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Notes & Instructions to Teacher

- This Study Guide is intended to be used with the book, *The Canterbury Tales: The General Prologue & Three Tales* (a Reader-Friendly Edition in the original words put into modern spelling, edited and copyright by Michael Murphy), published by Memoria Press (ISBN: 978-1-5477-0206-0).
- This Study Guide is best used in conjunction with a good-quality notebook, which will henceforth be called the **Literature Notebook**. Most of the activities in this guide will be expected to be completed in the Literature Notebook. And of course, the Literature Notebook will be the place for all of the student's notes during reading and discussion, and for all of the student's essays.
- Though I recommend that, ideally, your students complete the entire Study Guide in conjunction with reading and discussing the text, as a teacher myself, I also recommend that you **adapt the Study Guide to your particular context**. This means you should feel comfortable using the Study Guide to best suit the needs of you and your student(s) – in a manner that fits your family or class size, schedule, number of meetings per week, time for grading, time allowed for discussion, and total time for the unit, etc. This may mean that you will choose to assign fewer vocabulary words and questions, etc. This is fine, and I encourage it. I have written the guides comprehensively to provide a maximum number of notes, words, and questions, so that you will be able to assign fewer if need be, rather than wishing there were more.
- This Study Guide is written in such a way that it can be used for grades 8-12. If you are using it with 8th and 9th graders, additional guidance, assistance, and adaptation will be helpful.
- Particular points in the text will be cited by line number. Michael Murphy retains the original line numbers of the scholarly Riverside edition, which is arranged according to the fragments A, B, C, etc. Therefore, the line numbers will not correspond across the tales, just within each tale.
- The Introduction in the Study Guide, pp. 20-21, covers the introductory material in the text. Of course it is good to assign all of the questions to the students, but please feel free to assign fewer if you choose. Another fine option would be to complete this section orally in class discussion, in groups, or in another manner that suits your judgment. Students may also answer these questions in their Literature Notebooks.
- You will notice that many questions ask the student to quote a line(s) from the text in his answer. This will help develop the student's ability to find evidence in the text to support his answer. It will also develop the skill of synthesizing quoted material into his written argument, which is an important skill for analytical essay writing.
- The Reading Notes section contains some helpful notes and facts along with some of the difficult words and phrases. Most of the archaic and challenging words are explained in the marginal glosses of Murphy's reader-friendly edition; thus, the Reading Notes will feature just some of the words, not all.
- The Words to Be Defined section contains *specific* words chosen because they are both *challenging* and *useful* for the student to learn and memorize. Arcane or obscure Chaucerian words not in use anymore are not selected. As well, with a few of the words, I have altered the spelling just slightly from the way it appears in the text – so that the student will memorize the most useful form of the word.
- All italicized summaries of the tales in the Reading Notes are direct quotes from Michael Murphy's italicized summaries in the text.

- Some of the essay prompts tend toward a shorter essay, and some toward a longer. Both short essays (1 page) and long essays (2-4 pages) are useful and helpful, depending on the intent and purpose. Convey your expectations regarding length to your student(s).
- A Rhetoric Essay Template is provided in the back of the Study Guide as another pre-writing option to help students outline their essay before they undertake to write it. The template is very similar to the Rhetoric | Expression section that students complete in their Literature Notebook, but the template provides a worksheet layout. You may choose to have students complete the Rhetoric | Expression section or use the template (photocopying the template as needed).
- In the Comprehension and Socratic Discussion Questions, I sometimes use the words "paraphrase," "summarize," or "provide a brief summary." All of these essentially mean the same thing.
- As a kind of "final achievement" that celebrates the reading of the text and completion of the Study Guide, have your student(s) (or child) complete the Memorization & Recitation section at the end of the Study Guide. Perhaps more importantly, this section allows the student to move on from the poem with a special part of *The Canterbury Tales* in her heart.

WORDS TO BE DEFINED

1. cheerful
2. mud
3. a lover
4. filled with horror or shock
5. plentiful; ample
6. fever; illness
7. many thanks
8. a gathering; crowd
9. revenge
10. ripped; tore
11. oppose; resist
12. learning; knowledge
13. celebration; merriment
14. wickedness; sinfulness
15. angry disagreement; quarrel
16. devil; evil spirit
17. listen; give attention to
18. high-pitched, piercing in sound
19. deceive; delude
20. careless; neglectful

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. He says that heaviness (tragedies) is right enough for most people, but for him it is "*great dis-ease*" to hear of men who have "*been in great wealth and ease*" and then suddenly have a tragic fall. He'd rather hear the contrary—of those who have been in "*poor estate*" and climb up to prosperity. (3959ff.)
2. The Host calls him "Sir John," a rather contemptuous way of designating a priest. And he also makes fun of his skinny and dirty horse, "*though thou ride upon a jade./What though thine horse be bothé foul and lean*" (4002-4003).
3. The poor country widow who owns the roosters

WORDS TO BE DEFINED

Note: With a few words below, I have altered the spelling just slightly from the way it appears in the text, so that you will memorize the modern spelling of the word.

