Nasreddin the Ferry Man

Read the story and answer the questions.

Nasreddin once had an old boat, which he used to ferry people across the river. One day, he was taking a university professor to the other side.

“What is the square root of 9?” asked the professor.

“I don't know,” answered Nasreddin.

“How do you spell elephant?” asked the professor.



“I have no idea,” replied Nasreddin.

“Didn't you study anything at school?” demanded the professor, surprised.

“No,” said Nasreddin.

“Then you wasted half your life,” said the professor.

Nasreddin was silent for a little while. Then he said:

“Can you swim?”

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"No," said the professor.



"Then you wasted ALL of your life," said Nasreddin. "We are sinking."

Credits:

Story retold by Martin Holmes based on Nasreddin Hodja folktales.

Audio version performed by Cam Culham, English Language Centre.

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1. What was Nasreddin's job?

2. What kind of question did the professor ask him first?

3. What kind of question did he ask second?

4. Why didn't Nasreddin know any of the answers?

5. Which man was probably able to swim?

6. Who had the most useful knowledge?

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