

English IV**“The Prologue,” Canterbury Tales Characters****L#:_____**

Knight 43-80	Distinguished, modest (71) yet heroic and strong (65), he fulfills expectation of a knight (74). Courageous but does not brag about it and doesn't insult people (72). Follows the code of chivalry (45). Displays courtesy, generosity, honor (46). Involved in big battles of the Crusades (51). Well-traveled, he's met many people in powerful places (63). Is respectable.
Squire 81-102	Knight's apprentice (assistant) hoping to become a knight. This squire is also the Knight's son (81, 102). He whistles and sings (93). He's concerned about how he looks (83, 94) so that he can attract the ladies (99). During the day, he learns how to become a knight (96), e.g. how to joust (98). But all night long, pursues fun.
Yeoman 103-121	Dressed in green, this is the Squire's assistant. He is a rider who goes hunting, wearing peacock feather arrows, bow, and hunting horn (114). He wears the medal of St. Christopher—patron saint of travelers—on his breast (117). A typical outdoorsy type, he is a woodsman forester (121) who carves things (110-111).
Nun 122-168	Madam Eglantyne is a nice, flirtatious (123), tender-hearted (146, 148, 149, 152, 154) prioress who feeds her dog luxuriously (151). She wears a brooch that says “Love conquers all” (166) and secular jewelry (162-163). Her table manners are great (124, 132, 137-139); she's a foodie (160), who wants to seem classy (131) but speaks French badly (130) and has fake aplomb (143). Her priority is love.
Monk 169-211	The monk prioritizes hunting (171). He owns a lot of horses (172), suggesting he is atypical of monks who are simple, don't own a lot and are very spiritual. He ignored the rules monks follow (177-180), including that monks shouldn't hunt (182).
Friar 212-279	A happy beggar of money for the church, this eloquent marriage counselor was over-involved (216-217) with women, with whom he was popular (219, 238). He would hear confessions (222)—as licensed by the Pope—offering penance for gifts (225-226, 228, 235-236). He looked down on those in need (246-251), even begged money of them (259-262), yet spent time with the rich (221), with women and in bars (244).
The Merchant 280-294	With his forked beard suggesting diabolical intention (280) and crazy clothes, he desired policed water ways to prevent theft of his capital (285-286). This anonymous pilgrim was in debt (290), yet offered many opinions of his ability to trade in items and goods. Everyone thinks he's rich, perhaps because he talks mostly about politics, not of self.
The Oxford Cleric 295-318	This poor student/ philosopher (307) spent all his money on books (304-306) so he can not afford to feed his horse (297) or himself (298-299). He prayed for those who helped fund his education. He loved to teach others (318).

The Lawyer 319-340	At first sight, seems to be the busiest person of the group (331-332), the Lawyer makes his job look easy. He knows every law, judgment and case by heart (333). He's smart; his contracts are air-tight (330). He's "discreet" and reverent, "Or so he seemed" (323). Although evidence to genuine morality still pending, he seems great at his job.
The Franklin 341-370	This cheerful, old landowner was so hospitable he shared food and shelter with everyone (350). He had the best spread (351-352) and lots of it (353-356). With seasonal menus (357), farm fresh fowl (359) and fish (360), the Franklin was also a Sheriff (369) and "model among landed gentry" (370). But as an Epicurean (346), his morality could be confused for gluttony was it not for his generosity.
The Guildsmen 371-388	A "livery" (373), i.e. union of hat-maker, dyer, carpenter, weaver, carpet-maker doing financially well (376-377) (383), this group is rising socially-economically. And their wives expect to be called "Madam" (386) and be regarded as regal (388), regardless of inherited class status. No brass for them: silver!
The Cook 389-397	His ulcerated knee suggests his hygiene is compromised (395-396); however, he was a great cook (393-394) who can identify ale by taste, no label necessary (392). Note: it is possible the pilgrims tested this ability as The Cook is from their departure point of London.
The Skipper 398-420	This Skipper is a basically a pirate who is also comfortable with land travel (400). Although called a nice guy (405), during business transactions in wine (406), he took advantage of his peers (407-408). In battle, he was unrelenting (409-410).
The Doctor 421-454	He took care of his patients (432); however, he'd overprescribe them as a way of upholding his business deal with the pharmacist. He was good at talking about surgery. He used astronomy and "humors" (hot, dry, wet and cold) as medicinal cures (429).
Wife of Bath	Invested in looking rich, this well-traveled woman was assumed to be bold because of her gap-teeth as corroborated by her five husbands. If women approached the altar steps before her, she (feeling annoyed) ceased tithing. This suggests she is mean if she doesn't get her way. Also, that her annulments/divorces were achieved by paying off the church.
The Parson	The "post-office" guy, braved all types of weather to give to and help others. He gave to his parishoners property of his own and of the church. Of "noble example," he explained his goodness through an analogy to metals: If gold rusts, what would iron do, i.e. when religious people (gold) sin, people of a lower metal (iron) will too. While humble, he stands by the teachings.
The Plowman	This self-sacrificing brother of the Parson, the Plowman pays his taxes/tithes on times and helps the poor with a little money. He is religious, steady worker.

