The Canterbury Tales – An Introductory Group Work – Short Form

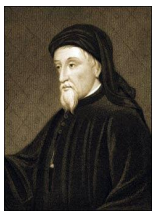


In order to do this work, you need your Text Books – don't forget to have a time keeper. If you are working on a shortened time period – EVERYONE writes – and you need to finish this at home (on your own). If you are doing this as homework, you may work in a group (from any class).

1. Some scholars (though I think it's a bunch of hooey) believe that the works commonly attributed to Shakespeare, could never have been written by Shakespeare – he just didn't have enough connections with the royal court, laws, etc. and didn't travel enough. How did Chaucer's stature, status, and job affect him as both a "sender" (giver of information, including his texts) and a "receiver" (one who receives information) – with specific regard to *The Canterbury Tales*, their germination and their writing? (6 minutes)

2. Read the excerpt from John Gardner on page 100 – while you are completing the rest of this group work – find as many specific examples from this intro that seem to support Gardner's words (1 minute now – but work on for the rest of the group work). Look closely at the descriptions of *The Canterbury Tales* – how Chaucer wrote it, its style, its content, even its language (ooh, go back and look at what you wrote for question 1).

3. Given what you know about Chaucer's life (go look at it again) – how might the epigraph to *Grendel*, apply to this great work.



4. When Dante wrote his epic *The Divine Comedy* in his native Italian instead of the much more common language of literature at the time – it (his book) was so influential that it froze the language. Dante wrote it between 1308 and 1321 – while *The Canterbury Tales* was written 1380 to 1392. Modern Italian is much closer to Dante's Italian than Chaucer's version of English (what we call Middle English) **is to Modern English**. Briefly try to explain why this could be (there are many possibilities).



5, What is a connection between a pilgrim (such as these in *The Canterbury Tales*) and the title character from "The Seafarer" use two quotes from "The Seafarer" in your answer. Yes you need to find it.

Preparing for the next class and the (200 point) test on *The Canterbury Tales* Prologue

Read the prologue gradually (that's why I gave you some reading of it already) – don't read it all in one sitting – keep the chart (you received) out and fill it out as you read. **I STRONGLY recommend** that you Xerox (make a copy of) the Prologue and write (annotate) directly on it.
You will not be allowed to work in a group on our next meeting if you do not have your chart filled out (for the first ½ of the Prologue). Fill out the first part tonight – tomorrow you will be allowed to compare and contrast what you came up with.

Homework

Monday (11/5) "Prologue to the Canterbury Tales" – first half (108-119) up to line 486 - **fill out the chart up to that point** (you will not be allowed in a group unless the first ½ of your chart is filled out) - begin reading the second half – get as far as you can.
Tuesday : Entire Prologue (200 point quiz) and chart filled completely out.
Thursday: Pardoner's Prologue and Tale (handout and text 131-138 – read the prologue first!)
Friday – "Wife of Bath's Prologue" (handout).
Tuesday (11/13) – "Wife of Bath's Tale" (140-149) in your text book