*“And straightaway the four knights entered the house of prayer with swords sacrilegiously drawn, causing horror to the beholders by their very looks and the clanging of their arms. Inspired by fury the knights called out, ‘Where is Thomas Becket, traitor to the king and realm?’ At this he descended from the stair and in a clear voice answered, ‘I am here, no traitor to the king, but a priest. Why do ye seek me?’ …The murderers followed him; ‘Absolve’, they cried, ‘and restore to communion those whom you have excommunicated.’ He answered: ‘I will not absolve them.’*

*‘Then you shall die,’ they cried, ‘and receive what you deserve.’ ‘I am ready’, he replied ‘to die for my Lord, that in my blood the Church may obtain liberty and peace. But in the name of Almighty God, I forbid you to hurt my people whether clerk or lay.’*

*Then they laid sacrilegious hands on him.. At the third blow he fell on his knees and elbows, offering himself a living victim, and saying in a low voice, ‘For the Name of Jesus and the protection of the Church I am ready to embrace death.’ The fourth knight prevented any from interfering so that the others might freely perpetrate the murder. As to the fifth, he put his foot on the neck of the holy priest and precious martyr, and horrible to say, scattered his brains and blood over the pavement, calling out to the others, ‘Let us away, knights; he will rise no more.’*

An eyewitness description of the murder, written by Edward Grim, one of Becket’s priests, between five and seven years after the event.

1. What demands do the knights make of Becket before they kill him? Explain in your own words. (1)
2. What can we learn from the source about the knights? Explain in your own words. (3)
3. How useful is the source to an historian investigating the death of Thomas Becket? Use your **own knowledge** and the **provenance** of the source to answer this question. (6)

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