Can You Tell Me Tales?
Themes in Literature

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Published by *K20 Center*

Grade Level	11th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	200 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	4–5 class periods
Course	British Literature		

Essential Question

How are ideas from our past still relevant today? How can opinions change as a result of investigation and conversation?

Summary

To activate prior knowledge and introduce two tales from "The Canterbury Tales," students complete an Anticipation Guide before discussing theme statements from the tales. Then, students work collaboratively to read the tales and compile two-column notes during reading. Students revisit their Anticipation Guides and two-column notes, deciding if and how their opinions have changed and why or why not. Finally, students reformulate the text by creating a video retelling the tales and adapting them to modern times. At the end of the lesson, students metacognitively reflect on their learning. While this lesson is currently aligned only to 12th grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in grades 11 through 12, adjusting standards as needed.

Snapshot

Engage
Students complete and discuss an Anticipation Guide for two tales.

Explore
Students read one of two Canterbury Tales, using a two-column handout to take notes as they read with a partner.

Explain
Students revisit their Anticipation Guides and two-column notes as they discuss plot and theme with a partner or in groups.

Extend
Students create a video reformulating the tale as a modern adaptation in an attempt to make it relevant in today's society.

Evaluate
Students write about the theme of the tale and their video, connecting the past to the present.

https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/lesson/499?rev=34733

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 12)

12.1.W.2: Students will work effectively and respectfully within diverse groups, demonstrate willingness to make necessary compromises to accomplish a goal, share responsibility for collaborative work, and value individual contributions made by each group member.

12.2.R.1: Students will summarize, paraphrase, and synthesize ideas, while maintaining meaning and a logical sequence of events, within and between texts.

12.3.R.1: Students will analyze the extent to which historical, cultural, and/or global perspectives affect authors' stylistic and organizational choices in grade-level literary and informational genres.

12.7.W.1: Students will create multimodal content to communicate knowledge and defend arguments.

Attachments

- 105ba60c9e481a3b1be5dd2c48d5b99d.docx
- 5a6bc85bab1637106f69b7ff1ab8da93.pdf
- 5a6bc85bab1637106f69b7ff1ab8da93.pdf
- Anticipation Guide—Can You Tell Me Tales - Spanish.docx
- Anticipation Guide—Can You Tell Me Tales - Spanish.pdf
- Anticipation Guide—Can You Tell Me Tales.docx
- Anticipation Guide—Can You Tell Me Tales.pdf
- Anticipation-Guide-Can-You-Tell-Me-Tales.docx
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- Anticipation-Guide-Can-You-Tell-Me-Tales.pdf
- Anticipation-Guide-Can-You-Tell-Me-Tales.pdf
- Anticipation-Guide-Tales.docx
- Anticipation-Guide-Tales.docx
- Anticipation-Guide-Tales.pdf
- Anticipation-Guide-Tales.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Can You Tell Me Tales.pptx
- Lesson-Slides-Can-You-Tell-Me-Tales.pptx
- Lesson-Slides-Can-You-Tell-Me-Tales.pptx
- The Pardoners Tale—Can You Tell Me Tales.pdf
- The Wife of Baths Tale—Can You Tell Me Tales.pdf
- The-Pardoner-s-Tale-Can-You-Tell-Me-Tales.pdf
- The-Pardoner-s-Tale-Can-You-Tell-Me-Tales.pdf
- The-Pardoner-s-Tale.pdf
- The-Pardoner-s-Tale.pdf
- The-Wife-of-Bath-s-Tale-Can-You-Tell-Me-Tales.pdf
- The-Wife-of-Bath-s-Tale-Can-You-Tell-Me-Tales.pdf
- The-Wife-of-Bath-s-Tale.pdf
- The-Wife-of-Bath-s-Tale.pdf
- Two-Column Notes—Can You Tell Me Tales - Spanish.docx
- Two-Column Notes—Can You Tell Me Tales - Spanish.pdf
- Two-Column Notes—Can You Tell Me Tales.docx
- Two-Column Notes—Can You Tell Me Tales.pdf
- Two-Column-Notes-Can-You-Tell-Me-Tales.docx
- Two-Column-Notes-Can-You-Tell-Me-Tales.docx
- Two-Column-Notes-Can-You-Tell-Me-Tales.pdf
- Two-Column-Notes-Can-You-Tell-Me-Tales.pdf
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Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- [Anticipation Guide](#) (attached and linked; one per student)
- [Two-Column Notes](#) (attached and linked; one per student)
- [The Wife of Bath's Tale](#) (attached and linked; one per student in this group)
- [The Pardoner, his Prologue, and his Tale](#) (attached and linked; one per student in this group)
- Writing materials: pens, pencils, paper, etc.
- Computers, tablets, and/or video cameras (if available)
- Props: Middle Ages styled clothing (optional)

40 minutes

Engage

Introduce the lesson using the **Lesson Slides**. Display the essential questions and learning objectives on **slides 3–4**. For this lesson, students begin by filling out the attached **Anticipation Guide** for the two tales they will study. Display **slide 5** and have students complete the guide. While each student will only read one tale, all students should work through each opinion statement. For each statement, have students decide if it is [Always, Sometimes, or Never True](#).

