



Week One: Vocabulary

Lesson & Assignments: Introduce New List

Assignment 1: Read the list of vocabulary words below. Then, using a dictionary as needed, match the vocabulary words with their definitions listed in the definition bank on the next page. Write each vocabulary word, follow it with a punctuation mark such as a hyphen or colon, and then write the definition.

e.g.

1. *to eat* – to put (food) into the mouth and chew and swallow it

Vocabulary Words –

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. apparition | 10. presentiment |
| 2. capacious | 11. requisition |
| 3. complacency | 12. reticence |
| 4. efficacy | 13. scrupulous |
| 5. erudite | 14. sobriety |
| 6. felicitous | 15. tacit |
| 7. implacable | 16. tremulous |
| 8. incongruous | 17. venerable |
| 9. malignity | |

Definition Bank

a feeling of smug or uncritical satisfaction with oneself or one's achievements	an intuitive feeling about the future, especially one of foreboding
having or showing great knowledge or learning	a ghost or ghost-like image of a person
an official order laying claim to the use of property or materials	diligent, thorough, and extremely attentive to details; very concerned to avoid doing wrong
the quality of being reserved; shyness	well chosen or suited to the circumstances
having a lot of space inside; roomy	the ability to produce a desired or intended result
the state of being sober; temperance; moderation	understood or implied without being stated
unable to be placated; relentless; unstoppable	malevolence; intense ill will; spite
not in harmony or keeping with the surroundings or other aspects of something	accorded a great deal of respect, especially because of age, wisdom, or character
shaking or quivering slightly; timid; nervous	



Week One: Grammar

Lesson & Assignments: Nouns & Pronouns

Writing is not just about having good ideas. If it were, people with good ideas would automatically be good writers. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

A good writer knows that he must have more than creative ideas in his head. In fact, he must have much more than ideas. A good writer must have *knowledge* of his language.

If you want to be a good writer and do not understand your language (whether English, Japanese, or French), you will not get very far. Understanding the basic mechanics of your language is essential to crafting good writing in letters, essays, reports, and stories. Although these studies may seem boring to you, **your writing has no ability to improve or grow unless you take the time to build a strong foundation in mechanics.**

We begin our study of writing mechanics with *the parts of speech*. Our English language has **eight** parts of speech. Below are the names and some examples of each:

Noun	Names a person, place, thing, or idea	Examples: mom, Mr. Grape, Seattle, NYC, apple, guitar, happiness, joy
Pronoun	Replaces a noun	Examples: he, she, it, I, you, some
Verb	States an action, helps another verb, or links another word to the subject	Examples: be, have, do, like, work, sing, can, must
Adjective	Describes a noun	Examples: a/an, the, sixty-nine (69), blue, some, good, big, red, interesting
Adverb	Describes an adjective, verb, or another adverb	Examples: quickly, silently, well, badly, very, really

Conjunction	Joins clauses or sentences or words	Examples: and, but, when
Preposition	Links a noun to another word	Examples: under, above, over, in, on, after, to, at
Interjection	Short exclamation, sometimes inserted into a sentence	Examples: My! Oh! Ouch! Hi!

THE NOUN –

A noun names a person, place, thing, or idea.

We can separate nouns into two main groups: **concrete nouns** and **abstract nouns**.

Concrete nouns are nouns that we can touch with our hands, see with our eyes, smell with our nose, hear with our ears, or taste with our tongue. In other words, we use one or more of our five senses to experience the concrete noun. Concrete nouns name people, places, and things.

The other type of noun is an abstract noun. This is a noun that we cannot see, hear, feel, touch, or taste.

Happiness is an example of this. We cannot see, hear, smell, touch, or taste happiness. It is an idea or a concept. You cannot say what color happiness is or what it tastes like. If you tried to touch happiness, you would have a very hard time doing so because there is nothing to touch. Does happiness have a smell? No. *Happiness* is an abstract noun.

Freedom and *liberty* are two other examples of abstract nouns. Abstract nouns do not have color, sound, taste, etc. Abstract nouns name ideas.

