Contents

This KS3 pack offers a structured route through a topic called 'Poetry through the ages', along with teaching ideas and accompanying resources, and suggestions for differentiation. The pack contains a rich collection of Teachit resources, many of which were specifically commissioned for the purposes of this pack.

It is organised into six parts, with each part focusing on a particular era and/or poet, such as Shakespeare and the Elizabethans or the Romantics. Within each part you'll find a selection of:

- starter activities
- activities to show students' understanding
- plenary activities
- creative opportunities.

The pack lends itself to being used in different ways. It could be dipped into on an ad hoc basis at either Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 or it could form the basis of half a term's work (or even a term's work if you wanted to dwell on certain poets and tasks a little more or even introduce your own choice of poets and poems to the mix). The resources are all available in adaptable formats, making it easy to differentiate the tasks by ability.

This particular pack aims to introduce students to a diverse and challenging mix of poetic texts in order to give them a sense of history, and a time frame in which to 'place' the various poetic movements and poets. It is also useful for giving KS3 students a taste of the kinds of poetry they will encounter at GCSE and get them used to: listening to, reading, annotating and analysing poetry in all its forms. At various points, there are also suggestions for approaching a poem 'blind' or as an unseen text to help students build their confidence in this area. There are also plenty of creative and written opportunities so that students can experiment with and create poetry of their own along the way.

We've included links to each separate resource included in this pack so that you can access the resources directly on teachit.co.uk. We've also included the file number or name for each original resource – just pop this into Teachit's search engine. Most of the resources in this pack are Word documents, but we've also included links to PowerPoints and interactive activities where applicable. Please log in first in order to access any of these resources on Teachit.

If you have accessed this pack as a Teachit subscriber then the usual permissions apply. Teachit.plus subscribers can access the Word documents and any PowerPoints whereas Teachit.works subscribers will also have access to any interactives.

To help with navigation, there is a contents table which details which part each resource is used in and the page number.

No poetry unit of work would be complete without a mention of Trevor Millum's Poetry Place. Its aim is to help with the teaching, understanding and enjoyment of poetry and it's filled with resources, suggestions for helping your students with the writing process and even has a place for you to share your own poems and those of your students. Do take a look!

Our thanks go to contributor Angela Topping who has written this pack and to the following contributors whose resources are also included: Julie Blake and Tim Shortis, Karin Barratt, Lindy Leslie, Ruth Newbury, Penny Fearn, Hannah Roberts, Kerry Ricketts, Ian Bennett, Emily Evans, Kat Kearey, Clare Rees, Lucy Cripps, Rhiannon Glover, Alison Powell.

We hope you enjoy using this pack. If you have any questions, please get in touch: email support@teachit.co.uk or call us on 01225 788850. Alternatively, you might like to give some feedback for other Teachit members – you can do this by adding a comment on the Teaching packs page on Teachit (please log in to access this!).

Route through – week one: Early and Middle English poetry

If you have three hours or less with your class each week, you might want to dispense with the introductory lesson below on riddles as fitting both *Beowulf* and Chaucer into three hours will probably be enough of a challenge!

Some introductory work on riddles

Starter activity

Guess the riddle! Tell students some Anglo-Saxon riddles (or display these on the board as students come in) and challenge them to solve them. Set the Teachit Timer for added urgency! You could use the Teachit resource *Can you solve the riddles? (22734)* which is based on Chapter 5 of *The Hobbit* ('Riddles in the Dark'), or *The Exeter Riddle Book*. There are also some here: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/english/beowulf/riddle.htm

Main activity

Taking it further. If using the Teachit resource *Can you solve the riddles? (22734)* get students to read and analyse the riddles in groups with a view to discovering the techniques used (such as repetition, use of active verbs, similes, prepositions and adjectives). You could, perhaps, give each group a different riddle to focus on according to the difficulty of the riddles and the ability of your students. **Differentiation:** Visual learners will enjoy watching a snippet from the film, *The Hobbit*. This Youtube clip shows Bilbo and Gollum challenging each other to solve their riddles.

