



*The
Canterbury Tales*

Ms. Kilroy

Fall 2017

UNIT PLAN:

The Canterbury Tales

RATIONALE FOR INSTRUCTION

The Canterbury Tales is a text central to the English III British Literature Curriculum. Chaucer's text provides students with insight into the period of medieval literature, addressing themes such as Christianity, gender, social inequity, and oppression. In addition to reading the text, students will complete a number of writing tasks - both analytical and creative - addressing these key themes. These critical close reading and analytical writing skills are the foundational principles of the English III curriculum.

DURATION OF INSTRUCTION

- This unit on *The Canterbury Tales* will be instructed over the course of fifteen class days.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- In what ways are values and social structures revealed in societies?
- How do literature and media serve to demonstrate the nuances of period social structure?

KEY UNDERSTANDINGS:

- Through reading Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, students will gain an understanding of class structure and gender roles in 14th century English society.
- Through reading Chaucer's text, students will analyze the text in four lenses: factual, interpretive, critical, and personal.

UNIT OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to compare and contrast medieval and modern ideas on Christianity, gender, and social class.
- Students will be able to define satire and discuss the satire employed in Chaucer's text.
- Students will be able to identify and analyze Chaucer's criticism of the Catholic church.

ASSESSMENTS:

- **Introductory Project:** Background information
- **Quizzes:** The General Prologue and The Miller's Tale
- **Writing Assignment:** The Pardoner's Tale
- **Closing Paper:** Chaucer, Antifeminism, and the Medieval Period

UNIT OUTLINE

The Canterbury Tales

Day 1

Class: Assign introductory assignment, students work in groups.

HW: Finish presentations.

Day 2

Class: Student introductory presentations and discussion.

HW: Read The General Prologue.

Day 3

Class: The General Prologue quiz, annotation review, and discussion.

HW: Read The Knight's Tale Section I.

Day 4

Class: The Knight's Tale introduction and discussion.

HW: Read The Knight's Tale Section II.

Day 5

Class: Read The Knight's Tale Part III, discuss historical context, and show short video.

HW: Begin The Miller's Tale

Day 6

Class: The Miller's Tale Introduction and in-class read.

HW: Finish The Miller's Tale

Day 7

Class: The Miller's Tale quiz, In-class read the opening pages of The Pardoner's Tale.

HW: Read The Pardoner's Tale

Day 8

Class: The Pardoner's Tale Lesson, The Pardoner's Tale Discussion.

HW: Begin The Pardoner's Tale Writing Assignment

Day 9

Class: In class-write - The Pardoner's Tale Writing Assignment.

HW: Submit The Pardoner's Tale Writing Assignment

Day 10

Class: Introduce The Miller's Tale, in-class read, and begin discussion.

HW: Read The Miller's Tale

Day 11

Class: The Miller's Tale discussion.

HW: Begin The Wife of Bath's Prologue

Day 12

Class: The Wife of Bath's Prologue Discussion, Begin The Wife of Bath's Tale

HW: The Wife of Bath's Tale

Day 13

Class: The Wife of Bath's Tale discussion and short video.

HW: Prepare questions for in class closing discussion

Day 14

Class: *The Canterbury Tales* closing discussion.

HW: Complete first draft.

Day 15

Class: First draft Peer Editing.

HW: Final paper due on Canvas within one week.

TALE INVENTORY

NAME

DATE

SECTION

TALE

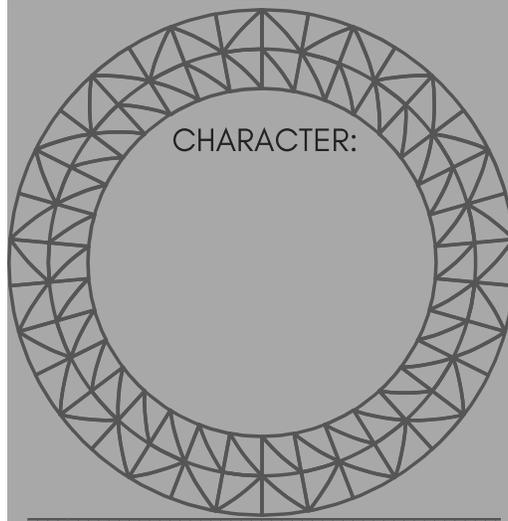
Summary: Write a short summary of the tale you read.

Vocabulary: Which vocabulary words did you find difficult? How did you resolve your lack of understanding of these words, and what are their meanings?

Interpretation: What was the main point the author wanted you to understand from reading this section?

