

Brief Questions in "The General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales"

Writer: Geoffrey Chaucer | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Brief Questions in "The General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales"

- What were the three main phases of Chaucer's poetic career?

Ans:

Chaucer's poetic career had three phases: French, Italian, and English.

- What is the masterpiece of Chaucer?

Ans:

The Canterbury Tales is the masterpiece of Chaucer.

- What is The Canterbury Tales?

Ans:

The Canterbury Tales is a collection of stories told by pilgrims traveling from London to Canterbury.

- How many pilgrims are described in the General Prologue?

Ans:

Twenty-nine pilgrims are described, and Chaucer himself was the thirtieth pilgrim.

- What was the proposal of Harry Bailey?

Ans:

Harry Bailey proposed that each pilgrim should tell two stories on the way to Canterbury and two on the way back. The best storyteller would win a free meal.

- What is a pilgrimage?

Ans:

A pilgrimage is a religious journey made to a sacred place for spiritual blessing or forgiveness.

- **How did the narrator describe the Knight?**

Ans:

The Knight was a brave, noble, and honorable man who fought many battles and was respected for his courtesy.

- **How is the Knight dressed?**

Ans:

The Knight wore a plain fustian tunic, stained with rust from his coat of mail.

- **How many battles did the Knight fight?**

Ans:

The Knight fought in fifteen battles.

- **How old was the Squire?**

Ans

: The Squire was about twenty years old.

- **What is the function of a Yeoman?**

Ans:

A Yeoman served as an attendant to a knight and often worked as a skilled forester or archer.

- **Who accompanied the Prioress?**

Ans:

The Prioress was accompanied by another nun, who was her chaplain, and three priests.

- **What was inscribed on the brooch of the Prioress?**

Ans:

The brooch of the Prioress was inscribed with the words "Amor vincit omnia," meaning "Love conquers all."

- **What was the Monk's horse like?**

Ans:

The Monk's horse was strong, handsome, and brown as a berry.

- **Mention some good qualities of the Friar.**

Ans:

The Friar could sing sweetly, play the fiddle well, and was cheerful and polite.

- **What did the narrator tell about the Friar's dress?**

Ans:

The Friar dressed like a rich man or lord, not like a poor scholar.

- **What type of person was the Merchant?**

Ans:

The Merchant was clever, confident, and skillful in business dealings.

- **How did the Clerk of Oxford look?**

Ans:

The Clerk of Oxford was thin, quiet, and serious-looking.

- **Which books did the Clerk like to keep near his bed?**

Ans:

The Clerk liked to keep twenty volumes of Aristotle and philosophy near his bed.

- **What was the Sergeant of Law?**

Ans:

The Sergeant of Law was a wise and respected lawyer and judge.

- **What did the Sergeant of Law wear?**

Ans

: He wore a multi-colored coat and a silk belt with small stripes.

- **What was the Franklin's view of life?**

Ans:

The Franklin believed that perfect happiness lies in pleasure.

- **Write about the five guildsmen.**

Ans:

The five guildsmen were a Haberdasher, a Carpenter, a Weaver, a Dyer, and a Tapestry Maker. They were well-dressed and prosperous.

- **What was the name of the Sailor's ship?**

Ans:

The name of the Sailor's ship was Madelaine.

- **How was the dress of the Doctor of Medicine?**

Ans:

The Doctor of Medicine wore clothes of blood-red and blue-gray lined with silk and taffeta.

- **Mention some physical features of the Wife of Bath.**

Ans:

The Wife of Bath was fair, red-faced, gap-toothed, large-hipped, and somewhat deaf.

- **How many times did the Wife of Bath marry?**

Ans:

The Wife of Bath married five times.

- **What was the occupation of the Wife of Bath?**

Ans:

The Wife of Bath was an expert cloth-maker.

- **What type of person was the Plowman?**

Ans:

The Plowman was honest, hardworking, charitable, and devoted to God.

- **What did the Miller wear?**

Ans:

The Miller wore a white coat and a blue hood.

