

## Reading for Information



Use with selections from *The Canterbury Tales*, page 140.



### SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS Reading Process & Information and Media Literacy

**Benchmark LA.1112.1.7.3** Determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details and facts.

**Benchmark LA.1112.6.2.2** Organize, synthesize, analyze, and evaluate the validity and reliability of information from multiple sources (including primary and secondary sources) to draw conclusions using a variety of techniques, and correctly use standardized citations.

## Pilgrimages: Journeys of the Spirit

- Book Excerpt, page 197
- Magazine Article, page 198
- Map and Illustrations, page 200

*The Canterbury Tales* is a collection of stories written as if they were told by pilgrims on their way to a holy site. The following selections describe what it was actually like to travel on a pilgrimage in Chaucer's time and also reveal why this ancient tradition still thrives today. As you read, consider how the information in these selections enhances your understanding of the characters in *The Canterbury Tales*.

### Skill Focus: Synthesize

Whenever you put together facts, ideas, and details from different sources to form your own understanding of a topic, you are **synthesizing**. You can usually gain deeper insight into a topic by synthesizing from several sources than by just reading one source.

Here is a process you can use to synthesize details about pilgrims and pilgrimages:

- Create a chart such as the one shown here.
- Skim through “The Prologue” of *The Canterbury Tales*, looking for information about pilgrims and pilgrimages. Add to the chart any information that would help you answer the questions provided.
- Read the selections that follow, and add any additional information about the topic to your chart.

Source	<u>The Canterbury Tales</u>	<u>A Distant Mirror</u>	<u>“In the Footsteps of the Faithful”</u>	<u>“Pilgrimage Sites” Map</u>
What kinds of people go on pilgrimages?				
Why do they go?				
What is the journey like?				
How does the pilgrimage affect them?				

In *A Distant Mirror*, historian Barbara Tuchman describes the hardships, including the difficulties of travel, faced by people of all classes in 14th-century Europe.

# *A Distant Mirror*

Barbara Tuchman

Travel, “the mother of tidings,” brought news of the world to castle and village, town and countryside. The rutted roads, always either too dusty or too muddy, carried an endless flow of pilgrims and peddlers, merchants with their packtrains, bishops making visitations, tax-collectors and royal officials, friars and pardoners, wandering scholars, jongleurs and preachers, messengers and couriers who wove the network of communications from city to city. Great nobles like the Coucys, bankers, prelates, abbeys, courts of justice, town governments, kings and their councils employed their own messengers. The King of England at mid-century kept twelve on hand who accompanied him at all times, ready to start, and were paid 3d. a day when on the  
 10 road and 4s. 8d. a year for shoes. . . .

The voyage from London to Lyon took about 18 days and from Canterbury to Rome about 30 days depending on the Channel crossing, which was unpredictable, often dangerous, sometimes fatal, and could take anywhere from three days to a month. One knight, Sir Hervé de Léon, was kept 15 days at sea by a storm and, besides having lost his horse overboard, arrived so battered and weakened “that he never had health thereafter.” It was no wonder that, according to a ballad, when pilgrims took to sea for the voyage to Compostella or beyond, “Theyr hertes begin to fayle.” . . . **A**

Travelers stopped before nightfall, those of the nobility taking shelter in some  
 20 nearby castle or monastery where they would be admitted indoors, while the mass of ordinary travelers on foot, including pilgrims, were housed and fed in a guest house outside the gate. They were entitled to one night’s lodging at any monastery and could not be turned away unless they asked for a second night. Inns were available to merchants and others, though they were likely to be crowded, squalid, and flea-ridden, with several beds to a room and two travelers to a bed—or three to a bed in Germany, according to the disgusted report of the poet Deschamps, who was sent there on a mission for the French King. Moreover, he complained, neither bed nor table had clean linen, the innkeeper offered no choice of foods, a traveler in the Empire could find nothing to drink but beer; fleas, rats, and mice were unavoidable,  
 30 and the people of Bohemia lived like pigs. **B**

Given the hardships and the length of time consumed, people journeyed over long distances to an astonishing degree—from Paris to Florence, from Flanders to Hungary, London to Prague, Bohemia to Castile, crossing seas, alps, and rivers, walking to China like Marco Polo or three times to Jerusalem like the Wife of Bath.

**A SYNTHESIZE**

Reread lines 1–18. What were the hardships of traveling in the Middle Ages?

