

LESSON 1 WORKSHEET

Geoffrey Chaucer - The Canterbury Tales

Identify each of the following:

1. Geoffrey Chaucer

2. Middle English

3. Chaucer's influence on the use of English in literature

4. heroic couplet

5. framework story

6. pilgrimages

7. St. Thomas Becket

8. Three most prominent groups in medieval society represented in The Canterbury Tales.
 - a.

 - b.

 - c.

LESSON 2 QUESTIONS

THE CANTERBURY TALES - "The Prologue"

1. What is the most popular time of year for pilgrimages?
2. Where do most pilgrims in England choose to go on pilgrimages?
3. Where does Chaucer, the narrator, meet the pilgrims?
4. Why is Chaucer there?
5. How many people does he meet?
6. What shall Chaucer discuss before the journey begins?

KNIGHT

7. What qualities does the knight possess?
8. In what places has he fought?
9. What is Chaucer's opinion of him?
10. Chaucer says the knight has "Fine horses." Why are fine horses important for a knight?
11. Describe his physical appearance.
12. Why is he going on the pilgrimage?
13. Who rides with him?

SQUIRE

14. What does the squire have in common with most young men his age?
15. Where has he served and with what "military" branch?
16. What details about him show his vanity?
17. What skills does he possess?
18. What does Chaucer think of the squire?
19. How is the squire different than his father?
20. Who rides with the knight and the squire?

YEOMAN

21. What is the yeoman's job?
22. Describe his physical appearance?
23. What about his physical appearance tells Chaucer that the yeoman is a "proper forester?"
24. Do you think the yeoman talked to Chaucer? Why or why not?

NUN

25. What is a prioress?
26. What are the qualities/images we usually associate with a nun?
27. Authors often use names to help develop a character. Chaucer calls the nun "Madam Eglantyne." What quality does the name suggest?
28. What is the demeanor of the nun?
29. What does the nun "counterfeit" or pretend she has?
30. How does she feel about animals?
31. Describe her physical appearance?
32. What does her pin say? Why does this seem unusual for a nun?
33. Does Chaucer like her or not? Explain.
34. Who travels with her?

MONK

35. What are the qualities/images we usually associate with a monk?
36. What does the monk enjoy most in life?
37. What does Chaucer say about the monk's horse? Why would this be unusual for a monk?
38. How do the monk's beliefs about the monastic life differ with the church's beliefs?
39. Chaucer says he "agreed" with the monk's views about the monastic life, and he says they "were sound." What evidence is there that he probably doesn't really agree? So why did he say he agreed with the monk as he was speaking with him?

40. Describe his physical appearance.
41. What is a palfrey?
42. What type of personality do you think the monk might exhibit? Explain.

FRIAR

43. How does a friar's life differ from a monk's?
44. The friar is called a "Limiter." What is his job?
45. What extra duties does he perform? How good is he? What is his goal?
46. How does he "make a decent living?"
47. With what types of people does the friar like to spend his time?
48. What is his attitude toward the poor?
49. Describe his physical appearance.
50. Describe his personality.
51. What is the friar's name?
52. Through his description of the monk and the friar, what is Chaucer trying to do?

MERCHANT

53. Describe the merchant's physical appearance.
54. What are his opinions?
55. What is Chaucer's opinion of the merchant?
56. What is the significance of Chaucer not knowing the merchant's name?

CLERIC

57. What is a cleric?
58. Where does he attend college?
59. Describe his appearance and that of his horse.
60. What is suggested by the details of his clothes and by the description of his horse?
61. What does he study?
62. Where does all his money go?
63. How does he repay the friends who have given him money?
64. How does he compare with the monk and the friar?
65. What does the last line of his section reveal about him?
66. What is Chaucer's opinion of him?

SERGEANT AT THE LAW

67. What is his job?
68. What type of man does he appear to be? What shows us that Chaucer may have his doubts?
69. Explain: "Though there was nowhere one so busy as he, He was less busy than he seemed to be."
70. How well does he know the law?
71. Describe his physical appearance.
72. What does Chaucer think of him?