We can also categorize nouns in another way: **common nouns and proper nouns**. **Let us look at common nouns first.**

COMMON NOUNS –

Person	Place	Thing	Idea
• mother	• home	• cup	• love
• brother	• store	• bananas	• hope
• clerk	• street	• table	• happiness
• policeman	• bedroom	• book	• fear
• athlete	• warehouse	• computer	• anger

Notice that the nouns in the table above do not start with a capital letter. That is because they are not naming a specific person, place, thing, or idea. *We call these types of nouns common nouns or improper nouns.* We use common nouns when we are not referring to someone, someplace, or something by a specific name.

Assignment 1A: Write ten common nouns for each:

Person	Place	Thing	Ideas
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.	6.
7.	7.	7.	7.
8.	8.	8.	8.
9.	9.	9.	9.
10.	10.	10.	10.

Assignment 1B: Underline the common nouns in the following sentences. (Some of the sentences contain more than one.)

1. We made sandwiches for lunch.
2. The car was stolen.
3. The boy took a nap.
4. You need new shoes.
5. The package arrived late.
6. Where is your suitcase?
7. The plane flew high into the clouds.
8. The tools rattled around in the trunk.
9. Mom gave the dog a bath.
10. The kids are hoping for snow.

PROPER NOUNS –

Person	Place	Thing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mom• Aunt Susan• Grandpa Chuck• President Anderson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highland Park• Walgreens• King's Dominion• France	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empire Apples• Bible• Android• Nile River

Note that all of the nouns in this table begin with a capital letter. These nouns are naming a specific person, place, or thing (note that ideas – abstract nouns – can never be made proper.) ***We call these types of nouns specific or proper nouns. We use proper nouns when we are referring to something by a specific name.***

The following categories are always proper nouns.

1. Names of people and pets:

Mrs. Edwards David Snoopy Garfield

2. Names of places and buildings:

Madrid, Spain Main Street Washington Monument
Lake Ontario Alaska Pacific Ocean

3. Names of books, movies, newspapers, and magazines:

Charlotte's Web Toy Story The Orlando Times
Highlights Monsters, Inc.

4. Names of holidays, days of the week, and months:

Christmas Sunday April
Memorial Day Thanksgiving Friday

5. Names of languages:

Spanish

English

French

Italian

6. Names of companies and brand names:

Google

Pepsi

Nike

Apple

7. Titles of people when used in front of their names:

President Lincoln

King George

Captain Hook

Judge Peterson

Prince William

Doctor McNeish

But do not capitalize these titles when used alone.

For example:

- “My uncle is a judge for the county.”
- “The doctor returned my phone call.”

8. Names of religions:

Baptist

Protestant

Jewish

Catholic

SOME CONFUSING NOUNS –

Two groups of nouns that can be confusing when it comes to capitalizing them are the seasons (spring, summer, fall, and winter) and directions (north, south, east, west).

- The general rule for seasons is that you do not capitalize them unless they start a sentence or are part of the name of an event such as the "Winter Olympics."
- The rule for directions is also easy. If you are referring to a specific part or location of the country (such as *the South*, *the Northwest*, *the East*), then you should capitalize the noun. But, if you are just referring to a general direction, then do not capitalize the noun (such as *north of town*, *southeast of my house*, *go west on Woolridge Rd.*).

Assignment 1C: Write five proper nouns for each. Remember to capitalize each proper noun:

Person	Place	Thing
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.

MAKING NOUNS PLURAL –

Making nouns plural is something you should already be familiar with as a growing writer. Most of the time, it is something you learn just by speaking. You know to turn *eyelash* into *eyelashes* or *chair* into *chairs*. You know that there are various plural forms such as *tomato* turned into *tomatoes* or *sheep* into *sheep*. For the sake of time, we will not review rules for making nouns plural here. If you feel you do not understand the rules, you can ask for review material from your instructor.

