**Focus and Motivate**

**COMMON CORE FOCUS**

**RL 2** Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text. **RL 3** Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story. **RL 4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. **W 2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. **W 9a (RL 3)** Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. **L 1a** Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention and can change over time. **L 3** Apply knowledge of language to make effective choices for meaning or style. **L 4a** Use context as a clue to the meaning of a word. **L 4b** Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech. **L 5a** Interpret figures of speech in context and analyze their role in the text. **L 5b** Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The original Beowulf manuscript …
- exists in only one copy.
- was damaged and nearly destroyed in a fire in the 18th century.
- has now been preserved through digitization.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Have students read this page and summarize key points about the history of Beowulf. Point out that Beowulf, as recorded by the monks, is the most famous surviving epic of its time.

**Selection Resources**

See resources on the Teacher One Stop DVD-ROM and on thinkcentral.com.

**RESOURCE MANAGER UNIT 1**
- Plan and Teach, pp. 11–18
- Summary, pp. 19–20†
- Text Analysis and Reading Skill, pp. 21–24†
- Vocabulary, pp. 25–27†
- Grammar and Style, p. 30

**DIAGNOSTIC AND SELECTION TESTS**
- Selection Tests, pp. 25–28

**BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT**
- Definition Mapping, p. E6
- Jigsaw Reading, p. A1
- Comparison Matrix, p. A24
- Cluster Diagram, p. B18

**INTERACTIVE READER**

ADAPTED INTERACTIVE READER
- ELL ADAPTED INTERACTIVE READER

**TECHNOLOGY**
- Teacher One Stop DVD-ROM
- Student One Stop DVD-ROM
- PowerNotes DVD-ROM
- Audio Anthology CD
- GrammarNotes DVD-ROM
- ExamView Test Generator on the Teacher One Stop

**Video Trailer**

Go to thinkcentral.com to preview the Video Trailer introducing this selection. Other features that support the selection include:
- PowerNotes presentation
- ThinkAloud models to enhance comprehension
- WordSharp vocabulary tutorials
- Interactive writing and grammar instruction

**The Anglo-Saxon Epic**

from Beowulf
Epic Poem by the Beowulf Poet Translated by Burton Raffel

**The Beowulf Poet** about 750?

Old English bears little resemblance to Modern English and so must be translated for readers today. By the time Beowulf was written, the Anglo-Saxons had also converted to Christianity. This Christian influence is evident in the poem.

**Long Ago and Far Away** Although Beowulf was composed in England, the poem describes events that take place in Scandinavia around the 500s among two groups: the Danes of what is now Denmark and the Geats (gēts) of what is now Sweden. Beowulf is a Geat warrior who crosses the sea to defeat Grendel, a monster who is terrorizing the Danes. He later returns to his homeland to succeed his uncle as king of the Geats.

Beowulf celebrates warrior culture and deeds requiring great strength and courage. Scops recited the poem and other tales in mead halls, large wooden buildings that provided a safe haven for warriors returning from battle. During the performances, audiences feasted and drank mead, an alcoholic beverage.

**Survivor** The sole surviving copy of Beowulf dates from about the year 1000. It is the work of Christian monks who preserved the literature of the past by copying manuscripts. After suffering mistreatment and several near-disasters, the Beowulf manuscript is now safely housed in the British Library in London.

**Video Trailer**

Go to thinkcentral.com to preview the Video Trailer introducing this selection. Other features that support the selection include:
- PowerNotes presentation
- ThinkAloud models to enhance comprehension
- WordSharp vocabulary tutorials
- Interactive writing and grammar instruction

**Author Online**

Go to thinkcentral.com. KEYWORD: HML12-40A

**Common Core**

**RL 3** Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story.

**RL 4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.
Where do MONSTERS lurk?

Unlike the monsters in Beowulf, those in our world are not always easy to identify. Evil can hide in the most unexpected places: behind a smiling face, between the lines of a law, in otherwise noble-sounding words. Even when evil is clearly exposed, people may disagree on how to confront it.

