**Focus and Motivate**

**COMMON CORE FOCUS**

RL1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly. RL3 Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story.

 RL4 Analyze the impact of specific word choices on tone. RL10 Read and comprehend literature.

L4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown words. L5 Demonstrate understanding of descriptive details. L6 Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Encourage students to consider why Chaucer chose to write *The Canterbury Tales* in English—the language of England’s common folk—rather than in French or Latin.

**NOTABLE QUOTE**

“*Full wise is he that can himself know.*”  
—Geoffrey Chaucer

Invite students to speculate what the quote suggests about Geoffrey Chaucer as a critic of human nature. Possible answer: Chaucer probably takes an honest view of his characters’ weaknesses and hypocrisy.

**Selection Resources**

See resources on the Teacher One Stop DVD-ROM and on thinkcentral.com.

**RESOURCES**

- **RESOURCE MANAGER UNIT 1**  
  Plan and Teach, pp. 117–124  
  Summary, pp. 125–126††  
  Text Analysis and Reading Skill, pp. 127–130†  
  Vocabulary, pp. 131–133†
- **DIAGNOSTIC AND SELECTION TESTS**  
  Selection Tests, pp. 49–52

**BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT**

- New Word Analysis, p. E8
- Character Traits Web, p. D7
- Classification Chart, p. B17

**INTERACTIVE READER**

- ADAPTED INTERACTIVE READER
- ELL ADAPTED INTERACTIVE READER

**TECHNOLOGY**

- Teacher One Stop DVD-ROM
- Student One Stop DVD-ROM
- PowerNotes DVD-ROM
- Audio Anthology CD
- GrammarNotes DVD-ROM
- ExamView Test Generator on the Teacher One Stop

**Video Trailer**

Go to thinkcentral.com to preview the Video Trailer introducing this selection. Other features that support the selection include:

- PowerNotes presentation
- ThinkAloud models to enhance comprehension
- WordSharp vocabulary tutorials
- Interactive writing and grammar instruction

**Meet the Author**

**Geoffrey Chaucer**  
1340?–1400

Geoffrey Chaucer made an enormous mark on the language and literature of England. Writing in an age when French was widely spoken in educated circles, Chaucer was among the first writers to show that English could be a respectable literary language. Today, his work is considered a cornerstone of English literature.

**Befriended by Royalty**  
Chaucer was born sometime between 1340 and 1343, probably in London, in an era when expanding commerce was helping to bring about growth in villages and cities. His family, though not noble, was well off, and his parents were able to place him in the household of the wife of Prince Lionel, a son of King Edward III, where he served as an attendant. Such a position was a vital means of advancement; the young Chaucer learned the customs of upper-class life and came into contact with influential people. It may have been during this period that Chaucer met Lionel’s younger brother, John of Gaunt, who would become Chaucer’s lifelong patron and a leading political figure of the day.

**A Knight and a Writer**  
Although Chaucer wrote his first important work around 1370, writing was always a sideline; his primary career was in diplomacy. During Richard II’s troubled reign (1377 to 1399), Chaucer was appointed a member of Parliament and knight of the shire. When Richard II was overthrown in 1399 by Henry Bolingbroke (who became King Henry IV), Chaucer managed to retain his political position, as Henry was the son of John of Gaunt.

Despite the turmoil of the 1380s and 1390s, the last two decades of Chaucer’s life saw his finest literary achievements—the brilliant verse romance *Troilus and Criseyde* and his masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*, a collection of verse and prose tales of many different kinds. At the time of his death, Chaucer had penned nearly 20,000 lines of *The Canterbury Tales*, but many more tales were planned.

**Uncommon Honor**  
When he died in 1400, Chaucer was accorded a rare honor for a commoner—burial in London’s Westminster Abbey. In 1556, an admirer erected a elaborate marble monument to his memory. This was the beginning of the Abbey’s famous Poets’ Corner, where many of England’s most distinguished writers have since been buried.
What makes a great CHARACTER?

Creating a great character requires a sharp eye for detail, a keen understanding of people, and a brilliant imagination—all of which Chaucer possessed. Chaucer populated The Canterbury Tales with a colorful cast of characters whose virtues and flaws ring true even today, hundreds of years later.

QUICKWRITE Work with a partner to invent a character. Start with an intriguing name. Then come up with questions that will reveal basic information about the character, such as his or her age, physical appearance, family, friends, job, home, and personal tastes. Brainstorm possible answers for the questions. Then circle the responses that have the best potential for making a lively character.

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

The following boldfaced words are critical to understanding Chaucer's literary masterpiece. Try to figure out the meaning of each word from its context.

1. The refined gentleman always behaved with courtliness.
2. She remained calm and sedately finished her meal.
3. The popular politician was charming and personable.
4. When you save money in a bank, interest will accrue.
5. Does she suffer from heart disease or another malady?
6. She made an entreaty to the king, asking for a pardon.

Complete the activities in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

VOCABULARY SKILL

DIAGNOSE WORD KNOWLEDGE Have all students complete Vocabulary in Context. Check their definitions against the following.

accrue (ə-krō’) v. to be added or gained; to accumulate
courtliness (kôrt’Li-nēs) n. polite, elegant manners; refined behavior
entreaty (en-trāt’ē) n. a polite request or plea
malady (mā’lād) n. a disease or disorder; an ailment

personable (pûr’sa-nā-bal) adj. pleasing in behavior and appearance
sedately (sē-dāt’ē) adj. in a composed, dignified manner; calmly

PRETEACH VOCABULARY Preteach vocabulary with this copy master. Read each item aloud.

RESOURCE MANAGER—Copy Master

PARAPHRASE

When a April the sēw shōwrs fall/And pūrcē the dōght of March to the rōt,... (lines 1-2)

When the April shows come and end the dryness of March;...
When in April the sweet showers fall
And pierce the drought of March to the root, and all
The veins are bathed in liquor of such power
As brings about the engendering of the flower,
When also Zephyrus with his sweet breath
Exhales an air in every grove and heath
Upon the tender shoots, and the young sun
His half-course in the sign of the Ram
has run,
And the small fowl are making melody
That sleep away the night with open eye
(And nature pricks them and their heart engages)
Then people long to go on pilgrimages
And palmers long to seek the stranger strands
Of far-off saints, hallowed in sundry lands,
And specially, from every shire’s end
Of England, down to Canterbury they wend
To seek the holy blissful martyr,
quick
To give his help to them when they were sick.  

It happened in that season that one day
In Southwark, at The Tabard, as I lay

**Paraphrase**

Possible answer: Paraphrase: When April’s showers end March’s drought, and vital rain bathes the plants’ roots; when the wind blows through every woodland and plain on sprouting plants; and the spring sun moves into the sign of the Ram; and young birds sing—birds that have hardly slept, as they are so invigorated; at that time, people journey to religious shrines; these pilgrims long to visit the unfamiliar grounds of long-gone saints, revered in many places, and especially from every county of England, they go down to Canterbury to visit the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket, who helped them when they were sick.

The improved weather in April inspires them to leave their homes and undertake a pilgrimage.

If students need help . . . Paraphrase the passage line by line with them, continuing the chart that appears on the previous page.
The Pilgrim's World

No wonder Chaucer's pilgrims gratefully welcomed spring and traveled to thank St. Thomas à Becket for rescuing them from sickness. Winter in 14th-century England was especially dark, cold, and brutal. The earth's climate was going through a long, cold period, which has been dubbed "the Little Ice Age." The only heat or light available came from the sun, the moon, or fire. The Black Death (1347–1349) was a recent memory and a constant worry. There were outbreaks in 1369, 1374–1375, 1379, and 1390. Medicine was primitive, and superstition was widespread. England lost about 40 percent of its population during that century. Food shortages, which caused hunger and malnutrition, contributed to the general misery. So, too, did the Hundred Years' War with France and the Peasant's Revolt (1381). The pilgrims had good cause to hope that their prayers to St. Thomas might allay some of their suffering.

