English 201
Major British Authors
Harris

Chaucer Reading Guide

You will be reading Chaucer in the original Middle English. It may help to read it out loud.

GENERAL PROLOGUE

1. Portraits. Who are the characters and what are their characteristics?

2. How does Chaucer react to them (Chaucer the pilgrim and Chaucer the poet)?

3. Who seem praiseworthy and who blameworthy? Why?

4. Do you recognize the beginning? Any parallels in other literature or film?

PARDONER'S PROLOGUE AND TALE

1. How does the Pardoner present himself? What kind of person is he?

2. Why does the Pardoner reveal his trickery to the pilgrims?

3. Do you recognize any parallels between the *Tale* and the *Prologue*?

THE NUN'S PRIEST'S PROLOGUE AND TALE

1. Who has higher status in this argument? Who seems more authoritative? Why?

2. What's the argument about?

3. What do the setting and background contribute to the argument? In other words, why birds, why a farm, why chaos at the end of the tale, etc.?