

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Beowulf Terminology

Note: Some of these words are repetitions from your reading notes. You are responsible for knowing the terms, regardless of whether you transfer the definitions to this page.

Anglo-Saxon –

Britons –

Caesura –

Comitatus –

Heriot –

Kenning –

Mead Hall –

Pagan –

Scop –

Synod –

Thane –

Wergild –

Wyrd –

## Beowulf Vocabulary

### *(1) Grendel Attacks the Danes*

moors –

spawned –

brood –

sprawled –

quench –

reparation –

plunder –

### *(2) The Coming of Beowulf*

moored –

sentinels –

gable –

purge –

gorge –

shrouds –

### *(3) The Battle with Grendel*

infamous –

taut –

sinews –

afflictions –

gaped –

murky –

pilgrimage –

### *(4) The Battle with Grendel's Mother*

clutched –

mail (p. 60) –

avenge –

loathsome –

### *(5) The Battle with the Dragon*

roused –

cavernous –

reproach –

endure –

comrades –

jackals –



5. How is Hrothgar's misery personified?

6. What Kenning's are used to describe Grendel?

7. Explain Grendel's nature as it is illustrated by the following items:

a. his ancestry:

b. his isolation:

c. his motives for coming to Hrothgar's battle hall:

d. the part of nature with which he is associated:

8. What conclusions can you draw about the last four lines? Why doesn't Grendel dare to touch the king's throne?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Beowulf, “The Coming of Beowulf”

*Glencoe British Literature*

1. What is Beowulf’s motivation for helping the Danes?
2. What is personified in line 110 and why does the personification make sense?
3. What two things are compared in line 114? Explain the comparison.
4. Explain the metaphor presented in lines 154-155.
5. Why does Beowulf spend so much time paying homage to Hrothgar upon entering Herot?







Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Beowulf, “The Battle with Grendel’s Mother”**

*Glencoe British Literature*

1. Why must Beowulf go to fight Grendel’s mother alone? How does this add to the journey of the archetypal hero?
2. What is significant about the line, “She welcomed him in her claws, / clutched at him savagely, but could not harm him”? How does this illustrate Beowulf’s position as a Christian warrior as well as intensify the battle of good versus evil?
3. Why do other sea creatures join in this fight? How is this battle different from his battle with Grendel? Why has it intensified?
4. How does Grendel’s mother also represent evil? In what ways is she similar / different from her son? Why is she able to wreak more damage to Beowulf than her son could?
5. What might Beowulf’s mail shirt symbolize and why?
6. How must Beowulf kill Grendel’s mom? What is symbolically significant in this action?

7. What happens to the imagery after her death? What archetypes play a role?
  
8. Why does Beowulf cut off Grendel's head although he finds Grendel dead in a corner?
  
9. Why does the sword melt after Beowulf's work was done?
  
10. What Christian elements are present during this scene? Why does the author incorporate them here? Essentially, according to the author, whose work was completed?
  
11. How does the lake's appearance change? Why?
  
12. Why does the water thicken with the monster's blood?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Beowulf, “The Battle with the Dragon”

*Glencoe British Literature*

1. What incident causes the dragon to attack Geatland?
2. What is the underlying message of the “last survivor of a noble race” who hid the treasure in the tower?
3. Compare and contrast the dragon with Grendel and Grendel’s mother.
4. Interpret the kenning in line 683 and explain its poetic effect.
5. How does Beowulf justify using weapons and armor in his fight with the fire dragon?
6. Is Beowulf’s decision to fight alone foolish or noble? Why?

7. When Beowulf challenges the fire-dragon, what kennings, words, or phrases are used to associate the dragon with evil?
  
8. What irony is expressed in lines 815-824?
  
9. Who is Wiglaf? Who is his father? How is he connected to Beowulf?
  
10. Why does Wiglaf chastise the other warriors?
  
11. What might Beowulf's shield symbolize at line 899?
  
12. What two things are compared in the metaphor at lines 946-951? What does the metaphor mean?
  
13. As he dies, for what does Beowulf say he is thankful?
  
14. Why does Beowulf want to see the treasure before he dies? What does it represent to him?
  
15. What does Beowulf mean when he says he sold his life well (line 1021)?