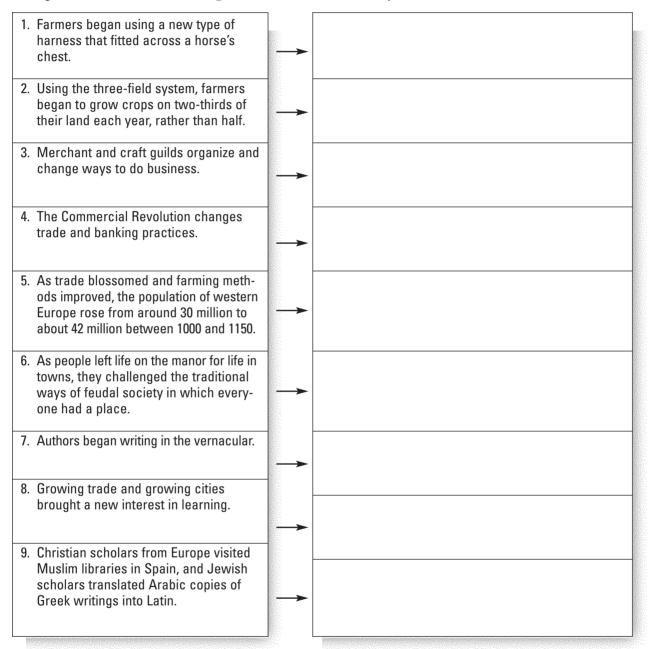


GUIDED READING Changes in Medieval Society

A. *Drawing Conclusions* As you read this section, make notes in the chart to explain the results of each change or trend in medieval society.



B. *Recognizing Facts and Details* On the back of this paper, briefly explain how each of the following contributed to intellectual life during medieval times: **Dante Alighieri, Geoffrey Chaucer, Christine de Pisan,** and **Thomas Aquinas.**



LITERATURE SELECTION from The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer

The Canterbury Tales, from about 1387, describes a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas Becket. In the long poem, a group of pilgrims tells stories for their own amusement on their way from London to Canterbury. Many different levels of 14th-century English society are portrayed. The following excerpt is from the prologue to The Canterbury Tales. How many different pilgrims can you identify?

When April with his sweet showers has V pierced the drought of March to the root, and bathed every vein in such moisture as has power to bring forth the flower; ⁵ when, also, Zephyrus [Greek god of the wind] with his sweet breath has breathed spirit into the tender new shoots in every wood and meadow, and the young sun has run half his course in the sign of the Ram, and small birds sing melodies and 10 sleep with their eyes open all the night (so Nature pricks them in their hearts): then people long to go on the pilgrimages, and palmers [pilgrims] long to seek strange shores and far-off shrines known in various lands, 15 and, especially, from the ends of every shire in England they come to Canterbury, to seek the holy, blissful martyr who helped them when they were sick. It befell that one day in that season, 20 as I was in Southwark at the Tabard Inn, ready to go on my pilgrimage to Canterbury with a most devout heart, at night there came into that hostelry [inn] a company of nine-and-twenty people-25 all sorts of people, who had met by chance; and all of them were pilgrims who were riding toward Canterbury. The chambers and the stables were spacious, and we were made most comfortable. 30 And shortly, when the sun had gone down, I had spoken with every one of them so that I had soon become one of their group, and made an arrangement to rise early to be on our way, as I shall tell you. But none the less, while I have time and space, 35 before I pass on further in this tale, it seems to me in order to tell you all about each of them, as they seemed to me-

and who they were, and of what rank in life, 40 and also what they wore—

and with a knight, then, I will begin. There was a KNIGHT, a valiant man, who, from the time when he had first begun

- 45 to venture out, had loved chivalry, truth and honor, liberality and courtesy. He had proved his worth in his lord's wars, in which he had ridden as far as any man, both in Christendom and in heathen lands,
- 50 and he had always been honored for his valor. He was at Alexandria when it was won; many times he had sat at the head of the table in Prussia, above knights of all nations; he had campaigned in Lithuania, and in Russia,
- 55 more often than any other Christian man of his rank:
 - he had also been in Granada at the siege of Algeciras, and had fought in Benmarin. He had been at Lyas and at Attalia when they were won; and he had sailed upon
- 60 the Mediterranean with many a noble host. He had been in fifteen mortal battles, and fought for our faith at Tlemcen three times in tournaments, and always slain his foe.
 - This same worthy Knight had also been $\overline{5}$ at one time with the lord of Palet
- 65 at one time with the lord of Balat, against another heathen in Turkey: and always he had won the highest honor. Although he was valiant, he was prudent, and bore himself as meekly as a maiden;
- 70 never in all his life had he been rude to anyone at all. He was a true, perfect, gentle knight. But to tell you about his array— His horses were good, but he was not gaily dressed.
- 75 He wore a fustian [coarse cloth] tunic, much stained by his hauberk [tunic of metal links];