QUICKWRITE What does evil mean to you? Write your own definition of the word, and provide some examples of real-life monsters.

READING STRATEGY: READING OLD ENGLISH POETRY

Old English poetry is marked by a strong rhythm that is easy to chant or sing. Here are some of the techniques used in an Old English poem:

- alliteration, or the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words, which helps unify the lines
- caesura (ka-sər-ə), or a pause dividing each line, with each part having two accented syllables to help maintain the rhythm of the lines
- kenning, a metaphorical compound word or phrase substituted for a noun or name, which enhances meaning—for example, "mankind's enemy" used in place of "Grendel"

As you read Beowulf, note examples of these techniques and consider their effect on rhythm and meaning in the poem.

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

The words shown here help convey the monstrous forces Beowulf faces in the epic. Choose a word from the list that has the same definition as each numbered item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD LIST</th>
<th>affiction</th>
<th>lair</th>
<th>purge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gorge</td>
<td>lived</td>
<td>talon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>infamous</td>
<td></td>
<td>loathsome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. claw  
2. burden  
3. notorious  
4. cram

Complete the activities in your Reader/Writer Notebook.
Hrothgar (hrôth’gär’), king of the Danes, has built a wonderful mead hall called Herot (hDrEt), where his subjects congregate and make merry. As this selection opens, a fierce and powerful monster named Grendel invades the mead hall, bringing death and destruction.

A powerful monster, living down
In the darkness, growled in pain, impatient
As day after day the music rang
Loud in that hall, the harp's rejoicing
Call and the poet's clear songs, sung
Of the ancient beginnings of us all, recalling
The Almighty making the earth, shaping
These beautiful plains marked off by oceans,
Then proudly setting the sun and moon
To glow across the land and light it;
The corners of the earth were made lovely with trees
And leaves, made quick with life, with each
Of the nations who now move on its face. And then
As now warriors sang of their pleasure:

Practice and Apply

SUMMARY
The monster Grendel has been terrorizing the Danes. Beowulf, a young prince of the Geats, sails to the Danish shore and offers to kill Grendel. The Danish king Hrothgar gratefully accepts. A fierce battle between Beowulf and the monster ends with Grendel's death. When Grendel's mother seeks revenge, Beowulf battles with her and kills her. Years later, when Beowulf is the aged king of the Geats, he fights a dragon. Beowulf defeats the beast but is mortally wounded. The Geats build a tower in memory of their beloved leader.

READ WITH A PURPOSE
Help students set a purpose for reading. As they read Beowulf, tell students to look for contemporary aspects of the epic.

OLD ENGLISH POETRY
Possible answer: The alliteration conveys a menacing mood, a mood of evil.
Extend the Discussion How might the idea that the monster is "impatient" foreshadow future events in the poem?

Analyze Visuals
Examine the composition, or arrangement of shapes, in this photograph. How does the angle of the photo contribute to its impact?

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
Word Associations Instruct students to prepare a visual representation of a scene from Beowulf. Tell them to carefully reread the lines describing their chosen scene. Have students create a list of any descriptive words they encounter. They should then use these words to help them create their visual representation.

FOR STRUGGLING READERS
The Audio Anthology CD provides extra support for students with reading difficulties. It is also recommended for use with English language learners.
CULTURAL CONNECTION

Oral Poets

Explain that oral poet-singers were not unique to Anglo-Saxon civilization. Other cultures had them as well. For example, the Celtic peoples of Britain and Ireland had oral poets known as bards, who sang of the deeds of great heroes, such as King Arthur. The people of West Africa had oral historians known as griots, who preserved and passed on accounts of heroic deeds and events. The most famous of the tales told by the griots is probably the African epic Sundiata.

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Vocabulary Support
Use Definition Mapping to teach these words: grant (line 160), final (line 281), survive (line 625), brief (line 686).

BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT—Transparency
Definition Mapping p. E6

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP

Analyze Tone
Instruct students to refer to the first passage in Beowulf. Ask them to describe the mood of the monster. Have students discuss how this description might serve as a foreshadowing of events to come.

