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Beowulf
BY ANONYMOUS



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Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**The Heroic Code****Objective:** Understanding the heroic code**Activity**

Beowulf is largely a reflection of the Germanic heroic code. This code, or system of beliefs, lays out the rules of conduct for a good man, warrior, and king. The rules involve different specific behaviors for the different classes of people who lived at the time. For example, warriors were expected to show strength, courage, and loyalty; kings, however, must exhibit political wisdom, along with gracious hospitality and generosity. The actions of the characters in *Beowulf* either conform to this code or deviate from it. What you will learn as you read the poem, however, is that this code is not only contradictory, but also oftentimes useless.

Here is a list of situations; next to each situation, write a sentence or two detailing how you believe a good, or moral, person would ideally react and why. Then, include what you personally would do and why.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters III and IV**Point of View**

Objective: Retelling a portion of the work from another point of view

Activity

How would Chapters III and IV be different if told from the point of view of the “scout,” or “shore-warden”? Rewrite both of them using the watchman’s perspective. As you write, keep in mind how the guard might feel about his job, his country, and the seemingly frightening invaders who have arrived.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters XIX and XX

Rewrite

Objective: Adapting two chapters from *Beowulf* into a television program format

Activity

Frequently on the news, after a major crime or disaster, involved parties are interviewed to give their impressions of the events. The victims range from sad and tearful to angry and vengeful. If Grendel's mother were to appear on a major news program or talk show, what would she say about her attack on Heorot? With a partner, develop a talk show interview or news program interview with Grendel's mother after her attack. Follow these steps:

1. Re-read Chapters XIX and XX.
2. With your partner, try to determine Grendel's mother's motivation for the attack. Was it simply to avenge her son's death, or does it go deeper than that? Keep in mind what you know about Grendel and his family.
3. Decide which of you will play Grendel's mother and which will play the interviewer. You also need to create a name for the mother [after all, you cannot call her only "Grendel's mother"] and for the interviewer. Possibly, you want to identify the name of the TV program.
4. Script the interview. Write a list of questions the interviewer will pose, and write Grendel's mother's answers to those questions. Your interview should run about five minutes in length.
5. Rehearse and be prepared to conduct your interview in front of the class.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters XXVII – XXXI

The Hero

Objective: Recognizing the traits of a hero

Activity

Beowulf was the supposed to be the ultimate ideal of what a hero of his time was. In the chart that follows, first complete the section on Beowulf the hero as you read the book. When you are finished reading the book and filling in the chart, choose someone who today would be considered a hero, either in books, magazines, TV, movies, or even real life. List that person's name in the blank at the top of the chart. After you have completed the chart for Beowulf and one other person, answer the questions on the attached sheet.

HERO CHART

Beowulf	
How is the hero portrayed?	
How does Beowulf treat his friends?	
Does Beowulf have any physical or mental gifts?	
Are the tasks Beowulf undertakes unusual in any way?	
Are the tasks Beowulf undertakes tried by anyone else?	
Does Beowulf have an antagonist he must meet at some point?	
Is Beowulf forced to take any perilous journeys?	
When is the hero Beowulf introduced in the story; is anyone in trouble?	
To whom does Beowulf thank for his greatness?	

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters XXXII – XLIII**Writing to Beowulf's Author****Objective:** Communicating with the author**Activity**

In the space that follows, write a letter to the author of *Beowulf* to give him or her your thoughts on the book (remember, no one knows exactly who wrote it). Include references to specific chapters to help describe your likes and dislikes of the book.

Include any questions that you have regarding the play itself, the language, or the creation of the book. Be sure to offer any advice that you think might help the author improve the book for contemporary audiences.

You might begin this way, although you may choose any beginning sentences.

Dear *Beowulf* author:

I've just finished reading *Beowulf*, and I have a few questions and comments for you. The great warrior Beowulf is given what is supposed to be a great sword named Hrunting. My question is, if the sword is so great, why does the blade melt when Beowulf tries to use it? Shouldn't it be a bit stronger than that?