Once students have analysed Tolkien's riddles, ask them to write their own riddles using the techniques they have discovered or analysed. For an added creative twist, invite students to make up their own riddles that are similar to the Anglo-Saxon ones but about very modern objects.

Plenary activity

And the prize goes to … Get students to guess each other's riddles. If they're feeling brave, you could get students to come out to the front of the class to read them out and set the Teachit Timer for the class. Give out prizes for the most successful riddles and best riddle guessers.

An introduction to *Beowulf*

Starter activities

Oral tradition. Ask students to list any songs and rhymes that they can remember from when they were very small. Make a list of these on the board and do a 'show of hands' survey to see how many students know each others' rhymes. To get students started off, perhaps mention: 'Ring a Ring of Roses', 'See Saw Margery Daw', 'Humpty Dumpty' etc.

Discuss how the rhythm and sometimes rhyme helps songs etc. from the oral tradition to be memorable, and so passed down by word of mouth, also why the oral tradition is an important part of our heritage from when most people were illiterate.

Listen ... to Teachit's recording of *Beowulf* by Trevor Eaton and ask students what they make of it. Can they identify any of the subject matter (by tone of voice, for example)? Do any of the words sound familiar?

Main activities

Compare the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf* with the translation. You might like to get students to do this in pairs using the Teachit resource *Beowulf (12722)*. As referred to in the starter section, the audio recording consists of Trevor Eaton reading an excerpt of *Beowulf* in Old English pronunciation while the Word document presents students with both the Old English plain text and a modern translation. **Differentiation:** Originally part of a Key Stage 5 unit on Language Change, the 'Having a go at translation' section is challenging so you may wish to cut this out. However, by putting the Anglo-Saxon and modern versions side by side and taking a close look at similarities and differences between words, students will start to acquire a real sense of history and the idea that English isn't 'fixed' at any given point in time.

Drama. Using the summary of *Beowulf* here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beowulf, students create a dramatic storytelling of the poem, with different groups taking charge of different sections of the story. Alternatively, the story also lends itself to a storyboard. **Differentiation:** lower ability students may need some help with prioritising which events to storyboard. If this is the case, help them out by providing, say, three or four bullet points and asking them to decide upon the rest. E.g. 1) Beowulf goes across the sea to fight the demon Grendel. 2) When Grendel attacks the feasting hall, Beowulf tears his arm from its socket, which mortally wounds him. 3) They all celebrate but ... Grendel's mother comes to attack them. Etc.

Plenary activities

Narrative posters. The Teachit resource, *Narrative arc (14307)*, is a creative resource which allows students to show understanding of the narrative arc of *Beowulf* in the form of a poster. Given that this is a pretty hefty task you may well want to run this activity on into the next lesson or set it as homework instead of doing the suggested group task.

Suggested additional creative opportunities

***Beowulf*, the film**. Using Movie Maker (Windows), or iMovie (Mac), students could make a film of *Beowulf* with a voiceover, found images, or by recording the class dramatic version.

An introduction to Chaucer

Starter activities

Group/class discussion. Discuss how the rhythm and sometimes rhyme helps songs etc. from the oral tradition to be memorable, and so were passed down by word of mouth. You'll also want to discuss why the oral tradition is an important part of our heritage dating back to a time when most people were illiterate. You might also like to show students the Teachit PowerPoint *The Middle Ages – useful context (22900)* which contains some useful social and historical context and a some background on Chaucer.