Possible answer: Grendel is described as living in darkness and being in pain and impatient, negative characteristics that foreshadow the difficult and violent times to come.

Analyze Visuals

Possible answer: The low angle makes the dead tree seem more ominous because it looms overhead and is silhouetted against the moon.
Where do Monsters lurk?

In lines 19–29, Grendel is said to have descended from Cain. How does this indicate that Grendel is evil? Possible answer: In the biblical book of Genesis, Cain intentionally kills his brother Abel, becoming history’s first murderer. The Beowulf poet portrays Grendel as a descendent of Cain to emphasize the monster’s inherent evil.

TEXT ANALYSIS

EPIC

Possible answer: The lines might suggest the idea of good triumphing over evil or God triumphing over the Devil.

EPIC

Possible answer: The tone of this passage is one of great sorrow. The words “joyless,” “mourning,” and “wept” all strongly convey Hrothgar’s despair at seeing the brutalized bodies of his warriors.

Extend the Discussion What is the meaning of lines 48–49? “...fearing / The beginning might not be the end”?

VOCABULARY

OWN THE WORD

lair: Have students create a semantic map for lair. Write the word in a center circle and add the definition given, “the den or resting place of a wild animal.” Draw spider legs from the center circle and have students add synonyms to complete the map. Possible answers: nest, hideaway, haunt, hole, burrow.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Vocabulary: Multiple-Meaning Words

[small-group option] Explain that the verb stir as it is used in line 16 means “to become active.” However, stir also has other meanings, such as “to mix with a circular motion.” Discuss how students can use context clues to figure out the appropriate meaning of a multiple-meaning word. Then have mixed-language-ability Jigsaw groups investigate these other multiple-meaning words and share their findings: moors (line 17); drove (line 23); bitter (line 24); brood (line 28); will (line 29); broke (line 43); rest (line 54); bent (line 86).

BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT

Jigsaw Reading p. A1
So Grendel ruled, fought with the righteous,
60 One against many, and won; so Herot
Stood empty, and stayed deserted for years,
Twelve winters of grief for Hrothgar, king
Of the Danes, sorrow heaped at his door
By hell-forged hands. His misery leaped.
65 The seas, was told and sung in all
Men's ears: how Grendel's hatred began,
How the monster relished his savage war
On the Danes, keeping the bloody feud
Alive, seeking no peace, offering
70 No truce, accepting no settlement, no price
In gold or land, and paying the living
For one crime only with another. No one
Waited for reparation from his plundering claws:
That shadow of death hunted in the darkness,
75 Stalked Hrothgar's warriors, old
And young, lying in waiting, hidden
In mist, invisibly following them from the edge
Of the marsh, always there, unseen.
So mankind's enemy continued his crimes,
80 Killing as often as he could, coming
Alone, bloodthirsty and horrible. Though he lived
In Herot, when the night hid him, he never
Dared to touch king Hrothgar's glorious
Throne, protected by God—God,
85 Whose love Grendel could not know. But Hrothgar's
Heart was bent. The best and most noble
Of his council debated remedies, sat
In secret sessions, talking of terror
And wondering what the bravest of warriors could do.
90 And sometimes they sacrificed to the old stone gods,
Made heathen vows, hoping for Hell's
Support, the Devil's guidance in driving
Their affliction off. That was their way,
And the heathen's only hope, Hell
95 Always in their hearts, knowing neither God
Nor His passing as He walks through our world, the Lord
Of Heaven and earth; their ears could not hear
His praise nor know His glory. Let them
Beware, those who are thrust into danger,
100 Clutched at by trouble, yet can carry no solace
In their hearts, cannot hope to be better! Hail
To those who will rise to God, drop off
Their dead bodies and seek our Father's peace!
So the living sorrow of Healfdane's son
Simmered, bitter and fresh, and no wisdom
Or strength could break it: that agony hung
On king and people alike, harsh
And unending, violent and cruel, and evil.
In his far-off home Beowulf, Higlac's
Follower and the strongest of the Geats—greater
And stronger than anyone anywhere in this world—
Heard how Grendel filled nights with horror
And quickly commanded a boat fitted out,
Proclaiming that he'd go to that famous king,
Now when help was needed. None
Of the wise ones regretted his going, much
As he was loved by the Geats: the omens were good,
And they urged the adventure on. So Beowulf
Chose the mightiest men he could find,
The bravest and best of the Geats, fourteen
In all, and led them down to their boat;