Analyse Visuals

Activity

Compare the picture with the opening to Chaucer's "Prologue." What details in the art match those in his text?

Possible answer: Both depict the showers of April, the blooming of plant life across the countryside, and the arrival of hopeful, sunny days. The painting also shows the Oxford Cleric, the Squire, the Prioress, the Monk, and the Knight on horseback and attired in 14th-century garb, wending their way to a holy shrine.

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/ AP

Expert Groups Encourage students to become subject experts by selecting and researching one of the following topics:

• the Norman Conquest
• 14th-century inns
• Thomas à Becket

Encourage students to prepare brief oral or written reports in order to share their findings.

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/ AP

Have students read lines 1–18 and rewrite them as a poem using modern day language and figurative language. Encourage students to use sensory details and metaphors in their poems.
and to knights’ campaigns in Lithuania and wars with France between 1345 and 1360; in North Africa between 1340 and 1380; to argued that these allusions refer to campaigns referred to in lines 51–67. Scholars have day may very well have witnessed the battles.

The passage shows that he is revealed about his character in this passage?

Possible answer: Paraphrase: In lines 23–34, who is the narrator of this poem? Possible answer: The narrator is a pilgrim on his way to Canterbury. What is revealed about his character in this passage? Possible answer: The passage shows that he is gregarious, friendly, interested in people, and a natural leader who convinced everyone to travel together (lines 31–34).

**Reading Strategy**

**Paraphrase**

Possible answer: Paraphrase: Nevertheless, while I am free to do it, before my story progresses further, it makes sense to explain their circumstances, a complete description of each pilgrim—as I saw them—according to their work and station in life, as well as what they wore during the trip; and I will begin with the Knight. The narrator sets out to describe the “full array” of pilgrims traveling to Canterbury: the profession, social status, and physical appearance of each one.

**If Students Need Help . . .** Go over the passage line by line with them.

**Extend the Discussion** Why did Chaucer begin with the Knight?

**Background**

**Medieval Conflicts** A knight in Chaucer’s day may very well have witnessed the battles referred to in lines 51–67. Scholars have argued that these allusions refer to campaigns in North Africa between 1340 and 1380; to wars with France between 1345 and 1360; and to knights’ campaigns in Lithuania and Russia (1380s).

Ready to go on pilgrimage and start For Canterbury, most devout at heart, At night there came into that hostelry Some nine and twenty in a company 25 Of sundy folk happening then to fall In fellowship, and they were pilgrims all That towards Canterbury meant to ride. The rooms and stables of the inn were wide; They made us easy, all was of the best. 30 And, briefly, when the sun had gone to rest, I’d spoken to them all upon the trip And was soon one with them in fellowship, Pledged to rise early and to take the way To Canterbury, as you heard me say.

But none the less, while I have time and space, Before my story takes a further pace, It seems a reasonable thing to say What their condition was, the full array Of each of them, as it appeared to me, 40 According to profession and degree, And what apparel they were riding in; And at a Knight I therefore will begin. 45 There was a Knight, a most distinguished man, Who from the day on which he first began To ride abroad had followed chivalry, Truth, honor, generousness and courtesy. He had done nobly in his sovereign’s war And ridden into battle, no man more, As well in Christian as in heathen places, And ever honored for his noble graces.

When we took Alexandria, he was there. He often sat at table in the chair Of honor, above all nations, when in Prussia. In Lithuania he had ridden, and Russia, 50 No Christian man so often, of his rank. When, in Granada, Algeciras sank Under assault, he had been there, and in North Africa, raiding Benamarin; In Anatolia he had been as well And fought when Ayas and Attalia fell, 55 For all along the Mediterranean coast He had embarked with many a noble host. In fifteen mortal battles he had been And jousted for our faith at Tramissene

**Differentiated Instruction**

**For English Language Learners**

**Language Coach**

Roots and Affixes

*Answer:* “state of”, *ladyship*, *scholarship*, *companionship*

Have students practice using words with the suffix *-ship* in two or three sentences.

**For Advanced Learners/AP**

Research [small-group option] Point out the various places mentioned in lines 51–67. Have students find these sites on a map. Then have them research the various battles that took place at these sites. Allow time for students to share their findings.
Thrice in the lists, and always killed his man. This same distinguished knight had led the van once with the Bey of Balat, doing work for him against another heathen Turk; he was of sovereign value in all eyes.

And though so much distinguished, he was wise and in his bearing modest as a maid. He never yet a boorish thing had said in all his life to any, come what might; he was a true, a perfect gentle-knight.

Speaking of his equipment, he possessed fine horses, but he was not gaily dressed. He wore a fustian tunic stained and dark with smudges where his armor had left mark; just home from service, he had joined our ranks. To do his pilgrimage and render thanks.

He had his son with him, a fine young Squire, a lover and cadet, a lad of fire with looks as curly as if they had been pressed. He was some twenty years of age, I guessed.

In stature he was of a moderate length, with wonderful agility and strength. He'd seen some service with the cavalry in Flanders and Artois and Picardy and had done valiantly in little space.

Of time, in hope to win his lady's grace. He was embroidered like a meadow bright and full of freshest flowers, red and white. Singing he was, or fluting all the day; he was as fresh as is the month of May.

He knew the way to sit a horse and ride. He could make songs and poems and recite, singing he was, or fluting all the day; and in his bearing modest as a maid. He never yet a boorish thing had said in all his life to any, come what might; he was a true, a perfect gentle-knight.

Squire: a young man attending on and receiving training from a knight.

Cadet: soldier in training.

Thrice: three times; lists: fenced areas for jousting.

Van: vanguard—the troops foremost in an attack.

Bey of Balat: a Turkish ruler.

Flunting: whistling.

Flanders and Artois (Ar'twâ') and Picardy (Pî'ser-dû): areas in what is now Belgium and northern France.

Yeoman (yô'man): an attendant in a noble household; him: the Knight.

Possible answer: The Knight's actions reveal that he is a model of chivalry. On the battlefield, he is brave and successful (lines 53–69). Off the battlefield, he is modest, wise, and genteel (lines 70–72). Moreover, he immediately seeks penance after his fighting (lines 79–80).

Possible answer: The Squire displays agility, strength (line 86), bravery (line 89), and courtesy (line 101), just like his father. However, he does not have his father's experience, though he will acquire it in time.

Possible answer: The Squire makes him seem real, rather than idealized like the Knight. Unlike his father, the Squire dresses ostentatiously (lines 91–92, 95) and enjoys frivolous pastimes (lines 97–100).

FOR STRUGGLING READERS
Visualization Encourage students to try to visualize each pilgrim. Have students close their eyes and listen as you read aloud the description of the Knight. Ask them to recall specific details. Record these details in the first column of a two-column chart. Repeat this procedure with the Squire. Help students use the chart to compare these two characters.

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP
Allusions Read aloud the Background note on the previous page to students and have them reread the side note about Chaucer's allusions to battles in lines 51–69. What assumptions might Chaucer's audience have made, based on these allusions? What conclusions can be drawn from these allusions about the political situations in Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East at this time? What do they suggest about life in Chaucer's time?

Tiered Discussion Prompts
In lines 81–102, use these prompts to help students understand the character of the Squire in relation to the Knight:

Connect What does the expression "like father, like son" mean to you? Possible answer: The expression suggests that fathers and sons often share similar characteristics.

Analyze Does the expression apply to the Squire and the Knight? Possible answer: The Squire displays agility, strength (line 86), bravery (line 89), and courtesy (line 101), just like his father. However, he does not have his father's experience, though he will acquire it in time.