A gentle way into Chaucer. The Teachit interactive matching activity *Chaucer – the wife of Bath translation activity (4662)* is a good way to introduce Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

YouTube. Alternatively, show students a clip from *The Animated Tales* version.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3zUoNG_P_0&list=PL9zid0LkjREGTOTihbMxCivHyJZddx3SS

Main activities

Getting familiar with the Prologue. Take a look at the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* and ask students what they notice about the language compared to *Beowulf*. This Teachit resource *Chaucer: the opening (12726)* shows Trevor Eaton reading the opening lines of 'The General Prologue' in Middle English. **Differentiation:** Although this activity was originally devised as part of a Key Stage 5 Language Change unit, it's relatively accessible and there are some fun translations included with this resource which will help students see how poetry has been written over the centuries.

Enjoying the characters. Give students an overview of *The Canterbury Tales* and introduce them to two memorable characters, as included in the Teachit resource: *Two pen portraits - the Miller and the Prioress (22735)*. Students will enjoy the descriptive language and can have fun with their own artistic impressions of either character. (NB 'The Prologue' also has many more characters that modern day students would enjoy, for example the Squire, who is reminiscent of Legolas in *The Lord of the Rings* films.) **Differentiation:** Both the original version of the text and a modern 'translation' are included within this resource. Able students should be encouraged to try reading the language and words or sounds that are similar to their modern equivalents.

Once students have explored the portraits of the Miller and the Prioress, get them to create their own pen portraits of more modern characters that did not exist in Chaucer's time.

Plenary activities

I have learned ... Students create, in groups of two, three or four, a still picture (freeze frame) of something they have learned so far about poetry. They should include a caption. For example: Ring a Ring of Roses, Beowulf slays the dragon; Chaucer's Miller cheats someone etc.

Suggested additional creative opportunities

Chaucer: fun with the Squire's profile ... Using the Teachit resource *Facebooking the Squire (22640)*, get students to help the Squire find a girlfriend by creating a suitably attractive Facebook profile for him.

Creative speed dating. Get your class into role for a bit of Chaucerian speed dating (NB this is suggested as an extension activity for the above resource). For minimum kerfuffle, give each student a character profile to use (either one taken from 'The Prologue' or, if students have created their own modern day ones inspired by *The Canterbury Tales*, they could use these). **Differentiation:** weaker students might struggle to get into, and stay in, character. Get them to complete Teachit's *Dating profile sheet (16969)* first and keep it in front of them as a handy prompt sheet.

Budding artists. As suggested in the Teachit resource, *Two pen portraits – the Miller and the Prioress (22735)*, students draw the two characters from the descriptions and add labels to show the features Chaucer includes. If you've chosen to focus on other Chaucerian characters, this activity would work equally well for these.

Week one: Early and Middle English poetry

Can you solve the riddles? *(22734)*

Background information:

As a professor of Anglo-Saxon, the writer of *The Hobbit*, J.R.R. Tolkien would have been very familiar with the Old English culture expressed in works like *Beowulf*.

One of the most famous scenes in *The Hobbit* involves a battle of wits between Bilbo Baggins (the protagonist) and the creature Gollum. Lost in the tunnels under the mountain, Bilbo is forced to bargain with Gollum over a game of riddles.

The Anglo-Saxons loved to play guessing games with riddles. Many still survive from this period and some of the most famous are recorded in the Exeter Book (dating from the 10th century). Tolkien evokes Anglo-Saxon history in this scene.

Task:

With a partner, read the riddles below and try to solve them (without referring to the text or the internet for help!). You might want to suggest more than one answer for each riddle.

Riddle 1:	**Riddle 2:**	**Riddle 3:**
What has roots as nobody sees, Is taller than trees, Up, up it goes, And yet never grows?	Voiceless it cries, Wingless flutters, Toothless bites, Mouthless mutters.	It cannot be seen, cannot be felt, Cannot be heard, cannot be smelt. It lies behind stars and under hills, And empty holes it fills. It comes out first and follows after, Ends life, kills laughter.
Suggested answer:	Suggested answer:	Suggested answer:
Riddle 4:	**Riddle 5:**	
Alive without breath, As cold as death; Never thirsty, ever drinking, All in mail never clinking	This thing all things devours; Birds, beasts, trees, flowers; Gnaws iron, bites steel; Grinds hard stones to meal; Slays king, ruins town, And beats mountain down.	
Suggested answer:	Suggested answer:	

Answers

1) Mountain
2) Wind
3) Dark
4) Fish
5) Time

Week one: Early and Middle English poetry

Beowulf (lines 210-228) *(12722)*

Context

In this excerpt, the hero of the narrative, Beowulf, sets off over the seas with a band of fellow Weder warriors to hunt out and kill the monster that has been wrecking the life of their mead-hall society.

