**Anglo Saxon and Middle Ages Study Guide**

**Texts:**

“Shooting an Elephant,” George Orwell

“On the Rainy River,” Tim O’Brien

*In Search of Beowulf,* BBC

*Beowulf,* scops and anonymous monk(s)

*The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales,* Geoffrey Chaucer

*The Pardoner’s Tale,* Geoffrey Chaucer

*The Wife of Bath’s Tale,* Geoffrey Chaucer

Royal Shakespeare Company videos of *The Wife of Bath’s Tale* and *The Pardoner’s Tale*

*Morte d’Arthur,* Sir Thomas Mallory

**Literary Terms:** Know definitions, but also how to apply them to texts and how authors use them with purpose.

Imagery

Diction

Connotation

Denotation

Detail

Syntax

Tone

Kenning

Alliteration

Caesura

Epic

Epic hero

Hero’s Journey

Scop

Archetype

Frame story

Elegy

Verisimilitude

Motif

Quest

Metamorphosis

Exemplum

Romance

Ballad

(Code of) Chivalry

Courtly love tradition

End stopped line

Enjambment

Satire

Irony: verbal, situational, dramatic

The difference between an epic and a romance

**History**:

Comitatus

Wergild

Mead hall

Wyrd

Roman occupation, contributions, and exit

Anglo, Saxon, and Jute invasion

King Arthur and Alfred the Great

The role of Christianity

The battle of Hastings and its lasting impacts

Chaucer’s Background, his roles or jobs, and countries that influenced his work

Crusades

Thomas a Becket

Hundred Year’s War

Feudalism (vassal)

Virtues and Vices (Seven Deadly Sins and Holy Virtues)

**Sample questions:**

1. History: What were two lasting impacts of the battle of Hastings?
2. Identifications: For terms, define them and provide an example. For quotes, identify the work, the context (where it happens in the story), and the quote’s significance.
3. Verisimilitude: the appearance of truth. Authors use verisimilitude to make fiction seem real. For example, Chaucer uses it when the narrator says; please forgive me if these characters speak in vulgar ways. To clean up their language would make it untrue, which is funny considering he—the author—is making it all up.
4. “Black scabby brows he had, and a thin beard.

Children were afraid when he appeared.

No quicksilver, lead ointment, tartar creams,

No brimstone, no boracic, so it seems,

Could make a salve that had the power to bite,

Clean up or cure his whelks of knobby white

Or purge the pimples sitting on his cheeks.”

Answer: In the General Prologue, Chaucer describes the Summoner near the end of the line of pilgrims. Chaucer shows the job of summoner to be corrupt, but this summoner is particularly greedy and unethical. He is ugly both physically and morally as he blackmails the people he could call to the church court.

1. Essay: Morally ambiguous characters – characters whose behavior discourages readers from identifying them as purely evil or purely good – are at the heart of many works of literature. Choose three of the works we have read in which a morally ambiguous character appears. Then write an essay in which you explain how each character can be viewed as morally ambiguous and why his or her moral ambiguity is significant to the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.