

# ***Beowulf* Annotations/Study Guide**

## **Themes, Motifs, and Concerns**

- Courage and Wisdom
- Good vs. Evil
- Hate and Revenge
- Heroism, Honor, and Sacrifice
- Royalty and Subjects
- Loyalty and Friendship
- Heirlooms and Marriage
- Names, Family, and Community
- Lineage and Heritage
- Identity and Reputation
- Power
- Degeneration and Death
- Grief vs. Hope
- Inevitability
- Divine Will and Faith
- Danger
- Vulnerability
- Fleeing and Exile

## **Settings and Symbols**

- Boasting
- Burial / Funeral Pyres
- The Coast and the Whale-Road
- The Dragon / The Hoard
- Grendel's Mere
- Heorot Hall / Denmark
- Hygelac's Great Building
- Swords (Hrunting/Naegling)

## **Characters, Nations, and Peoples**

- Beowulf
- Hrothgar
- Grendel
- Unferth
- Grendel's Mother (Grendma)
- Shield Sheafson
- Wealhtheow
- Heorogar
- Heorowearð
- Halga
- Hrethric
- Hrothmund
- Hrothulf
- Aeschere
- Sigemund
- Wulfgar
- Heremod
- Finn
- Hengest
- Ecgtheow
- Heatholaf
- Hygelac
- Halfdane
- Beow
- Eofor
- Wiglaf
- Hygd
- Hrethel
- Herebeald
- Haethcyn
- Heardred
- Hildeburh
- Hnaef
- Ongentheow
- Onela the Swede
- Onthere
- Eadgils
- Eanmund
- Weohstan
- Modthryth
- The Dragon
- Ingeld
- Freawaru
- Breca
- Friesland (Franks)
- Finland (Frisians)
- Denmark (Danes)
- Sweden (Swedes or Shylfings)
- Geatland (Geats)
- Waegmundings
- Heathobards
- Wulfings

## Poetic Terms

- Alliteration
- Anapest
- Assonance
- Consonance
- Dactyl
- Enjambment
- Foot/Feet
- Iamb
- Kenning
- Meter
- Prosody
- Scansion
- Scop
- Trochee

## Introduction, Margins, and Miscellany

Understand:

- The breakdown of the entire plot.
- The history of the poem.
- Heaney's translation process.
- How we've studied *Beowulf* over the years, and how our attitudes regarding the poem have changed.
- How the poem's structure reflects its larger concerns.
- The motives of specific characters.
- Everything from the lectures in class that isn't specifically mentioned here!

## Study Questions

Can you explain how characters relate to one another? (For example, can you tell the difference between the Geats and the Danes?)

Can you remember the differences between the royalty and those who serve them?

Can you remember the poetry terms that we cover in the very beginning of the unit?

Can you summarize the plot of the whole poem in a couple of paragraphs?

Can you lay out the events of the poem in a timeline format (considering that the poem jumbles those events)?

Do you know why each of the "stories within the story" exists?

Can you find parallels between characters?

Can you provide textual examples that relate to each of our themes?