

Clash of the Gods: *Beowulf*

You may write on this sheet for the fill-in-the-blank questions only. Answer the remaining questions in complete sentences on your own paper and staple to the back of this page. May your *wyrd* be to your advantage in this endeavor!

1. *Beowulf* is considered the oldest story in the _____ language.
2. Explain Beowulf's connection to the heroes in Greek mythology.
3. What is the difference between the actual composition date of the poem and the setting of the poem?
4. The *Beowulf* poet recasts these pagan, Norse oral stories into a _____ mold, so that its listeners would be able to keep in touch with their past.
5. What is Grendel's link to the Old Testament?
6. Why do you think Grendel's physical appearance is left to the imagination?
7. For how long does Grendel hold Heorot under siege?
8. Who is the one person that Grendel is not allowed to harm?
9. Men have stopped sleeping in Heorot. How does Beowulf ensure that Grendel will attack?
10. What curse has Grendel placed?
11. Explain how the human remains excavated at Sutton Hoo may have inspired the *Beowulf* poet.
12. What overshadows the celebration of Beowulf as a superhero?
13. What is known about real funerals in the ancient Norse world?
14. Why is this significant to our understanding of the poem?
15. What other evidence did the archeological excavation at Sutton Hoo yield about the world of Beowulf?
16. What other archeological site has yielded evidence of truth behind myth?
17. What does Heorot mean?
18. What is the name of fact-based Norse family histories recorded between 1,100 and 1,400 AD?
19. These above mentioned stories tell of a Danish king named _____, who lived around the 5th or 6th AD, suggesting that perhaps Beowulf was a real hero.
20. What advice does Beowulf give to Hrothgar after the attacks by Grendel's mother?
21. Surrounding the lair of Grendel's mother is an icy lake which swarms with poisonous snakes and sea dragons. What do these creatures symbolize?
22. What does Unferth give to Beowulf before he faces Grendel's mother (hint: it is tempered in blood and has never failed in battle before)?
23. As Beowulf fights Grendel's mother, he discovers his sword, Hrunting, is useless. Describe the use of the literary device *deus ex machina* in this portion of the poem?
24. Explain death of Grendel's mother as a religious metaphor.
25. In 600 AD, Roman Christians came north to the British Isles to convert the nonbelievers. Whom did Pope Gregory send and what was his strategy to achieve the conversion of the pagans?
26. Pre-Christian legends lived on in stories these new Christians passed down, including *Beowulf*. They retained the old-fashioned heroic values of the Norse era such as bravery in adversity and loyalty to comrades. However, Christians recast the story of *Beowulf* as a _____ for the battle of good and evil.
27. After the defeat of Grendel's dam, Beowulf returns to _____ to find his people embroiled in a civil war.
28. Beowulf's final battle is against mythology's ultimate monster, the dragon, which often in literature represents the human sin of _____, amplified.
29. Facing certain death, Beowulf leads his bravest men into battle against the dragon. What is the response of his men?
30. What is ironic about Wiglaf's heroics against the Dragon of Earnaness?