

Beowulf assignment

Your responses will be derived from the poem itself and by searching the relevant sites on the internet. Keep a log of your internet searches arranged by date, time, search engine used and URLs found.

1. compile a brief **TIMELINE** of major events in Anglo-Saxon England (choose five significant events with dates)
2. in what **MANUSCRIPT** does the poem appear? Where is it now located? Where, when, and by whom was the poem written?
3. compose a portrait of the **GERMANIC HEROIC CODE**. What heroic values are celebrated? Are these values consistently maintained? Is the poet "neutral"? Search for **TACITUS, GERMANIA**.
4. compose a portrait of the hero Beowulf. Can you reconstruct his **LIFE STORY** from childhood to death? What are his strengths and weaknesses?
5. what characteristics of **EPIC** can you find?
6. what characteristics of **ELEGY** can you find?
7. what specific **RELIGIOUS PRACTICES** are mentioned? Are the historical characters **PAGAN** or **CHRISTIAN**? What religion is the poet?
8. compose portraits of **GRENDDEL** and **GRENDDEL'S MOTHER**. What kind of creatures are they?
9. compose a portrait of the **DRAGON**?
10. look closely at the three **FIGHT SCENES**. What common themes or patterns can you find?
11. consider the treatment of **WOMEN** in the poem. Given the sexist depictions of women in later English literature, what is unusual about the Anglo-Saxon view? Look closely at Wealhtheow.
12. what are the functions of the many **DIGRESSIONS** (stories within the main story) in the poem? Look at the stories of Breca (l. 506), Sigemund (l. 875), Heremod (l.898), Finn (l. 1063), Modthrytho (l. 1925), Lay of the Last Survivor (l. 2247).
13. **ESSAY #1**: The main **THEME** or **PURPOSE** of Beowulf is