105 Simmered, bitter and fresh, and no wisdom
Or strength could break it: that agony hung
On king and people alike, harsh
And unending, violent and cruel, and evil.
In his far-off home Beowulf, Higlac's
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And they urged the adventure on. So Beowulf
Chose the mightiest men he could find,
The bravest and best of the Geats, fourteen
In all, and led them down to their boat;

104 Healfdane's son: Hrothgar.


DIFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP
Analyze Technique Ask students to study lines 104–108. Then have them discuss the poet's technique, especially his use of imagery (“the living sorrow . . . Simmered”); sentence structure; and adjectives (“harsh / And unending, violent and cruel, and evil”) to convey meaning and create a mood. Challenge students to write a concise paragraph conveying the same information in a similarly imaginative way. Have them share their paragraph with a small group.

FOR RELUCTANT READERS
Connect to the Text Have students reread lines 120–122. Ask students if they were going to fight Grendel, who they would choose to go with them. What characteristics would they look for in these warriors? Possible answer: The warriors should be loyal to their leader, brave, and strong.
He knew the sea, would point the prow
Straight to that distant Danish shore...  

Beowulf and his men sail over the sea to the land of the Danes to offer help to Hrothgar. They are escorted by a Danish guard to Herot, where Wulfgar, one of Hrothgar's soldiers, tells the king of their arrival. Hrothgar knows of Beowulf and is ready to welcome the young prince and his men.

Then Wulfgar went to the door and addressed the waiting seafarers with soldier's words:

“My lord, the great king of the Danes, commands me to tell you that he knows of your noble birth and that having come to him from over the open sea you have come bravely and are welcome. Now go to him as you are, in your armor and helmets, but leave your battle-shields here, and your spears, let them lie waiting for the promises your words may make.”

Beowulf arose, with his men.

Around him, ordering a few to remain with their weapons, leading the others quickly along under Herot's steep roof into Hrothgar's Presence. Standing on that prince's own hearth, Helmeted, the silvery metal of his mail shirt gleaming with a smith's high art, he greeted the Danes' great lord:

"Hail, Hrothgar!
Higlac is my cousin and my king. Of my youth have been filled with glory. Now Grendel's Name has echoed in our land: sailors of my youth have been filled with glory. Now Grendel's Name has echoed in our land: sailors..."

Have brought us stories of Herot, the best of all mead-halls, deserted and useless when the moon hangs in skies the sun had lit, Light and life fleeing together. My people have said, the wisest, most knowing And best of them, that my duty was to go to the Danes' Great king. They have seen my strength for themselves, have watched me rise from the darkness of war, dripping with my enemies' blood. I drove five great giants into chains, chased all of that race from the earth. I swam in the blackness of night, hunting monsters Out of the ocean, and killing them one...

139 mail shirt: flexible body armor made of metal links or overlapping metal scales.
140 smith's high art: the skilled craft of a blacksmith (a person who fashions objects from iron).
142 cousin: here, a general term for a relative. Beowulf is actually Higlac's nephew.

Point out that lines 145–147 describe Herot. Elicit or explain that the phrase “life fleeing” in line 148 refers to people leaving Herot in fear of Grendel's deadly attacks.
TEXT ANALYSIS

EPIC

Possible answer: The people of Beowulf’s time might have valued great strength and courage because they were frequently attacked by enemies.

TIERED DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Use these prompts to help students understand Beowulf’s offer to fight Grendel, which is discussed in lines 160–189:

Summarize  What is Beowulf asking of Hrothgar?  Possible answer: Beowulf is asking Hrothgar to let him and his men fight Grendel.