Evaluate Which details about the Squire make him seem real, rather than idealized like the Knight? Possible answer: The Squire shows many characteristics of a young, romantic knight-in-training who wishes to follow in his father's footsteps: He has fire (passion), dedication (lines 82–90), and desire to serve his father (line 102). However, he is also concerned with his appearance and the impression he makes. Unlike his father, the Squire dresses ostentatiously (lines 91–92, 95) and enjoys frivolous pastimes (lines 97–100).
In lines 108–121, use these prompts to help students understand Chaucer’s ironic treatment of the Yeoman:

**Connect** What would you think if a friend described somebody’s physical characteristics only? *Accept all thoughtful responses.*

**Analyze** What information, besides the Yeoman’s head resembling a nut (line 111), suggests that Chaucer does not take this character seriously? *Possible answer: Chaucer describes only his clothing, which seems to be showy.*

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**Vocabulary**

**Own the Word**

- **courtliness**: Have students reread the passage about the Prioress’s *courtliness*. Then have students list modern-day behaviors that could be described as *courtly*.

- **sedately**: Have students name synonyms for the adjective *sedate*. *Possible answers: composed, dignified, calm*.

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**Text Analysis**

**Characterization**

*Possible answer: The Prioress speaks French with an inauthentic English intonation. Her table manners are coarse, despite her efforts to be elegant: She reaches for meat with her hands, dips her fingers in the sauce, and eats everything on her plate. The phrase “strain or savor” (lines 142–143) is a clue.*

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**Differentiated Instruction**

**For Struggling Readers**

**Satire** Remind students that satire is a literary technique in which ideas, customs, behaviors, or institutions are ridiculed to point out flaws in society. As students read, work with them to find examples of satire within *The Canterbury Tales*, such as the Nun’s efforts at being sedate.

**For English Language Learners**

155 Her veil was gathered in a seemly way,
Her nose was elegant, her eyes glass-grey;
Her mouth was very small, but soft and red,
Her forehead, certainly, was fair of spread,
Almost a span across the brows, I own;

160 She was indeed by no means undergrown.
Her cloak, I noticed, had a graceful charm.
She wore a coral trinket on her arm,
A set of beads, the gaudies tricked in green,
Whence hung a golden brooch of brightest sheen
On which there first was graven a crowned A,
And lower, Amor vincit omnia.

Another Nun, the secretary at her cell,
Was riding with her, and three Priests as well.

170 A Monk there was, one of the finest sort
Who rode the country; hunting was his sport.
A manly man, to be an Abbot able;
Many a dainty horse he had in stable.
His bridle, when he rode, a man might hear
Jingling in a whistling wind as clear,
Aye, and as loud as does the chapel bell
Where my lord Monk was Prior of the cell.
The Rule of good St. Benet or St. Maur
As old and strict he tended to ignore;
And took the modern world's more spacious way.
He did not rate that text at a plucked hen
Which says that hunters are not holy men
And that a monk unclerest is a mere
Fish out of water, flapping on the pier,
That is to say a monk out of his cloister.
That was a text he held not worth an oyster;
And I agreed and said his views were sound;
Was he to study till his head went round
Poring over books in cloisters? Must he toil
As Austin bade and till the very soil?
Was he to leave the world upon the shelf?
Let Austin have his labor to himself.

190 This Monk was therefore a good man to horse;
Greyhounds he had, as swift as birds, to course.
Hunting a hare or riding at a fence

FOR STRUGGLING READERS
Comprehension Support  Direct students to the side notes for lines 177 and 190. Explain that these orders were established to correct abuses within the medieval Catholic Church. Monks were supposed to live pious lives dedicated to charitable work and service to society. Ask students
• What is this Monk’s primary pastime?
• What does the Monk think of the Benedictine rules?
• Does he lead a pious life?

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP
Allusions  Have partners work together to find additional information about medieval monastic orders (Benedictine, Augustinian, Cistercian, Dominican, and Franciscan) online. Discuss how this new information changes their reading of Chaucer’s text. Ask them how these allusions help to characterize the Monk. What do they contribute to Chaucer’s satire?

REVISIT THE BIG QUESTION
What makes a great CHARACTER?
Discuss In lines 169–192, does Chaucer reveal mostly virtues or flaws in the character of the Monk? Explain your answer. Possible answer: Chaucer shows, from the first couplet, that the Monk is a much-flawed character, whose overriding interest is hunting. The Monk ignores and ridicules the rules of his order (lines 177–186), shuns studying (lines 188–189), and avoids manual labor (lines 189–190).
Analyze Visuals
Activity: How does the picture support Chaucer’s description of the Monk?
Possible answer: It shows his preoccupation with hunting, as well as his horse and many greyhounds.

VOCABULARY
OWN THE WORD
personable: Review the definition of personable with students. Then have them name and define as many words as they can with the root person. Possible answers: persona: voice or character representing the speaker or narrator in a literary work; personage: a person of distinction; personal: private; personality: distinctive traits of a particular person; personnel: people employed in a business

TEXT ANALYSIS
CHARACTERIZATION
Possible answer: The Monk is a sportsman, shallow, self-indulgent, and materialistic. The narrator specifically pokes fun at the Monk’s worldly pastimes and appetites. He is far from being a humble and scholarly servant of God in the mold of St. Benedict, St. Maur, or St. Augustine.
Extend the Discussion: Is Chaucer’s satire of the Monk gently witty, mildly abrasive, or bitterly critical? Explain.

REVISIT THE BIG QUESTION
What makes a great CHARACTER?
Discuss: In lines 212–222, what character traits does the Friar appear to have in common with the Monk? Possible answer: The Friar, like the Monk, does not seem inclined toward a life of poverty or charity. He, too, is a “feste fellow” (line 213), who enjoys his fun. Given his interest in hearing confessions from women of means, a material life “of the coin” appears to be of greater concern than a life “of the cloth.”

DIFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION
FOR STRUGGLING READERS
Characterization: To help students better understand the Monk’s shortcomings as a religious person, ask them to brainstorm words and phrases that they associate with poverty, such as poor, hungry, humble circumstances. Make sure that they understand that the Monk is supposed to lead a life of poverty. Then have them compare the Monk with the words they brainstormed. Repeat with the Friar.

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP
Similes [small-group option] Have small groups identify and analyze the similes describing the Monk in lines 200–211. Then discuss the effect of Chaucer’s piling up of such similes. What was his purpose in selecting graphic and humorous images? Is he entirely serious? How do these similes serve his satiric purpose? How would the passage be different without them?
Or so he said, with more than priestly scope; He had a special license from the Pope.

225 Sweetly he heard his penitents at shrift With pleasant absolution, for a gift. He was an easy man in penance-giving Where he could hope to make a decent living; It’s a sure sign whenever gifts are given

230 To a poor Order that a man’s well shriver, And should he give enough he knew in verity The penitent repented in sincerity. For many a fellow is so hard of heart He cannot weep, for all his inward smart.

235 Therefore instead of weeping and of prayer One should give silver for a poor Friar’s care. He kept his tippet stuffed with pins for curls, And pocket-knives, to give to pretty girls. And certainly his voice was gay and sturdy,

240 For he sang well and played the hurdy-gurdy. At sing-songs he was champion of the hour. His neck was whiter than a lily-flower But strong enough to butt a bruiser down. He knew the taverns well in every town

245 And every innkeeper and barmaid too Better than lepers, beggars and that crew. For in so eminent a man as he It was not fitting with the dignity Of his position, dealing with a scum

250 Of wretched lepers; nothing good can come Of commerce with such slum-and-gutter dwellers, But only with the rich and victual-sellers. But anywhere a profit might accrue Courteous he was and lowly of service too.

255 Natural gifts like his were hard to match. He was the finest beggar of his batch. And, for his begging-district, paid a rent; His brethren did no poaching where he went. For though a widow mightn’t have a shoe,

260 So pleasant was his holy how-d’ye-do He got his farthing from her just the same Before he left, and so his income came To more than he laid out. And how he romped, Just like a puppy! He was ever prompt

265 To arbitrate disputes on settling days (For a small fee) in many helpful ways, Not then appearing as your cloistered scholar With threadbare habit hardly worth a dollar,

270 well-shivered: completely forgiven through the rite of confession.

273 verity: truth.