MAKING NOUNS POSSESSIVE –

Although this also should be something you are familiar with, making nouns possessive can be confusing for a lot of students. Let us review the basic rules:

Rule #1 - If the noun ends in any letter other than S, we use an apostrophe and then the letter S to show possession.

- the dog - the dog's bone
- the men - the men's team
- the quiz - the quiz's answers

Rule #2 - If a singular noun ends in the letter S, we can use EITHER an apostrophe and the letter S or we can use ONLY an apostrophe to show possession.

- Charles - Charles's book OR Charles' book
- the boss – the boss' paperwork OR the boss's paperwork
- Jesus - Jesus's mother OR Jesus' mother

Rule #3 – If a plural noun ends in the letter S, we use only an apostrophe to show possession.

- guys – guys' night out
- dogs – the dogs' bones

Rule #4 - Acronyms form the possessive with an apostrophe and the letter S.

- NASA - NASA's spaceship
- USA - the USA's flag
- ABC - ABC's documentary

Rule #5 - If you have two nouns and two objects that are individually owned, then each noun is made possessive.

- John and Mary - John's and Mary's hats (they each have their OWN hat)
- James and Ann - James' and Ann's dinners (they each have their OWN dinner)

Rule #6 - If you have two or more nouns and all nouns own the same object, then just the last noun is made possessive.

- John and Mary - John and Mary's children (they have the same children)
- James and Ann - James and Ann's car (they own the same car)
- Kara, Dave, and Julie – Kara, Dave, and Julie's father (they all have the same father)

Assignment 1D: Write six sentences to demonstrate each of the six rules for forming possessives.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

NOMINATIVE PRONOUNS –

Next up is the pronoun. We can study the pronoun immediately following the noun because it performs the same job as the noun. ***A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun.*** Pronouns are very useful because otherwise we would be repeating the same noun over and over again. There are several kinds of pronouns in English. Each type of pronoun is used in a specific way. This lesson will teach you how to use **nominative** and **possessive pronouns (You will learn about the other kinds of pronouns in the next class).**

Nominative pronouns are sometimes called *subject pronouns*, because they usually take the place of a noun that is functioning as the subject in a sentence (more about that in Lesson 4).

Here are the **nominative** or **subject pronouns**. The singular is given with its plural in the next column.

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
I	we
you	you
he	they
she	they
it	they

Remember, these pronouns are used as the subjects of a sentence. Below are some examples using each of these pronouns.

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
<i>I</i> drive a car.	<i>We</i> drive a car.
<i>You</i> eat ice cream.	<i>You</i> (all) eat ice cream.
<i>He</i> speaks Russian.	<i>They</i> speak Russian.
<i>She</i> swims every day.	<i>They</i> swim every day.
<i>It</i> keeps food cold.	<i>They</i> keep the food cold.

Imagine that two friends, Hannah and Ashley, are having a conversation about a field trip. The subjects are placed in parentheses to make it easier for you to see them.

(Hannah, speaking) went on a field trip.

(Ashley, being spoken to) went on a field trip.

(Caleb) enjoyed the field trip.

(Jane) arrived too late for the field trip.
(The car) was full.
(Jane and Caleb) bought some souvenirs.

Below are the same sentences with nominative pronouns in place of the nouns used above.

I went on a field trip.
You went on a field trip.
He enjoyed the field trip.
She arrived too late for the field trip.
It was full.
They bought some souvenirs.

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS –

Lastly, we will move on to **possessive pronouns**. As you learned above, we can make nouns possessive to show that someone or something owns something. Possessive pronouns show ownership as well but are used at the end of a sentence.

Here are the **possessive pronouns**. The singular is given with its plural in the next column.

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>
mine	ours
yours	yours
his	theirs
hers	theirs
its	theirs

We use possessive pronouns as substitutes for possessive forms of nouns, when these nouns are used at the end of a sentence.

For example –

- “This dog is Andrew's.” (possessive form of noun)
- “This dog is his.” (replaced with possessive pronoun)

Remember, these pronouns are only used to show possession. Look at some examples using each of these possessive pronouns.

