

Historical and social background

I. Match the word with its definition

1. Aristocracy	A. the people who are members of the priesthood and who are allowed to perform religious services
2. yeoman	B. a group that is of higher level or rank
3. clergy	C. a farmer who owns and works his own land
4. merchant	D. the people of the highest social class, especially people from noble families who have titles and rank
5. elite	E. a man of noble rank trained to fight
6. knight	F. a farm worker who had to work for a particular master
7. freeman	G. a person who buys and sells goods in large amounts
8. serf	H. a person who as an honour has been given a special right

II. Decide whether the statements are true or false.

1. The Battle of Hastings marked the end of the Anglo-Saxon Period and the beginning of the Medieval Period.
2. Under the feudal system political power lay in the hands of the king and aristocracy who ruled through a system of patronage, which meant that he gave privileges to the people who were loyal to him and helped him in times of need.
3. Domesday Book included the names of the landowners and how much land they owned. Using this census the king knew how much tax to ask for from each village.
4. The church during Middle ages had the great influence, both as an institution and a judicial instance.
5. By the end of the Middle Ages the king enjoyed almost absolute power.
6. Magna Carta was the historic agreement according to which the king had to consult a representative council of the aristocracy.
7. By 1300 French was used by all classes, having been greatly enriched by the huge number of Latin words imported into the language by the church.

III. Read the quote and comment it.

“At his most characteristic, medieval man was neither a dreamer nor a wanderer. He was an organizer, a codifier, a builder of systems. He wanted “a place for everything and everything in the right place.” Distinction, definition, and tabulation were his delight. Though full of turbulent activities, he was equally full of the impulse to formalize them. There was nothing, which medieval people liked better, or did better, than sorting out and tidying up. Of all our modern inventions, I suspect that they would most have admired the card index”

C.S. Lewis “The Chronicles of Narnia”

Geoffrey Chaucer

I. True or false? Correct the false statements.

1. Geoffrey Chaucer lived in the 14th century.
2. Geoffrey Chaucer is considered to be the founder of the English language and the English literature.
3. He was born into a poor illiterate family.
4. During his life he was a soldier, a diplomat, a civil servant, a politician, a poet.
5. He died when he was around fifty-five or sixty years old.
6. He is buried in Westminster Abbey, in what is called Poets' Corner.

II. Use the mind map to prepare a short talk about Chaucer's life and works.

Geoffrey Chaucer

Army

Travels

Patron: John of Gaunt

Buried in Poets' Corner

Literary career

Political career

Middle class background