Excerpt from *Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales,* edited by A. Kent Hieatt and Constance Hieatt. Translation copyright © 1964 by Bantam, a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc. Used by permission of Bantam Books, a division of Random House, Inc. for he had just come back from his expedition, and was on his way to make his pilgrimage. With him was his son, a young SQUIRE,

- ⁸⁰ a lover, and a gay youth on his way to knighthood,
 - with locks as curly as if they had been pressed. He was about twenty years old, I guess; he was of normal height
- and wonderfully agile, and of great strength. 85 He had been on cavalry expeditions for a
 - while in Flanders, in Artois, and in Picardy—
 - and in this short time he had borne himself well,
 - in the hope of winning his lady's favor.
 - His clothing was embroidered so as to look like a meadow
- 90 all full of fresh flowers, white and red. He sang or fluted all the day long; he was as youthful as the month of May. His gown was short, with long, wide sleeves. He knew how to sit his horse well, and ride beautifully;

95 he could compose songs and poems, joust and dance, too, and draw and write. . . . There was also a nun, a PRIORESS, whose smile was modest and sweet. Her greatest oath was only "By Saint Loy!"

- 100 She was called Madame Eglantine. She sang the divine service well, entuning it in her nose in a most seemly way; and she spoke French well and properly, after the school of Stratford-at-Bow—
- 105 for the French of Paris was unknown to her. Her table manners were admirable: she never let a morsel fall from her lips, nor wet her fingers too deeply in the sauce; daintily she carried a morsel to her lips, taking care
- 110 that no drop should fall on her breast:she took much pleasure in proper etiquette.She wiped her upper lip so carefully that no trace of grease could be seen in her cup when she had taken a drink from it;
- 115 she helped herself to food in a very proper way. And certainly she was very cheerful, most pleasant, and amiable in bearing, and took great pains to behave in a wellbred fashion, to be stately in manner,
- 120 and to appear worthy of reverence. But to speak of her tender feelings:

she was so charitable and so full of pity that she would weep if she saw a mouse caught in a trap and dead or bleeding.

- 125 She had a few small dogs that she fed with roast meat, or milk and fine bread; but she wept indeed if one of them died, or if someone hit it smartly with a stick she was all feeling and tender heart.
- 130 Her wimple [head cloth] was suitably pleated; her nose well-shaped; her eyes bright as glass; her mouth very small, and soft and red; and indeed she had a fine forehead it was almost a handspan broad, I believe,
- 135 for certainly she was not undersized.I noticed that her cloak was becoming.Around her arm she wore a rosary of tiny coral beads, marked off with green, and on it hung a lovely golden brooch,
- 140 on which was written first a crowned A, and then, Amor vincit omnia. With her she had another NUN.
 - who was her assistant, and THREE PRIESTS. There was a MONK—a splendid sort;
- 145 an inspector of his monastery's estates, who loved venery [sport of hunting];a manly man, capable of being an abbot. He had many a dainty horse in the stable, and when he rode one might hear the bells on his bridle jingle in the wind as
- 150 loud and clear as the chapel bellin the place where this Monk was in charge.As for the rule of Saint Maurus or SaintBenedict:
 - since it was old and somewhat strict, this same Monk let old-fashioned things pass away
- 155 and held to the ways of the modern world. He didn't give a plucked hen for that text which says that hunters are not holy men, and that a monk, when he is heedless of duty, is like a fish out of water—
- 160 that is to say, a monk out of his cloister;but he held that text was not worth an oyster.And I said his opinion was good.Why should he study and drive himself mad,always poring over a book in the cloister,
- 165 or work with his hands and labor as Saint Augustine ordered? How shall the world be served?
 Let Augustine have his labor to himself. Therefore he was a really hard-riding horseman.