Singular

The car was *mine*.

The ice cream is *yours*.

The book will be *his*.

The swimming pool is *hers*.

The tires were *its*.

Plural

The car was *ours*.

The ice cream is (all of) *yours*.

The book will be *theirs*.

The swimming pool is *theirs*.

The tires were *theirs*.

Assignment 1E: Underline all of the nominative or possessive pronouns in the following sentences.

1. What are you doing with those books?
2. Their fish will be ours.
3. He left an hour ago.
4. They are friends of hers.
5. Is that yours?
6. It is going to be cold next week.
7. The painting is his.
8. That shirt is hers.
9. The blue car is theirs.
10. She loves working with watercolors.
11. We are selling our house.
12. Will they come early, do you think?
13. That is mine!
14. You are very confused.



Week One: Writing

Lesson & Assignments: Types of Sources

A strong research question or thesis (a claim) is imperative to writing quality papers, but neither of these will do you any good if you do not take the time to find useful material to answer your question or support your thesis. Well-written work contains *thoughtful* research, *critical* thinking, and applicable sources as evidence.

At times, personal experience or knowledge is beneficial or perhaps even required (some early college English classes, for example, may not *allow* you to use sources for beginning assignments, because professors want you to rely solely on your own writing voice and ideas).

Still, once you get into the thick of writing, the ability to find, choose, and use sources appropriately is an invaluable skill, in terms of college, business, and critical thinking/reasoning in general. Through writing, you are discovering and learning about new ideas and perspectives. You may also be solidifying a viewpoint that you already held but had not yet backed by evidence. The goal of nearly any writing assignment is for a student to improve his understanding of a given issue or topic and then express this understanding through writing. In order to do this, you must learn from other sources.

With so much information available to us in today's society, *finding* sources is not necessarily the challenging part. You may find information in any of the following:

- Books, both fiction and non-fiction
- Encyclopedias and dictionaries
- Websites and blogs
- Magazine, journal, and newspaper articles
- Research reports and conference papers
- Field notes and diaries
- Photographs, paintings, cartoons, and other works of art

- TV and radio programs, podcasts, movies, and videos
- Architectural plans and maps
- Pamphlets and government documents
- Music scores and recorded performances
- Dance notation and theater set models

With so many sources available, finding material which pertains to your topic is not usually the challenge. Instead, the challenge is determining *what* sources will best support your thesis. To know how to find, choose, and use suitable sources to the advantage of your writing, you should first understand sources themselves: that is their types and their roles.

PRIMARY, SECONDARY, & TERTIARY SOURCES –

Sources can be broken down into three main categories:

- **Primary:** these sources are first-hand. As a young student, you might have learned that primary sources are those written by people who have witnessed or experienced an actual event. However, primary information is not always a result of being a part of an event, so we must consider this definition more holistically. Primary sources are those in their original form. They have not been paraphrased or summarized by anyone else. They are not a translation, analysis, or interpretation of an original. The information from a primary source comes directly from the creator itself.
- **Secondary:** these sources are second-hand. After reading a primary source, a writer may then translate, paraphrase, analyze, or provide interpretation for the source. Because this information is now passed from the creator through at least one other person, it becomes secondary.
- **Tertiary:** this is third-hand information. These sources continue to depart from the original, by indexing, condensing, or summarizing the original. Tertiary sources are not generally ones you would read “cover to cover,” but they are still good sources for reference.

