also made a deep connection with me because some of the situations it describes or talks about are experiences of mine also. I think some of the feelings I was feeling were also the feelings of the poet, they even connect to those of the poet because they are the same or close.  My feelings of what you must know and be able to do to be a grownup connect to his and we share the same ideals and principles. This connects us in some inexplicable way that makes is seem as though there are too few words in the English language to describe such a link.

3.What is the poem about? Consider speaker, symbols, comparisons, contrasts and conflicts.

The poem is about growing up. It talks about how the poet can tell his son to grow up. He also explains what a real man is. If you can do this with that happening is what most of the lines are like. The conflict is a boy that cannot grow up and is going through many difficulties. He does not know how feel, act, or be.

This poem is about becoming mature and becoming and adult. The writer is putting his own experiences into this and tells about the high and low ends and the conflicts you will face, like not giving in even though everyone else has. It compares and contrasts the right and wrong decisions that one person can make in their journey to adulthood.

4.What are the poetic form, figurative language and poetic structure?

It has some rhyming. But not in every line. Between lines it describes how to become a man. It also has much figurative language and can be clear as water. Also the poetic structure is a stanza piece. It has four stanzas and each one rhymes. Each stanza has a little repetition. This keeps the reader engaged and reading.

e. What feelings does the poem awaken in you? How do your feelings connect with those of the poet?

    This poem awakens a variety of feelings within me such as inspiration and the feeling of happiness. It also made a deep connection with me because some of the situations it describes or talks about are experiences of mine also. I think some of the feelings I was feeling were also the feelings of the poet, they even connect to those of the poet because they are the same or close.  My feelings of what you must know and be able to do to be a grownup connect to his and we share the same ideals and principles. This connects us in some inexplicable way that makes is seem as though there are too few words in the English language to describe such a link. Amongst the most famous poems written in the English language is Rudyard Kipling's ever popular piece "if." It seems to have entered into the public's general consciousness in ways that other poems have not come close to. The timeless appeal of the passing down of knowledge and wisdom from father to son is immediately recognized and appreciated by an audience all too familiar with the joys and pitfalls of parenthood. The poem is touching in its sincerity and is full of humility and warmth which has been appreciated by millions since it was first written in 1895.