

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

**Piers The Plowman**  
William Langland, 14th Century

Text	Paraphrase
<p>The needy are our neighbors, if we note rightly;</p> <p>as prisoners in cells, or poor folk in hovels,</p> <p>charged with children and overcharged by landlords.</p> <p>What they may spare in spinning they spend on rental,</p> <p>on milk, or on meal to make porridge</p> <p>to still the sobbing of the children at mealtime.</p> <p>Also they themselves suffer much hunger.</p> <p>They have woe in winter time, and wake at midnight</p>	

to rise and to rock the cradle at the bedside,  
to card and to comb, to darn clouts and to wash them,  
to rub and to reel and to put rushes on the paving.

The woe of these women who dwell in hovels  
is too sad to speak of or to say in rhyme.

And many other men have much to suffer

from hunger and from thirst;

They turn the fair side outward,

for they are abashed to beg,

lest it should be acknowledged

at their neighbors what they need at noon and even.

**Prompt:** As we know, Piers the Plowman is an allegorical poem of a man who may have known poverty in London. There is a message embedded much deeper in the poem other than the toughness of poverty in the Middle Ages. What is the deeper message in the poem, how do you know? Explain your answer in 5-8 sentences.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

*Welling up from the peasantry comes a cry of suffering-an allegorical poem attributed to a cleric who may have known poverty in London with wife and child. It extols the simple life, warns the heartless rich of retribution in hell:*