For example:

- **Primary:** Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- **Secondary:** A book review of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

- **Tertiary:** A Wikipedia page about Harriet Beecher Stowe
- **Primary:** An eye-witness account of a twenty-car pile-up on the highway
- **Secondary:** A web article that compiles various eye-witness accounts and makes an analysis about what may have happened to cause the pile-up
- **Tertiary:** A timeline of the events before, during, and after the pile-up

Here is a great list of examples:

Primary Sources –

- Any literary work, including novels, plays, and poems
- Breaking news
- Diaries
- Advertisements
- Music and dance performances
- Eyewitness accounts, including photographs and recorded interviews
- Artworks
- Data
- Blog entries that are autobiographical
- Scholarly blogs that provide data or are highly theoretical, even though they contain no autobiography
- Artifacts such as tools, clothing, or other objects
- Original documents such as tax returns, marriage licenses, and transcripts of trials
- Websites, although many are secondary
- Buildings
- Correspondence, including email
- Records of organizations and government agencies
- Journal articles that report research for the first time (at least the parts about the new research, plus their data)

Secondary Sources –

- All nonfiction books and magazine articles except autobiography

- An article or website that critiques a novel, play, painting, or piece of music
- An article or web site that synthesizes expert opinion and several eyewitness accounts for a new understanding of an event
- The literature review portion of a journal article

Tertiary Sources –

-
- Almanacs
- Dictionaries
- Guide books
- Survey articles
- Timelines
- Bibliographies
- Encyclopedias, including Wikipedia
- Most textbooks (1)

NOTE: Tertiary sources are not typically accepted as cited material for academic papers. You may discover upon arriving at college that most professors will not accept your use of Wikipedia, for example. As you can see above, this is because Wikipedia is a tertiary source – the information is so far removed from first-hand information that you no longer have to think critically about it, form an opinion about it, summarize it, or arrange it in a suitable manner. Use of primary and secondary sources requires you to do all of the above, which is the point of writing papers in the first place.

Ideally, you should focus first on finding, choosing, and using primary sources. These sources “provide direct engagement with artifacts and records of the past, which encourage deeper content exploration, active analysis, and thoughtful response. Your analysis of primary sources helps you to develop critical thinking skills by considering meaning, context, bias, purpose, point of view, etc. When you interact with a variety of primary sources, you are led to further inquiry in order to understand different accounts of the past and their relation. In addition, you are able to see more fully how a variety of sources reflects different viewpoints and biases.” (2)

Assignment 1A: Each of the information sources below is about the same bridge collapse. Apply the definitions above to identify whether the source is a primary, secondary, or tertiary source.

1. A journal article analyzing the reasons behind the bridge collapsing.
2. An article database record that points to a magazine article about the bridge collapse.

3. A chapter about this bridge collapse in a book about famous bridge collapses.
4. A blog entry written by someone who barely escaped the bridge collapse and lost his car.
5. The blueprints for the bridge that collapsed.
6. A magazine article that summarizes the accounts of people who saw the bridge collapse.
7. A list of years and bridge collapses for each year.
8. A breaking news television report showing the bridge collapsing.

Assignment 1B: Read the title and information for each source below carefully. Then, apply the definitions above to identify whether the source is a primary, secondary, or tertiary source.

1. A photograph of Harriet Tubman
2. *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*
3. A breaking news article from April 16, 2019 entitled “Notre-Dame: Massive fire ravages Paris cathedral.”
4. *The Houseplant Encyclopedia* by Maggie Stuckey
5. *The Wright Brothers*, a book by David McCullough
6. A journal article published by the U.S. National Library of Medicine on May 19, 2017 entitled “Short- and long - term health consequences of sleep disruption.”
7. A Wikipedia article about the Revolutionary War
8. *The Diary of Anne Frank*
9. An article written by Sheila O'Malley on December 20, 2017 reviewing the movie *The Greatest Showman*
10. “The Second Coming”, a poem by William Butler Yeats

POPULAR, PROFESSIONAL, & SCHOLARLY SOURCES –

Another way to categorize sources is by the intended audience – that is, what level of understanding will the audience need to understand the material?

- **Popular material** is information written for the general public, most often found in newspapers and magazines (print or online). This type of material is easy to acquire, easy to read, and easy to understand. Popular material discusses news, opinions, background information, and entertainment.
- **Professional material** is information written for people in a particular profession. This type of material is usually available through professional organizations. Professional material discusses

news and trends about the particular profession, and includes book reviews and case studies applicable to the field.

