

Geoffrey Chaucer

The Father of English Literature

“There was never a man who was more of a Maker than Chaucer...He came very near to making a nation.”

~ G.K. Chesterton

Chaucer Bio:

- Chaucer was born in _____ between _____ and _____.
- Family was not nobility, yet was fairly well off. His father was a _____.
- As a young man he served as an attendant in the household of _____, son of King Edward III. Learned about the customs of upper-class life and brought him into contact with influential people.
- _____, brother of Prince Lionel, became his patron, a person who gives financial support.
- As a teenager, fought in the _____, a 116-year battle between France and England.
- Chaucer's was a diplomat for the King and his travels exposed him to French and Italian literature, such as _____. His writing is greatly influenced by these experiences.
- Enjoyed royal favor, even during the turbulent times of the reign of Richard II. He was appointed a knight of the shire and became a member of Parliament, England's law. He died shortly after _____ became king.
- When he died in _____ he was the first commoner to be buried in London's Westminster Abbey's famous _____.

The Canterbury Tales

- The last two decades of Chaucer's life saw his finest literary accomplishments. They include the romance, _____ and his masterpiece, _____, a collection of tales he began organizing in 1387.
- In the Canterbury Tales a group of travelers from various walks of life gather at an inn to make a _____ to Thomas a (of) Becket' shrine in the city of Canterbury. Chaucer, the narrator of the tales, describes the pilgrims in detail in The Prologue of the story. The pilgrims have dinner, during which the owner of the tavern, or Host, makes a proposal to the group. He challenges each pilgrim to tell two tales on the way to Canterbury, followed by two more on the way back. The _____ will accompany the group and act as a judge. The pilgrim who tells the best tale wins _____ at the journey's end.
- The work was still unfinished at the time of his death. He had written 20,000 lines, but many more were planned. The Canterbury Tales end after only _____ tales, a far cry short of the planned _____. We never get to see the pilgrims reach Canterbury, not do we learn who wins the competition.

Name: _____

The Canterbury Tales: Background Information

What years was Middle English the language of Britain? Briefly discuss the Normandy Invasion. How did this event affect Britain's language? Write the first line of *The Canterbury Tales* in Middle English and then translate it to modern English.

What are the Medieval social classes? The three estates? In your search find an image that demonstrate the social classes in a triangular form and draw it here. In GENERAL, how does Chaucer write about ALL the members of society in *The Canterbury Tales*?

What is a pilgrimage? How does it relate to *The Canterbury Tales*? Tell us a little bit about Thomas a(of) Beckett.

Define the Bubonic Plague as it relates to Medieval England. How did this pandemic affect Chaucer's life?

Define SATIRE. In GENERAL, how does Chaucer employ this technique in *The Canterbury Tales*?

Define Characterization. List three characterization techniques. In GENERAL, what are some ways Chaucer uses characterization in *The Canterbury Tales*?