276 tippet: an extension of a hood or sleeve, used as a pocket.

279 hurdy-gurdy: a stringed musical instrument, similar to a lute, played by turning a crank while pressing down keys.

281 virtual: (v-kr(Y))‘s food.

accrete (ak-riyt) v. to be added or gained, to accumulate

283 farthing: a coin of small value used in England until recent times.

settling days: days on which disputes were settled out of court. Friars often acted as arbiters in the disputes and charged for their services, though forbidden by the church to do so.

285 shift: confession.

PARAPHRASE
Restate lines 257–264. How does the Friar spend the money he earns through hearing confessions?

290 The Friar uses his position to gain money; he spends his money on drinking and gifts for women; he does not associate with the poor or unfortunate members of society.

Evaluate Is the Friar more corrupt than the Monk? Explain your answer. Possible answer: Though both are corrupt, the “wanton” Friar’s past and his abuse of power are particularly loathsome.

PARAPHRASE
Possible answer: Paraphrase: He kept his pocket stuffed with hairpins and pocket-knives for girls. He also spends his money at inns and taverns.

Vocabulary Support: Related Vocabulary

accrue: Tell students that the connotation of accrual tends to be financial. Bank accounts accrue interest; companies can accrue profits. Employees may accrue benefits, such as paid time off or vacation, in their jobs.

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Vocabulary Support: Related Vocabulary

Point out words related to the rite of confession in lines 222–232: confessions (line 222), “declarations of guilt”; absolution (line 226), “forgiveness of sins”; penance (line 227), “an expression of sorrow for sin”; penitent (line 232), “sorry”; repented (line 232), “asked forgiveness.” Explain that confession is a sacrament, or holy ritual, in the Roman Catholic Church. The Friar should not be carrying out this rite to make money.

FOR STRUGGLING READERS

Author’s Perspective Through his narrator, Chaucer makes his ideas, values, feelings, and beliefs known. Have students think about these questions: What are Chaucer’s feelings about the Monk and the Friar? What seem to be his personal beliefs about how a monk and a friar should behave? What values does Chaucer reveal through these characters?
**READER CLUES TO THE CLERIC’S CHARACTER?**

Discuss In lines 295–318, what words give the reader clues to the Cleric’s character? **Possible answer:** The words sober (line 299), unworldly (line 302), earnestly (line 311), formal (line 315), respectful (line 315), lofty (line 316), and moral (line 317) tell the reader that the Cleric is devoted to his studies to become a priest.

**DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION**

**FOR STRUGGLING READERS**

*Visualization* Read the description of the Merchant aloud. Ask students to recall specific details about this character and to record them in a Character Traits Web. Repeat this procedure with the Cleric, the Sergeant at the Law, and the Franklin.

*BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT—Transparency*

Character Traits Web p. D7

**FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP**

*Text Structure* The Cleric appears shortly after the Friar and the Monk, with whom he differs greatly. Ask groups of students to discuss Chaucer’s presentation of the Cleric in “The Prologue.” What effect does it have on the contrast between these different figures? How would the effect have been different if the Cleric had appeared before the two other characters? Ask students whether or not Chaucer made a wise structural decision. Encourage them to give their reasons.
His only care was study, and indeed
He never spoke a word more than was need,

315 Formal at that, respectful in the extreme,
Short, to the point, and lofty in his theme.
A tone of moral virtue filled his speech
And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach.

318 A Sergeant at the Law who paid his calls,

320 Wary and wise, for clients at St. Paul’s
There also was, of noted excellence.
Discreet he was, a man to reverence,
Or so he seemed, his sayings were so wise.
He often had been Justice of Assize
By letters patent, and in full commission.
His fame and learning and his high position
Had won him many a robe and many a fee.
There was no such conveyancer as he;
All was fee-simple to his strong digestion.

330 Not one conveyance could be called in question.
Though there was nowhere one so busy as he,
He was less busy than he seemed to be.
He knew of every judgment, case and crime
Ever recorded since King William’s time.

335 He could dictate defenses or draft deeds;
No one could pinch a comma from his screeds
And he knew every statute off by rote.
He wore a homely parti-colored coat,
Girt with a silken belt of pin-stripe stuff;
Of his appearance I have said enough.

There was a Franklin with him, it appeared;
White as a daisy-petal was his beard.
A sanguine man, high-colored and benign,
He loved a morning sop of cake in wine.

345 He lived for pleasure and had always done,
For he was Epicurus’ very son,
In whose opinion sensual delight
Was the one true felicity in sight.
As noted as St. Julian was for bounty
He made his household free to all the County.
His bread, his ale were finest of the fine
And no one had a better stock of wine.
His house was never short of bake-meat pies,
And no one could pinch a comma from his screeds.
He could dictate defenses or draft deeds;
Every recorded since King William’s time.

355 It positively snowed with meat and drink.
And all the dainties that a man could think.

**TEXT ANALYSIS**

**CHARACTERIZATION**


319 Sergeant at the Law: a lawyer appointed by the monarch to serve as a judge.
320 St. Paul’s: the cathedral of London, outside which lawyers met clients when the courts were closed.
324 Justice of Assize: a judge who traveled about the country to hear cases.
325 letters patent: royal documents commissioning a judge.
328 conveyancer: a lawyer specializing in conveyances (deeds) and property disputes.
329 fee-simple: property owned without restrictions.

**TIERED DISCUSSION PROMPTS**

In lines 319–337, use these prompts to help students understand the Sergeant at the Law:

**Connect** Have you ever known anyone who seemed to be “all talk and no action”? Accept all responses.

**Analyze** To what extent does the Sergeant at the Law seem to be all talk and no action? Possible answer: He could talk a fine game of law (lines 333–337), so he had made good money and won respect, but he wasn’t nearly as productive as he seemed (lines 331–332).

**Evaluate** Would you want to hire the Sergeant at the Law? Why or why not? Most students will say that they would not want to hire the Sergeant at Law. Though the Sergeant gives the appearance of wisdom and discretion (lines 320–322), the narrator questions these credentials (line 323). The Sergeant appears to be busy, but is “less busy than he seemed to be” (lines 331–332).

**FOR STRUGGLING READERS**

Characterization [paired option] Point out that Chaucer often summed up his characters briefly, as in “He lived for pleasure and had always done.” For he was Epicurus’ very son” (lines 345–346). Why might Chaucer have done so? Ask partners to try to find one or two summaries that characterize each of the pilgrims so far. Have students keep a log of each character’s summary to recall later and to compare with other students’ summaries.

**FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

Vocabulary: Related Words Point out words related to the law in lines 325–337. Explain that many are multiple-meaning words, often used in other ways: judgment (line 333), “legal ruling”; case (line 333), “court case or legal action”; crime (line 333), “an act that violates the law”; defenses (line 335), “legal arguments”; deeds (line 335), “legal documents”; statute (line 337), “law.”

**TEXT ANALYSIS**

**CHARACTERIZATION**

Possible answer: The Franklin has a white beard and rosy complexion (lines 342–343). He lives for pleasure (line 345), especially for fine food and drink (lines 344–356).
According to the seasons of the year
Changes of dish were ordered to appear.
He kept fat partridges in coops, beyond,
Many a bream and pike were in his pond.
Woe to the cook unless the sauce was hot
And sharp, or if he wasn't on the spot!
And in his hall a table stood arrayed
And ready all day long, with places laid.
As Justice at the Sessions none stood higher;
He often had been Member for the Shire.
A dagger and a little purse of silk
Hung at his girdle, white as morning milk.
As Sheriff he checked audit, every entry.
He was a model among landed gentry.
A Haberdasher, a Dyer, a Carpenter,
A Weaver and a Carpet-maker were
Among our ranks, all in the livery
Of one impressive guild-fraternity.
They were so trim and fresh their gear would pass
For new. Their knives were not tricked out with brass
But wrought with purest silver, which avouches
A like display on girdles and on pouches.
Each seemed a worthy burgess, fit to grace
A guild-hall with a seat upon the dais.
Their wisdom would have justified a plan
To make each one of them an alderman;
Besides their wives declared it was their due.
And if they did not think so, then they ought;
To be called “Madam” is a glorious thought,
And so is going to church and being seen
Having your mantle carried, like a queen.

