

# “STEPMOTHER”



(After J. Greenwood)

# STEPMOTHER -

---

the woman who is married to someone`s biological (=related by birth) father but who is not their biological mother

Translate these words into English:  
**step**father, **step**son, **step**daughter

# James Greenwood

(1833-1927)

British writer, editor, journalist



## Task 1:

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
(Mark the sentences as True or False)

1. The word “stepmother” has a negative meaning in this text.
2. The word “stepmother” is always associated with kindness, protection, care, love.
3. It is better for children to have an angry stepmother than to live with only their father.

**Read the text and check your answers.**

## Task 2:

Read the first paragraph of the text. Who is / who are the main character(s) of the text?

1. How old is he/she?
2. What is his/her name?
3. Where does he/she live?
4. Whom does he/she live with?

## Task 3:

Read the text and answer the following questions:

1. How old was Jimmy when his mother died?
2. Why did Jimmy`s father marry again? Whom did he marry?
3. What household chores did Jimmy do at the age of five years old?
4. Did Jimmy`s stepmother beat him?
5. When and why did Jimmy`s stepmother call him by name for the first time?

## Task 4:



- Find in the text the description of Mrs. Burke's appearance and read it aloud.
- Does the picture to the text correspond to this description? Why? Why not?
- Was Mrs. Burke really beautiful, to your mind?

## Task 5:

There are two important dialogues in the text.  
Let`s read them in roles.

Dialogue 1: (Jimmy, Stepmother, the Author)

Dialogue 2: (Jimmy, Stepmother, Jimmy`s  
father, the Author)

## Task 6:

Find the information in the text, complete the following sentences:

1. Jimmy didn't like his stepmother and she ... .
2. She didn't show her hatred to Jimmy when ... .
3. Jimmy was sorry for his stepmother when she drank a lot of gin with her friend because ...
4. Jimmy spent his father's money on ... .
5. Jimmy's father didn't believe him and ... .

## Task 7:

Read the following sentences from the text one more time.  
Translate them into Russian.

In each sentence find and underline the word(s) which are the most important to characterize Jimmy`s stepmother as a person.

- 1) So we began to hate each other; but she did not show her hatred when my father was at home.
- 2) “But he`ll give me a good beating for it” – Oh, no, he won`t. I shall not let him beat you, you may be sure!”
- 3) “I can`t beat him, he is your child, but you can give him a good beating”.
- 4) And she stood by while my father beat me with his belt till the blood showed.

## Task 8:

Try to characterize each character of the text using 3 adjectives for him/her:

Jimmy	Stepmother	Jimmy`s Father
...	...	...

**small, sly, silly, two-faced, poor, cold, undefended, wicked, indifferent,  
heartless**

## Task 9:

Please, define the sentences as True or False, give your comments to the statements, using information from the text:

- 1) The word “stepmother” has its negative meaning in this text.
- 2) The word “stepmother” is always associated with kindness, protection, care and love.
- 3) It is better for children to have an angry stepmother than to live with only their father.

## Task 10:

- Was the text “Stepmother” interesting for you?
- Would you like to read the novel “The True History of a Little Ragamuffin” by J. Greenwood in English now?
- Would you like to read this novel in Russian?
- Did Jimmy`s story impress you? In what way?
- Are you sorry for Jimmy? Is his story typical in real life?
- Did Jimmy`s father really love him? Why do you think so? Can you prove it by the text?
- What kind of advice would you like to give Jimmy?