Old English plain text

Fyrst forð gewāt;
bāt under beorge.
on stefn stignon,-
sund wið sande;
on bearm nacan
gūð-searo geatolīc;
weras on wil-sīð

Gewāt þā ofer wǣg-holm,
Flota fāmī-heals,
oðþæt ymb ān-tīd,
wunden-stefna
þæt ðā līðende
brim-clifu blīcan,

sīde sǣ-næssas;
ēoletes æt ende.
Wedera lēode

sǣ-wudu sǣldon

gūð-gewǣdo;
þæs þe him ȳþ-lāde

flota wæs on ȳðum,
Beornas gearwe
strēamas wundon,

secgas bǣron
beorhte frætwe,
guman ūt scufon,
wudu bundenne.
winde gefȳsed,
fugle gelīcost,
ōþres dōgores
gewaden hæfde,
land gesāwon,
beorgas stēape,
þā wæs sund liden,
Þanon up hraðe
on wang stigon,
- syrcan hrysedon,
Gode þancedon,
ēaðe wurdon.

Modern English version

There are many translated versions of *Beowulf*, including the recent one by Seamus Heaney. The one on the next page is by Charles Kennedy, originally published in 1940. This excerpt is publically available as part of a longer preview on GoogleBooks. You could search GoogleBooks to find other translations for comparison and consideration of the choices each translator has made. For example, here 'flota' is translated as 'boat', but in his 1908 translation Alfred John Wyatt sticks with the original metaphor and opts for 'floater'. What problems might such a word choice cause today? What does this have to tell us about language change?

Came the hour of boarding; the boat was riding
The waves of the harbour under the hill
The eager mariners mounted the prow;
Billows were breaking, sea against sand.
In the ship's hold snugly they stowed their trappings,
Gleaming armour and battle-gear;
Launched the vessel, the well-braced bark,
Seaward bound on a joyous journey.
Over breaking-billows, with bellying sail
And foamy beak, like a flying bird
The ship sped on, till the next day's sun
Showed sea-cliffs shining, towering hills
And stretching headlands. The sea was crossed,
The voyage ended, the vessel moored.
And the Weder people waded ashore
With clatter of trappings and coats of mail;
Gave thanks to God that His grace had granted
Sea-paths safe for their ocean-journey.

Having a go at translation

If you want to have a go at translating at least some words from the text (the grammar binding them together is trickier), start by seeing how many words you can recognise or have a guess at from Modern English. Use this rough guide to get you started, and aim to find a word or two per line.

- ð (a letter called 'eth')and Þ (a letter called 'thorn') would be represented today by the same letters 'th'. So, in the first line forð becomes forth.
- Try replacing æ (a letter called 'ash') with 'a' and you can see that wæs becomes was. For the sake of this activity, ignore the line marks over the vowels, such as ī and ā, and treat them as regular modern English letters.
- Words in Old English took case endings as in modern German (and other languages) that we have lost in Modern English. So, þancedon is close to Modern English thanked.
- Try playing around with an online Old English Translator such as at http://www.oldenglishtranslator.co.uk.
- You could also work backwards from the modern translation: it is close in some places and not in others, but you can fairly easily see, for example, that sande in line 4 is sand.

Week one: Early and Middle English poetry

Narrative arc *(14307)*

The person with the highest house number in your group should read these instructions aloud.