**B SYNTHESIZE**

What was it like for a pilgrim to stay at an inn?



Many people today still go on pilgrimages, often walking for long distances along ancient routes. Canadian writer Taras Grescoe writes about his journey to one of the most famous European pilgrimage sites.

## In the Footsteps of the Faithful

Taras Grescoe

Little by little, the road to Santiago de Compostela was changing me. When I started off on the Camino Francés—a 1,200-year-old route across northern Spain to one of Catholicism’s holiest shrines—I was unprepared for the camaraderie this pilgrimage fosters. Since A.D. 813, when the bones of St. James the Apostle were discovered in a cave at the western tip of Galicia, devout pilgrims from all over Europe have tramped hundreds of miles across the snow-streaked Pyrenees and the sun-baked plains of Castile in a quest for absolution and spiritual growth. Beginning the walk in the French town of St. Jean-Pied-de-Port, I was part of this rare band of travelers for three weeks. **C**

20 In the shade of eucalyptus forests and olive groves, over tuna sandwiches and chocolate bars, I heard stories by turns touching and inspiring. A young mother—a Danish athlete—was alternately carrying and pushing her two blond-haired infants over the mountain trails and switchbacks, a feat of almost superhuman endurance. A 60-year-old man in disintegrating sandals and with a long white beard paused just long enough to tell me he’d walked all the way from Rome, 40 miles a day. Next to a purling stream, I came across a pilgrim who’d lost his right leg and was being borne to Santiago on his trusty mare Lorena—named after his daughter, herself only recently recovered from leukemia.

### **C** SYNTHESIZE

Reread lines 8–16. What are some reasons why people go on pilgrimages today?

The Camino Francés, which wends  
 40 past storks on the chimney stacks of  
 Rioja and seagulls on the moss-covered  
 church spires of Galicia, is a crash  
 course in medieval European history,  
 with daily seminars in Romanesque  
 architecture and the arcane  
 iconography of the Knights Templar.  
 I found myself walking on the original  
 paving stones of Roman roads, staining  
 my shoes on the red earth of the  
 50 vineyards of Rioja, and losing my way  
 in the fog of the Pyrenees. In a little  
 town outside Logroño, I joined the  
 queue at an unattended tap at a stone  
 wall, from which Navarran red wine  
 flowed free of charge, a local winery's  
 gift to passing pilgrims.

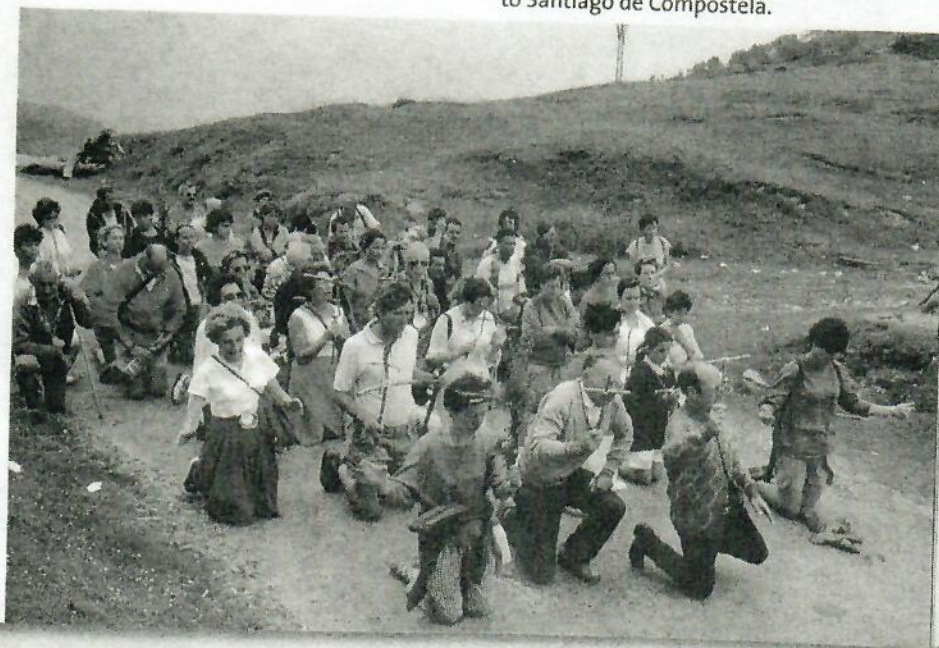
As I walked, materialism and  
 concern about self-image fell by  
 the wayside; I divested myself of  
 60 guidebooks and excess clothing, and  
 sought only to fill my belly with  
 nourishing food and to find simple  
 lodgings each evening. I learned to  
 expect the warm westerly wind that  
 crosses the land just before sunset, the  
 cool *tramontana* from the north, and

