

from *Beowulf*
translated by Burton Raffel

Directions: As you read your assigned sections with your group members, answer the questions completely and thoroughly.

Section 1-“The Monster Grendel”

1. Why is the monster “growling in pain” and “impatient”?
2. What imagery associated with Grendel foreshadows his evil nature?
3. What is being alluded to in lines 6-13?
4. Explain lines 19-23.

Section 2

5. Why do none of Hrothgar’s men challenge Grendel?
6. What evidence is there that Grendel symbolizes evil and that the conflict is not only between men but also between good and evil?
7. What is the implication of the fact that God prevents Grendel from touching Hrothgar’s throne?
8. What is the main idea of Section 2?

Section 3

9. Describe Beowulf’s character based on your interpretation of Section 3.
10. How do the “wise ones” view Beowulf?

Section 4-“The Arrival of the Hero”

11. Does Beowulf’s boasting show him to be offensively arrogant in lines 142-144?
12. In what situations today might such boasting be expected? (Lines 150-160)
13. Why do you think Beowulf intends to fight Grendel without a sword?
14. What is the purpose of Section 4?

Section 5

15. Why might Hrothgar find it necessary to remind Beowulf of the time he helped Beowulf of the time he helped Beowulf’s father?
16. What does Hrothgar’s speech tell us about him in lines 207-212?

Section 6-“Unferth’s Challenge”

17. What is Unferth’s motive for challenging Beowulf?
18. What is the purpose of Section 6?
19. What examples of alliteration do you see in lines 272-273 and lines 288-290 for example?

Section 7

20. Explain the metaphor in lines 293-297.
21. What does Beowulf believe about fate? (Lines 305-306)
22. In literature a foil is a character who contrasts with another. How does Unferth serve as a foil to Beowulf?
23. Welthow exhibits the qualities of Anglo-Saxon women of the time, as they are described as beloved, generous, gracious, and cheerful. How does Welthow fit the description in Women in Anglo-Saxon Culture on page 10?
24. How is the coming of night personified as the sun sets in lines 379-380?
25. What is the purpose of Hrothgar's promise to Beowulf?

Section 8—"The Battle with Grendel"

26. Why do you think Beowulf allows Grendel to slaughter one of the Geats before taking action himself?
27. What kennings associate Grendel with evil?
28. What specific verbs are used to create a tone of fierceness in Beowulf's confrontation with Grendel?
29. Describe the battle between Beowulf and Grendel starting from line 450.

Section 9

30. How do the actions of Beowulf's men uphold the Anglo-Saxon code of honor.
31. What did Grendel do to the men's swords in order to prevent them from hurting him?
32. Why do you think Beowulf hangs Grendel's arm from the rafters of Herot?

Section 10

33. Give three specific examples of how the people felt about the end result of the battle.

Section 11

34. What imagery in the description of Grendel's lair associates Grendel with death and darkness?

Section 12—"The Monster's Mother"