Our group's job is to create a poster, showing the narrative arc of *Beowulf*. We need to do the following:

1. Draw a narrative arc on the poster (there is an example below). It must include the following labels: Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action and Resolution. It should be BIG, taking up the whole poster.
2. We have to cut out the grey boxes which represent plot events.
3. We should discuss and decide where we think each of the plot events should be placed on the narrative arc.
4. We can then glue the grey boxes onto our poster.
5. We should cut out the white boxes which are quotations from *Beowulf*.
6. We have to discuss and decide which of the plot events matches each quotation.
7. Then we can glue on the quotations next to the corresponding grey box.
8. We need to draw a small illustration for each grey box.

Extension:

9. There is a spare grey box and a spare quotation box. We should think of another important point in the poem and decide where it fits on the narrative arc.

We will all have jobs. They are:

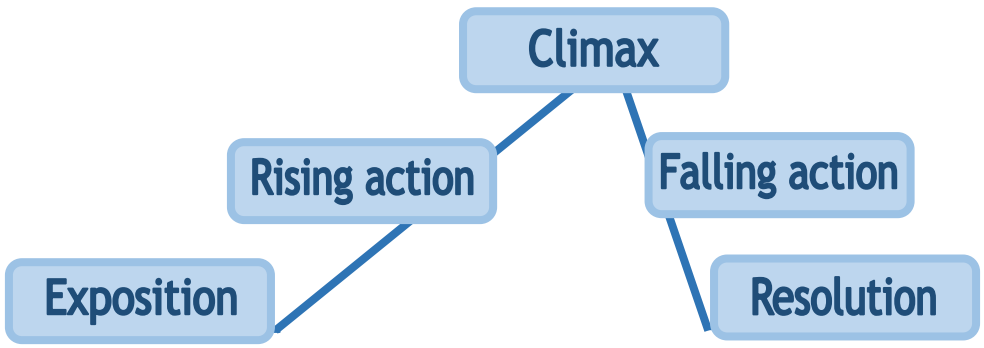
The Marker Master: This person will draw and label the arc and then be in charge of gluing.

Mr/Ms Slash: They will be in charge of cutting out the help cards squares.

Artist extraordinaire: This person will do the pencil illustrations to go along with each grey box on the poster.

Coach: This person will gently encourage others and refer back to these instructions if the group is confused.

Here is a generic narrative arc to get us started:



Beowulf rips Grendel's arm off.	Grendel attacks Herot, taking away thirty men.
	Beowulf hears what is happening and comes to Denmark to help.
They follow Grendel's blood trail, realise he's dead and celebrate.	Herot is built and attracts the notice of the Monster, Grendel.

‘That most beautiful of dwellings, built as he’d wanted … A powerful monster growled in pain … As day after day the music range loud in the hall.’	‘Grendel went up to Herot … snatched up thirty men … The blood dripping behind him.’
‘In his far off home Beowulf heard … How Grendel filled nights with horror.’	‘Beowulf, a prince of the Geats, had killed Grendel … hanging high from the rafters … was the monster’s arm, claw and shoulder and all.’
‘They … went tracing his bloody footprints … The old and the young rejoiced.’	

Week one: Early and Middle English poetry

The Middle Ages – useful context *(22900)*

We've included a screenshot of the PowerPoint here so you can see the resource. To use it as intended, please type 22900 into the Teachit search bar and click on the orange PPT icon. *(Please note: the 'layering' effect seen in the screenshot below is not an error! Once the PowerPoint is viewed as a slideshow, this issue resolves itself.)*

Week one: Early and Middle English poetry

Chaucer - the wife of Bath translation activity *(4662)*

Teaching notes:

How it works

This is a nice resource for exploring the language of the text at various levels, with plenty of scope for differentiation. Although it's in the KS3 library, it's also good for KS5. I'm focusing here on using it as an AS/A2 language change resource, rather than for literary study purposes.