Interpret  Why does Beowulf insist that “my hands alone shall fight for me”?  Possible answer: Because Grendel “needs no weapons,” Beowulf feels that fighting him with “hands alone” gives Beowulf no advantage and thus makes the fight fair.

Evaluate  What is the significance of Beowulf’s statement, “Fate will unwind as it must”?  Possible answer: As discussed in the historical essay, such fatalism was part of the Anglo-Saxons’ pagan religion.

VOCABULARY

OWN THE WORD

• purge: Tell students that the connotation of purge in this sentence is “to purify.” Then have them explain why Beowulf is calling for the hall to be purged. Possible answer: The hall is to be purified, rid of evil.

• gorge: Tell students that the Latin root for gorge is gurga, “throat.” Remind students that in this instance gorge is used as a verb, and review the definition with them. Then have them identify the meaning of gorge when it is used as a noun. Possible answer: A gorge is a deep narrow passage with steep sides.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP

Analyze Tone and Characterization  As students read Beowulf, ask them to reflect on the poet’s tone and characterization. What can students infer about the poet’s feelings toward Beowulf?  toward Hrothgar?  toward the poem’s other characters?  Does the poet depict all of the characters in a black-and-white way, as either good or bad, or are there shades of gray?  Does the poet imply any opinions?  Direct students to write a brief essay summarizing and supporting their conclusions. Then ask students to compare their observations.
Kingdom and its golden city: Hergar,
My older brother, a far better man
Than I, had died and dying made me,
Second among Healfdane's sons, first
In this nation. I bought the end of Edgetho's
Quarrel, sent ancient treasures through the ocean's
Furrows to the Wulfings; your father swore
He'd keep that peace. My tongue grows heavy,
And my heart, when I try to tell you what Grendel
Has brought us, the damage he's done, here
In this hall. You see for yourself how much smaller
Our ranks have become, and can guess what we've lost
to his terror. Surely the Lord Almighty
Could stop his madness, smother his lust!
How many times have my men, glowing
With courage drawn from too many cups
Of ale, sworn to stay after dark
And stem that horror with a sweep of their swords.
And then, in the morning, this mead-hall glittering
With new light would be drenched with blood, the benches
Stained red, the floors, all wet from that fiend's
Savage assault—and my soldiers would be fewer
Still, death taking more and more.
But to table, Beowulf, a banquet in your honor:
Let us toast your victories, and talk of the future.

Then Hrothgar's men gave places to the Geats,
Yielded benches to the brave visitors
And led them to the feast. The keeper of the mead
Came carrying out the carved flasks,
And poured that bright sweetness. A poet
Sang, from time to time, in a clear
Pure voice. Danes and visiting Geats
Celebrated as one, drank and rejoiced.

Edgetho by sending treasures to Edgetho's enemies, the Wulfings, thus buying peace between the tribes.
After the banquet, Hrothgar and his followers leave Herot, and Beowulf and his warriors remain to spend the night. Beowulf reiterates his intent to fight Grendel without a sword and, while his followers sleep, lies waiting, eager for Grendel to appear.

Out from the marsh, from the foot of misty Hills and bogs, bearing God's hatred,

Grendel came, hoping to kill i

Anyone he could trap on this trip to high Herot.

He moved quickly through the cloudy night,

Up from his swampland, sliding silently

Toward that gold-shining hall. He had visited Hrothgar's

Home before, knew the way—

But never, before nor after that night,

Found Herot defended so firmly, his reception

So harsh. He journeyed, forever joyless,

Straight to the door, then snapped it open,

Tore its iron fasteners with a touch

THE BATTLE WITH GRENDEL

After the banquet, Hrothgar and his followers leave Herot, and Beowulf and his warriors remain to spend the night. Beowulf reiterates his intent to fight Grendel without a sword and, while his followers sleep, lies waiting, eager for Grendel to appear.

