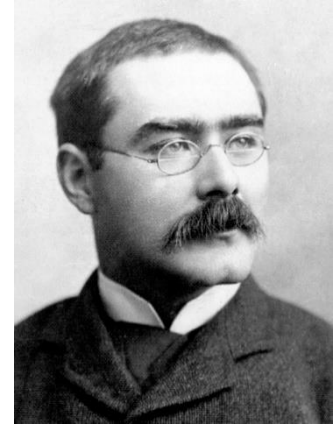


Name _____

“The White Man’s Burden” by Rudyard Kipling, 1899



This famous poem, written by Britain’s imperial poet, was a response to the American takeover of the Philippines after the Spanish-American War. Kipling was born in British India.

lines

- Take up the White Man’s burden— burden: heavy weight, a responsibility
 Send forth the best ye breed— ye: you / breed: give birth to
Go bind your sons to exile
 To serve your captives’ need; 4
To wait in heavy harness,
 On fluttered folk and wild— fluttered folk: irregular people
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
 Half-devil and half-child. 8
- Take up the White Man’s burden—
 In patience to abide, abide: wait
To veil the threat of terror veil: hide
 And check the show of pride; 12
By open speech and simple,
 A hundred times made plain
To seek another’s profit,
 And work another’s gain. 16
- Take up the White Man’s burden—
 The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine Famine: widespread lack of food
 And bid the sickness cease; 20 cease: end
And when your goal is nearest
 The end for others sought,
Watch sloth and heathen Folly sloth: laziness / heathen: non-Christian / Folly: mistakes
 Bring all your hopes to naught. 24 naught: nothing
- Take up the White Man’s burden—
 No tawdry rule of kings, tawdry: showy but cheap and of poor quality.
But toil of serf and sweeper— toil: hard work / serf: a type of slave-worker
 The tale of common things. 28
The ports ye shall not enter,
 The roads ye shall not tread,
Go mark them with your living,
 And mark them with your dead. 32
- Take up the White Man’s burden—
 And reap his old reward:

The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard— 36
The cry of hosts ye humor
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—
“Why brought he us from bondage, 40 bondage: slavery
Our loved Egyptian night?”¹

Take up the White Man’s burden—
Ye dare not stoop to less—
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloak your weariness; 44
By all ye cry or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples 48 sullen: gloomy, sad
Shall weigh your gods and you.

Take up the White Man’s burden—
Have done with childish days—
The lightly proffered laurel, 52 proffered laurel: offered recognition of achievement
The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers! 56 peers: those of one’s same age or generation

1. What is the “White Man’s burden”?

2. What are three ways that the British had to suffer while ruling over the Indians according to the poem. You may quote, but make sure to also write in your own words for each of the three ways.

¹ quote: reference to Moses bringing Jews out of slavery in Egypt. The fictitious quote seems to suggest that the Jewish slaves are angry at Moses for leading them out of more comfort in Egypt into the wild desert, where they are free.