Definitions Bank

angry disagreement; quarrel	learning; knowledge
careless; neglectful	listen; give attention to
celebration; merriment	a lover
cheerful	many thanks
deceive; delude	mud
devil; evil spirit	oppose; resist
fever; illness	plentiful; ample
filled with horror or shock	revenge
a gathering; crowd	ripped; tore
high-pitched, piercing in sound	wickedness; sinfulness

1. Such thing is **gladsome**, as it thinketh me (3968)
2. Although the **slough** had never been so deep. (3988)
3. Which were his sisters and his **paramour(s)** (4057)
4. She was **aghast**, and said: "O hearté dear (4079)
5. When humours be too **abundant** in a wight. (4115)
6. Or an **ague** that may be your bane. (4150)
7. "Madame," quod he, "**gramercy** of your lore (4160)
8. Where as there was such **congregation** (4178)
9. **Vengeance** and justice of this felony (4230)
10. But casually the ship's bottom **rent** (4291)
11. I them **defy**, I love them never a deal. (4346)
12. He knew by kind, and by none other **lore** (4386)
13. Full is mine heart of **revel**, and soláce (4393)
14. A coal fox, full of sly **iniquity** (4405)
15. That in school is great **altercation** (4427)

16. Now certès, I were worsè than any **fiend** (4476)
17. Was only for to **hearken** how you sing (4480)
18. Ne made never shoutès half so **shrill** (4585)
19. If thou **beguile** me oftener than once. (4618)
20. And **negligent**, and trust in flattery. (4627)



Read The Nun's Priest's Tale, marking the text in key places according to the method taught in "How to Mark a Book."

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the specific reason that the Knight gives for not wanting to hear any more stories with tragic endings? Quote a phrase or line from the text in your answer.
2. From lines 3998ff., what is one of the comments by the Host in which he makes fun of the Nun's Priest? Quote a phrase or line from the text in your answer.
3. *In patience led a full simple life,
For little was her chattel and her rent.
By husbandry of such as God her sent
She found herself, and eke her daughters two.* (ll. 4016-4019)
This quote is speaking of whom?
4. Identify two **similes** in the description of Chanticleer in lines 4037ff.
5. Provide a brief **description** of Pertelote. Quote a phrase in your answer.
6. From the "*The cock's favorite wife, Pertelote*" section (lines 4055-4071), quote the particular line (or two) that articulates the **beast fable** genre.
7. Describe Pertelote's reaction to Chanticleer's dream. Quote a line or two from the text in your answer. Do you agree with her reaction? Why or why not?
8. What is Pertelote's diagnosis of dreams? In other words, what does she say dreams are caused by?

4. Here are three, though there are several:
 - "His voice was merrier than the merry organ" (4041)
 - "Well sikerer was his crowing in his lodge,/Than is a clock, or any abbey orloge." (4043-4044)
 - "And like the burnèd gold was his colour." (4054)
5. She has the prettiest-colored throat. She is sociable and elegant in manner: "compaignable, and bore herself so fair" (4062). Also "Courteous she was, discreet, and debonair" (4061).
6. "For thilkè time, as I have understand/Beastès and birdès couldè speak and sing." (4070-4071)
7. She is shocked and ashamed, and berates him rather severely. She says, "Avoy! ... fie on you, heartless" (4098). She also says he has now lost her heart and her love, and that she "cannot love a coward, by my faith" (4101). Answers will vary regarding her reaction. It is fairly easy to assume we would react differently considering we know that the fox does come and snatch him away, thus revealing the dream to in fact be prophetic. But if we are honest, most of us would probably be as skeptical as Pertelote!
8. She says they are caused by an excess of eating and drinking—"Swevens engender of repletions" (4113); and that they are caused by the imbalance of the humors in the body—"When humours be too abundant" (4115).

9. Answers will vary. First she says to beware of the noonday sun. Then she prescribes many medicinal herbs, such as "laureole, centaury, and fumetere,/Or else of hellebore that groweth there,/Of catapuce, or of gaitre-berries" (4153-4155).
10. He says that many men, of more authority than Cato, have found dreams to be highly significant, and have proved them by their experience. "Than ever Cato was, so may I thee,/That all the reverse say of this sentéce,/And have well founden by experience,/That dreames be significations" (4166-4169).
11. Two comrades go on a journey, have to stay in separate hostels, and one dreams that the other will be murdered, which turns out to be what happens.
Two sailors are about to sail; one dreams that if they sail the next day, they will be drowned. His fellow sailor sails anyway and his ship goes down at sea.
12. Answers will vary. In the Old Testament, the dreams of Daniel, Joseph, and the Pharaoh; Croesus, King of Lydia; and "Andromache, Hector's wife,/That day that Hector shouldé lose his life" (4331-4332).
13. 4416-4420
14. mock-heroic or comic irony
15. Flattery and praise for Chanticleer's singing. He appeals to Chanticleer's pride. Any number of lines could be chosen: "Save you, ne heard I never man yet sing/As did you father in the morwening" (4491-4492).
16. He tempts the fox to turn around and verbally taunt his pursuers, thereby releasing Chanticleer when he opens his mouth.

