Canterbury Tales Prologue Pilgrim Activity

****

**Before reading:**

Let’s review a few terms you will need for understanding the prologue:

1. characteristics of Middle English C) iambic pentameter E) stereotype
2. pilgrimage D) couplets F) satire

G) frame story

**As you read:**

Much of what we know about everyday medieval life comes from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. The work is an important view into history as well as a work of literature. As you read the opening lines of the Prologue, determine each of the following …

1. the time of the year C) the meeting place E) the purpose
2. the number of pilgrims D) the destination

**The Pilgrims:**

As you read the Prologue, find the following information for each pilgrim …

1. name or title E) Occupation
2. physical description F) Representative line from text
3. clothing G) a modern day counterpart
4. Personality and/or character traits

**\*\*NOTES**: Not all of this info. is available for all pilgrims.

Also pay attention to Chaucer’s tone. Many times he is satirical about the pilgrims. He’ll suggest that they are good and

righteous, but then he shows that they are actually hypocrites, particularly many associated with the church.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Pilgrim | Physical description | Clothing | Personality and/or Character Traits | Occupation | Representative line | Modern-day Counter-part |
| **Knight (p.146)** | “A most distinguished man” (line 43) | “He wore a fustian tunic stained and dark with smudges where his armor had left mark” (77-78) | He seems to be brave, skilled, experienced Crusader for Christianity, and he is humble. | A knight | “He was true, a perfect gentle-knight!” (line 74) | Navy Seal |
| **Squire (p.147)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Yeoman (p.147-8)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Nun (p.148-9)**  **(Prioress)**  NOTE: Chaucer is satirizing this character who is a woman who lives in a convent, has taken vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. She does not live the life a nun is expected to live. | -her features are pretty, even her enormous forehead (a sign of beauty during this period)  -by no means undergrown (fat…inappro-priate considering she is supposed to live a sacrificial life) | - she wears a set of prayer beads, from which hangs a gold brooch that features the Latin words for “Love Conquers All.” | -she does her best to imitate manners of the courtly but is actually rude (not dipping her fingers too deeply into the sauce…one shouldn’t put one’s fingers in the sauce at all)  - takes great care to eat her food daintily, to reach for food on the table delicately, and to wipe her lip clean of grease before drinking from her cup  -does a poor job of speaking French (fakes it)  - compassionate toward animals, weeping when she sees a mouse caught in a trap, and feeding her dogs roasted meat and milk (more than for people) | Nun in charge of other nuns | “…Pleasant and friendly in her ways, and straining/ To counterfeit a courtly kind of grace….” (142-143) |  |
| **Monk (p.149-50)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Friar (p. 150-151)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Merchant (p.152)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Oxford Cleric (p.152)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Sergeant at the Law (p.153)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Franklin (p.153)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Guildsmen**  **(Haber-dasher, Dyer, Carpenter, Weaver, Carpet-Maker) (p.154)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Cook (p. 154)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Skipper/Sailor (p.154-5)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Physician/ Doctor (p.155)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Wife of Bath (p.156)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Parson (p.157)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Plowman (p. 158)**  **Brother to Parson** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Miller (p. 159)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Manciple (p. 159)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Reeve (p. 160)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Summoner (p. 161)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Pardoner (p. 162) Rode with the summoner** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Host (p. 164)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |