

## Canterbury Tales Banquet Project (100 points)



### Introduction

Terry Jones, author of *Who Murdered Chaucer?*, used textual evidence and historical records (or lack of!) to reach the conclusion that Geoffrey Chaucer was murdered by Archbishop Arundel and Henry IV for several reasons: he published *The Canterbury Tales* in English; he parodied the church (a very dangerous thing to do at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century); and he made the act of going on a pilgrimage appear fun (and very unchristian). What could be so dangerous about **writing in the common vernacular, creating a few characters, and presenting a group of people having a good time?**

Use logic and provide your own answers to the three questions posed above:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

One answer lies in whether the descriptions of the characters defies that character's role in society, or whether the description makes that character's profession look bad, thus offending its representatives.

# The Assignment

## Character Presentation/Written Report

You will be given a character from *The Canterbury Tales* to research and present to the class. **In addition to creating a costume representative of your character to wear for a banquet held on Friday, 2/27, you will present your character to the class and write a brief report on your character to be turned in on the day of the banquet.** Your report and presentation to the class must take into consideration all of the following:

- Note whether your character is of the **feudal, merchant (guild), or ecclesiastical (church) class.**
- Describe the **character's role in society.** i.e. what was his/her job?
- **Compare that character's role with the description presented in Chaucer's *Prologue*.**
  - Describe your character **physically.**
  - Is the physical description in contrast with the character's societal role?
  - What is Chaucer trying to point out about this character?
  - Does Chaucer present a positive or negative character?
- Note any of the **major themes** discussed earlier in class and in your theme notes.
- Include **textual clues** that lead you to this conclusion.

### Costume

Dress is described specifically for all of the major characters in *Canterbury Tales*. Pay particular attention to the color and quality of the garments your character is wearing. In addition, **physical description** (facial features, body type, hair color/baldness, etc.) play an important role in defining your character.

**I do not expect you to rent or buy a costume, although I won't discourage this either.**

You must create a costume which represents the garments worn by your character in the *Prologue* and bring with you at least two props that are either specifically mentioned by Chaucer or that help represent your character.

### Banquet

You will sign up to bring an item to the banquet. We will need drinks and food items as well as utensils, plates, and napkins. If you are unable to provide an item for the banquet, **please discuss this with me privately before the due date so I can make appropriate arrangements.**

If your parents have questions regarding the requirements of this assignment, please have them email me.

## Grading Rubric

Written Report	Comments	Score
1) Character's role in society is accurately described and contains contextual details for support.		/10
2) Report contains specific and accurate physical description and discusses what Chaucer is trying to point out about this character.		/10
3) Report connects character to <b>at least</b> one major theme and explains the connection clearly.		/10
4) Report is free of errors in spelling, sentence construction, and grammar. Word choice reflects appropriate tone and maturity.		/10
Presentation	Comments	Score
<b>Must present each of the following topics to class:</b>		
Social Status		/5
Role in Society/Job. Do they fulfill this role? What do they <i>actually</i> do?		/5
Personality Description		/10
Physical Description		/5
Does Chaucer like or dislike this character? <b>Why or why not?</b>		/10
Costume	Comments	Score
Costume demonstrates creativity and effort by the student. (i.e. it was not thrown together at the last minute before class and/or is made from notebook paper)		/5
Costume is representative of and demonstrates an understanding of the character's description in the prologue. Costume <b>includes props</b> .		/10
Important physical characteristics (such as hair color/style, facial features, etc.) are represented in the costume.		/10
<b>Total</b>		<b>/100</b>

