

from The Canterbury Tales: The Prologue

LITERARY ANALYSIS

As you read the Prologue, look for these forms of characterization—techniques of revealing character:

- Direct characterization presents direct statements about character.
- Indirect characterization uses actions, thoughts, and dialogue to reveal a character's personality.

Each character in *The Canterbury Tales* represents a different segment of society in Chaucer's time. By noting the virtues and faults of each, Chaucer provides social commentary, writing that offers insight into society, its values, and its customs.

READING STRATEGY

Chaucer's Prologue begins with an eighteen-line sentence. To analyze difficult sentences like this one, ask the questions *when, who, where, what*, and how to identify the essential information the sentence conveys. Complete the chart below to finish analyzing Chaucer's first sentence.

When?	in April
Who?	people; palmers
Where?	
What?	
Why?	
How?	

from The Canterbury Tales: The Prologue

Geoffrey Chaucer

Translated by Nevill Coghill

Summary The author joins a group of pilgrims traveling toward the shrine at Canterbury. He describes in detail the people making the trip with him. The characters represent a cross-section of society. Among them are a knight and his son, who is a squire or knight's helper; a yeoman, who is a servant to the squire; a nun, accompanied by another nun and three priests; a well-dressed monk; a jolly friar, a member of a religious order; a merchant; a clergyman who is an impoverished student; and a number of others. They all agree to tell stories on the trip.

Note-taking Guide

Use this chart to list details about the characters.



Characters	Traits and Appearance
1. Knight	
2. Squire	
3. Yeoman	
4. Nun	
5. Monk	
6. Friar	
7. Merchant	
8. Oxford Cleric	

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Chaucer wrote in what we now call Middle English. Lines 1-18 of the Prologue appear here in Middle English. They are followed by a modern translation of these lines, together with a translation of a part of the Prologue.

Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
5 Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halve cours yronne,
And smale foweles maken melodye
10 That slepen al the nyght with open ye
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages)
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
To ferne halwes kowthe in sondry londes;
15 And specially from every shires ende
Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende,
The hooly blisful martir for to seke
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.

When in April the sweet showers fall
And pierce the drought of March to the root, and all
The veins are bathed in liquor of such power
As brings about the engendering of the flower,
5 When also Zephyrust with his sweet breath
Exhales an air in every grove and heath
Upon tender shoots, and the young sun
His half-course in the sign of the Ram² has run,
And the small fowl are making melody
10 That sleep away the night with open eye
(So nature pricks them and their heart engages)
Then people long to go on pilgrimages
And palmer³s long to seek the stranger strands⁴
Of far-off saints, hallowed in sundry lands,
15 And specially, from every shire's end
In England, down to Canterbury they wend

1. Zephyrus (ZEF uh ruhs) the west wind.
2. Ram Aries, the first sign of the zodiac. The pilgrimage began on April 11, 1387.
3. palmer's pilgrims who wore two crossed palm leaves to show that they had visited the Holy Land.
4. strands shores.



Chaucer's pilgrims will tell one another stories as they journey to Canterbury. Recall times when you have traveled on a fairly long trip with family or friends. Write down three ways in which you passed the time.

2. _____

3. _____



Review lines 1-18 that are written in Middle English. Circle five words that you think you recognize.



Review lines 1-18 in the modern translation. Compare the translation with the Middle English, and write down the five words that correspond to the ones you circled. Check the words you guessed correctly.

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

TAKE NOTES
Reading Strategy

Analyze the difficult sentence that has been underlined by asking yourself *who* is talking, *where* he is, *what* he is getting ready to do, and *whom* he sees.

Who? _____

Where? _____

What? _____

Whom? _____

Literary Analysis

Authors use **direct characterization** when they make direct statements about characters. In the bracketed description of the Knight, circle two examples of direct characterization.



Reading Skill

What group of people does the speaker meet at The Tabard?

To seek the holy blissful martyr,⁵ quick
To give his help to them when they were sick.
It happened in that season that one day
In Southwark,⁶ at The Tabard,⁷ as I lay
Ready to go on pilgrimage and start
For Canterbury, most devout at heart.
At night there came into that hostelry
Some nine and twenty in a company
Of sundry folk happening then to fall
In fellowship, and they were pilgrims all
That towards Canterbury meant to ride.
The rooms and stables of the inn were wide;
They made us easy, all was of the best.
And shortly, when the sun had gone to rest,
By speaking to them all upon the trip
I soon was one of them in fellowship
And promised to rise early and take the way
To Canterbury, as you heard me say.