9. What are some of her prescriptions for the health problems?
10. In the "Chanticleer's justification of the value of dreams" section (4160-4172), how does Chanticleer introduce his **refutatio**, his rhetorical refutation to Pertelote's argument? Quote a line or two from the text in your answer.
11. What two **anecdotes** does Chanticleer tell to argue for the significance of dreams (through 4294)? **Summarize** each one in a sentence or two.
12. List two shorter **examples** provided by Chanticleer in which dreams foretold disaster. Quote a line from the text in one.
13. In lines 4405-4423, which lines feature **anaphora**?
14. The barnyard animals discussing lofty philosophical and theological subjects is an example of what literary style?
15. What is the fox's primary means of manipulating Chanticleer? Quote a line or two from the text in your answer.
16. In a surprising **peripeteia**, how does Chanticleer outsmart the fox?

LOGIC | Dialectic

The student reasons with the facts, elements, and features of the poem; sorts, arranges, compares, and connects ideas – and begins to uncover and determine the Central One Idea.

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

May be verbally discussed or answered in written form in your Literature Notebook.

1. Describe some of the **imagery** of the poor country widow. What details reveal that she is poor? Quote a phrase or line from the text in your description.
2. Do you think Chaucer intends a kind of **irony** by **contrasting** the poor widow with her splendid, "crowing" Chanticleer and Pertelote? What two social worlds might the widow and the hens **symbolize**?
3. Describe some of the **imagery** in Chanticleer's dream. Do you think his dream has a prophetic sense about it? Explain.

4. Write a fairly general **outline** of Chanticleer's **rhetorical argument** for the significance of dreams (ll. 4160-4361). Use a traditional alphanumeric outline with major points and subpoints (Roman numerals, capital letters, numbers, and lowercase letters, etc.). Outlines vary widely, as they are written according to the nature of the content being outlined. With respect to your time, your outline here may be more general, rather than detailed and specific. If you wish, you may use some of Murphy's italicized headings in your outline, or to help you conceive your outline. Here is a section of an outline to serve as a brief example:

Traditional Poetic Forms

I. The Villanelle

A. Formal Characteristics

1. 19 lines
2. 6 stanzas—5 stanzas with 3 lines, and the last with 4 lines
3. The first line of the first stanza is repeated as the last line of the second and fourth stanzas.
4. The third line of the first stanza is repeated as the last line of the third and fifth stanzas.
5. The rhyme scheme is *aba*.

B. Notable Villanelles

1. "The House on the Hill," Edward Arlington Robinson
2. "The Waking," Theodore Roethke

II. The Sonnet

A. Formal Characteristics

4. Chanticleer's Argument

I. Introduction

A. Chanticleer's Justification of the Significance of Dreams

1. Many men of more authority than Cato held the opposite view.

II. Support - Anecdotes and Examples

A. Two fellows on a pilgrimage

B. Exclamatio

C. Two sailors about to set out to sea

1. Doomed sailor's refutation against the significance of dreams

D. Chanticleer's Mini-Conclusion

1. In light of these anecdotes, no man should be too contemptuous of dreams.

E. St. Kenélm's dream of his own murder

F. A series of shorter examples

III. Major Conclusion

A. My dream forebodes adversity.

B. I do not want or trust your laxatives.

C. Let's speak of fun things and stop this disagreement.

D. Pertelote, you're beautiful!

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Answers will vary. She is advanced in age, "*dwelling in a narrow cottáge*" (4012). She leads a patient, "*full simple life*" (4016). "*Full sooty was her bower, and eke her hall*" (4022)—The sootiness belongs to the peasant life, rather than the life of the rich. She does not eat fancy meats or dainty morsels, and thus has no need for poignant sauces. She lives modestly and eats temperately. She is content and peaceful.
2. Yes, Chaucer intends his contrast to create irony and to serve as a commentary on both the rich and the poor. The widow represents the poor, and Chanticleer and Pertelote represent the rich. He considers each class ironically, but clearly the rich (Chanticleer and Pertelote) receive the most ironic, sarcastic treatment.
3. He dreamt that he was roaming up and down the yard. He sees a "*beast*" in the yard "*like a hound.*" The beast's "*colour was betwixtè yellow and red;/And tippèd was his tail, and both his ears/With black*" (4092-4094). The beast has a "*snoutè small, with glowing eyen tway*" (4095). Yes, his dream has a foreboding, ominous prophetic sense—in particular because of these lines: the beast "*would have made arrest/Upon my body, and have had me dead*" (4090-4091); and "*Yet of his look for fear almost I die*" (4096).