Blancmange: a thick chicken stew with almonds.

**DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION**

**FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

**Vocabulary**
Point out that several professions named in “The Prologue” have become proper names in English, including *Knight* (and *Knightly*), *Priest* (and *Priestly*), *Merchant*, *Franklin*, *Dyer*, *Carpenter*, *Weaver*, and *Cook* (and also *Reeve* and *Miller*). Ask students to name professions, current or outdated, that have become common surnames in their primary language.

**FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP**

**Historical Perspective**
Ask students to consider what the group of tradesmen—the Haberdasher, Dyer, Carpenter, Weaver, and Carpet-maker—suggests about England’s growing middle class and material well-being at the end of the 14th century. Have them write a brief report on this topic. Allow time for students to share their findings with the class.
A Doctor too emerged as we proceeded;
No one alive could talk as well as he did
On points of medicine and of surgery,
For, being grounded in astronomy,
He watched his patient closely for the hours
When, by his horoscope, he knew the powers
Of favorable planets, then ascendant,
Worked on the images for his dependent.
The cause of every malady you’d got
He knew, and whether dry, cold, moist or hot;
He knew their seat, their humor and condition.
He was a perfect practicing physician.
These causes being known for what they were,
He gave the man his medicine then and there.
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He watched his patient closely for the hours
When, by his horoscope, he knew the powers
Of favorable planets, then ascendant,
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The cause of every malady you’d got
He knew, and whether dry, cold, moist or hot;
He knew their seat, their humor and condition.
He was a perfect practicing physician.
These causes being known for what they were,
He gave the man his medicine then and there.

The barge he owned was called The Maudelayne.
And every creek in Brittany and Spain;
From Gottland to the Cape of Finisterre,
And every creek in Brittany and Spain;

Many a draft of vintage, red and yellow,
And certainly he was an excellent fellow.

He rode a farmer’s horse as best he could,
In a woolen gown that reached his knee.
A dagger on a lanyard falling free
Hung from his neck under his arm and down.
The summer heat had tanned his color brown,
And certainly he was an excellent fellow.

Many a draft of vintage, red and yellow,
And certainly he was an excellent fellow.

He rode a farmer’s horse as best he could,
In a woolen gown that reached his knee.
A dagger on a lanyard falling free
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In a woolen gown that reached his knee.
A dagger on a lanyard falling free
Hung from his neck under his arm and down.
The summer heat had tanned his color brown,
And certainly he was an excellent fellow.
In his own diet he observed some measure; There were no superfluities for pleasure, Only digestives, nutritives and such. He did not read the Bible very much. In blood-red garments, slashed with bluish grey And lined with taffeta, he rode his way; Yet he was rather close as to expenses And kept the gold he won in pestilences. Gold stimulates the heart, or so we’re told. He therefore had a special love of gold. A worthy woman from beside Bath city Was with us, somewhat deaf, which was a pity. In making cloth she showed so great a bent She bettered those of Ypres and of Ghent. In all the parish not a dame dared stir Towards the altar steps in front of her, And if indeed they did, so wrath was she As to be quite put out of charity. Her kerchiefs were of finely woven ground; I dared have sworn they weighed a good ten pound, The ones she wore on Sunday, on her head. Her hose were of the finest scarlet red And gartered tight; her shoes were soft and new. Bold was her face, handsome, and red in hue. A worthy woman all her life, what’s more She’d had five husbands, all at the church door, Apart from other company in youth; No need just now to speak of that, forsooth.
And she had thrice been to Jerusalem,
    Seen many strange rivers and passed over them;
    She'd been to Rome and also to Boulogne,
    St. James of Compostella and Cologne,
    And she was skilled in wandering by the way.
    She had gap-teeth, set widely, truth to say.
    Easily on an ambling horse she sat
    Well wimpled up, and on her head a hat
    As broad as is a buckler or a shield;
    She had a flowing mantle that concealed
    Large hips, her heels spurred sharply under that.
    In company she liked to laugh and chat
    And knew the remedies for love's mischances,
    An art in which she knew the oldest dances.

A holy-minded man of good renown
    There was, and poor, the Parson to a town,
    Yet he was rich in holy thought and work.
    He also was a learned man, a clerk,
    Who truly knew Christ's gospel and would preach it
    Devoutly to parishioners, and teach it.
    Benign and wonderfully diligent,
    And patient when adversity was sent
    (For so he proved in much adversity)
    He hated cursing to extort a fee,
    Nay rather he preferred beyond a doubt
    Giving to poor parishioners round about
    Both from church offerings and his property;
    He could in little find sufficiency.
    Upon his feet, and in his hand a stave.
    This noble example to his sheep he gave
    That first he wrought, and afterwards he taught;
    And it was from the Gospel he had caught
    Those words, and he would add this figure too,
    That if gold rust, what then will iron do?
    For if a priest be foul in whom we trust
    No wonder that a common man should rust;
    And shame it is to see—let priests take stock—
    A shitten shepherd and a snowy flock.
    The true example that a priest should give
    Is one of cleanness, how the sheep should live.

    Boulogne (bO-lōn'), St. James of
    Compostella and Cologne (kO-lōn'),
    popular destinations of religious pilgrimages in the Middle Ages.

480  wimpled: with her hair and
      neck covered by a cloth headdress.
481  buckler: small round shield.

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Comprehension Support  Make sure that students understand the religious metaphor of a clergyman as the shepherd of his congregation—the flock—and the wolf as a representation of evil, sin, and temptation (lines 514–524). Then ask these questions:

• Which lines state the shepherd’s job?
• Which lines state the danger faced by a flock?

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP

Compare and Contrast  Ask students to compare the Parson with other religious figures in “The Prologue,” such as the Prioress, the Monk, the Friar and the Cleric. Ask groups of students to research Chaucer’s life. How are his religious beliefs and the beliefs of the time reflected in these characters? Have students write a short essay on this topic.

CHARACTERIZATION
Reread lines 455–486. Which details help define the Wife of Bath as a worldly woman?

Possible answer: The Wife of Bath is a superlative weaver; she wears stylish and expensive clothes; she has been married five times; and she has traveled to many important pilgrim sites, including three visits to Jerusalem.

TIERED DISCUSSION PROMPTS
In lines 490–516, use these prompts to help students understand the significance of the Parson:

Connect  What qualities make you respect and trust somebody? Accept any thoughtful answer.

Analyze  Do the Parson’s traits show him to be trustworthy? Explain your answer. Possible answer: The Parson’s kindness, moral rectitude, generosity, conscientiousness, and diligence show that he is trustworthy.

Synthesize  What point is Chaucer making through the Parson? Possible answer: He is making the point that the clergy should be above reproach in their behavior and spotless models to the people they serve.
He did not set his benefice to hire
And leave his sheep encumbered in the mire
Or run to London to earn easy bread
By singing masses for the wealthy dead,
Or find some Brotherhood and get enrolled.
He stayed at home and watched over his fold
So that no wolf should make the sheep miscarry.
He was a shepherd and no mercenary.
Holy and virtuous he was, but then
Never contemptuous of sinful men,
Never disdainful, never too proud or fine,
But was discreet in teaching and benign.
His business was to show a fair behavior
And draw men thus to Heaven and their Savior,
Unless indeed a man were obstinate;
And such, whether of high or low estate,
He put to sharp rebuke, to say the least.
I think there never was a better priest.
He sought no pomp or glory in his dealings,
No scrupulosity had spiced his feelings.
Christ and His Twelve Apostles and their lore
He taught, but followed it himself before.
There was a Plowman with him there, his brother;
Many a load of dung one time or other
He must have carted through the morning dew.
He was an honest worker, good and true,
Living in peace and perfect charity,
And, as the gospel bade him, so did he,
Loving God best with all his heart and mind
And then his neighbor as himself, repined
At no misfortune, slacked for no content,
For steadily about his work he went
To thresh his corn, to dig or to manure
Or make a ditch; and he would help the poor
For love of Christ and never take a penny
If he could help it, and, as prompt as any,
He paid his tithes in full when they were due
On what he owned, and on his earnings too.
He wore a tabard smock and rode a mare.
There was a Reeve, also a Miller, there,
A College Manciple from the Inns of Court,
A papal Pardoner and, in closest consort,
A Church-Court Summoner, riding at a trot,
And finally myself—that was the lot.