But nonetheless, while I have time and space,
Before my story takes a further pace,
It seems a reasonable thing to say
What their condition was, the full array
Of each of them, as it appeared to me
According to profession and degree,
And what apparel they were riding in:
And at a Knight I therefore will begin.
There was a *Knight*, a most distinguished man,
Who from the day on which he first began
To ride abroad had followed chivalry,
Truth, honor, generousness and courtesy.
He had done nobly in his sovereign's war
And ridden into battle, no man more,
As well in Christian as heathen places,
And ever honored for his noble graces.

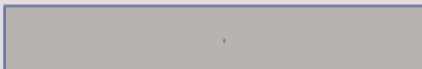
When we took Alexandria,⁸ he was there.
He often sat at table in the chair
Of honor, above all nations, when in Prussia.
In Lithuania he had ridden, and Russia,
No Christian man so often, of his rank.
When, in Granada, Algeciras sank
Under assault, he had been there, and in
North Africa, raiding Benamarin;
In Anatolia he had been as well
And fought when Ayas and Attalia fell,
For all along the Mediterranean coast

5. martyr St. Thomas a Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral in 1170.
6. Southwark (SUHth uhk) suburb of London at the time.
7. The Tabard (TA buhd) an inn.
8. Alexandria site of one of the campaigns fought by Christians against groups who posed a threat to Europe during the fourteenth century. The place names that follow refer to other battle sites in these campaigns, or crusades.



105 This Yeoman wore a coat and hood of green,
 And peacock-feathered arrows, bright and keen
 And neatly sheathed, hung at his belt the while
 —For he could dress his gear in yeoman style,
 His arrows never drooped their feathers low-
 110 And in his hand he bore a mighty bow.
 His head was like a nut, his face was brown.
 He knew the whole of woodcraft up and down.
 A saucy brace¹⁴ was on his arm to ward
 It from the bow-string, and a shield and sword
 115 Hung at one side, and at the other slipped
 A jaunty dirk,¹⁵ spear-sharp and well-equipped.
 A medal of St. Christopher¹⁶ he wore
 Of shining silver on his breast, and bore
 A hunting-horn, well slung and burnished clean,
 120 That dangled from a baldric¹⁷ of bright green.
 He was a proper forester I guess.

There also was a Nun, a Prioress.¹⁸
 Her way of smiling very simple and coy.
 Her greatest oath was only "By St. Loy!"¹⁹
 125 And she was known as Madam Eglantyne.
And well she sang a service,²⁰ with a fine
Intoning through her nose, as was most seemly.
And she spoke daintily in French, extremely,
After the school of Stratford-atte-Bowe.²¹
 130 French in the Paris style she did not know.
At meat her manners were well taught withal
No morsel from her lips did she let fall,
Nor dipped her fingers in the sauce too deep;
But she could carry a morsel up and keep
 135 The smallest drop from falling on her breast.
 For courtliness she had a special zest,
 And she would wipe her upper lip so clean
 That not a trace of grease was to be seen
 Upon the cup when she had drunk; to eat,
 140 She reached a hand sedately for the meat.
 She certainly was very entertaining,
 Pleasant and friendly in her ways, and straining
 To counterfeit a courtly kind of grace,
 A stately bearing fitting to her place,



Analyze the underlined passage by noting the three chief accomplishments of the Nun that it mentions.

2. _____
3. _____



Who are the first four characters that the speaker describes?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

14. brace bracelet.
 15. dirk n. dagger.
 16. St. Christopher patron saint of forests and travelers.
 17. baldric n. belt worn over one shoulder and across the chest to support a sword.
 18. Prioress /7. in an abbey, the nun ranking just below the abbess.
 19. St. Loy St. Eligius, patron saint of goldsmiths and courtiers.
 20. service daily prayer.
 21. Stratford-atte-Bowe nunnery near London.

