

## ***Beowulf* Introductory Activity**

### **Introductory Description:**

Beowulf is an Anglo-Saxon epic poem, the most important work of Old English literature and one of the earliest extant poems in modern times. The only surviving manuscript was discovered in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the English antiquarian, Sir Robert Cotton (1571-1631). It has been preserved since 1753 in the Codex Vittelius AXV in the British Museum.

The somber story is told in vigorous, picturesque language, with much use of metaphors. It tells of a hero, a Scandinavian prince named Beowulf, who rids the Danes of the monster Grendel, half man and half fiend. Fifty years later, Beowulf succeeds in repeating these exploits, freeing his own land from devastation.

*Beowulf* has been published and translated into modern English frequently since 1833, sometimes in prose.

### **Pre-Reading Activity: *Getting Ready to Read*** **Activity 1: Quickwrite**

**Directions:** In groups of three to four (no more), you will have 10-15 minutes to complete the following questions on your paper. Be prepared to share with the rest of the class!

1. List all of the superheroes that you can think of.

2. What are some common traits that all of these superheroes have?
3. Why are superheroes so important in society?