

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 **impostors**¹ just the same:
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by **knaves**² 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**³
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!

1 **impostors**: people who pretend to be someone else

2 **knave**: tricky, deceitful, unprincipled person

3 **sinew**: tissue that connects muscles to bones

Question Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

“If” Questions

- _____ 1. The theme of this passage is
- a. living wisely.
 - b. friends.
 - c. enemies.
 - d. being healthy.
- _____ 2. Which phrase supports the theme?
- a. “If you can keep your head...”
 - b. “If you can dream and not make your dreams your master...”
 - c. “If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue...”
 - d. all of the above
- _____ 3. The line, “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,” means:
- a. when you take a risk and lose everything, start over.
 - b. when you lose a game don’t be a sore loser.
 - c. when others lose at a game you are playing, share your award with them.
 - d. you should avoid games where you can lose a lot.
- _____ 4. When the author says, “Yours is the Earth and everything that is in it,” he means that by following his advice you will
- a. be very rich.
 - b. be very powerful.
 - c. live a good life.
 - d. have a lot of friends.

_____ 5. What advice does the author give in this poem? Explain.

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“If” Answer Sheet

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 - “If you can dream and not make your dreams your master...”
 - “If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue...”
 - all of the above**
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 - live a good life.**
 - have a lot of friends.
- Th 5. What advice does the author give in this poem? Explain.

Answers will vary. Examples of advice: trust yourself; be patient; don’t be influenced by the shortcomings of others; be independent; hold on to your own ideals, etc.

Suggested Additional Vocabulary: allowance, virtue, foes