Personal Response: What do you think about this piece? How did this piece influence your ideas about the text as a whole?

Describe the character's occupation.



Describe the character's role during the pilgrimage.

Describe the character's facial features.

What five words would you use to describe this person?

Describe the character's physical body.

What does this character's physical appearance and presence imply?

Write one quote from the character that you feel captures their true essence.

What does Chaucer seem to think of this person, based on how the character is portrayed?

What is *your* impression of this person?

INTRODUCTION:

The Canterbury Tales

Instructions: As a class, we will work as groups to research and summarize background information about Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. Your task as a group is to create a short presentation, video, or lesson that addresses the questions assigned. You may use whatever format you see fit, as long as your project is both creative and factually accurate. Cite all sources at the end of your presentation!

GROUP 1: CHAUCER

- Who was Geoffrey Chaucer? Where/when was he born? Provide a general timeline of his life.
- What were Chaucer's various occupations throughout his life? How could his employment have provided him with unique perspective?
- What languages did Chaucer speak?
- What was his father's profession?
- When did Chaucer start writing *The Canterbury Tales*?
- What was Chaucer's first major literary work?
- Where is Chaucer buried?
- What makes Chaucer's text so significant? Why is it still taught, and why is it considered a "classic" text?

GROUP 2: THE MIDDLE AGES

- Provide a brief timeline of the Middle Ages. How did it begin and end?
- What began at the end of the Middle Ages?
- What was The Black Death?
- What was the Hundred Year's War?
- What was the social structure of the Middle Ages?
- What were some major issues present during the Middle Ages?
- What political structure/form(s) of government were in place during this period?
- What religious ideals were central to the Middle Ages?
- What were the Crusades?
- What was the Code of Chivalry?
- What was the Code of the Clergy?

GROUP 3: VOCABULARY

- What is a pilgrim, and what is a pilgrimage?
- What is irony? Provide an example.
- What is satire? Provide an example.
- What is physiognomy? Provide an example.
- What is an allegory and what is an allegorical poem?
- What is prose?
- What is iambic pentameter? Provide an example.
- What is Middle English, and what are the features of the language?
- What is Estates Satire?
- What is a Frame Story?
- What is a heroic couplet? Provide an example.
- What is courtly love?

GROUP 4: THE CANTERBURY TALES

- What is Feudalism? How does this connect to the text?
- Who is St. Thomas Beckett?
- What is the structure of *The Canterbury Tales*?
- Who is the narrator of *The Canterbury Tales*?
- How many tales did Chaucer intend to write?
- How many tales did Chaucer complete?
- What literary title has been bestowed upon Chaucer?
- When was *The Canterbury Tales* written?
- What are the primary themes written about in the text?
- Essentially: What is the premise of this text? How does the prologue serve to set up the text as a whole?

READING QUESTIONS:

The General Prologue

THE KNIGHT

- What is so notable about the knight?
- What does the Knight do to his opponents?
- What are the primary personality characteristics of the Knight?
- What pilgrim is the son of this Knight?

THE SQUIRE

- How does the squire's appearance contrast with that of his father?
- How old is the Squire? What talents does he have and how do they contrast with the Knight?
- Why does the Squire sleep so little?

THE YEOMAN

- What does the Yeoman look like?
- What is a yeoman in medieval times?
- Why do you suppose the Knight might want a servant who is skilled with a bow and arrow?

THE PRIORESS

- What is a prioress?
- What foreign language does the Prioress speak? Where did she learn to speak that language? What might this detail about her background/ability to speak the language?
- How does the Prioress eat her food?
- What sort of accessories is the Prioress wearing?
- Is the Prioress holy? Why/why not?

THE MONK

- What is the Monk's attitude toward the rules of the church?
- What does the Monk think about hunting? What does the Monk think about studying books?
- What is unusual about the Monk?
- Is the Monk holy? Why/why not?

THE FRIAR

- What does the Friar frequently arrange for young women in his parish? What might this imply?
- What sort of absolution does the Friar grant to sinners? How?
- What is the Friar especially good at?
- Is the Friar holy? Why/why not?

READING QUESTIONS:

The General Prologue

THE COOK

- Who does the Cook work for in the pilgrimage company?
- What does the Cook have on his shin?
- What is implied about his general health and hygiene?

THE MILLER

- What does the Miller look like?
- What is the Miller's door related party trick?
- What is unusual about his physical appearance?
- What does the Miller create poetry about?
- What instrument does the Miller play?

