

Middle English Period (The Medieval Period)

Years: 1066-1485

Content:

- plays that instruct the illiterate masses in morals and religion
- chivalric code of honor
- romances
- religious devotion

Style/Genres:

- oral tradition continues
- folk ballads
- mystery and miracle plays
- morality plays
- stock epithets
- kennings
- frame stories
- moral tales

Effect:

- church instructs its people through the morality and miracle plays
- an illiterate population is able to hear and see the literature

Historical Context:

- Crusades bring the development of a money economy for the first time in Britain
- trading increases dramatically as a result of the Crusades
- William the Conqueror crowned king in 1066
- Henry III crowned king in 1154 brings a judicial system, royal courts, juries, and chivalry to Britain

Key Literature/Authors:

- Domesday Book
- L'Morte de Arthur
- Geoffrey Chaucer

