

# MIDDLE ENGLISH

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- Norman invasion
- 1066: Battle of Hastings
- William the Conqueror becomes the king

## SOCIAL CONTEXT

- French becomes the language of the governing class
- dominance of French culture

## KEY CONCEPTS

- chivalric code
- alliterative revival
- Arthurian romances

## LITERARY CONTEXT

- literature of the period written in Latin, French and English
- most texts are anonymous
- secular literature becomes more courtly in tone
- didactic purpose of writing
- literature is mostly spread by means of reciting



## KEY FIGURES

- Geoffrey Chaucer
- William Langland
- John Wycliff
- William Caxton



## KEY TERMS

- alliteration
- heroic couplet
- ballad
- miracle/mystery play
- morality play



## KEY WORKS

- *The Canterbury Tales*
- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
- *The Vision of Piers Plowman*