

Before-Reading Activities

Directions: Before you read Episodes 7-9 of *Beowulf*, review the vocabulary and terms for this reading and answer the short-answer questions.

Vocabulary Word	Definition
plaited (verb)	twisted together or braided
turbid (adj.)	not clean or clear; murky and cloudy
resolute (adj.)	very determined
requite (verb)	to give or to do something in return
adversary (noun)	an enemy or opponent
renown (noun)	great fame and respect
affliction (noun)	something that causes pain or suffering
contention (noun)	a belief that is argued or stated
insidious (adj.)	causing harm in a way that is gradual or not easily noticed
malice (noun)	a desire to cause harm to another person

Definition

Example

foreshadowing

hints provided by a writer about what will happen later in a narrative

These lines from Act I, Scene IV, of *Romeo and Juliet* foreshadow the end of the play: "I fear too early, for my mind misgives / Some consequence yet hanging in the stars / Shall bitterly begin his fearful date / With this night's revels, and expire the term / Of a despised life closed in my breast / By some vile forfeit of untimely death."

1. In three to five sentences, summarize Episodes 4-6 of *Beowulf*.

2. So far in the epic, the author has given Beowulf some superhuman abilities, such as super strength, which helps him complete heroic tasks, including slaying Grendel. Think about heroes and superheroes in modern culture. Why do you think Beowulf is given these abilities even though he is a mortal man?

3. Throughout *Beowulf*, a lot of treasure is given to warriors from kings and passed down from generation to generation. Think about heirlooms, prized possessions, or other things that have been in your family for generations. What are they and why are they valuable?

During-Reading Activities

Directions: Read Episodes 7-9 of *Beowulf*. As you read, answer these questions. When you are finished, save your work and complete the rest of the lesson.

Episode 7

1. How do Beowulf, Hrothgar, and the warriors find Grendel's mother?
2. What are some of the disturbing things that the warriors see when they reach the cliff that overlooks Grendel's mother's lair?
3. How does Beowulf prepare himself before jumping in the water? What does Unferth give him and why?
4. Before finally setting off to battle Grendel's mother, Beowulf has a conversation with King Hrothgar to ensure that he keeps the promises which he made to Beowulf. What are these promises?

5. In this episode in particular, the author utilizes the willing suspension of disbelief. The reader is asked to sacrifice the realism and logic of a situation for the sake of enjoyment. In other words, the reader should just take what is happening in the story at face value and believe it to be true without questioning it. How is this implemented when the narrator talks about how Beowulf found Grendel's mother's lair? Why might this technique be used by the author?

6. What happens once Beowulf approaches the home of Grendel's mother? Summarize the interaction between the two characters.

7. What does Beowulf do to Grendel's body?

Episode 8

1. Why do the Danes and King Hrothgar leave the lake?

2. What happens to the sword that Beowulf found in the underwater cave? What are the two things that Beowulf takes back with him instead?

3. Who does Beowulf credit with his victory over Grendel's mother? What does his speech (along with the other religious references in the epic) reveal about his character and about the beliefs of the Danes and Geats?

4. Why is the story that King Hrothgar tells about the late King Heremod significant? What advice does he give to Beowulf?

5. During Hrothgar's speech, he reveals an insecurity about his leadership to Beowulf. What is it? How does his guilt become absolved?

Episode 9

1. In Episode 9, there is a time lapse and the reader learns that Beowulf has become king of the Geats. How did this happen? For how long has he been ruling when the episode begins?

2. What creature is now causing problems in the Geat kingdom? Why?

3. Foreshadowing is again used in this section, as the narrator gives the reader a hint about Beowulf's future in the last section. What will happen to Beowulf? How do you think it will happen?

4. Who does Beowulf blame for the destruction of his kingdom and why? What does he plan to do about it?