Name

He had greyhounds as swift as a bird in flight; 170 riding and hunting the hare

- were all his joy; for this he spared no cost. I saw that his sleeves were edged at the cuff with gray fur, and that the finest in the land; and to fasten his hood under his chin
- 175 he had a very intricate pin made of gold; there was a love knot in the bigger end. His head was bald and shone like glass, and his face did, too, as if he had been anointed. He was a fine fat lord, in splendid shape;
- 180 his protruding eyes rolled in his head and glowed like a furnace under a pot; his boots were supple, his horse well-groomed: now certainly he was a handsome prelate—he was not pale, like a wasted ghost;
- 185 his favorite roast was a good fat swan; his palfrey [horse] was as brown as a berry. . . . There was a MERCHANT with a forked beard; dressed in motley [colored cloth], he sat high on his horse.
 - On his head was a Flemish beaver hat;
- 190 his boots were clasped handsomely and well. He delivered his remarks very solemnly, always emphasizing how his profits grew. He wanted the sea to be guarded at all costs between Middelburg and Orwell.
- 195 He did well on the exchange, selling French currency.
 - This worthy man made good use of his wits; no one knew he was in debt, he conducted himself in such a stately way,
 - with his bargainings and his borrowings.
- 200 In any case, he was indeed a worthy man; but to tell the truth, I don't know what his name is.
 - There was also a CLERK of Oxford,
 - who had long since devoted himself to the course of logic.
 - His horse was as lean as a rake,
- 205 and he himself was not exactly fat, I assure you, but looked hollow and serious.
 - His outer cloak was very threadbare, for as yet he had not got himself a benefice
 - [estate],
 - nor was he worldly enough to hold a secular office.
- 210 He would rather have twenty volumes of Aristotle and his philosophy, bound in black or red, at the head of his bed than rich robes, or a fiddle or lively harp.

But although he was a philosopher,

- ²¹⁵ he still had little gold in his coffers; he spent all that he could get from his friends on books and learning,
 - and diligently prayed for the souls
 - of those who gave him money to carry on his studies with.
- 220 He gave most of his attention to studying. He never spoke a word more than was necessary, and what he did say was in due form, and reverent,
 - and short and to the point, and full of lofty thought:
 - his talk tended toward moral qualities,
- ²²⁵ and gladly would he learn, and gladly teach.... A HABERDASHER and a CARPENTER,
 - a WEAVER, a DYER, and a TAPESTRY MAKER were with us, too,
 - all clothed in the same livery—
 - that of a great and dignified guild.
- ²³⁰ Their gear was all freshly and newly adorned; Their knives were mounted not with brass, but entirely with silver; their belts and their purses were beautifully made in every respect. Each of them seemed indeed a burgess imposing enough
- ²³⁵ to sit on the dais [guest platform] in a guildhall; every one of them, because of his wisdom, was suited to be an alderman, for they had enough property and income, and also their wives would certainly agree to it
- 240 (otherwise they would surely be to blame): it is very nice to be called "Madame," to go into church first on feast eves, and to have your mantle borne right royally.

from A. Kent Hieatt and Constance Hieatt, eds., *The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer* (New York: Bantam, 1964), 3–19.

Discussion Questions

- 1. *Recognizing Facts and Details* Which of the pilgrims who accompany Chaucer on his pilgrimage to Canterbury are mentioned in this excerpt?
- 2. *Recognizing Point of View* Which of the pilgrims do you think Chaucer admires? Explain your answer.
- 3. *Making Judgments* Which pilgrims do you admire? Why?



RETEACHING ACTIVITY

Changes in Medieval Society

Determining Main Ideas Choose the word that most accurately completes each sentence below. Write that word in the blank provided.

journeymen	Commercial Revolution
surname	guild
vernacular	Thomas Aquinas

scholastics burghers letters of credit three-field system

- 1. The first ______ was a group of merchants who worked to improve the economic and social conditions of its members.
- 2. Merchants and craftspeople who lived in the towns and who demanded privileges such as freedom from tolls and the right to govern their town were called ______.
- 3. ______ were documents given by a bank to an individual allowing that person to withdraw an amount of money from that bank or one of its branches.
- 4. The ______ allowed villages to grow more food by organizing land into three fields instead of two.
- 5. In the 1100s, poets began to use the everyday language of their homeland, or the
- 6. Scholars who met together at universities were known as schoolmen, or ______.
- 7. The expansion of trade and business as agriculture was expanding is called the _____
- 8. In many European countries, your _____ could also label your profession.
- 9. A scholar in the 1200s named ______ said that logic could prove many religious truths.
- 10. A day worker, known as a ______, had to complete several steps in order to become a master in his craft.