The Miller 561-584	The Miller works at a mill, the rotating wheel that breaks down grain. Known for bawdy bar talk and jokes (577) and playing his bag-pipes (583), he had a memorable physique: big and burly and shrouded in a blue hood and white coat. He heated people out of their money by putting his thumb on the scale to add weight (to increase the bill) of the grain they purchased from him (579-580).
The Manciple 585-604	An illiterate (592) purchaser, the Manciple was among first to buy when the price was low (589-590). By trade, he bought and stocked food for others. His clients were well-educated lawyers (603), yet far less effective at financial management (599-601).
The Reeve 605-640	A clean-cut, old, grumpy (“choleric” 605) man from Norfolk (638), he knows his affairs so well, auditors never find fault with his practice (612, 620) and his clients’ business contacts can not deceive him (622). In fact, the workers fear him; his boss offers bonuses (629-630). He rides in the back of the pilgrims (640).
The Summoner 641-688	Like the officer who serves warrants, this Pilgrim brings you to ‘church-court.’ Rosy-faced (642), garlic-breathed (652) and drunk (653), The Summoner is remembered for acne (650), lechery (644) and bribery (671-674). Worse still, if left unpaid, he had people thrown out of the church (679-682). He knew their secrets (683).
The Pardoner 689-734	What the Pardoner lacks in appearance (699, 704, 708), he makes up for in financial wealth; however, his ill gotten gains (707) require that he lie (725), embellish and act irreverently (714-721)—all the worse because in society, he passes for a religious church attendee (728). People buy Mary’s veil from him, but it’s actually a pillowcase (714-715), and people buy sacred bones that are actually pigs’ bones (720)

Other notes:

- Knight: on pilgrimage, soon after battle *in the Holy War (The Crusades, during which Christians sought to retake Holy Lands from Muslims)*, (page 102) to offer thanks.
- Squire: reference to courtly love (90).
- Yeoman: seen as resourceful (hand-makes his weaponry); likened to Robin Hood (in green)
- Monk: religious/secular
- Merchant’s mystery: is he poor or has he diversified his investments?
- Guildsmen signify anti-feudal upward mobility.
- The Doctor [key words: apothecary, guile, Hippocratic Oath]
- Wife of Bath [key words]: physiognomy. Note: pos. linkage between tithing and divorce. Through her characterization, Chaucer critiques the church.
- Parson compared to post office: rain, sleet or snow...

Anticipatory Questions:

- Would the Franklin eat the Cook’s food?
- Who else might have gap-teeth besides the Wife of Bath? [Nun, Squire]
- The Parson and the Plowman would be good friends to have.
- What type of tales would the Miller tell, based upon the jokes and talk he already demonstrates?