- **Scholarly material** is information written for scholars, students, and even the general public who want to thoroughly or more deeply understand an issue or topic. This type of material is written by researchers and scholars in the form of journal articles, which include the findings of research projects, data and analytics, and case studies.

Assignment 1C: Each of the information sources below is about the same bridge collapse discussed in 1A. Apply the definitions above to identify the audience for whom each source was intended (popular, professional, or scholarly).

1. A blog entry by the National Association of Professional Engineers about the bridge collapse and implications for engineers
2. A book with an in-depth analysis of multiple bridge collapses, full of formulas, data, etc.
3. An article in the local newspaper about the bridge collapse
4. A blog entry written by someone who barely escaped the bridge collapse and lost his car
5. A short article in a newsletter advocating that engineers rethink the use of a specific metal alloy that may have been partially to blame for the bridge collapse
6. An NBC news story about the bridge collapsing
7. Data gathered by university researchers analyzing one of the metal alloys used in the bridge
8. A 10-page journal article in which there is a deep analysis of why the bridge collapsed

Assignment 1D: Choose a well-known historical event or person. Then, complete the steps below.

STEP ONE: Identify at least three each of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources that would be of use if writing a paper about this event or person.

(Please do not merely write down something like “A book about the Revolutionary War.” Instead, locate and write down a real book, such as *The First American Revolution: Before Lexington and Concord*, by Ray Raphael.

Use your online library system or Amazon to help locate books. You can also Google “Primary/Secondary sources for YOUR TOPIC”, and you will usually be led to great sources or online databases that will connect you to primary/secondary sources.)

STEP TWO: Summarize briefly (1-2 complete sentences) how each resource would be beneficial to learning about the event.

STEP THREE: Identify and write down at least one type of source that you could not find that would be helpful.

Sources –

1. "Primary, Secondary, & Tertiary Sources." *Choosing & Using Sources: A Guide to Academic Research*, Ohio State University, Pressbooks.
2. *Teaching Primary and Secondary Sources*. The George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, 2011.



Week One: Literature

Lesson & Assignments: Intro to Literature & *The Canterbury Tales*

Throughout this year, we are going to study literature from early times to modern times. As we read various works, you may begin to notice some similarities in structure, characters, themes, etc. You may also realize that some of our favorite modern stories bear remarkable resemblance to tales of long ago. As we study works across centuries, we can appreciate the value of quality writing to society and the impact of literature on generations.

By this point, you should already be familiar with basic elements of literature, but if not, let's briefly review.

- The **title** is the name of the story – a simple but important element!
- The **author** is the person who wrote the story.
- The **plot** is what happens in the story – the beginning, middle, and end.
- The **characters** are the people in the story, who the story is about.
- The **setting** of the story is the location and time in which it takes place.
- The **theme** is the main idea of the story.
- The **conflict** is the major problem or issue in the story.
- The **resolution** is how that problem or issue is solved.
- The **structure** is made up of the **point of view** (*1st person, 2nd person, or 3rd person*) and **verb tense** (*past or present*) in which the story is written.

With these generalities in mind, let's get started with a bit of history!

MEET THE ANGLO-SAXONS (roughly 450-1066) –

Fun fact: After the fall of Rome, a unified “England” didn’t exist until the year 924. (1) For over six hundred years before the kingdom of England came together under King Æthelstan, the region was populated by Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Frisians—immigrants from northern Europe—in a wealth of kingdoms and groups. (2) We call the Angles and the Saxons the . . . you guessed it . . . “Anglo-Saxons” because they hailed from the Germanic regions Angeln and Saxony (creative, I know).

While the original settlers were pagans, most of the Anglo-Saxons adopted Christianity in the late sixth century through the seventh century, spurred by Augustine’s missionary visit to King Æthelberht of Kent and continued by Roman and Irish influences. They lived in a hierarchical, monarchical society reigned over by a king and his family, and organized the land into “shires” (any J.R.R. Tolkien fans?) that existed in England through the 20th century. While Anglo-Saxon women didn’t have the levels of freedom that British women enjoy today, they were patrons of poetry, subjects of epic literature like *Judith*, and even governed “double monasteries” that housed both men and women. (3)

The Anglo-Saxon kings of England reigned from 924 to 1066 (which may be a familiar date from your history classes), when Harold II lost his life to the Normans in the Battle of Hastings. By the way, you may know of this time period as “the Dark Ages,” simply because historians didn’t know much about what happened. Now, it’s more commonly referred to as the “early middle ages/early medieval period.”

