

PARDONER'S TALE QUESTIONS
BRITISH LITERATURE
MRS. PILGREEN

Name _____

Date _____ Hour _____

CRITICAL THINKING

1. Were you surprised by the fate of the rioters? Why or why not?
2. When the story opens, what are the rioters doing, and what captures their attention?
3. What sort of people are the rioters?

How do you know?

4. What pledge do the rioters make to one another?
5. Do they keep that pledge? Explain.
6. What do the rioters find under the tree?
7. The old man has said that death is under the tree. In what sense is he lying?
In what sense is he telling the truth?
8. The Pardoner is quite open about the manipulative use to which he puts this tale. Do the Pardoner's reasons for telling the story detract from the moral?
9. The tale refers to the time of the plague. What does the tale suggest about the effects of such a disaster on society? Support your answer.
10. Can stories such as these encourage people to behave well even in times of crisis? Explain.

11. Do you think the desire for gain is ultimately destructive, as the Pardoner's tale suggests, or can it lead to positive consequences? Explain.

LITERARY ANALYSIS

1. Explain how the allegory of "The Pardoner's Tale" proves that greed is the root of all evil.
2. Identify two ways in which the tale differs from modern short stories.
 - a.
 - b.
3. Why is it ironic that the Pardoner tells this story?
4. The old man is the typical "mysterious guide" common in medieval tales, but he can also be considered a symbol. Arguments could be made that he symbolizes good, evil, death, the Devil, God's mercy, or even the Pardoner himself. Which of these items do you think the old man symbolizes? Why?
5. Explain how the Pardoner's tale includes each of the following archetypal elements:
 - a. Patterns of Three:
 - b. Test of Characters:
 - c. Mysterious Guide:
 - d. Justified Ending:
6. Why do you think many tales feature things that come in threes? (Can you think of any other stories that use the number three?)

VOCABULARY BUILDER

For each of the vocabulary words below, write a synonym.

1. Pallor: _____
2. Hoary: _____
3. Prating: _____
4. Tarry: _____
5. Apothecary: _____