

## CP English 12 Assignments

(Page numbers refer to *The Language of Literature* textbook unless otherwise noted.)

### UNIT 1

## ENGLISH LITERATURE ARRIVES: THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

### Week 1

#### Everyday Life: Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*

*During the Anglo-Saxon period from 449-1066, epic poetry was the dominant genre. These early years were ones of turmoil and change, and oral storytellers responded by celebrating heroic warriors who prevailed in battle. Tests of courage not only made for exciting stories, but they provided a platform for expressing a strong belief in fate and for reinforcing religious faith and moral instruction through literature. The church and pagan worlds were often strongly juxtaposed in a good vs. evil scenario. Eventually these poems got written down. And so it went for hundreds of years...*

*Then along came the first superman of English literature: Geoffrey Chaucer. Chaucer was not just concerned with telling a good story but with telling it well. With the conquest of the island of Britain in 1066 by William the Conqueror of Normandy, a dialect of Old French became widely spoken in educated circles, with English being confined mostly to the peasants, or "conquered" population. Chaucer was the first writer to show that English could be a respectable literary language.*

*What did medieval authors like Chaucer write about? First and foremost: romance. But not just mushy, chick stuff. Instead, medieval romance consisted largely of tales of chivalry to which were added a love interest and all sorts of wonders and marvels--fairy enchantments, giants, dragons, wizards, and sorceresses. Where did they get these wonderful stories? Well, there were three main sources: Britain (the story of King Arthur and his knights), France (the court of Charlemagne), and Rome (classical stories such as the conquest of Troy).*

*Aside from the romance, medieval writers also concerned themselves with autobiography, travel writing, and devotional writing.*

*And why's Chaucer so cool to this day? Well, he wrote The Canterbury Tales, for starters. He was also a very funny, quick kind of guy. Chaucer would make fun of people so on-the-sly that everything sounded like praise on the surface, but was truly insulting in reality. What talent, eh? The Canterbury Tales give insight into what life was like in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Despite the hundreds of years that separate you from the interesting personalities in The Canterbury Tales, look for many similarities—it may surprise you!*

#### Objectives:

- Understand and appreciate a narrative poem
- Identify the tone of a literary work
- Analyze the author's use of characterization
- Use context clues to determine meaning of unfamiliar words
- Recognize homonyms and homographs

pp. 107-10 Read "England's First Great Writer"

p. 111 Read "Build Background" and preview "Words to Know."

Then read [Summary](#)

pp. 112-36 Read "The Prologue from The Canterbury Tales"

Do As you read, note details that will help you analyze the characters using

[Active Reading](#) SkillBuilder ([Answers](#))

- p. 137 Write answers to “Thinking Through the Literature” Questions 1-8
- Do [Literary Analysis SkillBuilder “Tone” \(Answers\)](#)
- Do [Homonyms and Homographs \(Answers\)](#)
- Do Write a one-page journal entry: Make predictions about the characters introduced in the “Prologue.” Which ones will get along? Which will not? Which will tell the best stories? Which one(s) do you personally like best and why?
- pp. 139-40 Read “from The Life and Times of Chaucer”
- p. 140 Write answers to “Thinking Through the Literature” Questions 1-8

## Week 2

### **The Pardoner’s Tale and The Wife of Bath’s Tale from The Canterbury Tales**

*Medieval pilgrimages to a certain shrine or holy destination were quite common. Just as there would be many personalities on a group field trip today and everyone would get to know each other quite well, the travelers in the Canterbury Tales, together for a long journey, have an opportunity to reveal themselves through the tales that they share.*

*In “The Pardoner’s Tale,” Chaucer examines hypocrisy and deceit motivated by greed. There are stories all over the news today that reveal how these elements of human weakness motivate the actions of misguided individuals in everyday life, just as they did in Chaucer’s time. Well, in “The Pardoner’s Tale,” three young hooligans go on a quest to find Death so they can kill him. Instead of finding Death, they find a golden treasure, and their scheming over the hoard leads them to murder each other, so that their original purpose is fulfilled. Although this is a solemn tale teaching that “greed is the root of all evil,” the Pardoner is a con artist of the highest degree, who preaches morality strictly for his own profit, scamming his way to a fortune at the expense of his poor fans. Familiar?*

*“The Wife of Bath’s Tale” addresses the timeless and universal topic of love and marriage, exploring what married women and men expect in everyday life. In her tale, a young knight must kiss or marry an ugly old woman, upon which she transforms into a more desirable form (kind of like the princess and the frog, but flip-flopped). The main point of the Wife’s tale is that women do desire and should be granted sovereignty over their own bodies and minds. Also in “The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” the knight is spared from the completely punitive justice represented by the king, only to face the queen’s rehabilitative justice. Just as our society is divided on the proper form of criminal justice, readers of “The Wife of Bath’s Tale” disagree about how effective the queen’s justice actually is. Thus, despite being a fairy tale, “The Wife of Bath’s Tale” explores issues we are still debating to this day.*

