



# Unit 25

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## Chaucer—The Canterbury Tales

### BACKGROUND ON THE LITERATURE READING

- Fill out the following information while watching the *Video Lecture*.

AUTHOR:

TITLE:

IMPORTANT DATES:

GENRE:

OTHER NOTES:

## LITERATURE READING

- Read the passage multiple times.
- Annotate the passage, identifying key vocabulary and ideas.
- Make notes in the margin of any thoughts that strike you while reading.

*The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer, Modernized (Public Domain)*

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Canterbury\\_Tales/The\\_Prologue,\\_Modern](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Canterbury_Tales/The_Prologue,_Modern)

### THE PROLOGUE.

When April with his showers sweet with fruit 1  
The drought of March has pierced unto the root  
And bathed each vein with liquor that has power  
To generate therein and sire the flower;  
When Zephyr also has, with his sweet breath, 5  
Quickened again, in every holt and heath,  
The tender shoots and buds, and the young sun  
Into the Ram one half his course has run,  
And many little birds make melody  
That sleep through all the night with open eye 10  
(So Nature pricks them on to ramp and rage) –  
Then do folk long to go on pilgrimage,  
And palmers to go seeking out strange strands,  
To distant shrines well known in sundry lands.  
And specially from every shire's end 15  
Of England to Canterbury they went,  
The holy blessed martyr there to seek  
Who helped them when they lay so ill and weak  
Befell that, in that season, on a day  
In Southwark, at the Tabard, as I lay 20  
Ready to start upon my pilgrimage  
To Canterbury, full of devout homage,  
There came at nightfall to that hostelry  
Some nine and twenty in a company  
Of sundry persons who had chanced to fall 25  
In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all  
That toward Canterbury town would ride.  
The rooms and stables spacious were and wide,

And well we there were eased, and of the best.  
And briefly, when the sun had gone to rest, 30  
So had I spoken with them, every one,  
That I was of their fellowship anon,  
And made agreement that we'd early rise  
To take the road, as you I will apprise.  
But none the less, whilst I have time and space, 35  
Before yet farther in this tale I pace,  
It seems to me accordant with reason  
To inform you of the state of every one  
Of all of these, as it appeared to me,  
And who they were, and what was their degree, 40  
And even how arrayed there at the inn;  
And with a knight thus will I first begin.

## READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- After reading and annotating the *Literature Reading* multiple times, answer the following questions. (Refer back to the passage for answers, if necessary.)
- Answers should make use of complete sentences as well as good grammar, spelling, word choice, and so forth.
- Answers should be in your own words.
- Write your answers in below, so you have quick reference to use during the discussion.
- Review your answers before discussing to ensure that you are ready.

1. At what time of year does the tale take place?

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2. List three signs of this time of year mentioned in the first ten lines of the poem (there are more than three in the lines).

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3. What do people long to do during this time? (Lines 12-14)

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4. Why do the pilgrims go to Canterbury in England? (Lines 15-18)

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5. Where was the author at, waiting to start upon his pilgrimage? (Lines 19-22)

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6. How many other pilgrims came in a company to the hostelry?

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7. How does the author describe the rooms and stables?

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8. After talking with the pilgrims, what does the author and the company decide to do? (Lines 30-34)

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9. In lines 35-42, what does the author set out to do in the rest of the prologue?

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