the afternoon breeze that sends  
 iridescent ripples through the fields. I  
 realized I'd never truly seen the world  
 70 go by at this human pace, three miles  
 an hour, hour after hour, day in, day  
 out—nor understood that the quality  
 of one's travel experience is inversely  
 proportional to the speed at which  
 one travels. **D**

I finally walked into Santiago in  
 the midst of a record spring heat wave.  
 Sweaty and unshaven, I approached  
 the wildflower- and lichen-covered  
 80 cathedral where the bones of St. James  
 the Apostle rested—a fantastic  
 barnacle-encrusted reef looming over  
 waves of stone houses. As I strode up  
 the last set of stairs before my goal, I  
 was overwhelmed by a connection with  
 all those who, over the ages, had risked  
 losing home, family, and life to follow  
 their faith to some marvelous shrine at  
 the edge of the earth.

90 Step by step, the Camino had made  
 me one of its own: a pilgrim.

Pilgrims stop to kneel along the main  
 pilgrimage route from southwest France  
 to Santiago de Compostela.



**D SYNTHESIZE**

Reread lines 57–75.  
 How has the author  
 been affected by his  
 pilgrimage?

Medieval pilgrims visited holy sites throughout Europe and in parts of Asia. These sites continue to serve as important spiritual centers as well as popular tourist attractions.

## PILGRIMAGE SITES



### E SYNTHESIZE

Use the scale on the map to measure the distances between London and the pilgrimage sites, and notice the geographic features that a pilgrim would have to cross to reach these sites. How does the map enhance your understanding of what it was like to make a pilgrimage in Chaucer's day?



**Reliquary** At many pilgrimage sites, relics (personal items or body parts of saints) are kept in containers called reliquaries.

**Stained Glass** In this French cathedral window, Saint Mary of Egypt is shown on a boat full of pilgrims bound for Jerusalem.



**Canterbury Cathedral** Located 55 miles from London, Canterbury Cathedral became an important pilgrimage site after Archbishop Thomas à Becket was murdered there in 1170.

## Comprehension

1. **Recall** According to Barbara Tuchman, what was sea travel like in Chaucer's day?
2. **Recall** During medieval times, how did the lodging offered to the nobility differ from the lodging available to members of other social classes?
3. **Clarify** How does Taras Grescoe feel about the slow pace of travel on a pilgrimage?

## Critical Analysis

4. **Analyze Author's Message** Reread lines 83–89 of "In the Footsteps of the Faithful." What experiences have allowed Grescoe to form the connection he describes? Use details from the selection to support your answer.
5. **Synthesize Information from Graphic Aids** Examine the photographs on page 200. How do these images help you understand the appeal of going on a pilgrimage?

## Read for Information: Draw Conclusions

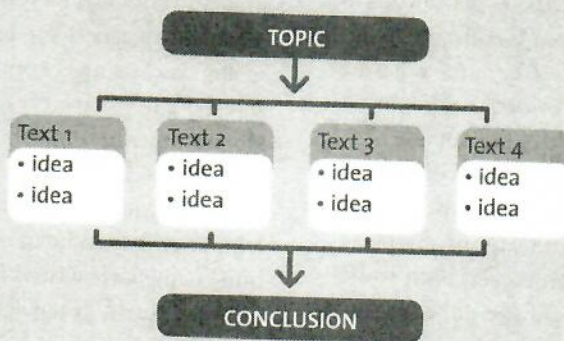
### WRITING PROMPT

In a paragraph, state and support a conclusion about one of the following topics:

- travel during Chaucer's day
- the benefits of making a pilgrimage

To answer this prompt, you will need to pick your topic and follow these steps:

1. Gather information about your topic from the three selections as well as from "The Prologue" of *The Canterbury Tales*.
2. Consider the main ideas and information you have collected. Ask yourself what conclusion you can draw from them.
3. Present your conclusion in a topic sentence, and support it with ideas and information from the texts.



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