Teacher's Note: Anticipation Guide

As discussed in Kylene Beers's *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Do*, anticipation guides "activate students' prior knowledge, encourage them to make personal connections to what they will be reading, and give them a chance to become an active participant with the text before they begin reading" (2002, pp. 74–75). Students are likely to struggle with these theme statements. What is important is not to determine an essential truth of the statement, but for students to determine their opinions of each statement and provide justification.

Once students have individually completed the Anticipation Guide, display **slide 6** and have them [Think-Pair-Share](#) with a partner, then with the whole class. A class discussion on these themes should lead into the reading of the two tales. Allow ample time for substantive conversation before diving into the readings.

Here's how Think-Pair-Share works in this lesson:

1. After completing the Anticipation Guide individually, have each student pair with a partner.
2. Each student should share their responses with their partner.
3. They can either choose the best response or collaborate together to create a shared response.
4. *Optional: Partners can then be paired with another set of partners (a group of four) to further collaborate and choose the best response or create a new shared response.*

40 minutes

Explore

Display **slide 7**. Have students work in two separate groups by dividing the class in half. Pass out the attached **Two-Column Notes** handout, or have students use a digital version or their own notebook paper. If they are using their own paper, ask students to divide a piece of notebook paper in half lengthwise. The left column should be labeled "In the text it says" and the right column should be labeled "My reaction to the text." Have students keep a running list of two-column notes, focusing especially on the theme statements from the Anticipation Guide. It might be helpful to initially model the two-column note-taking strategy for the class.

> **Teacher's Note: Two-Column Notes**
>
> Encourage students to provide page/paragraph/line numbers as they write down information from the text. That way, they can revisit that information in future discussions.

Display **slide 8**. Instruct one group to read "The Wife of Bath's Tale" and the other group to read "The Pardoner, his Prologue, and his Tale." Students can read individually, with a partner, or with a small group. Be sure to edit the slide to fit the instructions you've given the class if they are not reflected accurately.

> **Teacher's Note: Reading Options**
>
> Depending on your students, feel free to read one tale aloud as a class. Given the vocabulary, these texts are a bit difficult, so if students need a more guided approach, the whole class could read a tale together and take two-column notes along the way. If students are more independent readers, you can divide the class into groups and have them read collaboratively or individually.

40 minutes

Explain

Display **slides 9–10**. Once students have read the tale, ask them to revisit both the Anticipation Guide and their Two-Column Notes. Have them go back to the theme statements and decide whether their opinion has changed or not, then ask them to provide a written justification for why their opinion has or has not changed after reading the tale.

Display **slide 11**. At this point, it is important that students use evidence from the text (which can be found in their two-column notes) to support their opinions and justifications, whereas previously they relied solely on prior knowledge.

Ask students to compare their responses with a classmate who read the same tale.

Display **slide 12**. Remix groups and have students team up with a classmate who read the other tale. This new partner should have more detailed information about theme statements that didn't necessarily apply to both tales. In essence, students can teach one another about the plot and themes from each tale without having to read both. Encourage students to use their Anticipation Guide and Two-Column Notes throughout their discussions.

After students have had a chance to discuss with partners who read the same tale and partners who read the other tale, start and facilitate a whole-class discussion centering on the plot and themes from the tales. Be sure students have a solid understanding of the plot and themes from both tales so they are able to successfully complete the next activity. Encourage students to ask clarifying questions, and allow for substantive conversation to occur during the whole-class discussion.

40 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 13**. Have students form small groups (3–4 students per group) with students who read the same tale, and create a video or live performance to retell and reformulate the tale. The goal is for students to make the tale relevant in today's society, so they must bridge the gap from the Middle Ages to now. Tell students to use the theme statements as a guide, but encourage autonomy and creativity. Collaboration is encouraged as students work to create a script, assign roles, film the video and/or perform the scene, etc.

Students should stick to the general plot of the original tale their group read, but they should make the tale current and applicable to today's society. Due to time constraints, students should focus on important events from the story and not feel obligated to include every line or scene. Students should be encouraged to adapt aspects of the tale to modern times, especially including the language/dialect of the characters. However, it is important that themes from the original tales are also present in the reimagining.

Teacher's Note

Students should video their reimagining if technology is available. One of the group members could serve as director/videographer if students opt to video their performance. The video could then be shown to the class. If technology is not an option, students can act out their performance live in front of the class.

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40 minutes

Evaluate

Have groups show their video or perform their script live to the class. Display **slide 14** as necessary. While groups show their performances, non-performing students should write down themes they notice that are carrying over from the original tale to this modern-day retelling. After each group performs, lead a discussion that focuses on how that group integrated the themes into their retelling.

Display **slide 15**. Have students complete an open-ended freewrite Exit Ticket, in which they write about how themes from the tales they read could still be applicable today. Have students reflect on if and how their opinions changed throughout the lesson's activities. This reflective writing allows students to consider both the "what" and "how" of their learning processes.

Resources

- Beers, K. (2003). *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Do*. Heinemann.
- Chaucer, G. (1966, January 1). "The Pardoner, his Prologue, and his Tale." *The Canterbury Tales*.
- Chaucer, G. (1966, January 1). "The Wife of Bath's Tale." *The Canterbury Tales*.
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Always, Sometimes, Never True. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/145
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Exit Ticket. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/125
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Think-Pair-Share. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/139