- **What were the negative features of the Miller?**

Ans:

The Miller was a rude talker, told obscene jokes, and cheated people by overcharging for corn.

- **What do you know about the horse of the Reeve?**

Ans:

The Reeve's horse was named Scot and was spotted gray all over.

- **What did the Summoner wear on his head?**

Ans:

The Summoner wore a garland on his head, as big as one used for an alehouse sign.

- **How were the eyes of the Pardoner?**

Ans:

The Pardoner had bright, shining eyes like those of a hare.

- **What does Plato say?**

Ans:

Plato says that words should truthfully express one's thoughts and feelings.

- **What type of man was the Host?**

Ans:

The Host was bold, cheerful, sensible, and full of good humor.

- **Whom did the Host call to draw his lot first?**

Ans:

The Host called the Knight to draw his lot first.

- **To whom did the lot fall?**

Ans:

The lot fell to the Knight, who told the first tale.

- **Why does Chaucer praise April?**

Ans:

Chaucer praises April because it brings rain, warmth, and the renewal of life.

- **Why did people travel to Canterbury?**

Ans:

People traveled to Canterbury to visit the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket and receive blessings.

- **What is the job of a Reeve?**

Ans:

A Reeve worked as a manager and accountant of a nobleman's estate.

- **Who is the owner of the Tabard Inn?**

Ans:

The owner of the Tabard Inn was the Host, Harry Bailey.

- **Name some of the great personalities referred to in the Prologue.**

Ans:

Some important characters are the Knight, the Squire, the Prioress, the Monk, and the Sergeant of Law.

- **What does the Host of the Tabard Inn propose to pass the time?**

Ans:

The Host proposes a storytelling contest during the journey to Canterbury and back.

- **What is the name of the Prioress?**

Ans:

The Prioress's name was Madam Eglantine.

- **Who is Saint Thomas Becket?**

Ans:

Saint Thomas Becket was the Archbishop of Canterbury who was killed in 1170 for opposing King Henry II's interference in church matters.

- **What did the Host propose after the pilgrims reached the watering place of Saint Thomas?**

Ans:

The Host proposed that they draw lots to decide who would tell the first story.

- **What is a prologue?**

Ans:

A prologue is an introduction that gives background information before the main story begins.

- **Who was the Sergeant-at-Law?**

Ans:

The Sergeant-at-Law was a learned judge at the law courts.

- **Why did the Doctor of Physic love gold?**

Ans:

The Doctor loved gold because he believed that gold was useful in medicine and healing.

- **What is Canterbury?**

Ans:

Canterbury is a city in southeast England that became a famous pilgrimage site in the Middle Ages.

- **Where did the pilgrims assemble?**

Ans:

The pilgrims assembled at the Tabard Inn in Southwark.

- **What was the Friar's name?**

Ans:

The Friar's name was Hubert.

- **How were the teeth of the Wife of Bath?**

Ans:

The Wife of Bath was gap-toothed.

- **What is a Prologue?**

Ans:

A Prologue is an opening section of a story that introduces the background or setting.

- **What does spring symbolize in The Prologue?**

Ans:

Spring symbolizes fertility, hope, and spiritual renewal.

- **How does Chaucer praise April?**

Ans:

Chaucer praises April because its rain and warm winds bring life and beauty back to the earth.

- **What was the destination of the pilgrims?**

Ans:

The destination of the pilgrims was the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury.

- **What was the favorite pastime of the Monk?**

Ans:

The Monk's favorite pastime was hunting.

- **Who is Madam Eglantine?**

Ans:

Madam Eglantine is the Prioress described in the General Prologue.

- **What is the name of the Host?**

Ans:

The name of the Host is Harry Bailey.

- **What is the function of a Summoner?**

Ans:

The Summoner's duty was to call people to appear before the church court for their sins.

- **Who was the Wife of Bath?**

Ans:

The Wife of Bath was a wealthy and experienced woman from near the city of Bath who loved travel and marriage.

LxNotes