THE REEVE

- What does it mean that the Reeve is "choleric?"
- What does the Reeve look like?
- Why are businessmen more afraid of the Reeve than death?
- Where is the Reeve from?

THE PARDONER

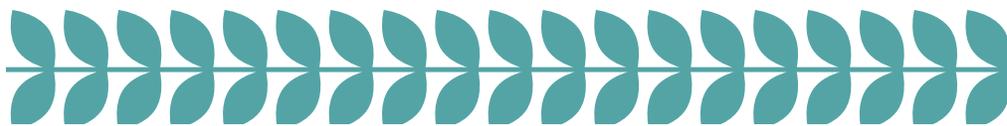
- What is a pardoner? What is a pardon or indulgence?
- What does the Pardoner look like?
- What documents are in the Pardoner's wallet?
- Why does the Pardoner carry a pillowcase?
- What does the Pardoner sell?

THE HOST

- How is the Host described?

READING QUIZ:

The General Prologue



NAME:

SECTION:

1. What season does the beginning of the prologue describe?
A. Fall C. Winter
B. Spring D. Summer
2. Where are the Pilgrims headed?
A. Becket C. London
B. Canterbury D. Brownstun
3. Which character introduced in the prologue is described using the following quotation?
"His horse was thinner than a rake,/ And he was not too fat, I undertake,/ But had a hollow look, a sober stare; / The thread upon his overcoat was bare."
A. The Yeoman C. The Merchant
B. The Squire D. The Oxford Cleric
4. Which character introduced in the prologue speaks French and has excellent manners?
A. The Squire C. The Prioress
B. The Monk D. The Wife of Bath
5. Which character introduced in the prologue is fat, bald, and greasy?
A. The Friar C. The Monk
B. The Squire D. The Franklin
6. Which character introduced in the prologue is known for their hospitality?
A. The Knight C. The Franklin
B. The Friar D. The Prioress
7. Which character introduced in the prologue is best known for their truthful, generous, and courtly ways?
A. The Prioress C. The Wife of Bath
B. The Monk D. The Knight
8. Which character introduced in the prologue is wearing a green outfit and carries and bow and arrows?
A. The Yeoman C. The Knight
B. The Squire D. The Merchant
9. Which character introduced in the prologue has a massive, open ulcer on his leg?
A. The Knight C. The Yeoman
B. The Cook D. The Friar
10. Which character introduced in the prologue is described as gap-toothed and heavy set?
A. The Prioress C. The Wife of Bath
B. The Monk D. The Squire

READING QUESTIONS:

The Miller's Tale

THE MILLER'S PROLOGUE

- How do the pilgrims react to The Knight's Tale?
- Who does the Host ask to tell the next tale?
- Who interrupts the Host's request?
- Why is the Miller pale and why is he having trouble keeping in the saddle as the pilgrims head on?
- What does the Miller say his tale will do to the Knight's tale?
- How does the Miller respond when the Host tries to talk him out of interrupting?
- If the Miller misspeaks or says anything wrong, what does he ask the audience to blame?
- Why does the Reeve interrupt the Miller?

THE MILLER'S TALE

- Who lives as a renter with John the Carpenter and his wife? What knowledge or skills does this person have?
- Describe Nicolas's bedchamber and his lodgings? What stuff does he keep there? How does this suggest two aspects of his identity?
- Who has John the Carpenter recently married? How old is she? How does John treat his wife?
- Describe Alison's apparel and physical features. When the narrator describes Alison, he compares her to numerous plants and animals in nature. Select three of these animals or plants and explain why they are appropriate or how they characterize her.
- What does Nicholas do when John is gone?
- When Nicolas finds Alison alone, what does he do? What does this line suggest about the Miller's idea of "smooth" dating behavior? How does Alison initially respond to Nicolas's advances? How does she respond after he tries some "smooth talking"?
- What job or occupation does Absalon have? What does Absalon look like? What does his voice sound like?
- After Absalon falls for Alison, where does he go with his guitar? What does he do with that guitar beyond just playing music? Who, besides Alison, responds when Absalon plays music?
- What are some of the things Absalon does or sends to Alison to woo her?
- Nicholas's plan to have his way with Alison involves three things or stages. What are they?
- John recounts to himself the story of a clerk who gazed too much at the stars during astronomy lessons. What happened to that clerk in John's story? What does John's choice of stories reveal about his own attitude toward learning? What must John and his servant do to get inside Nicholas's bedroom?
- When John commands Nicolas to think of Christ's passion as a cure for his illness, what does this reveal about John's attitude toward medicine and religion?
- After drinking, Nicholas says he will reveal to John special information. What does Nicholas say will happen to John, should he tell anyone this secret info?
- Whom does John express concern about in the face of apocalypse? How long will the flood on Monday last?
- According to Nicholas, what will the only three survivors of this disaster be? What will they be the "lords of" when the flood waters recede?
- Who notices that John hasn't been working all day? What does this person mistakenly assume about John?
- What trick or prank does Alison play on Absolon?
- How does Absolon plan to lure Alison out?
- When neighbors come to find out what all the screaming and yelling is about, what do Nicholas and Alison tell them about John?

