

Geoffrey Chaucer

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Geoffrey Chaucer (; JEF-ree CHAW-s■r; c. 1343 – 25 October 1400) was an English poet, writer and civil servant best known for *The Canterbury Tales*. He has been called the 'father of English literature', or alternatively, the 'father of English poetry'. He was the first writer to be buried in what has since become Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey. Chaucer also gained fame as a philosopher and astronomer, composing the scientific *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* for his ten-year-old son, Lewis. He maintained a career in public service as a bureaucrat, courtier, diplomat and member of the Parliament of England, having been elected as shire knight for Kent. Amongst his other works are *The Book of the Duchess*, *The House of Fame*, *The Legend of Good Women*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, and *Parlement of Foules*. A prolific writer, Chaucer has been seen as crucial in legitimising the literary use of Middle English at a time when the dominant literary languages in England were still Anglo-Norman French and Latin. His contemporary Thomas Hoccleve hailed him as "the firste fyndere of our fair langage" (i.e., the first one capable of finding poetic matter in English). Almost two thousand English words are first attested in Chaucerian manuscripts.