Geoffrey Chaucer-Canterbury Tales
Mr. Pogreba, Helena High

Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400)
- Author, philosopher, diplomat and poet, best remembered for <u>The Canterbury Tales</u> and <u>Troilus and Cressida</u>.

Middle English
- Middle English is the early form of the English language that was spoken and written between roughly 12th-15th centuries. Derived from Old English combined with the influences of French and Anglo-Norman, it was the language of the common people of England. However, some of England's greatest writers, including Chaucer, Kempe, and Malory wrote in Middle English.
- The invasion of England in 1066 by William the Conqueror had a profound impact on the language of England. England was essentially tri-lingual, with the Wessex dialect of Old English for the commoners, French for the nobility, and Latin for the clergy. All three languages influenced the development of Middle and Modern English.
  - For example, English has three words for one concept, each with a slightly different meaning
    - Kingly (Old English)
    - Royal (French)
    - Regal (Latin)
- Old English loses its case endings and complicated inflection, and the language begins to take on a sound and written form that is much easier for Modern English speakers to follow.
  - Syððan wæs geworden þæt he ferde þurh þa ceastre and þæt castel: godes rice prediciende and bodiende. and hi twelfe mid. And sume wif þe wæron gehælede of awyrgdum gastum: and untrumnessum: seo magdalenisce maria ofþære seofan deoflu uteodon: and iohanna chuzan wif herodes gerefan: and susanna and manega oðre þe him of hyra spedum þenedon; (Luke 8.1-3, in Old English)
  - And it is don, aftirward Jesus made iourne bi cites & castelis prechende & euangelisende þe rewme of god, & twelue wiþ hym & summe wymmen þat weren helid of wicke spiritis & sicnesses, marie þat is clepid maudeleyn, of whom seuene deuelis wenten out & Jone þe wif off chusi procuratour of eroude, & susanne & manye oþere þat mynystreden to hym of her facultes (Luke 8.1-3, in Middle English)
- **Pronunciation of Middle English**
  - 'a' as in modern 'father'
  - long 'e' as in modern 'there'
  - short 'e' as in modern 'egg'
  - 'i'/vowel 'y' as in modern 'see'
  - long 'o' as the oa in modern 'oar'
  - short 'o' as in modern 'on'
  - 'u' as in modern 'do'
  - 'r' sounds have a light roll
  - Generally, all letters are pronounced. Thus, knight is pronounced k-n-i-g-h-t, not "nite"
  - The final e in words is pronounced, unstressed

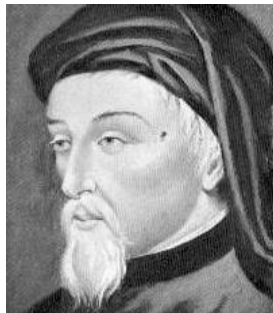# Geoffrey Chaucer-Canterbury Tales
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Literary Types in The Canterbury Tales

- <u>Framing Device</u>: outline for a story that provides a unified whole to a story that is partially disconnected
- <u>Beast Fable</u>: Animals with human characteristics teaches a lesson. Relies on assumptions about the nature of particular animals
- <u>Exemplum</u>: Short narrative that teaches through example
  - <u>Exemplar</u>: Model person
- <u>Fabliaux</u>: Fable with a snappy ending
- <u>Breton Lay</u>: narrative poem, not a song
- <u>Courtly Romance</u>: love story that uses the conventions of the aristocracy
  - <u>Andreas Capellanus</u>: The Rules of Courtly Love
    - Jealousy
    - Temporary
    - Strength and Weakness
    - Paleness
    - Knight and His Lady
    - Representative of relationship between knight and his lord.

Themes of the Prologue

- Appearance versus Reality. Chaucer points out the hypocrisy of the characters in the story
- Religious Hypocrisy in Particular
  - The Nun—polite, nice, genuine. Honest faith, but human
  - The Friar—worldy, earthy. Against expectations of his order
  - The Pardoner-vain, betrays his faith
  - The Summoner-Appearance suggests his reality. He is really evil, selfish, and perhaps mad
  - The Parson-like a shepherd to his flock

Chaucer Day Assignment
Mr. Pogreba/ AP English IV
Helena High

Assignment, Part the First (Completed by a Group of 2-3)

Select one of the following tales from Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. Between now and this Friday, read and understand the entire tale, including its prologue. Then, in a 5-7 minute presentation, creatively accomplish these tasks: 1) explain the character, 2) present the story, 3) identify what type of medieval literature it uses, and 4) identify its theme or moral. Yes, I am aware that you can read these using Spark Notes or some other nonsense, but don't. The language of Chaucer (and all literature, for that matter!) is what matters—so don't shortchange yourself. I mean it!

- The Knight's Tale
- The Miller
- The Reeve
- The Cook
- The Wife of Bath
- Man of Law
- The Merchat
- The Squire
- The Shipman
- The Canon Yeoman
- The Manciple

- The Monk
- The Summoner
- The Clerk
- The Franklin
- The Prioress
- Nun's Priest
- The Physician
- Second Nun
- The Parson

Assignment, Part the Second (Individual)

Complete your second literary terms sheet this week, using a literary device that is employed in the tale your group has selected.

Assignment, Part the Third (Individual or Group)

I've come to my senses. The costume will not be a graded part of the assignment. However, any group or individual can earn 'some' to 'much' extra credit for appearing on Friday in costume or bringing food appropriate to the Middle Ages.