The Miller's Tale Quiz

NAME:

SECTION:

1. Name two ways The Miller depicts his misogyny in this tale:

2. Name one thing Alison is compared to in this tale:

3. Describe the status of each of the following characters at the end of the tale:

Nicolas:

Absolon:

Alison:

READING QUESTIONS:

The Pardoner's Tale

THE PARDONERS'S PROLOGUE

- Why is the host upset at the opening of the Pardoner's Tale?
- What does the Pardoner say is always the "theme" of his sermons?
- What are some of the Pardoner's money-making tricks?

THE PARDONERS'S TALE

- What is the setting of the tale?
- What is a rioter?
- Lists the sins the Pardoner condemns in the opening of his sermon.
- When the Pardoner leaves his examples behind and turns to the rioters, he mentions their drinking habits. At what time of day do these guys show up at the tavern to drink?
- What event disturbs them this morning as they try and drink?
- What does the knave-boy reveal to them when they ask him to find out what's going on?
- Who killed the rioter's friend?
- What agreement or pact do the three rioters make with one another?
- The rioters encounter an old man at a stile. What's a stile?
- What does the old man look like?
- What does the old man seek as he travels endlessly from place to place?
- Where does the old man tell the rioters he last saw Death?
- What do the rioters find when they hunt there?
- Explain how the rioters end up dying.

THE EPILOGUE

- How does the Pardoner's conclusion turn his sermon into a "pitch"?
- Whom does the Pardoner claim needs a pardon, worst of all?
- Why does the Host explode in anger at the Pardoner's words?
- What threat of physical violence does the Host make toward the Pardoner?
- Who interrupts the fight between the host and the Pardoner? Why is this an appropriate or inappropriate character to do this?
- What does the Knight require the host to do as a visible sign of forgiveness?

READING GUIDE:

The Pardoner's Tale

What is a Pardoner?

How does Chaucer portray his Pardoner?

What is Chaucer satirizing in this tale?

ESSAY PROMPT:

The Pardoner's Tale

BRAINSTORM:



Consider the characteristics of The Pardoner that are central to his character. What makes him who he is?

What would The Pardoner look like in present-day America? Would he be successful in the same position/occupation?

What person or position might be a modern-day Pardoner? (Ex: Jordan Belfort, from *The Wolf of Wall Street*).



PROMPT: **Instructions:** Write your own mock- *Canterbury Tales* tale, profiling a modern-day pardoner. You must create your own character. Be sure to employ the following elements in your short story.
Formatting: MLA, minimum of 250 words, submitted as a PDF.

Satire

Physiognomy
or
Caricature

Commentary on
a social issue

READING QUESTIONS:

The Wife of Bath's Prologue

THE PROLOGUE

- Which is better, the actual experience of scholarly authority, according to the Wife of Bath (WOB)?
- At what age was the WOB first married? How many husbands has the WOB had?
- What does the WOB say about her married life versus the presentation of married life in scripture?
- What, according to the WOB, is one clear commandment from faith that clearly indicates she should be married?
- What does the Wife's point about "different schools" making diverse perfect students and "different methods" making workmen perfect?
- How does this connect with her own argument?
- Who does the WOB point to prove that "righteous men" could have multiple wives?
- What characters interrupt the WOB as she speaks?
- What were the WOB's first 3 marriages like?
- The WOB lists several complains men typically make about women. What are some of these common complaints?
- What were the WOB's first three marriages like? What common features were found in each marriage match?
- What made problems in the WOB's 4th marriage?
- What did the WOB do to make her 4th husband loyal?
- What problems did the WOB have with her 5th husband?
- What revelation does the WOB have about the tears she cried at her 4th husband's funeral?
- What sort of reading material did husband #5 read to her each night before going to bed?
- What did the WOB do to anger her husband?
- How did she become deaf in one ear?
- What trick did she employ to sucker punch her husband and knock him into the fireplace?
- How did she achieve mastery over the last husband, and what was their marriage like afterward?

