

Section 1 - Stanzas 1 - 10

Introduction: The Poet Reading in his Chamber

Re-read this section of the poem and answer the following questions. Make sure that your answers are written in such a way that you will be able to understand these at a later date when you come to use the notes for either a critical essay or as part of your revision for the exam.

Stanzas 1 – 3

1. What is the weather like when the poet begins to write?
2. What time of year is it?
3. Why do you think the poet chooses to mention the weather?
4. Write down all the astrological and zodiacal references in this part of the poem.

Stanzas 4 – 6

5. Why is his decision to pray to the goddess Venus and 'hir hie magnificence' an appropriate one?
6. What does the narrator say about love?
7. The poet changes his mind. What does the poet decide to do on impulse?

Stanzas 7 – 9

8. In your own words, give a brief account of Chaucer's story as it is recounted in stanzas 7 – 9.

Stanza 10

9. The narrator cannot guarantee the authenticity of the second story, anymore that he can be sure that Chaucer is telling the truth. What words tell you that the narrator isn't sure?
10. In what way does he open up the debate to discuss the wider 'world' of fiction?

Henryson's Narrator

It should be clear from your reading of the first section that Henryson 'narrator' has a 'voice' in the poem. This is clearly established in the first six stanzas.

❖ Look at Henryson's '*persona*'.

- i) In your own words, describe the persona by making a list of what is he like in appearance, what he does and 'personality'?
- ii) Referring to the text, use a quotation to support what you have written in the list.
- iii) Finally, what do you think perhaps is the opinion Henryson expected us to have of his narrator? Is this the same as your own opinion? Why is this important for your further reading of the text?
Give reasons for your answers.