

British Literature: Exercise 5 “There Is Nothing Like A Dame!”

Based on your reading of the tales and prologues of the Franklin, the Wife of Bath, the Knight, the Miller, the Reeve, the Clerk, the Merchant, the Shipman, the Man-of-Law and the Nun’s Priest and the section I gave you from The Book Of The City of Ladies by Christine de Pisan, a French contemporary of Chaucer’s, write a **five paragraph essay explaining at least three different views of women current in the Middle Ages and which of these you think Chaucer holds**. Feel free to also use Marie de France’s Eliduc. This essay should introduce the tales, the book and the question, discuss at least three views of women and their role in society, and conclude by hypothesizing which Chaucer favored and why you think so.

Structure: 1. Begin with an **introductory paragraph** that explains the thesis (main idea) of your essay. Begin this paragraph with a general statement leading to essential background for your analysis. Introduce the works you’re using as well as the pilgrims whose tales you will be discussing. In your **thesis statement**, the last sentence of the paragraph, state your main idea, which should indicate Chaucer’s personal view of women.

2. Each of the **3 body paragraphs should center on one view of women** in these tales: the Franklin, the Wife of Bath, the Knight, the Miller, the Reeve, the Clerk, the Merchant, the Shipman, the Man-of-Law and the Nun’s Priest, as well as in The Book Of The City Of Ladies. Each of these works should be included somewhere in one of the body paragraphs. **The Book Of The City Of Ladies and the tales of the Franklin, the Merchant, the Clerk and the Wife of Bath MUST be discussed in detail with regard to this topic.** You may also include the medieval ballad The Wanton Wife of Bath, which indicates the reception this character received in late medieval England. Note that one tale may include more than one viewpoint about women. At least one of the tales has two very different views incorporated within it. Each paragraph should begin with a statement introducing one view of women, followed by evidence to demonstrate how a particular view of women is treated in the tales. You may either paraphrase or quote. You should use several direct quotes in each body paragraph. When using a quotation, be sure to explain its context and what it means. Be sure to connect quotations to the overall idea of the paragraph and use parenthetical notes. **End each body paragraph with a restatement of its main idea.**

3. After providing a minimum of three body paragraphs, close the essay with a **concluding paragraph** that ties together your main ideas. Your summary should connect the main ideas of the body paragraphs to show how they interrelate. In your last sentences, leave the reader with the main idea you want the reader to grasp about Chaucer’s own view of women, why you believe this to be his view, and how common you believe this view was in the Middle Ages. Be sure that this is similar to your thesis statement. If they are different, your essay has gone off the track.

Schedule: Due: Thursday, October 9 by class time.

Revision Deadline: Monday, October 20 by class time.

Email to caryh@school-one.org as an attachment if you are absent on either of these dates.