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Tore its iron fasteners with a touch

Possible answer: The rhythm of the lines reflects the relentless, ominous approach of Grendel as he advances on Herot.

OLD ENGLISH POETRY
Reread lines 233–235. Notice that the translator uses punctuation to convey the effect of the midline pauses, or caesuras, in the lines. In what way does the rhythm created by the pauses reinforce the action recounted here?

Possible answer: marsh, lake: hell; Herot: heaven. Extend the discussion by asking students to recall other poems, short stories, or novels they may have read in which characters or settings symbolized similar ideas. Have students compare the writing techniques used and discuss which ones were most effective.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION
FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP
Analyze Symbolism As students read, have them explore the symbolism in Beowulf. For example, ask what Grendel (and later, Grendel’s mother and the dragon) might symbolize. Possible answer: the universal idea of evil; death; revenge. Remind students that setting, too, has symbolic significance. Ask them to consider the location and description of Grendel’s marsh, the lake, and Herot. What might the places symbolize?

Possible answer: marsh, lake: hell; Herot: heaven. Extend the discussion by asking students to recall other poems, short stories, or novels they may have read in which characters or settings symbolized similar ideas. Have students compare the writing techniques used and discuss which ones were most effective.
And rushed angrily over the threshold.
He strode quickly across the inlaid
Floor, snarling and fierce: his eyes
Gleamed in the darkness, burned with a gruesome
Light. Then he stopped, seeing the hall
Crowded with sleeping warriors, stuffed
With rows of young soldiers resting together.
And his heart laughed, he relished the sight,
Intended to tear the life from those bodies
By morning; the monster’s mind was hot
With the thought of food and the feasting his belly
Would soon know. But fate, that night, intended
Grendel to gnaw the broken bones
Of his last human supper. Human
Eyes were watching his evil steps,
Waiting to see his swift hard claws.
Grendel snatched at the first Geat
He came to, ripped him apart, cut
His body to bits with powerful jaws,
Drank the blood from his veins and bolted
Him down, hands and feet; death
And Grendel’s great teeth came together,
Snapping life shut. Then he stepped to another
Still body, clutched at Beowulf with his claws,
Grasped at a strong-hearted wakeful sleeper
—and was instantly seized himself, claws
Bent back as Beowulf leaned up on one arm.
That shepherd of evil, guardian of crime,
Knew at once that nowhere on earth
Had he met a man whose hands were harder;
His mind was flooded with fear—but nothing
Could take his talons and himself from that tight
Hard grip. Grendel’s one thought was to run
From Beowulf, flee back to his marsh and hide there:
This was a different Herot than the hall he had emptied.
But Higlac’s follower remembered his final
Boast and, standing erect, stopped
The monster’s flight, fastened those claws
In his fists till they cracked, clutched Grendel
Closer. The infamous killer fought
For his freedom, wanting no flesh but retreat,
Desiring nothing but escape; his claws
Had been caught, he was trapped. That trip to Herot
Was a miserable journey for the writhing monster!

246 threshold: the strip of wood or stone at the bottom of a doorway.

TIERED DISCUSSION PROMPTS
Use these prompts to help students understand the battle between Beowulf and Grendel in lines 268–288:

Connect In what ways is Beowulf’s encounter with Grendel similar to other man-monster clashes you’ve read about or seen on television or in the movies? How is it different? Accept all thoughtful responses.

Analyze What character traits of an epic hero does Beowulf display in this passage? Possible answer: Beowulf shows incredible courage and superhuman strength, facing Grendel without a weapon, seizing Grendel’s claws, and preventing the monster from escaping.

Synthesize How do you predict the battle between Beowulf and Grendel will end? Accept all reasonable responses.

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
Comprehension: Text Structure Point out the sudden narrative shift in line 271. Discuss how the poet first establishes a strong forward flow in lines 262–270, conveying Grendel’s seemingly unstoppable advance. Then, abruptly, the poet inserts a dash at the beginning of line 271, and the forward flow is reversed in lines 271–272: “[Grendel] was instantly seized himself, claws / Bent back.” Discuss how this shift adds drama to the narrative.