A NOTE ON ANCIENT IRELAND, SCOTLAND, AND WALES –

We know this lesson is full of historical context, so we will keep this one short—sadly, as these ancient cultures are fascinating!

Several hundred years after the Angles, Saxons, and their contemporaries came to Britain, the Celts migrated from an uncertain part of Europe to, first, Ireland and, later, Scotland. Scotland was already occupied by people whose ancestors came across the sea (probably from Scandinavia), and other immigrants (potentially from Europe). (4)

While scholars now believe that Ireland was first peopled by European immigrants, the mythical folklore-history of Ireland followed a descendant of Noah who wasn’t allowed a place on the Ark and fled to Ireland—a second band of colonizers after the Flood—a third who were enslaved by children of a goddess with magical abilities—a fourth who journeyed from the Tower of Babel and melded the cream of the language crop to create Gaelic (the Irish language)—and a final fifth who traveled from Spain. (5)

Speaking of mythical history, I bet you’ve heard of King Arthur and Merlin. Early Welsh literature carries many signature pieces of Arthurian tradition, including what may be the first reference to the legendary king, and Geoffrey of Monmouth placed Camelot itself in South Wales. (6)

FAST FORWARD TO MEDIEVAL ENGLAND (roughly 1066-1485) –

Now, let's jump ahead a few years. The Anglo-Saxon reign of England was lost to the Normans (which the English won't forget in a hurry), and the idea of Christendom—viewing Europe as dominated by the pope and the emperor—was on the rise, starring the Roman Catholic Church. (7) England existed under a feudal system marked by turmoil in the monarchy until Henry II, the first of the Plantagenets, ascended in 1154. (8) (His son was Richard I, who you might know as Richard the Lionheart.) Under English nobility, the English language regained power over Norman French.

Henry II is important to this week's readings not because of his leadership—which was a little spotty—but because of his biggest mistake. Let me set the scene for us. Henry's archbishop was Thomas Becket, his close friend, who had previously served as his Chancellor. However, Becket's new religious post changed him dramatically, and eventually, he clashed with his old friend—defending the Church instead of Henry's secular government. (9,10) Years later, after Becket excommunicated three other Church leaders, Henry is said to have declared, “Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?” Whether or not those were Henry's exact words, four of his knights saw his outburst as a call to action, and ended up murdering Becket in Canterbury Cathedral on December 29, 1170. Becket was canonized in 1173, and his shrine at Canterbury was widely visited by pilgrims.

CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES: THE ORIGINAL MINISERIES –

Geoffrey Chaucer, the son of a London wine merchant, had a string of official duties: diplomat, soldier, justice of the peace, clerk of works . . . I could go on. (11) He was well-traveled and a prolific writer, composing poetry in a wide range of genres and even translating a Roman text. His pop culture legacy, however, lies primarily in *The Canterbury Tales*, an unfinished collection of short stories (composed of 17,000+ lines!) held together with an imaginary storytelling competition. In the *Tales*, a group of fictional pilgrims decide to host a contest to pass the time on their way to Canterbury Cathedral. Each pilgrim will tell two stories, and the best one wins a free meal when they make it back to the inn.

(This kind of story, where one or more mini-stories are tied together with an overarching narrative, is known as a **frame story** or **frame tale**.)

The *Tales* are a cross section of genres, jumping from allegories to beast fables (a story, like Aesop's fables, where animals are the main characters and a moral is usually provided) to sermons to romances and even genre-bending mixes. For our class, we'll only dip our toes into Chaucer's poetry by reading part of his “General Prologue,” which begins the collection, a section which is often considered a favorite part of the entire text.

