

Bubbling Personalities: Unraveling the Wife of Bath's Tale

Chaucer's Wife of Bath Tale

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Grade Level	11th – Undergraduate Grade	**Duration**	2–3
Subject	English/Language Arts, Social Studies		
Course	British Literature		

Essential Question

How does literature serve as a mirror to society, offering insights into different eras, cultures, and human experiences? How can literature encourage empathy and understanding?

Summary

In this lesson on The Wife of Bath's tale from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, students will examine different perspectives of characters from the story. They will do a deeper dive on "What Women Want?" and the history of women's movements.

Snapshot

Engage:

Students read marriage laws, decide which are (or were) real and which are not, and sort them using the Card Sort strategy.

Explore:

Students listen to and follow along reading "The Wife of Bath" using the Categorical Highlighting strategy.

Explain:

Students use the Step In, Step Out, Step Back strategy to reflect on different characters' perspectives and experiences.

Extend:

Students reflect on the article about women's liberation using the Categorical Highlighting strategy.

Evaluate:

Students create women's liberation–style posters featuring key elements they learned in the lesson using the S-I-T strategy.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 12)

12.2.R.1: Summarize the main ideas and paraphrase significant parts of increasingly complex texts.
12.3.R.1: Analyze the extent to which historical, cultural, and/or global perspectives affect authors' stylistic choices in grade-level literary and informational texts.

Attachments

- Geoffrey Chaucers Wife of Bath Prologue and Tale—Bubbling Personalities.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Bubbling Personalities.pptx
- Marriage Laws Card Sort—Bubbling Personalities - Spanish.docx
- Marriage Laws Card Sort—Bubbling Personalities - Spanish.pdf
- Marriage Laws Card Sort—Bubbling Personalities.docx
- Marriage Laws Card Sort—Bubbling Personalities.pdf
- Step In Step Out Step Back—Bubbling Personalities - Spanish.docx
- Step In Step Out Step Back—Bubbling Personalities - Spanish.pdf
- Step In Step Out Step Back—Bubbling Personalities.docx
- Step In Step Out Step Back—Bubbling Personalities.pdf
- What Women Want—Bubbling Personalities - Spanish.docx
- What Women Want—Bubbling Personalities - Spanish.pdf
- What Women Want—Bubbling Personalities.docx
- What Women Want—Bubbling Personalities.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides—Bubbling Personalities: Unraveling the Wife of Bath's Tale (attached)
- Marriage Laws Card Sort—Bubbling Personalities: Unraveling the Wife of Bath's Tale (attached; one set per group)
- Geoffrey Chaucer's The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale handout (attached; one per student)
- The Wife of Bath's Tale Prologue recording (attached)
- The Wife of Bath's Tale recording (attached)
- Step In, Step Out, Step Back handout (attached; one per student)
- What Women Want handout (attached; one per student)
- Highlighters (pink, yellow, orange, or three colors of your choosing)
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Internet-capable devices

Engage

Teacher's Note

Content Warning: The Wife of Bath's Prologue contains explicit discussions of sexuality, gender roles, and relationships that may be distressing or triggering for some readers. Topics include references to rape, abuse, misogyny, and language that may be considered offensive or inappropriate in a contemporary context.

Introduce the lesson by displaying the title on **slide 1** from the attached **Lesson Slides**.

Display **slides 2–3**. Review the essential question and the learning objectives.

Teacher's Note

The marriage laws in the two columns on the left in this card sort are real. The marriage laws in the two columns on the right are AI-generated.

Display **slide 4** and share the instructional strategy Card Sort with students. Have students partner up and pass out the attached copies of the **Marriage Laws Card Sort**. Instruct students to read through each of the rules with their partners. Instruct the groups to sort the cards into rules that were or are real laws and the false AI-generated rules for marriage.

Explore

Teacher's Note

Errors in the spelling of simple words and some proper nouns in the present-day English (PDE) translation of the Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale are found in the original translation (https://digitalresearch.bsu.edu/canterburytales/items/show/12). Proper nouns (particularly Greek and Latin) rendered from Chaucer's original Middle English (ME) are not adapted to PDE in either the printed text or audio.

Distribute copies of the complete **The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale** handout (attached) and highlighters.

Display **slide 5**. Have students use the instructional strategy Categorical Highlighting as they read and listen to look for things that are Surprising, Interesting, and Troubling. Students will highlight the surprising things yellow, the interesting things orange, and the troubling things pink. Play the "The Wife of Bath - Prologue" and "The Wife of Bath - Tale," located on the hidden **slide 6,** for the students. After students have finished reading and highlighting, direct them to compare and discuss what they have highlighted with a partner and then with the whole class.

Teacher's Note

Due to the sensitive material in the tale, the YouTube videos of the narration have been filtered for adults. This may restrict your access to the videos, depending on your school's internet settings. If you are unable to access the videos, you may have students read the prologue and tale individually or as a read-aloud.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=xPhnGmvkBAU

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=qZ2yCaD4jTo

Explain

Display **slide 7** and share the instructional strategy Step In, Step Out, Step Back with students. Distribute the attached **Step In, Step Out, Step Back** handout. Direct students to think about the characters in The Wife of Bath's Tale and choose one character to focus on. Instruct students to put themselves in the shoes of their chosen character and answer the following questions as if they were their chosen character.

Display **slide 8.** Read the **Step In** prompt: *Given what you see and know at this time, what do you think this person might feel, believe, know, or experience?* Direct students to the corresponding box on the handout and give them time to complete this section of the handout based on their chosen character.

Display **slide 9**. Read the **Step Out** prompt: *What else would you like or need to learn to understand this person's perspective better?* Direct students to the corresponding box on the handout. Give students time to complete this section of the handout based on their chosen character.

Display **slide 10**. Read the **Step Back** prompt: G*iven your exploration of this perspective so far, what do you notice about your own perspective and what it takes to take somebody else's?* Direct students to the corresponding box on the handout and give them sufficient time to complete this section of the handout based on their chosen character.

Direct students to share what they reflected on. As they are sharing, remind them to take notes on the handout in the box labeled: *Notes about other characters from the share-out*.

Extend

Distribute the **What Women Want** article (attached).

Display slide 11. Direct students to read the article and once again use the instructional strategy Categorical Highlighting to look for things that are Surprising, Interesting, and Troubling. Students will highlight the surprising things yellow, the interesting things orange, and the troubling things pink. Direct students to compare and discuss what they have highlighted with a partner and then with the whole class.

Evaluate

Distribute chart paper and markers.

Display **slide 12**. Explain to students that they will be creating a poster similar to a women's liberty poster. Have students use the S-I-T Strategy to complete this activity. Explain that their poster should include the following:

- Surprising: an issue that women faced historically but still face today.
- Interesting: a fact/information you learned from this lesson.
- Troubling: include data or information that stands out and is concerning.

Explain that students should include images, words, phrases, titles, headings, color, etc., and that their poster should relate to the Wife of Bath tale. Encourage students to use the checklist on the slide for reference. When the posters are completed, have students present their poster to the class, noting their S-I-T choices.

Resources

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