145 And to seem dignified in all her dealings.
 As for her sympathies and tender feelings,
 She was so charitably solicitous
 She used to weep if she but saw a mouse
 Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bleeding.
 150 And she had little dogs she would be feeding
 With roasted flesh, or milk, or fine white bread.
 And bitterly she wept if one were dead
 Or someone took a stick and made it smart;
 She was all sentiment and tender heart.
 155 Her veil was gathered in a seemly way,
 Her nose was elegant, her eyes glass-gray;
 Her mouth was very small, but soft and red,
 Her forehead, certainly, was fair of spread,
 Almost a span²² across the brows, I own;
 160 She was indeed by no means undergrown.
 Her cloak, I noticed, had a graceful charm.
 She wore a coral trinket on her arm,
 A set of beads, the gaudies²³ tricked in green,
 Whence hung a golden brooch of brightest sheen
 165 On which there first was graven a crowned A,
 And lower, *Amor vincit omnia*.²⁴

Another *Nun*, the chaplain at her cell,
 Was riding with her, and *three Priests* as well.

A *Monk* there was, one of the finest sort
 170 Who rode the country; hunting was his sport.
 A manly man, to be an Abbot able;
 Many a dainty horse he had in stable.
 His bridle, when he rode, a man might hear
 Jingling in a whistling wind as clear,
 175 Aye, and as loud as does the chapel bell
 Where my lord Monk was Prior of the cell.
 The Rule of good St. Benet or St. Maur²⁵
 As old and strict he tended to ignore;
 He let go by the things of yesterday
 180 And took the modern world's more spacious way.
 He did not rate that text at a plucked hen
 Which says that hunters are not holy men
 And that a monk uncloistered is a mere
 Fish out of water, flapping on the pier,



Be aware of how the Nun is being **characterized** in the first bracketed passage. Use what you learn about her to guess which of the previously mentioned characters she would get along with best. Then, explain your choice.



With which of these characters would you like to travel? Why?



Review the second bracketed passage to see how the Monk is **characterized**. Circle words and phrases that indicate the Monk does not behave as a member of a religious order should.

Vocabulary Development: **solicitous** (suh LIS uh tuhs) *adt* showing care or concern

22. span nine inches.
 23. gaudies large green beads that marked certain prayers on a set of prayer beads.
 24. *Amor vincit omnia* (ah MOR WINK it OHM nee ah) "Love conquers all" (Latin).
 25. St. Benet or St. Maur St. Benedict, author of monastic rules, and St. Maurice, one of his followers. Benet and Maur are French versions of Benedict and Maurice.

TAKE NOTES

Literary Analysis

In the bracketed passage, Chaucer indirectly characterizes the Monk by describing his clothing. What do the Monk's clothes reveal about him?

Briefly describe the Nun, the Monk, and the Friar.

185 That is to say a monk out of his cloister.
That was a text he held not worth an oyster;
And I agreed and said his views were sound;
Was he to study till his head went round
Poring over books in cloisters? Must he toil
190 As Austin²⁶ bade and till the very soil?
Was he to leave the world upon the shelf?
Let Austin have his labor to himself.

This Monk was therefore a good man to horse;
Greyhounds he had, as swift as birds, to course.
195 Hunting a hare or riding at a fence
Was all his fun, he spared for no expense.
I saw his sleeves were garnished at the hand
With fine gray fur, the finest in the land,
And on his hood, to fasten it at his chin
200 He had a wrought-gold cunningly fashioned pin;
Into a lover's knot it seemed to pass.
His head was bald and shone like looking-glass;
So did his face, as if it had been greased.
He was a fat and personable priest;
205 His prominent eyeballs never seemed to settle.
They glittered like the flames beneath a kettle;
Supple his boots, his horse in fine condition.
He was a prelate fit for exhibition,
He was not pale like a tormented soul.
210 He liked a fat swan best, and roasted whole.
His palfrey²⁷ was as brown as is a berry.

There was a *Friar*, a wanton²⁸ one and merry
A Limiter,²⁹ a very festive fellow.
In all Four Orders³⁰ there was none so mellow
215 so glib with gallant phrase and well-turned speech.
He'd fixed up many a marriage, giving each
Of his young women what he could afford her.
He was a noble pillar to his Order.
Highly beloved and intimate was he
220 With County folk³¹ within his boundary,
And city dames of honor and possessions;
For he was qualified to hear confessions,
Or so he said, with more than priestly scope;

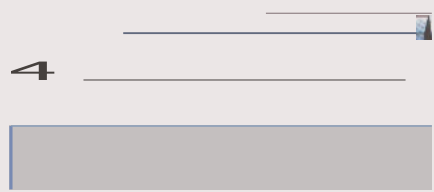
Vocabulary Development: garnished (GAR nish) *ad/* decorated; trimmed

26. Austin English version of St. Augustine, who criticized lazy monks.
27. palfrey // saddle horse.
28. wanton *adj.* jolly.
29. Limiter friar who is given begging rights for a certain limited area.
30. Four Orders There were four orders of friars who supported themselves by begging: Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Augustinians.
31. County folk The phrase refers to rich landowners.

