

Learning objective: Continue learning about Geoffrey Chaucer and context of *The Canterbury Tales*. Begin to understand the Middle English and the pilgrims that the narrator encounters.

Starter:

Use one of the sheets on Chaucer's life available from Teachit.

Introduction:

Ensure students remember the work from last lesson by asking them:

What time of year is it?
What do people long to do?
Whereabouts do they want to go?
Where does the speaker meet other pilgrims?
How many does he meet?

Development:

Explain to students that in *The Canterbury Tales* Chaucer describes many fictional pilgrims that his narrator meets at the Tabard Inn although they are probably based on real people. Chaucer's opinion of various types of people is obvious from his attitude in the Tales. What Chaucer often seemed to make fun of was the church and the fact that so many people professed to be religious but actually seemed to enjoy wealth or be selfish towards those less fortunate than themselves. Chaucer draws attention to the fact that the pilgrims go on horses to Canterbury – in itself not really a martyrish thing to do! The distance from London to Canterbury is about 60 miles. Explain that the pilgrims are encouraged to tell stories by the inn-keeper, Harry Bailey, who accompanies them. He says he will choose a winner and their dinner will be paid for by the other pilgrims (he doesn't offer to pay for it!)

Go to <http://academics.vmi.edu/english/audio/GP-Opening.html> and play the extract of the Knight's Portrait to students.

Using the attached sheet students pick out words that they can identify such as 'knyght' is now 'knight'.

What do students think Chaucer writes about the knight? Can they pick out any words which suggest Chaucer is impressed by the knight and thinks he is a noble man?

Plenary:

Students draw a table in their books and on one side write down ten Middle English words and on the other write down their modern translation. Go round the room to ensure everyone has found at least some words for translation. See if each student can identify a different word.

The Knight's portrait from the General Prologue

A knyght ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To riden out, he loved chivalrie,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hade he riden, no man ferre,
As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse,
And evere honoured for his worthynesse;
At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne.
Ful ofte tyme he hade the bord bigonne
Aboven alle nacions in Pruce;
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade at the seege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
At Lyeys was he and at Satalye,
Whan they were wonne, and in the Grete See
At many a noble armee hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for oure feith at Tramysse
In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye
Agayn another hethen in Turkye;
And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.
He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde
In al his lyf unto no maner wight.
He was a verray, parfit, gentil knyght.
But for to tellen you of his array,
His hors were goode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian he wered a gypon
Al bismotered with his habergeon,
For he was late ycome from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.