IF

(by: Rudyard Kipling (1865- 1936)

Poem #5

Student:

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,

    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

Rudyard Kipling (1865- 1936)

British writer during the Victorian period. “If” is a didactic poem, which means it teaches a moral lesson. It is written in **iambic pentameter** which consists of ten syllables, divided into five groups (or [feet](http://www.shmoop.com/literature-glossary/foot.html)). Each foot consist of an [iamb](http://www.shmoop.com/literature-glossary/iamb.html), or an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. An iamb produces a [rhythm](http://www.shmoop.com/literature-glossary/rhythm.html) like daDUM.

Are ***los***ing ***theirs*** and ***blam***ing ***it*** on ***you***.

**Questions:**

1. What literary device is used in the line, “If you meet with Triumph and Disaster” (Stanza 2)
2. What literary device is used in the line, “If you can fill the unforgiving minute” (Stanza 4)
3. Identify what is symbolized by the following:

* Knaves represent
* Crowds symbolize
* Kings represent
* Common touch

1. What **moral values** does Kipling suggest in his poem? Put the value in the thought bubble.
2. **Form and Style:**

This poem uses ***imperatives*** which is having the form that expresses a command rather than a statement or a question. Imperatives can affect the mood. Even through “if” is a poem, it is written in the form of persuasion.

What ***method of development*** does Kipling use to develop his argument? Use two (2) direct references.

1. Identify a ***theme*** statement for Kipling’s Poem. Use two (2) specific references for support.
2. Explain how Kipling uses effective ***diction*** in the poem to emphasize hardship.
3. Explain the effectiveness of using ***repetition*** in the poem. Use two (2) examples for support.
4. How does Kipling use **parallel structure** to develop a **mood** that revolves around the burdens and stresses of the Victorian period?