225 He had a special license from the Pope.
 Sweetly he heard his penitents at shrift³²
 With pleasant absolution, for a gift.
 He was an easy man in penance-giving
 Where he could hope to make a decent living;
 It's a sure sign whenever gifts are given
 230 To a poor Order that a man's well shriven,³³
 And should he give enough he knew in verity
 The penitent repented in sincerity.
 For many a fellow is so hard of heart
 He cannot weep, for all his inward smart.
 235 Therefore instead of weeping and of prayer
 One should give silver for a poor Friar's care.
 He kept his tippet³⁴ stuffed with pins for curls,
 And pocket-knives, to give to pretty girls.
 And certainly his voice was gay and sturdy,
 240 For he sang well and played the hurdy-gurdy.³⁵
 At sing-songs he was champion of the hour.
 His neck was whiter than a lily-flower
 But strong enough to butt a bruiser down.
 He knew the taverns well in every town
 245 And every innkeeper and barmaid too
 Better than lepers, beggars and that crew,
For in so eminent a man as he
It was not fitting with the dignity
Of his position, dealing with a scum
 250 Of wretched lepers; nothing good can come
Of dealings with the slum-and-gutter dwellers,
But only with the rich and victual-sellers.
 But anywhere a profit might accrue
 Courteous he was and lowly of service too.
 255 Natural gifts like his were hard to match.
 He was the finest beggar of his batch,
 And, for his begging-district, payed a rent;
 His brethren did no poaching where he went.
 For though a widow mightn't have a shoe,
 260 So pleasant was his holy how-d'ye-do
 He got his farthing from her just the same
 Before he left, and so his income came
 To more than he laid out. And how he romped,

Vocabulary Development: **absolution** (alp suh LOO shuhn) n. act of freeing someone of a sin or of a criminal charge

32. shrift *a* confession.
 33. well shriven *adj* absolved of his sins.
 34. tippet /r. hood.
 35. hurdy-gurdy stringed instrument played by cranking a wheel.



Analyze the bracketed sentence by answering these questions:

1. What did the Friar get in return for pardons he granted?

2. What standard did he use to determine whether someone sincerely regretted his sins?



In the underlined passage, Chaucer **indirectly characterizes** the Friar by revealing his thoughts. What do the Friar's thoughts and attitudes reveal about him?



Consider all of the characters who are associated with religious institutions. Analyze Chaucer's **social commentary** by indicating what the words and actions of these characters suggest about the practice of religion in medieval England.



Circle two facts in the bracketed passage that seem to contradict each other. Explain how Chaucer uses this contradiction to **characterize** the Merchant as a boaster who is not entirely truthful.

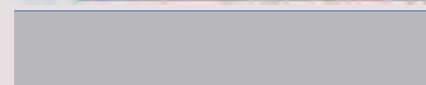


How are the Friar, the Merchant, and the Oxford Cleric dressed?

265 Just like a puppy! He was ever prompt
 To arbitrate disputes on settling days
 (For a small fee) in many helpful ways,
 Not then appearing as your cloistered scholar
 With threadbare habit hardly worth a dollar,
 But much more like a Doctor or a Pope.
 270 Of double-worsted was the semi-cope³⁶
 Upon his shoulders, and the swelling fold
 About him, like a bell about its mold
 When it is casting, rounded out his dress.
 He lisped a little out of wantonness
 275 To make his English sweet upon his tongue.
 When he had played his harp, or having sung,
 His eyes would twinkle in his head as bright
 As any star upon a frosty night.
 This worthy's name was Hubert, it appeared.
 280 There was a *Merchant* with a forking beard
 And motley dress, high on his horse he sat,
 Upon his head a Flemish³⁷ beaver hat
 And on his feet daintily buckled boots.
 He told of his opinions and pursuits
 285 In solemn tones, and how he never lost.
 The sea should be kept free at any cost
 (He thought) upon the Harwich-Holland range,³⁸
 He was expert at currency exchange.
 This estimable Merchant so had set
 290 His wits to work, none knew he was in debt,
 He was so stately in negotiation,
 Loan, bargain and commercial obligation.
 He was an excellent fellow all the same;
 To tell the truth I do not know his name.
 295 An *Oxford Cleric*, still a student though,
 One who had taken logic long ago,
 Was there; his horse was thinner than a rake,
 And he was not too fat, I undertake,
 But had a hollow look, a sober stare;
 300 The thread upon his overcoat was bare.
 He had found no preferment in the church
 And he was too unworldly to make search
 For secular employment. By his bed
 He preferred having twenty books in red
 305 And black, of Aristotle's³⁹ philosophy,
 To having fine clothes, fiddle or psaltery.⁴⁰
 Though a philosopher, as I have told,

