

# Old British and Medieval Literature Cheat Sheet

## by karlaxer via cheatography.com/125160/cs/31320/

THE ANG	LO-SAXONS (450-1100)	THE ME	DIEVAL PERIOD 1100-1500	
Background			Background	
	Begins with the invasion of Celtic England by Germanic		1066 - the beginning of a new social and linguistic era	
	tribes		the 1470s - the printing press introduced in England by	
	Lasts until the conquest of England by the Norman-		William Caxton	
	French William the Conqueror.		Language of court became French.	
	Anglo-Saxon poetry	French	'High' functions	
	Poetry was listened, not read.		'high' culture: government, law, religion, education, litera-	
	Anglo-Saxon poetry was oral.		ture, science, the arts, 'high society' English	
	A bard (or scop) recited or sang the poetry.	English	'Low' functions	
	It is believed that it was initially recorded by Christian Monks.		'common folk': home speech, folk/popular songs, tales, everyday commerce	
Scop /shop/	A bard poet; storyteller. Also serves as a narrator to move the story along and reiterate the morals or values of the		Literature	
			Became more refined.	
	time.		Court and peasants both enjoyed new songs from	
	Often performed in the Mead Hall (gathering place).  Preserved the culture in song before writing was common.		Scotland, Ireland, and England.	
			Court enjoyed medieval romances from France.	
	Literary devices		Genres	
Caesura	rhythmic pause to create unity. Punctuation reproduces		chivalric romances	
Odesura	pause effect of the caesura.		folk ballads	
Allite-	the repetition of consonant sound in words close		dramas	
ration	together.		morality plays	
Kenning	a metaphorical phrase or compound word used to name		Types of historical material	
	a person, place, thing, or event indirectly.	Rome	Classical legends	
	A kenning enhances the literal meaning of the words. A kenning gives the listener an idea of how the words connect to an idea or concept that is richer and more emotionally complex.	France	Often tales of Charlemagne and his knights	
		Britain	Arthurian stories	
			Tales dealing with knightly heroes	

The Anglo-Saxon world was tribal, so the people who are the subjects of the poems had a different way of seeing where they lived; they had different "laws" and ways of life as well.

### **BEOWULF**

The first great work of English national literature.

The epic story of the hero Beowulf, who fights the demonic monster Grendel (man-eating monster).

Two parts

The epic hero is the central figure in a long narrative that reflects the values and heroic ideals of a particular society.

Beowulf was composed in Old English, which uses a caesura, or rhythmic pause, to create unity.

### SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Written by the unknown "Pearl poet."

Arthurian Romance in Alliterative Verse

Involves Sir Gawain's quest to confront the Green Knight, who has disrupted Arthur's court.

The Green Knight represents pagan fertility against Gawain's Christian chastity. A church reaction against "courtly love."

There is a movie called after this work, which is actually good.

THE CANTERBURY TALES		
Geoffrey Chaucer (1342-1400)	Was a civil servant, held several political positions.	
	Observer of life and people (satirist).	



By karlaxcr cheatography.com/karlaxcr/ Not published yet. Last updated 25th March, 2022. Page 1 of 2.

Sponsored by Readable.com Measure your website readability! https://readable.com



# Old British and Medieval Literature Cheat Sheet by karlaxer via cheatography.com/125160/cs/31320/

### THE CANTERBURY TALES (cont)

Broke tradition by writing in native English.

#### The Canterbury Tales

The Prologue tells the story of 29 pilgrims who, on their way to Canterbury (to the shrine of St. Thomas a Becket), participate in a tale-telling contest to pass the time

Each tale had to have a moral and be entertaining.

The Tales is a collection of the various pilgrims' stories.

Originally planned to be 120 tales, Chaucer only completed

#### The Wife of Bath's Tale

The

A worthy woman from beside Bath city

Wife

of

Bath

Attractive, red-faced, gap- toothed, large hipped, and somewhat deaf Loves to laugh and talk.

Traveled a lot (Pilgrimages to Jerusalem 3 times, Rome, etc.)

Married 5 times (expert in love; had many "boyfriends" in her youth)

The Tale Tale of a knight who breaks the rules of chivalry and is punished with a challenge that he has a year and a day to complete. WoB's Tale

This tale belongs with the Marriage Group tales of The Canterbury Tales as it deals with philosophies of love and marriage.

Classified as a "medieval romance" due to its setting, characters, and code of chivalry.



By **karlaxcr** cheatography.com/karlaxcr/

Not published yet. Last updated 25th March, 2022. Page 2 of 2. Sponsored by **Readable.com**Measure your website readability!
https://readable.com