#### Objectives:

- Understand and appreciate a moral tale that provides insights into life during the Middle Ages
- Make predictions to enrich understanding and appreciation of a narrative poem
- Recognize foreshadowing
- Analyze author’s use of a narrator to tell a story
- Analyze the structure of a story and understand how the use of a frame story affects plot
- Practice using synonyms and antonyms
- Learn the correct construction and usage of progressive verb forms

- Do Write a one-page journal entry: “The love of money is the root of all

- evil,” says the Bible. Comment on this well-known saying. In what situations is the desire for money evil or harmful? When is the desire normal or legitimate for you?
- p. 141 Read “Build Background” and preview “Words to Know.”  
Read [Summary](#)
  - pp. 142-51 Read “The Pardoner’s Tale”
  - Do As you read, make predictions using [Active Reading \(Answers\)](#)
  - p. 152 Write answers to “Thinking through the Literature” Questions 1-8
  - Do [Literary Analysis](#) SkillBuilder “Moral Tale” ([Answers](#))
  - p. 153 “Vocabulary in Action -- Exercise A: Context Clues and Exercise B: Meaning Clues”
  - Do Write a one-page journal entry: What are your opinions on “the battle of the sexes?” Would you say that a good marriage is basically an equal partnership? Or do you think that one person needs to be the decision maker? Explain.
  - p. 154 Read “Build Background” and preview “Words to Know.”
  - Read [Summary](#)
  - pp. 155-66 Read “The Wife of Bath’s Tale”
  - Do As you read, analyze the structure using [Active Reading \(Answers\)](#)
  - p. 167 Write answers to “Thinking through the Literature” Questions 1-8
  - Do [Literary Analysis](#) SkillBuilder “Narrator” ([Answers](#))
  - p. 170 “Vocabulary in Action Exercise A: Synonyms and Exercise B: Antonyms”
  - Do [Progressive Verb Forms \(Answers\)](#)
  - Do Write a 1-2 page **informal** research report on a topic related to the Canterbury Tales. Choose from “The Plague” (p. 153), “Women’s Roles” (p. 169), “Medieval Justice” (p. 169) or “Bath” (p. 169). Be sure to document your sources (see pp. 1376-1378 in the Writing Handbook for guidelines).

### Week 3

#### The Legend of King Arthur

*The legends of King Arthur and his heroic knights of the Round Table were popular in the medieval period due to the idealized world they were set in. It was a world quite unlike the real medieval England, with its plagues, political battles and civil unrest. In King Arthur’s “world” --a world of castles, heroes, courtly love, and magical spells--the knights strove to obey a code of chivalry, which represented a combination of Christian and military ideals: faith, modesty, loyalty, courtesy, bravery, honor. It was the attempts at perfection that presented a model for the ideal behavior expected of a Knight of the Round Table. Ever wonder where Round Table Pizza, the last honest pizza, gets its name? Soon you’ll know! The King Arthur legends are some of the most popular and lasting stories of all time.*

#### Objectives:

- Understand and appreciate a classic written in the medieval romance genre
- Identify and understand a writer’s use of characterization
- Review romance
- Recognize relative pronouns and relative adverbs
- Build vocabulary

- p. 225 Read “Build Background” and preview “Words to Know.”  
Then read [Summary](#)
- pp. 226-36 Read “Le Morte D’Arthur”
- Do As you read, do [Active Reading Skillbuilder](#) “Understanding Characterization” ([Answers](#))
- p. 237 Write answers to “Thinking through the Literature” Questions 1-7
- Do [Literary Analysis Skillbuilder](#) “Characterization” ([Answers](#))
- Do [Relative Pronouns and Relative Adverbs](#) ([Answers](#))
- Do [Words to Know Skillbuilder](#) ([Answers](#))

## Week 4

### Writing Workshop: Application Essay

*The legend of King Arthur reflects the ideal medieval virtues of honor, courage, and loyalty. The characters in these legends are portrayed in a positive light, even though they do not always achieve their goals. Present yourself in a positive light in an application essay that you will use when applying for college admission or for a job.*

Objectives:

- Write an application essay
- Use a written text as a model
- Revise a draft to use the active voice
- Check a draft for subject-verb agreement

- p. 260 Find and read the “Writing Prompt”
- p. 260 Review the “Basics in a Box”
- pp. 261-62 Read and analyze a student model.
- pp. 263-4 Follow this link for support materials for [Prewriting](#), Drafting, Revising, and Editing and Proofreading.
- p. 265 Mini lesson: Assessment Practice (Revising & Editing)

**FORMAT:** The final copy must be **typed** (no larger than 12 point type) in a traditional font such as Times New Roman or Arial. It must be **double-spaced** with one-inch margins on the top, bottom, and sides of each page. It should also adhere to the standard **MLA format**.

Your finished essay should demonstrate your abilities as a quality editor and proofreader. It should be easy to read, having been proofread for spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage, and grammar errors. It should also adhere to the standard conventions of paragraphing (i.e., indented first line of each new paragraph and no extra spaces between paragraphs).