The Miller was a chap of sixteen stone,
A great stout fellow big in brawn and bone.
He did well out of them, for he could go
And win the ram at any wrestling show.

Broad, knotty and short-shouldered, he would boast
He could heave any door off hinge and post,
Or take a run and break it with his head.
His beard, like any sow or fox, was red
And broad as well, as though it were a spade;
And, at its very tip, his nose displayed
A wart on which there stood a tuft of hair
Red as the bristles in an old sow’s ear.
His nostrils were as black as they were wide.

He had a sword and buckler at his side,
His mighty mouth was like a furnace door.
A wrangler and buffoon, he had a store
Of tavern stories, filthy in the main.
His was a master-hand at stealing grain.
He felt it with his thumb and thus he knew
Its quality and took three times his due—
A thumb of gold, by God, to gauge an oat!

He wore a hood of blue and a white coat.
He liked to play his bagpipes up and down
And that was how he brought us out of town.

The Manciple came from the Inner Temple;
All caterers might follow his example
In buying victuals; he was never rash
Whether he bought on credit or paid cash.
He used to watch the market most precisely
And got in first, and so he did quite nicely.

And in first, and so he did quite nicely.
Now isn’t it a marvel of God’s grace
That an illiterate fellow can outpace
The wisdom of a heap of learned men?
His masters—he had more than thirty then—
All versed in the abstrusest legal knowledge,
Could have produced a dozen from their College
Fit to be stewards in land and rents and game
To any Peer in England you could name,
And show him how to live on what he had
Debt-free (unless of course the Peer were mad)
Or be as frugal as he might desire,
And make them fit to help about the Shire

REVISIT THE BIG QUESTION

What makes a great CHARACTER?

Discuss In lines 585–604, what words best describe the Manciple’s character? Possible answer: Cautious, clever, and frugal. Which lines state Chaucer’s opinion of the Manciple most clearly? Possible answer: “Now isn’t it a marvel of God’s grace / That an illiterate fellow can outpace / The wisdom of a heap of learned men?” (lines 591–593)

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Vocabulary: Outdated Forms Point out that some words in this translation are not commonly used in modern American English, such as bade (line 544), “commanded”; buckler (line 574), “small shield”; victuals (line 587), “food”; Shire (line 602), “a county [of Great Britain].” Then have students reread the lines, substituting a modern synonym for each word.
In any legal case there was to try;
And yet this Manciple could wipe their eye.

The Reeve was old and choleric and thin;
His beard was shaven closely to the skin,
His shorn hair came abruptly to a stop
Above his ears, and he was docked on top
Just like a priest in front; his legs were lean,
Like sticks they were, no calf was to be seen.

He kept his bins and garners very trim;
No auditor could gain a point on him.

And he could judge by watching drought and rain
The yield he might expect from seed and grain.

His master’s sheep, his animals and hens,
Pigs, horses, dairies, stores and cattle-pens
Were wholly trusted to his government.

He had been under contract to present
The accounts, right from his master’s earliest years.
No one had ever caught him in arrears.
No bailiff, serf or herdsman dared to kick,
He knew their dodges, knew their every trick;
Feared like the plague he was, by those beneath.

He had a lovely dwelling on a heath,
Shadowed in green by trees above the sward.
A better hand at bargains than his lord,

Discuss  In lines 605–640, what traits and habits have helped the Reeve grow rich? Possible answer: The Reeve is a crafty and capable manager (lines 612–614); he has been entrusted with the management of his master’s livestock (lines 615–617); he stays on top of collections (lines 618–622); he knows a good bargain and can manage his money (lines 628–630); he is also a fine carpenter (lines 631–632). Does Chaucer seem to have any reservations about this character? Possible answer: Chaucer’s opening words describe the Reeve as temperamental; Chaucer also says that he is “feared like the plague” (line 623) by everyone under him, suggesting that the Reeve is probably not compassionate or kind, but a bully and a stickler.

Analyze Visuals

Activity  How does the picture support Chaucer’s description of the Reeve? Possible answer: It shows the neat, well-kept farm he managed and his shorn hair, cropped above his ears, as well as the confident bearing one might expect from the prosperous Reeve.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Vocabulary Support  Help students use context to figure out the meaning of these expressions: Feared like the plague (line 623), “feared [him] terribly”; as I heard tell (line 637), “I was told”; No wonder (line 659), “It is not surprising.”

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP

Historical Perspective [small-group option] Both the Manciple and the Reeve are 14th-century success stories. Though illiterate, the Manciple has outpaced men of greater learning, while the Reeve has grown rich and tucked away a treasure, despite his start as a carpenter. What does Chaucer suggest about mobility in medieval English society through these two characters? What traits seem to be essential for such success? How does Chaucer,
He had grown rich and had a store of treasure
Well tucked away, yet out it came to pleasure
His lord with subtle loans or gifts of goods,
To earn his thanks and even coats and hoods.
The stallion-cob he rode at a slow trot
Was dapple-grey and bore the name of Scot.
He wore an overcoat of bluish shade
And rather long; he had a rusty blade
Slung at his side. He came, as I heard tell,
From Norfolk, near a place called Baldeswell.
His coat was tucked under his belt and splayed.
He rode the hindmost of our cavalcade.

There was a Summoner with us at that Inn,
His face on fire, like a cherubin,
For he had carbuncles. His eyes were narrow,
He was as hot and lecherous as a sparrow.
Black scabby brows he had, and a thin beard.
Children were afraid when he appeared.
No quicksilver, lead ointment, tartar creams,
No brimstone, no boracic, so it seems,
Could make a salve that had the power to bite,
Clean up or cure his whelks of knobby white
Or purge the pimples sitting on his cheeks.
Garlic he loved, and onions too, and leeks,
And drinking strong red wine till all was hazy.
Then he would shout and jabber as if crazy,
And wouldn’t speak a word except in Latin
When he was drunk, such tags as he was pat in;
He only had a few, say two or three,
That he had mugged up out of some decree;
No wonder, for he heard them every day.
And, as you know, a man can teach a jay
To call out “Walter” better than the Pope.
But had you tried to test his wits and grope
For more, you’d have found nothing in the bag,
Then “Questio quid juris” was his tag.
He was a noble varlet and a kind one,
You’d meet none better if you went to find one.
Why, he’d allow—just for a quart of wine—
Any good lad to keep a concubine
A twelvemonth and dispense him altogether!
And he had finches of his own to feather:
And if he found some rascal with a maid

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP
Situational Irony [paired option] Review with students that situational irony contrasts what is expected to happen with what actually does happen. Then have partners find and explain examples of situational irony in “The Prologue,” such as

- The Summoner, whose job is to summon sinners to the church courts, is himself a lecher and a drunk.
- The Monk, whom one expects to live a pious, simple life devoted to other people, instead loves hunting and fancy clothing.

Discuss the purpose and effect of Chaucer’s situational irony. How does it support his satire?
Pardoner like the Summoner? Discuss
CHARACTER?
What makes a great
revisit the big
question (lines 708–711).

He would instruct him not to be afraid
In such a case of the Archdeacon’s curse
(Unless the rascal’s soul were in his purse)
675 For in his purse the punishment should be.
“Purse is the good Archdeacon’s Hell,” said he.
But well I know he lied in what he said;
A curse should put a guilty man in dread,
For curses kill, as shriving brings, salvation.
680 We should beware of excommunication.