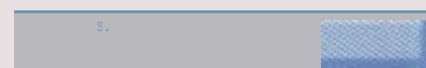
36. semi-cope cape.
 37. Flemish from Flanders.
 38. Harwich-Holland range the North Sea between England and Holland.
 39. Aristotle's (AR is TAHT uhlz) referring to the Greek philosopher (384-322 B.C.).
 40. psaltery (SOHL tuhr ee) ancient stringed instrument.

He had not found the stone for making gold.⁴¹
 Whatever money from his friends he took
 He spent on learning or another book
 And prayed for them most earnestly, returning
 Thanks to them thus for paying for his learning.
 His only care was study, and indeed
 He never spoke a word more than was need,
 Formal at that, respectful in the extreme,
 Short, to the point, and lofty in his theme.
 The thought of moral virtue filled his speech
 And he would gladly learn, and gladly teach. . . .



In the bracketed passage, circle sections that describe the Oxford Cleric's attitude toward money. Then, compare and contrast his attitude toward money with that of the Friar.

Now I have told you shortly, in a clause,
 The rank, the array, the number and the cause
 Of our assembly in this company
 In Southwark, at that high-class hostelry
 Known as *The Tabard*, close beside *The Bell*.
 And now the time has come for me to tell
 How we behaved that evening: I'll begin
 After we had alighted at the inn,
 Then I'll report our journey, stage by stage,
 All the remainder of our pilgrimage.
 But first I beg of you. in courtesy,
 Not to condemn me as unmannerly
 If I speak plainly and with no concealings
 And give account of all their words and dealings,
 Using their very phrases as they fell.
For certainly, as you all know so well,
He who repeats a tale after a man
is bound to say, as nearly as he can,
Each single word if he remembers it,
However rudely spoken or unfit,
Or else the tale he tells will be untrue,
The things invented and the phrases new.
 He may not flinch although it were his brother,
 If he says one word he must say the other.
 And Christ Himself spoke broad⁴² in Holy Writ,
 And as you know there's nothing there unfit,
 And Plato⁴³ says, for those with power to read,
 "The word should be as cousin to the deed."



Analyze the underlined sentence by answering these questions:

1. What do lines 743-749 indicate that the speaker (the one who refers to himself as "I") is planning to do in this poem?

2. According to lines 750-756, what problems may result from the speaker's plan?

3. In lines 759-762, what reason does the speaker give for going ahead with his plan despite the problems it causes?

41. **stone ... gold** At the time, alchemists believed that a "philosopher's stone" existed that could turn base metals into gold.

42. **broad** bluntly.

43. **Plato** Greek philosopher (427?-347? e.c.)

TAKE NOTES

Literary Analysis

Review the bracketed passage. Write one thing you learn about the Host of The Tabard through **direct characterization** (what the speaker says about him). Also, take note of the author's **indirect characterization** by writing one thing the Host does and what you learn about him from this action.

1. direct characterization:

2. indirect characterization:

Reading Check

Briefly summarize what the Host does for and says to his guests.

