



Geoffrey Chaucer

The Canterbury Tales

Often called the **Father of English poetry.**

(1342-1400)

Since most literature and science was still written in Latin, Chaucer wrote his stories in Middle English (now Modern English). Until then, only ballads and the Gawain poems had been written in English because scholars felt the language lacked sophistication and had a limited vocabulary.



Since Chaucer worked as a government official under three different kings, his social status made him a popular poet.

He wrote in the **vernacular** or everyday language.

Chaucer's Life



- Born to a middle class family.
- His father was a wine merchant who believed his child should have a formal education.
- He became a page to an important family and was so respected that when he was captured as a soldier during the Hundred Year's war, a king paid his ransom.

Chaucer's Writing

- Wrote a great deal for personal advancement *The Book of the Duchess*.
- Also created great allegorical poems, including *House of Fame* and *the Parliament of Fowls*.

What is an allegory?

- A story in which the character, settings, and events stand for abstract or moral concepts.
- It has a literal meaning and a symbolic meaning.
- Popular in the Middle Ages.

Framing Device

In Italy, Chaucer met writer Giovanni Boccaccio, and it is believed Chaucer got his inspiration for the *Canterbury Tales* from Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

Both use a framing device within the tales. Chaucer's frame is a religious pilgrimage during which each traveler is to tell two tales going and two tales upon his or her return.

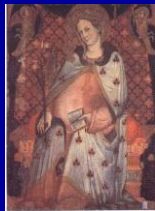
Although the work was never completed, *The Canterbury Tales* is considered one of the greatest works in the English language.



Chaucer's Style

- Prose
- Iambic pentameter p. 99
- Lack of alliteration

Chaucer was one of the first writers to be buried in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.



Please turn to page 100 and read *The Canterbury Tales: Snapshot of an Age*.

You will then read



from "The Prologue" p. 105

From "The Pardoner's Tale" p. 129

From "The Wife of Bath's Tale" p. 138