Thus, as he pleased, the man could bring duress
On any young fellow in the diocese.
He knew their secrets, they did what he said.
He wore a garland set upon his head
685 Large as the holly-bush upon a stake
Outside an ale-house, and he had a cake,
A round one, which it was his joke to wield
As if it were intended for a shield.

He and a gentle Pardoner rode together,
690 A bird from Charing Cross of the same feather,
Just back from visiting the Court of Rome.
He loudly sang, “Come hither, love, come home!”
The Summoner sang deep seconds to this song,
No trumpet ever sounded half so strong.

This Pardoner had hair as yellow as wax,
Hanging down smoothly like a hank of flax.
In driblets fell his locks behind his head
Down to his shoulders which they overspread;
Thinly they fell, like rat-tails, one by one.
700 He wore no hood upon his head, for fun;
The hood inside his wallet had been stowed,
He aimed at riding in the latest mode;
But for a little cap his head was bare
And he had bulging eye-balls, like a hare.

He’d sewed a holy relic on his cap;
705 His wallet lay before him on his lap,
Brimful of pardons come from Rome, all hot.
He had the same small voice a goat has got.
His chin no beard had harbored, nor would harbor,
710 Smoother than ever chin was left by barber.
I judge he was a gelding, or a mare.
As to his trade, from Berwick down to Ware
There was no pardoner of equal grace,
For in his trunk he had a pillow-case
715 Which he asserted was Our Lady’s veil.

DifferenTiated Instruction

FOR STRUGGLING READERS
Classification [small-group option] Chaucer
describes a broad cross-section of people
from 14th-century England. Invite students
to consider ways of grouping the pilgrims: for
example, by professions; men and women;
laity and priests; or as round and flat, rich and
poor, educated and uneducated, or moral and
immoral characters. Which groupings are
most useful? Which help us to better under-
stand Chaucer’s world? Have groups fill out
Classification Charts to illustrate these group-
ings. Allow time for students to share and
compare their findings.

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
Comprehension Support Direct students’
attention to the side notes related to holy
relics (lines 705, 715, 716, 717–718). Make
sure they understand that all of these relics
are fakes, which the Summoner uses to fool
people and to cheat them out of their money.
Explain that he probably passes the pigs’
bones (line 720) off as the bones of a saint or
other religious person.
He said he had a gobbet of the sail
Saint Peter had the time when he made bold
To walk the waves, till Jesu Christ took hold.
He had a cross of metal set with stones
And, in a glass, a rubble of pigs' bones.
And with these relics, any time he found
Some poor up-country parson to astound,
More than the parson in a month or two,
He had a cross of metal set with stones
And, in a glass, a rubble of pigs' bones.
And with these relics, any time he found
Some poor up-country parson to astound,
In one short day, in money down, he drew
More than the parson in a month or two,
And by his flatteries and prevarication
Made monkeys of the priest and congregation.

But still to do him justice first and last
In church he was a noble ecclesiast.
How well he read a lesson or told a story!
But best of all he sang an Offertory,
For well he knew that when that song was sung
He'd have to preach and tune his honey-tongue
And (well he could) win silver from the crowd.

That's why he sang so merrily and loud.

Now I have told you shortly, in a clause,
The rank, the array, the number and the cause
Of our assembly in this company
In Southwark, at that high-class hostelry
Known as The Tabard, close beside The Bell.
And now the time has come for me to tell
How we behaved that evening; I'll begin
After we had alighted at the Inn,
Then I'll report our journey, stage by stage,
All the remainder of our pilgrimage.

But first I beg of you, in courtesy,
Not to condemn me as unmannerly
If I speak plainly and with no concealings
And give account of all their words and dealings,
Using their very phrases as they fell.
For certainly, as you all know so well,
He who repeats a tale after a man
Is bound to say, as nearly as he can,
Each single word, if he remembers it,
However rudely spoken or unfit,
Or else the tale he tells will be untrue,
The things pretended and the phrases new.
He may not flinch although it were his brother,
He may as well say one word as another.
And Christ Himself spoke broad in Holy Writ,
Yet there is no scurrility in it.
And Plato says, for those with power to read, “The word should be as cousin to the deed.” Further I beg you to forgive it me If I neglect the order and degree And what is due to rank in what I’ve planned. I’m short of wit as you will understand.

Our Host gave us great welcome; everyone Was given a place and supper was begun. He served the finest victuals you could think, The wine was strong and we were glad to drink. A very striking man our Host withal, And fit to be a marshal in a hall. His eyes were bright, his girth a little wide; There is no finer burgess in Cheapside. Bold in his speech, yet wise and full of tact, There was no manly attribute he lacked, What’s more he was a merry-hearted man. After our meal he jokingly began To talk of sport, and, among other things After we’d settled up our reckonings, He said as follows: “Truly, gentlemen, You’re very welcome and I can’t think when —Upon my word I’m telling you no lie— I’ve seen a gathering here that looked so spry, No, not this year, as in this tavern now. I’d think you up some fun if I knew how. And, as it happens, a thought has just occurred
To please you, costing nothing, on my word. You're off to Canterbury—well, God speed!
790 Blessed St. Thomas answer to your need!
And I don't doubt, before the journey's done
You mean to while the time in tales and fun.
Indeed, there's little pleasure for your bones
Riding along and all as dumb as stones.
795 So let me then propose for your enjoyment,
Just as I said, a suitable employment.
And if my notion suits and you agree
And promise to submit yourselves to me
Playing your parts exactly as I say
800 Tomorrow as you ride along the way,
Then by my father's soul (and he is dead)
If you don't like it you can have my head!
Hold up your hands, and not another word."

Well, our opinion was not long deferred,
805 It seemed not worth a serious debate;
We all agreed to it at any rate
And bade him issue what commands he would.
"My lords," he said, "now listen for your good,
And please don't treat my notion with disdain.
810 This is the point. I'll make it short and plain.
Each one of you shall help to make things slip
By telling two stories on the outward trip
To Canterbury, that's what I intend,
And, on the homeward way to journey's end
815 Another two, tales from the days of old:
That is to say who gives the fullest measure
Of good morality and general pleasure.
He shall be given a supper, paid by all,
Here in this tavern, in this very hall,
When we come back again from Canterbury.
820 In the hope to keep you bright and merry
I'll go along with you myself and ride
All at my own expense and serve as guide.
825 I'll be the judge, and those who won't obey
Shall pay for what we spend upon the way.
Now if you all agree to what you've heard
Tell me at once without another word,
And I will make arrangements early for it."

790 St. Thomas: St. Thomas à Becket, to whose shrine the pilgrims are traveling.
794 dumb: silent.

BACKGROUND
Pilgrims’ Identities  Did Chaucer base his pilgrims on real-life individuals from his day? Scholars have researched and debated this question for years. Unfortunately, no records exist of Chaucer’s personal revelations on the subject, so his readers may never know for sure. The pilgrim who has been identified with the greatest certainty is the Host. The Cook refers to him as “Herry Bailly” in the Cook’s Prologue. Some scholars think that an innkeeper named Henri Bayliff lived in Southwark, the location of Chaucer’s Tabard Inn. Bayliff’s name appears in various rolls and records from the 1370s and 1380s.

Language Coach
Multiple Meanings  Submit has several meanings: (1) to yield to someone else’s power, (2) to present for review, (3) to present as an opinion. Which meaning applies in line 798? Which meaning applies in this sentence? I will submit my article to the school newspaper.

TFTE ANALYSIS
TONE
In literature, tone refers to the attitude a writer takes toward a subject or character. A writer can communicate tone through diction, choice of details, and direct statements of his or her opinion. Tone can be serious, playful, admiring, mocking, or objective. How would you describe Chaucer’s tone toward his characters throughout “The Prologue”? Why do you think he portrays his characters this way?