Further I beg you to forgive it me
If I neglect the order and degree
And what is due to rank in what I've planned.
I'm short of wit as you will understand.
Our *Host* gave us great welcome; everyone
Was given a place and supper was begun.
He served the finest victuals you could think,
The wine was strong and we were glad to drink.
A very striking man our Host withal,
And fit to be a marshal in a hall.
His eyes were bright, his girth a little wide;
There is no finer burgess in Cheapside.⁴⁴
Bold in his speech, yet wise and full of tact,
There was no manly attribute he lacked,
What's more he was a merry-hearted man.
After our meal he jokingly began
To talk of sport, and, among other things
After we'd settled up our reckonings,
He said as follows: "Truly, gentlemen,
You're very welcome and I can't think when
—Upon my word I'm telling you no lie—
I've seen a gathering here that looked so spry,
No, not this year, as in this tavern now.
I'd think you up some fun if I knew how.
And, as it happens, a thought has just occurred
And it will cost you nothing, on my word.
You're off to Canterbury—well, God speed!
Blessed St. Thomas answer to your need!
And I don't doubt, before the journey's done
You mean to while the time in tales and fun.
Indeed, there's little pleasure for your bones
Riding along and all as dumb as stones.
So let me then propose for your enjoyment,
Just as I said, a suitable employment.
And if my notion suits and you agree
And promise to submit yourselves to me
Playing your parts exactly as I say
Tomorrow as you ride along the way,
Then by my father's soul (and he is dead)
If you don't like it you can have my head!
Hold up your hands, and not another word."
Well, our consent of course was not deferred,
It seemed not worth a serious debate;
We **all** agreed to it at any rate
And bade him issue what commands he would.
"My lords," he said, "now listen for your good,

44. Cheapside district in London.

810 And please don't treat my notion with disdain.
 This is the point. I'll make it short and plain.
Each one of you shall help to make things slip
By telling two stories on the outward trip
To Canterbury that's what I intend.
And, on the homeward way to journey's end
 815 Another two, tales from the days of old:
And then the man whose story is best told.
That is to say who gives the fullest measure
Of good morality and general pleasure.
He shall be given a supper, paid by all,
 820 Here in this tavern, in this very hall,
When we come back again from Canterbury.
 And in the hope to keep you bright and merry
 I'll go along with you myself and ride
 All at my own expense and serve as guide.
 825 I'll be the judge, and those who won't obey
 Shall pay for what we spend upon the way.
 Now if you all agree to what you've heard
 Tell me at once without another word,
 And I will make arrangements early for it."
 830 Of course we all agreed, in fact we swore it
 Delightedly, and made entreaty too
 That he should act as he proposed to do,
 Become our Governor in short, and be
 Judge of our tales and general referee,
 835 And set the supper at a certain price.
 We promised to be ruled by his advice
 Come high, come low; unanimously thus
 We set him up in judgment over us.
 More wine was fetched, the business being done;
 840 We drank it off and up went everyone
 To bed without a moment of delay.
 Early next morning at the spring of day
 Up rose our Host and roused us like a cock,
 Gathering us together in a flock,
 845 And off we rode at slightly faster pace
 Than walking to St. Thomas' watering-place;⁴⁵
 And there our Host drew up, began to ease
 His horse, and said, "Now, listen if you please,
 My lords! Remember what you promised me.
 850 If evensong and matins will agree⁴⁶
 Let's see who shall be first to tell a tale.
 And as I hope to drink good wine and ale
 I'll be your judge. The rebel who disobeys,

A--

Reading Strategy

The Host uses a single sentence to describe his plan for the journey to Canterbury. **Analyze** this underlined sentence by answering these questions:

1. What will the pilgrims have to do?

2. What standard will be used to judge their performances?

3. What reward will the winner receive?

Reading Check

What does the Host tell the pilgrims as they begin the ride to Canterbury in the morning?

45. St. Thomas' watering-place a brook two miles from the inn.
 46. If evensong ... agree if what you said last night holds true this morning.

TAKE NOTES

855 However much the journey costs, he pays.
 Now draw for cut⁴⁷ and then we can depart;
 The man who draws the shortest cut shall start."

47. draw for cut draw lots, as when pulling straws from a bunch; the person who pulls the short straw is "it."

Reader's Response: Do you think it would have been fun to go on this pilgrimage to Canterbury? Why or why not?

Thinking About the Skill: Would analyzing direct and indirect characterization help you better understand short stories and novels? Explain.

from The Canterbury Tales: The Prologue

1. **Apply:** What modern character types match the characters in the Prologue?

2. **Literary Analysis:** Choose one of the characters. Explain what the appearance or actions of the character tell the reader.

3. **Literary Analysis:** Use the chart to reflect on the social commentary in the Prologue. What social comment does Chaucer make in his sketch of the Pardoner? What does the sketch of the Knight suggest were some of the excellences promoted by medieval society? Include the details that support the social comment.

Character	Detail	Comment About Society
Pardoner		
Knight		

4. **Reading Strategy: Analyze the sentence** in lines 47–50, answering the questions *who*, *what*, *how much*, and *how well*.