On one level, the task is very simple, matching the Middle English to its Modern English equivalent. At the next level, students can use the correctly matched lines to explore what changes have occurred to the English Language in this time. By dividing the passage into lines, this is very manageable even for weaker students. Basic spot the difference on each line can be done, while stronger students can range more freely both within and beyond this particular passage. The passage provided is rich in material for exploring a range of aspects of language change. On a more sophisticated level, very strong students could explore the strengths and limitations of the translation provided, comparing it with others and deciding which is best and why.

Try this!

I'd think about following this activity up with a bit of creative writing in order to explore issues of standardisation and translation. For example, the glossary of the James Whinney edition of *The General Prologue* tells students that "shiten" means "defiled", which loses the vernacular grittiness of Chaucer's use of language and turns the text into something quite different. So, I'd explore the sexual connotations of "wandering by the wayside" and the gap teeth, etc, then invite the students to rewrite the portrait in vernacular Late Modern English. This would be fun, and could facilitate discussion of standard versus vernacular varieties, Chaucer's style, and the importance of us handling 'old' texts in their unmediated form. Throw in a bit of collage to represent their 'reading' of the portrait, get them to add a commentary about the language issues the different versions raise, and you've got Open Evening wall displays nailed into the bargain.

I've also done this kind of thing where the students had to write the Modern English equivalents for different target audiences, specifically a group of Japanese students whose English was at a low intermediate level. We were having a joint lesson ahead of a joint trip to Canterbury. This made the students really think about the language needed, and about the pragmatic understanding needed to read the text. They were then able to test out how good their translations were in the joint lesson!

She was a worthy womman al hir lyve:	She was a worthy woman all her life:
Housbondes at chirche dore she hadde fyve,	She had (married) five husbands at the church door,
Withouten oother compaignye in youthe, –	Not counting other company in youth –
But thereof nedeth nat to speke as nowthe.	But there is no need to speak of that right now.
And thries hadde she been at Jerusalem;	And she had been three times at Jerusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge strem;	She had passed many a foreign river;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,	She had been at Rome, and at Boulogne,
In Galice at Seint-Jame, and at Coloigne.	In Galicia at Saint-James and at Cologne.
She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye.	She knew much about wandering by the way.
Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.	She had teeth widely set apart, truly to say.

Chaucer – The Wife of Bath translation activity (4662) – Whizzy activity

We've included a screenshot of the interactive version here so you can see the resource. To use it as intended, please type 4662 into the Teachit search bar and select the yellow star.

Week one: Early and Middle English poetry

Chaucer: the opening *(12726)*

The opening (lines 1-42)

Middle English plain text

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;
Whan zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
Tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the ram his halve cours yronne,
And smale foweles maken melodye,
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;
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.
Bifil that in that seson on a day,
In southwerk at the tabard as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage
To caunterbury with ful devout corage,

At nyght was come into that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle
In felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,
That toward caunterbury wolden ryde.
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon
That I was of hir felaweshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse,
To take oure wey ther as I yow devyse.

But nathelees, whil I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thynketh it acordaunt to resoun
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree,
And eek in what array that they were inne;
And at a knyght than wol I first bigynne.

Modern English

There are lots of Modern English translations of Chaucer's work, each quite different according to the audience and intended purpose. Some go for a lively modern read, some go for linguistic authenticity, some try to keep the poetic form, some work more loosely with it, and there are different versions and adaptations for adults and children. GoogleBooks is a great source for exploring versions. Here are a few to start off with.

An interlinear translation

This short excerpt is from the translation by Vincent Hopper published in 1977. It is publicly available as part of a longer preview on GoogleBooks.

Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote

When April with his showers sweet

The droghte of march hath perced to the rote,

The drought of March has pierced to the root,

An 18th century translation

This short excerpt is from Eighteenth-century modernizations from *The Canterbury Tales* by Betsy Boden published in 1991. It is publicly available as part of a longer preview on GoogleBooks. This particular translation is by one Mr Thomas Betterton.