FRANKLIN

73. What is a franklin?
74. Describe the franklin's appearance.
75. Who was Epicurus?
76. What type of life did the franklin like to live?
77. What type of reputation do you think he had? Explain.

TRADESMEN

78. What professions travel together? What is each tradesman's job?
79. What is a guild?
80. Why does Chaucer point out that "their gear would pass for new?"
81. How well off are these men?
82. What things seem important to the tradesmen?
83. What do the wives want?

COOK

84. What is the cook's reputation?
85. What about his description is so in contrast with the image of a cook?

SKIPPER

86. What kind of a horseman is the skipper? Why?
87. Describe his physical appearance?
88. How has he treated wine merchants?
89. How has he treated prisoners?
90. Does Chaucer like him or not? Explain.
91. How good is he as a sailor?

DOCTOR

92. On what does the doctor base his medical treatments?
93. With whom does he work to make money? How?
94. Describe his physical appearance.
95. What are "pestilences?"
96. What does he especially love?

WIFE OF BATH

97. Describe her physical appearance.
98. What is her job and where is her home?
99. What is her personality like?
100. What do the red stockings and the red hue of her skin suggest about the wife of Bath?
101. Who else among the pilgrims has traveled as much?
102. Why is it appropriate that she is riding an "ambling horse?"

PARSON

103. What is his job?
104. What qualities of the parson does Chaucer point out?
105. Who are "his sheep?"
106. Explain: "...if gold rust, what then will iron do?"
107. The parson's entire life is devoted to what?
108. What is Chaucer's opinion of the parson?
109. How does the parson compare with the friar and the monk?

PLOWMAN

110. Chaucer says the plowman is the brother of the parson. Although he may be his actual brother, how is he also his brother figuratively?
111. What are some of his qualities?
112. What does the plowman spend his time doing?
113. What does Chaucer think of him? Explain.
114. Describe his physical appearance.
115. What is the significance of Chaucer telling so little about the plowman's physical appearance?
116. What is the significance of the plowman riding a mare?

MILLER

117. A stone is an English measurement equal to 14 lbs. Describe the miller's physical appearance.
118. What is a miller's job?
119. How well does he do his job? Explain.
120. What instrument does he play?
121. Where does he ride in the procession to Canterbury?
122. Unlike the plowman, the description of the miller is almost completely a physical one. What is the significance of this?

MANCIPLE

123. What is a manciple's job?
124. How well does he perform his duties?
125. What does Chaucer think of the manciple?
126. What does he seem to have that the people he works for lack?

REEVE

127. What is a reeve's job?
128. Describe his physical appearance.
129. How good is he at his job?
130. What is his financial status?
131. What is his special skill?
132. Describe his horse.
133. Where does he live?
134. Where does he travel in the procession of pilgrims?

SUMMONER

135. What is the summoner's occupation?
136. Describe his physical appearance.
137. What does his appearance suggest about his character?
138. What does he enjoy eating and drinking?
139. What does he know a little of and where did he learn it?
140. He will ignore sins on what condition?
141. What does Chaucer think of him?

PARDONER

142. What is a pardoner's job?
143. What is the significance of the summoner riding with the pardoner?
144. Describe his physical appearance.
145. Chaucer characterizes the pardoner as being effeminate. What details does he give to develop that characterization?
146. What kinds of "relics" does he carry?
147. What is prevarication?
148. Why is the pardoner so successful in selling his "relics?"
149. How does he behave in church?
150. Why does he try to sing so well?
151. Compare the pardoner to the monk and friar.

HOST

152. For what does Chaucer ask that his readers now condemn him?
153. Describe the host.
154. What does Chaucer think of the host?
155. What does the host propose?
156. How does the host's proposal help set up Chaucer's plan for The Canterbury Tales?
157. What is the storytelling plan he suggests?
158. What will the winner receive?
159. Who will judge the contest?
160. How do the pilgrims decide who will begin the storytelling?