

Modern Canterbury Tales Character Sketch

Due Date: _____

Assignment: For this assignment you will create a character sketch in the form of a poem. Your character must reside in the modern (not medieval) world.

Your Character: As the characters in *The Canterbury Tales* gained their identity from their profession (knight, monk, miller, etc.), your character should epitomize a certain profession. Chaucer satirizes the professions of some of his characters by making sarcastic and unflattering statements, while he praises the professions of other characters by showing them in a positive light.

Steps:

1. Write a vividly detailed description of your character, using sensory details, strong verbs, and figurative language.
2. In the description, include physical, mental, personal, emotional, and/or social traits.
3. Some attention should be paid to how this character relates to his/her profession (Example: Are they the expert? Do they not really care about it?)
4. The character's clothing should be described in such a way that it contributes to the overall portrayal of the character's personality.
5. Through your description, select some area of the character's personality to either praise or criticize. Try to imitate Chaucer's use of subtle satire—mockery, irony, sarcasm, understatement, etc.
6. Your poem must be a minimum of 20 lines long.
7. The poem should have approximate heroic couplets (AABB rhyme scheme).
8. Title your poem, "The [Profession]."

Bonus Points: Illustrate your poem with a portrait of your pilgrim on the same paper.

Example: "The Fast Food Worker" by John Doe

There was a young lad, all sickly and scrawny.
He worked in fast food, a place called McDonnie's.
You see, the bland boy was such a horrible slob
fast food was the one place that would give him a job.
His dull little face was dotted with zits.
His cheeks were potted and peppered with pits.
His voice was quite squeaky, and as we could see,
He was fighting a long battle with puberty.
He wore an orange shirt and an odd-looking hat
that said in small letters, "You want fries with that?"
From frying up formerly-chicken parts
to laughing immaturely at his co-worker's farts,
to filling and refilling a deep-frier vat.
(There was enough grease on his face to do just that.)
Between texting and sleeping, his life has no ambition
but to play X-Box each night in a comatose condition.

His interests in life are his phone and his friends.
His prospects for a career are getting quite thin.
He could be a success—if he dared, if he cared.
If he is our future, we should surely be scared.