'Twas when the Fields imbibe the Vernal Show'rs

And Venus paints her Month with early Flow'rs

A prose version for children

This short excerpt is from The Canterbury Pilgrims Being Chaucer's Canterbury Tales Retold for Children by M. Sturt published in 2004. It is publicly available as part of a longer preview on GoogleBooks.

When April comes, and with her gentle showers has banished the dreary month of March

Week one: Early and Middle English poetry

Two pen portraits – the Miller and the Prioress *(22735)*

Pen portrait: a written description of a person and their behaviour. It can also be seen as a character sketch in words rather than in paint or another artistic medium.

Read the following pen portraits (adapted from The Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales*) and complete the accompanying tasks.

The Miller – Modern Version	The Miller – Middle English Version
The miller was a chap of sixteen stone,	The MILLERE was a stout carl for the nones;
A great stout fellow big in brawn and bone.	Ful byg he was of brawn and eek of bones-
He did well out of them for he could go	That proved wel, for over al ther he cam
And win the ram at any wrestling show.	At wrastlynge he wolde have alwey the ram.
Broad, knotty, and short-shouldered, he would boast	He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,
He could heave any door off hinge and post,	Ther was no dore that he nolde heve of harre,
Or take a run and break it with his head.	Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.
His beard, as any sow or fox, was red	His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
And broad as well, as though it were a spade;	And therto brood, as though it were a spade.
And at its very tip, his nose displayed	Upon the cop right of his nose he hade
A wart on which there stood a tuft of hair	A werte, and thereon stood a toft of herys,
Red as the bristles in an old sow's ear.	Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys;
His nostrils were as black as they were wide.	Hise nosethirles blake were and wyde.
He had a sword and buckler by his side,	A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde.
His mighty mouth was like the furnace door.	His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
A wrangler and a buffoon, he had a store	He was a janglere and a goliardeys,
Of tavern stories, filthy in the main.	And that was moost of synne and harlotries.
He was a master-hand at stealing grain.	Wel koude he stelen corn, and tollen thries;
He felt it with his thumb and thus he knew	And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
Its quality and took three times his due -	
A thumb of gold, by God, to gauge an oat!	
He wore a hood of blue and a white coat.	A whit cote and a blew hood wered he.
He liked to play the bagpipes up and down	A baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,
And that was how he brought us out of town.	And therwithal he broghte us out of towne.

Task 1:

Read both descriptions of the Miller. You can either start with the modern translation or with the original text – it's up to you. When reading the original text, you might like to read it aloud with a partner as it'll be easier to make sense of the individual words this way.

Task 2:

Highlight or underline each word or phrase which gives a visual description of the Miller e.g. 'a great stout fellow' = very big and broad. If you're using the modern English version, see if you can find the same phrase in the original text too. Does it add anything to your understanding?

Task 3:

Are there any words in the modern English version you aren't sure about? If so, highlight these. You can then discuss these with a neighbour or ask your teacher about them.

Task 4

Now read the descriptions of the Prioress, below. (Note: For this resource, both the modern and Middle English versions have been cut down slightly.)

The Prioress – Modern Version	The Prioress – Middle English Version
There also was a nun, a Prioress,	Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
Her way of smiling was very simple and coy.	That of hir smylyng was ful symple and coy;
Her greatest oath was only, 'By Saint Loy!'	Hir gretteste ooth was but by Seinte Loy;
And she was known as madam Eglantyne.	And she was cleped Madame Eglentyne.
And well she sang a service, with a fine	Ful weel she soong the service dyvyne,
Intoning through her nose, as was most seemly,	Entuned in hir nose ful semely,
And she spoke daintily in French, extremely	And Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly,
After the school of Stratford-atte-Bowe;	After the scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe,
French in the Paris style she did not know.	For Frenssh of Parys was to hir unknowe.
At meat her manners were well taught withal;	At mete wel ytaught was she with alle:
No morsel from her lips did she let fall,	She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Nor dipped her fingers in the sauce too deep;	Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce depe;
But she could carry a morsel up and keep	Wel koude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe
The smallest drop from falling on her breast.	That no drope ne fille upon hir brist.
For courtliness she had a special zest,	In curteisie was set ful muche hir list.
And she would wipe her upper lip so clean	Hire over-lippe wyped she so clene
That not a trace of grease was to be seen	That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng sene
Upon the cup where she had drunk; to eat	Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
She reached her hand sedately for the meat.	Ful semely after hir mete she raughte.

