

HS1's "Where are those pilgrims now?"

Students may be familiar with VH1's show, *Where are they now?*, which tracks down former celebrities to see what they are doing now. You may be able to find and show a small selection from the show in order to generate interest and get ideas brewing in students' minds before outlining the assignment.

In small groups, students will create their own version of the television show, focusing on the pilgrims of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The objective is for students to use details about the pilgrims from *The General Prologue* and create a plausible future, anywhere from six months to several years, after their return from Canterbury. Students must employ critical reading and thinking skills, clear organization of information and textual details in both writing and performance, and integration of 21st century technology and/or performance skills.

The following is one suggestion for outlining the assignment to students, though may be tweaked to suit the needs of your classes. I suggest allowing some class time to begin work and expecting a finished product within approximately two weeks' time.

The assignment

We have read *The General Prologue* and discussed the various pilgrims as they set forth to Canterbury, but what happened to them after they finished their journey? In groups no larger than four, you will select four pilgrims from our reading and flesh out your answer to "where are they now?" You must use textual details to create plausible futures for your pilgrims. You may keep the pilgrims in their original time frame or you may "modernize" them, though all details from Chaucer's text must still remain the same and taken into account when writing your scripts. Ultimately you will act out your interviews with the pilgrims and submit your short films via email or DVD.

Part One (1 class period): After carefully selecting the pilgrims your group will use, complete another close reading, annotating your text and discussing important character and physical details.

Part Two (1 class period): Collaborate to decide what each pilgrim would be doing "now"/after the journey to Canterbury. Write a clear script for each pilgrim, keeping in mind that it is set up as an interview and a question & answer format. Remember to avoid anachronisms if keeping Chaucer's time frame for your setting, and, as always, be mindful of language and props. *You must include your textual justifications for your decisions somewhere in the margins or as a separate paper attached to your scripts!*

Part Three (on your own time): Having written your scripts, assign roles to each person in the group. Every person must have a speaking part of some sort. Practice your scripts thoroughly, especially if you are acting "live" in front of the class and not turning in a filmed version.

Part Four (in class): "Live" performances will be conducted. A debriefing of justifications will be held in class, and each group must explain their rationale for scripting/directing choices. If time allows, we will have a debate in order to determine the "best" matches of pilgrim descriptions in *The General Prologue* to future versions created by the class.