For Advanced Learners/AP
Historical Perspective  Have students discuss the Host’s proposal and ask these questions.
• Why did the Host make this proposal?
• What does it suggest about 14th-century pilgrimages?
• Is any irony intended?
• Why did Chaucer place the proposal at the end of “The Prologue,” rather than at the beginning?

• Why did Chaucer choose to have the Host make this proposal?
• Could any other pilgrim have suggested the contest?

For English Language Learners
Language Coach
Multiple Meanings  Answers: (1), (2)
Ask volunteers to speak aloud sentences that include the word submit. Then, ask the class to correctly identify the meaning used in each sentence.
Of course we all agreed, in fact we swore it
Delightedly, and made entreaty too
That he should act as he proposed to do,
Become our Governor in short, and be
Judge of our tales and general referee,
And set the supper at a certain price.
We promised to be ruled by his advice
Come high, come low; unanimously thus
We set him up in judgment over us.

More wine was fetched, the business being done;
We drank it off and up went everyone
To bed without a moment of delay.

Early next morning at the spring of day
Up rose our Host and roused us like a cock,
Gathering us together in a flock,
And off we rode at slightly faster pace
Than walking to St. Thomas’ watering-place;
And there our Host drew up, began to ease
His horse, and said, “Now, listen if you please,
My lords! Remember what you promised me.
If evensong and matins will agree
Let’s see who shall be first to tell a tale.
And as I hope to drink good wine and ale
I’ll be your judge. The rebel who disobeys,
However much the journey costs, he pays.
Now draw for cut and then we can depart;
The man who draws the shortest cut shall start.”

entreaty (én-tré’tē) n. a serious request or plea

text analysis
characterization

Possible answer: The Host is likely to be
friendly, fun-loving, charismatic, fair, honest,
and generous.

SELECTION WRAP–UP
READ WITH A PURPOSE  Now that students
have read “The Prologue” of The Canterbury
Tales, ask them to make a generalization about
the characters that will narrate The Canter-
bury Tales. Possible answers: These characters
come from a wide cross-section of 14th-century
society. Their backgrounds, occupations, and
character traits are very diverse.

FOR STRUGGLING READERS
Develop Reading Fluency Have students
work in pairs to practice reading lines 830–
856 to each other. Encourage students to
work together to clarify the pronunciations of
difficult words before reading. As one
student reads the text, instruct the other
student to listen and then summarize what
the first has read. When both students
have finished reading the text, ask them
to discuss how fluent reading allowed for
improved comprehension of the material.

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP
Simile [paired option] Have students ana-
yze the extended simile in lines 842–844.
What is Chaucer comparing? Is the simile
serious or humorous? What light does it
cast on the Host and on the pilgrims? Then
have them compare this simile with the
religious metaphor in lines 514–524. Allow
time for partners to share their findings.
Comprehension

1. Recall When and where does "The Prologue" take place?
2. Recall What event or circumstance causes the characters to gather?
3. Summarize What plan does the Host propose to the characters?

Text Analysis

4. Analyze Characterization Throughout the selection, Chaucer uses physical details—eyes, hair, clothing—to help develop his characters. Choose three pilgrims and describe how their outward appearances reflect their personalities.

5. Identify Irony Much of the humor of "The Prologue" is based on irony, the discrepancy between what appears to be true and what actually is true. Explain the irony in each of the following character portraits:
   - the Nun Prioress
   - the Merchant
   - the Skipper
   - the Doctor

6. Draw Conclusions Review what you paraphrased as you read the selection. Describe the narrator’s personality and values.

7. Examine Satire A writer who pokes fun at behaviors and customs with the intent of improving society is creating satire. Review the descriptions of the Monk and the Friar in lines 169–279. What aspects of the medieval church does Chaucer satirize through these characters?

8. Interpret Tone In literature, tone refers to the attitude a writer takes toward a subject or character. Tone can be serious, playful, admiring, mocking, or objective. Review lines 455–486. What is Chaucer’s tone toward the Wife of Bath? Cite specific words and phrases to support your answer.

Text Criticism

9. Critical Interpretations In 1809, the English poet and artist William Blake made the following observation: “Chaucer’s pilgrims are the characters which compose all ages and nations… Some of the names or titles are altered by time, but the characters themselves forever remain unaltered.” Do you agree or disagree that Chaucer’s characters seem timeless and universal? Support your opinion with details from the text and your own experiences.

What makes a great CHARACTER?
Which of Chaucer’s characters do you like best? Which character traits make this character appealing to you?

7. Chaucer satirizes their worldliness, materialism, and hypocrisy and by extension any churchmen with those traits. Both indulge in worldly pleasures. Neither serves those in need.

8. Though Chaucer gently mocks the Wife of Bath’s pride and her excesses in clothing and husbands, he generally admires her, using words such as worthy, bold, and handsome to describe her.

9. Chaucer’s pilgrims seem timeless. His stories of the corruption, hypocrisy, greed, and pretense of the Sergeant at the Law, the Merchant, the Friar, the Monk, the Summoner, and the Pardoner are similar to current stories about failures of trust in business, politics, and the clergy. So, too, the faith and charity of the Parson, Cleric, and Plowman have parallels in the humble clergy of today.

What makes a great CHARACTER? Accept all thoughtful responses.
Assess and Reteach

**Assess**

**DIAGNOSTIC AND SELECTION TESTS**

Selection Tests A, B/C pp. 49–50, 51–52

Interactive Selection Test on thinkcentral.com

**Reteach**

Level Up Online Tutorials on thinkcentral.com

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**Vocabulary in Context**

**VOCABULARY PRACTICE**

Use the details from “The Prologue” and your understanding of the boldfaced words to help you choose the answer to each question.

1. Which of these characters shows the most courtliness?
2. Which of these characters seems the most personable?
3. What does the Doctor believe can cause a malady?
4. Which of these characters tries the most to behave sedately?
5. Which character has seen money accrue in his savings?
6. To whom do the pilgrims make an entreaty about judging the story contest?

**ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING**

Suggest that students begin by sketching a rough outline or graphic organizer to represent the structure of “The Prologue.” As students begin to write and revise their work, they should focus on correctly incorporating academic vocabulary into their writing.

**VOCABULARY STRATEGY: WORDS FROM FRENCH**

Direct students’ attention to the structural similarities of the Old French roots and the contemporary English terms. With them how the original meanings of the roots relate to the definitions of the contemporary words.

**Answers:**
1. accrue, increased 3. personable
2. malady, malade 4. entreaty

**ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING**

Chaucer characters embody abstract concepts like greed and vanity, yet remain fully-realized, three-dimensional characters. Using at least two additional Academic Vocabulary words, write about how the structure of “The Prologue” allows Chaucer to give such a complete picture of the pilgrims.

**VOCABULARY STRATEGY: WORDS FROM FRENCH**

French has contributed words to English since the French-speaking Normans invaded England in 1066. A huge number of our “Latin” words actually come from Latin by way of Old French. Knowing the French origins of a word can help you understand its meanings. For example, knowing that parler comes from the French parley, which means “to speak,” will tell you that a parley is a conference.

**PRACTICE** Based on the word list to the right and the following word bank, respond each item below:

- concept  - culture  - parallel  - section  - structure

1. The words accretion and ______ both contain the core meaning of the Old French word acreu. What is that core meaning? ______
2. The core meaning of the English word ______ can be found in the Old French word for “sick.” What is that word? ______
3. If the Normans had not invaded England in 1066, we might not say a friendly individual is __________.
4. Although it did not survive into Modern French, the Old French word entraiter survives in English in the form of __________.

**DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION**

**FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

**Vocabulary Support** Invite students who speak Latin-based languages to name words in their native languages that contain the prefix mal-.

**FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP**

**Vocabulary Practice: Challenge** Ask partners to do a word search to find additional words with the mal- prefix, such as maladroit, malfeasance, and malingerer. Have them use five words with the prefix to write descriptions of five make-believe characters.