

WIFE'S TALE QUESTIONS
BRITISH LITERATURE
MRS. PILGREEN

Name _____

Date _____ Hour _____

CRITICAL THINKING

1. Were you surprised by the outcome of this story? Why or why not?
2. According to the Wife of Bath, in what way does life in her day differ from life in King Arthur's time?
3. What is the Wife of Bath's opinion on friars?

How do you know?

4. What punishment does the king initially issue to the knight?
5. Why might the king willingly allow his wife to effect a different punishment instead?
6. What philosophy about relationships do the king and queen share with the Wife of Bath?
7. What bargain does the knight make with the old woman?

Why do you think that the queen forces the knight to keep his part of the bargain?

8. How does the old woman define true gentility (Starting in line 305)?
9. How effective are her arguments about gentility, poverty, and old age?

10. What final choice does the old woman offer the knight?
11. In what way does his response show that he has finally learned his lesson about the nature of women?
12. Has the knight experiences sufficient punishment and redemption for his crime?

LITERARY ANALYSIS: FRAME

1. In what ways might the Wife of Bath identify with the old woman in the tale?
2. What character flaw is the tale-within-a-tale of Midas' wife meant to illustrate?

VOCABULARY BUILDER

For each numbered item below, use an S to identify the word pair as synonyms or an A to identify the word pair as antonyms.

- _____ 1. implored, pleaded
- _____ 2. relates, suppresses
- _____ 3. misalliance, match
- _____ 4. contemptuous, praiseworthy
- _____ 5. bequeath, hand down
- _____ 6. prowess, cowardice
- _____ 7. esteemed, despised
- _____ 8. rebuke, scold