

Middle Ages Test discussion Questions

Part 1: characters

1. What are three characteristics of a Medieval Ballad?
 - a. refrain
 - b. anonymous
 - c. meter

2. What five elements lead to the breakdown of the feudal system?
 - a. crusades
 - b. murder of Thomas a'Becket
 - c. Magna Carta
 - d. 100 Years War
 - e. Plague

3. What are the four characteristics of a Medieval man?
 - a. organized
 - b. builder of systems
 - c. knew rules of chivalry
 - d. knew code of honor and love

4. What are the eight characteristics of the Middle Ages?
 - a. Norman Conquest made England mainstream
 - b. Feudal System
 - c. Catholic Church fostered unity
 - d. Rise of towns and cities
 - e. Magna Carta weaken political power of Catholic Church
 - f. crusades
 - g. Rise of Yeoman Class
 - h. Plague

Part 2: discussion

1. Explain the *right of sanctuary*, then explain why the murder of Thomas a 'Becket at Canterbury destroyed the Church's *right of sanctuary*.

In the Middle ages, a person evading the law could run into a church and yell "Sanctuary!" and be safe from arrest. However, when Thomas a Becket was murdered inside the Canterbury Cathedral, the common people's right of sanctuary was destroyed. If the Archbishop wasn't safe inside a church, how could common people expect protection?

2. Discuss the three reasons why Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* represents an important development in British Literature.

1. *The Canterbury Tales* was the first written account ABOUT the common people's lives. All other works had been written about the upper class and nobility.

2. *The Canterbury Tales* was written in Middle English, not French or Latin that was commonly used for important documents.

3. *The Canterbury Tales* was the first work of literature written FOR the common people. It wasn't written to entertain the elite; it was written for the general, common population.

3. Why did Chaucer choose to write the *Canterbury Tales* in the vernacular? What effect did this decision have on English Literature?

Although Chaucer modeled his work on Italian literary style, *Canterbury Tales* is written in the common people's vernacular. The Tales are written in Middle English, the language that was spoken by the common people. These pilgrims were characters regular people could understand and relate to. When publishing his work in this vernacular (everyday language), Chaucer helped to make English an acceptable language for history and literature.

4. Explain Chaucer's original plan for the *Canterbury Tales*. In what way does the *Canterbury Tales* we have now differ from Chaucer's plan for the original?

This is in your notes and the textbook.