Her veil was gathered in a seemly way,	Ful semyly hir wympul pynched was,
Her nose was elegant and her eyes glass-grey;	Hire nose tretys, hir eyen greye as glas,
Her mouth was very small, but soft and red,	Hir mouth ful smal, and therto softe and reed;
her forehead, certainly, was fair of spread,	But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
Almost a span across the brows, I own;	It was almoost a spanne brood, I trowe;
She was indeed by no means undergrown.	For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
Her cloak, I noticed, had a graceful charm.	Ful fetys was hir cloke, as I was war;
She wore a coral trinket on her arm,	Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A set of beads, the gaudies tricked in green,	A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene,
Whence hung a golden brooch of brightest sheen	An theron heng a brooch of gold ful sheene,
On which there first was graven a crowned ***A***	On which ther was first write a crowned **A**,
And lower, ***Amor vincit omnia.***	And after ***Amor vincit omnia***.

Task 5:

Highlight or underline each word or phrase which gives a visual description of the Prioress e.g. 'Her way of smiling was very simple and coy' = she smiles in a reserved or shy way. If you're using the modern English version, see if you can find the same phrase in the original text too. Does it add anything to your understanding?

Task 6:

Are there any words in the modern English version you aren't sure about? If so, highlight these. You can then discuss these with a neighbour or ask your teacher about them.

Task 7:

How similar or different are the Miller and the Prioress? Do you think they'd have much in common? What would happen if they sat next to one another at a dinner party?

Task 8:

Choose to draw **either** the Miller or the Prioress. Once you have drawn your character, label him or her in as detailed a way as possible, with quotations from the Middle English version of the text.

Week one: Early and Middle English poetry

Facebooking the Squire *(22640)*

Task one:

Read Chaucer's description of the Squire, below. Highlight anything you learn about him (e.g. his age, looks attitude etc.) and make annotations or 'translations' where necessary.

With hym ther was his sone, a yong squier
A lovyere and a lusty bacheler
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly delyvere, and of greet strengthe.
And he had been somtyme in chyvachye,
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Pycardye,
And born hym weel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a meede
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede.
Syngynge he was, or floytynge al the day; (floytinge= playing the flute)
He was as fressh as is the month of May.
Short was his gowne, with sleves long and wyde.
Wel koude he sitte on hors and faire ryde.
He koude songes make and wel endite,
Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and write.
So hoote he lovede, that by nyghtertale
He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale.
Curteis he was, lowely and servysable
And carf biforn his fader at the table.

Task two:

As you can see, the Squire is a very attractive young man! However, being abroad has not given him time to meet any English girls. Write his Facebook profile, including information from the poem but adding more detail/embellishment and updating it.

Extension work:

Your teacher is now going to allocate you a character – either one of Chaucer's, or a modern day one inspired by *The Canterbury Tales*. You need to get into your character's head and take on their persona. Remember to talk like them and act like them at all times!

You are then going to do a round of speed-dating with your classmates (who will also be in character). May the best Chaucerian hero/heroine win!

Week one: Early and Middle English poetry

Dating profile *(16969)*

Complete the following profile for your character.
Be as detailed as possible.

Name:	**Photo**
Age:	
Height/build:	
Occupation:	
Likes:	
Dislikes:	
Hobbies:	
Five words to describe myself:	
How other people would describe me:	
What I am looking for in a partner:	