READING QUESTIONS:

The Wife of Bath's Tale

THE TALE

- When is this tale set?
- According to the Wife of Bath (WOB), why can't people see elves anymore? What has driven them away?
- What happens to the maid riding alone?
- What crime does the bachelor commit?
- What is the initial punishment King Arthur orders for the knight?
- Who intervenes to request a special trial?
- Who is in charge of these special trial for the knight?
- What must the knight do to save his head? How long does the knight have to fulfill this mission?
- What problem does the knight find when he starts asking women what they want?
- What strange sight does the knight see while riding through the forest on his return journey?
- What do the 24 women do or what happens to them as the knight approaches?
- What does the old woman say she wants in return for providing the answer to the knight's riddle?
- What is the Queen and the court's reaction to the knight's answer?
- What does the hag teach the young knight about nobility in her lecture?
- What makes a person "noble" or "gentle" according to her?
- What defense does the woman provide for her poverty and her ugliness?
- Why are these advantages, according to her?
- What two options does the woman present to the knight?
- What option does the knight pick?
- What happens to the old woman's appearance at the end of the story?

The Knight's Tale

DUKE THESEUS, RULER OF ATHENS



Theseus is a just, stern leader. After conquering the _____, he takes the queen, Hippolyta, to be his wife. He brings home her _____ Emily, too. He takes mercy on those suffering, and he's "_____" in all aspects.

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

The Wheel of Fortune is a tragic understanding of the rise and fall of fate. In this belief, the Goddess _____ spins the wheel at _____, leaving some as _____ and some as _____. This theory was used to explain death, illness, wars, and so forth.



The Knight's Tale



PALAMON AND ARCITE

Palamon and Arcite are brothers, sworn to each other through the code of _____. Both were imprisoned for years together by _____. _____ was the first to look out the window and fall in love with Emily. _____ did the same soon thereafter.



COURTLY LOVE

Courtly love was the demonstration of love considered "proper" during the period. Courtly love required the men to do all in their power to woo the one they loved. Love could even cause _____. Risking _____ was considered a reasonable cost for love, and people truly in love could not sleep, as they could not bear to be without their love even in_____.

READING GUIDE:

The Miller's Tale

SATIRE:



satire

VS.

parody

Large empty rounded rectangular box for notes on satire.

Large empty rounded rectangular box for notes on parody.

READING GUIDE:

The Miller's Tale

caricature:



fabliau:



irony:

FINAL ESSAY:

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

PROMPT:

Defend or Challenge

By writing *The Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer contributed to the antifeminist beliefs of Medieval England.

YOUR ESSAY MUST INCLUDE:

- Five paragraphs: Introduction with thesis, body paragraphs one through three, and a conclusion.
- A succinct thesis statement that contains the title and author of the text, a debatable claim, and three pieces of evidence to support that claim.
- At least three quotations with analytical explanations that connect the quote to your claim.
- A concise topic sentence for each body paragraph that addresses the main idea of the body paragraph in connection to your thesis.

FORMATTING:

- MLA formatted
- Five paragraphs with proper citations
- Submitted by the assigned due date

Draft Due:

Final Due:

ESSAY PEER REVIEW:

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

Instructions: Place a check mark next to the question denoting what the author of the essay you are reviewing has or has not done. Leave meaningful and detailed comments in order to help your partner continue to develop their essay!



WRITER'S NAME:

REVIEWER'S NAME:



BASICS:

yes no

- Is there a heading and title with correct MLA formatting?
- Is the correct class section listed next to the class in the header?
- Does it name the author and title of the text?
- Is the title of the text in italics and not underlined/in quotation marks?

THESIS:

- Is it clear and to the point? If not, what should the author do differently?
- Does it introduce the point of the discussion in this paragraph? If not, what should the author do differently?

ESSAY PEER REVIEW:

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

EVIDENCE:

yes

no

Is there sufficient context for the quote? If not, what else does the reader need to know in order to understand this paragraph?

Does the quote have a good lead-in with correct citation and punctuation?

Does the writer need this entire quote? If not, discuss what can be cut out?

EXPLANATION

Does the writer break down the evidence, looking at language and meaning? How could the writer do this better?

Is this a convincing explanation of how the evidence supports the thesis? If not, what's missing?

CONCLUSION

Does the conclusion wrap up the essay and address the "so what"?

OTHER COMMENTS?

Leave any additional comments for the writer here.