



Pushing the Limits of Heritage Suggested Reading and Discussion Questions

Heritage...it's who and where we come from. And why it matters. Our personal past shapes our identity, grounding us in a culture and a place. But the speed of modern life dims that sense of belonging. It erodes old traditions and disrupts our ancestors' land. Each generation loses more of their origin story. And rebuilding those bonds can take years of effort.

The Pillars of the Earth

Ken Follett, Fiction. *The Pillars of the Earth* tells the story of Philip, prior of Kingsbridge, a devout and resourceful monk driven to build the greatest Gothic cathedral the world has known . . . of Tom, the mason who becomes his architect—a man divided in his soul . . . of the beautiful, elusive Lady Aliena, haunted by a secret shame . . . and of a struggle between good and evil that will turn church against state and brother against brother.

A spellbinding epic tale of ambition, anarchy, and absolute power set against the sprawling medieval canvas of twelfth-century England, this is Ken Follett's historical masterpiece. - [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

- Although *The Pillars of the Earth* is fiction, it includes some real-life characters and incidents from history, such as King Stephen at the battle of Lincoln, and the murder of Thomas Becket. Why does the author mix fact and fiction like this?
- Were there things about the building processes and materials that surprised you? Do you think you'll look at medieval churches with new eyes after reading *The Pillars of the Earth*? What about other historical structures? How and why would things be different if the cathedrals were being built today?
- Do you think that reading historical fiction is a good way to learn about a culture's heritage?

