

English 11 - Summer Reading - J.K Rowling Commencement Address: "The Fringe Benefits of Failure, and the Importance of Imagination."

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2008/06/text-of-j-k-rowling-speech/>

Please read - or better yet - also listen to Ms. Rowling's address from Harvard's graduation several years ago. Then reflect and respond to these questions.

01 Name a presentation or speech that made you nervous. How did you handle your nerves?

02 Remember one of the great speeches or presentations you've heard. Do you remember details? What advice has stuck with you over the months or years?

03 What is Rowling's first piece of advice? (It's in paragraph 4.)

04 Define quixotic and paradoxical.

05 Do your dreams for yourself match the dreams your parents and others have for you?

06 "What I feared most for myself at your age was not poverty, but failure." What is your greatest fear?

07 How does Ms. Rowling define failure?

08 What have you failed at - but learned an invaluable lesson?

09 Identify the two or three definitions presented that identify what imagination truly is.

10 Where did Rowling work that so impacted her life?

11 "What is more, those who choose not to empathise [sic] enable real monsters. For without ever committing an act of outright evil ourselves, we collude with it, through our own apathy." Do you agree or disagree? Take a moment, or a day, to think about this.

12 Plutarch said, and Rowling quoted, "What we achieve inwardly will change outer reality." She goes on to say it solidifies our "inescapable connection" to others and the world as a whole. In fact, Ms. Rowling challenges us to change the world by using our "power to imagine better." How do you do this?

13 Who do you imagine will be your friend long after you graduate from Bishop Ready?

14 And, finally, what do you imagine will be your "good" life? (I mean, how do you envision your future?)