HOW ENGLISH HAS CHANGED –

Studying centuries-old texts gives us an appreciation of how the English language has developed over time. For example, in the epic poems *The Wanderer* and *Beowulf*, we see “Old English” being used. Following Old English came Middle English, which we will study this week while studying Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Then came Elizabethan English (think Shakespeare), followed by Modern English.

While it's easy to assume that “Old English” means “any way of speaking English that isn't contemporary,” it actually refers to an entirely different language—just a great-grandparent of our modern English. We lump “Old English” together, but there were individual dialects for individual regions. (12)

Here's an example of Old English from the epic poem *The Wanderer* (using the transcription from Anglo-Saxons.net):

Translation	Old English
So spoke the wanderer, mindful of hardships,	Swa cwæð eardstapa, earfeþa gemyndig,

In comparison, here's what Middle English looks like (using the transcription from Harvard's online “Chaucer Page”):

Translation	Middle English
When April with its sweet-smelling showers Has pierced the drought of March to the root,	Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,

Lastly, here's a fun, simplified overview of the broad stages of the English language:

Old English <i>(The poet of Beowulf)</i>	Middle English <i>(Chaucer)</i>	Elizabethan English <i>(Shakespeare)</i>	Contemporary English <i>(Us, right now)</i>
An entirely different language / “I have no idea what you’re saying.”	A different language with traces of contemporary English / “Okay, I think I see some words?”	Clearly English as we know it, but with different words and structures / “Outdated modern English”	The language that you’re reading right now.

Assignment 1A: Read the “General Prologue” from *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer, attached with this week's lesson. (Note: we are reading from Neville Coghill's 2003 translation.)

Assignment 1B: Read and compare the four translations of the “General Prologue”, Lines 1-18. These are attached in the document titled “Translations.” Then, answer the following questions using complete sentences. (Be specific!)

1. What are the major differences among these translations? What are the major similarities?
2. Which translation do you think is the easiest to understand? The most interesting? The most exciting? The most appealing? Why? Explain your answers.
3. Although we no longer have Chaucer's original manuscript, Hengwrt's manuscript is considered one of the earliest translations of *The Canterbury Tales*, possibly overseen at times by Chaucer himself. Thus, we can consider Hengwrt's manuscript to be as close to the original as possible. With this in mind, do you feel that any of the other three translators struggled to incorporate important elements from the original? Explain your answer.
4. Noticeably, Wright's translation eliminates the AABB end rhyme of the original poem. Are there advantages to reading a non-rhyming version? Do you think it's fair for a translator to eliminate structural features from an original in order to construct a more modern and readable version?
5. What can you learn from this experience about the process of translation?

Assignment 1C: After completing your reading of the “General Prologue” from Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, choose and complete one of the following response assignments.

Option 1: Write a character sketch in the form of a poem, imitating Chaucer's style of identifying the person based on his/her profession. Your character can be real or fictional but must be from the modern world (not Medieval times).

- Your poem must be at least 20 lines long.
- Your poem should utilize the AABB rhyme scheme.
- Your poem should describe the character's physical traits, social traits, personality, profession, and his/her relation to that profession (i.e. is the person an expert in his field? Or, is the person disinterested in his/her career?)

Option 2: Write a poem about a pilgrimage to one of your favorite destinations.

- Your poem must be at least 20 lines long.
- Your poem should utilize the AABB rhyme scheme.
- Your poem should begin by introducing the pilgrimage, explaining where, when, and why you are going.
- Your poem should introduce the reader to at least two fellow travelers, each representing very different social backgrounds. Each character should be named in general terms (i.e. don't give the person's real name), imitating Chaucer's style (the Knight, the Cook).
- The poem should conclude by stating the goal of the pilgrimage. What do you and your fellow travelers hope to gain from the journey?

Sources –

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8. As for England’s Medieval history, try “An Introduction to Medieval England (1066-1485).” *English Heritage*, www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/story-of-england/medieval/.
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