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP
Hypothesize Have students reread Grendel’s attack on these two pages. Point out that Beowulf does not spring into action until after Grendel kills one of the sleeping Geats (lines 262–268). Have students reflect on the possible reasons for Beowulf’s delay. That is, why does Beowulf not act immediately, so as to spare the Geat’s life? Have students summarize their conclusions in a well-written paragraph, and then share their conclusions with the class.

VOCABULARY
infamous (in′fa-mas) adj. having a very bad reputation

REVISIT THE BIG QUESTION
Where do MONSTERS lurk?
Discuss In lines 247–257, what specific details suggest that Grendel is a creature of pure evil? Possible answer: The poet describes him in frightening terms: “snarling and fierce: his eyes . . . burned with a gruesome / Light” (lines 248–250). He tells how Grendel laughs cruelly, relishing the idea of tearing the young soldiers apart and devouring them.

talon (tā′lən) n. a claw
278–289 Up to this point Grendel has killed his human victims easily.

VOCABULARY
• talon: Have students name birds of prey that are known for their sharp talons and explain how the talons are used. Possible answers: eagles, hawks, osprey, falcons; to catch prey
• infamous: Have students name famous people from various walks of life, including presidents and other elected officials, business people, actors, and athletes. Then have students name some infamous people from the same categories. Make a class list and discuss the differences in achievements, why some people are famous and why some are infamous.
The high hall rang, its roof boards swayed,  
And Danes shook with terror. Down  
The aisles the battle swept, angry  
And wild. Herot trembled, wonderfully  
Built to withstand the blows, the struggling  
Great bodies beating at its beautiful walls;  
Shaped and fastened with iron, inside  
And out, artfully worked, the building  
Stood firm. Its benches rattled, fell  
To the floor, gold-covered boards grating  
As Grendel and Beowulf battled across them.  

Hrothgar’s wise men had fashioned Herot  
To stand forever; only fire,  
They had planned, could shatter what such skill had put  
Together, swallow in hot flames such splendor  
Of ivory and iron and wood. Suddenly  
The sounds changed, the Danes started  
In new terror, cowering in their beds as the terrible  
Screams of the Almighty’s enemy sang  
In the darkness, the horrible shrieks of pain  
And defeat, the tears torn out of Grendel’s  
Taut throat, hell’s captive caught in the arms  
Of him who of all the men on earth  
Was the strongest.

That mighty protector of men  
Meant to hold the monster till its life  
Leaped out, knowing the fiend was no use  
To anyone in Denmark. All of Beowulf’s  
Band had jumped from their beds, ancestral  
Swords raised and ready, determined  
To protect their prince if they could. Their courage  
Was great but all wasted: they could hack at Grendel  
From every side, trying to open  
A path for his evil soul, but their points  
Could not hurt him, the sharpest and hardest iron  
Could not scratch at his skin, for that sin-stained demon  
Had bewitched all men’s weapons, laid spells  
That blunted every mortal man’s blade.  
And yet his time had come, his days  
Were over, his death near; down  
To hell he would go, swept groaning and helpless  
To the waiting hands of still worse fiends.

**REVISIT THE BIG QUESTION**

*Where do MONSTERS lurk?*

**Discuss** In lines 319–322, why might the poet have used the figurative phrase “open a path for his evil soul” rather than simply write “slay” or “wound”?  
*Possible answer:* “Evil soul” reinforces the idea that Grendel is a creature of evil, a monster from hell (note that the poet has just referred to him as “hell’s captive” in line 311).
Now he discovered—once the afflictor
Of men, tormentor of their days—what it meant
To feud with Almighty God: Grendel
Saw that his strength was deserting him, his claws
Bound fast, Higlac’s brave follower tearing at
His hands. The monster’s hatred rose higher,
But his power had gone. He twisted in pain,
And the bleeding sinews deep in his shoulder
Snapped, muscle and bone split
And broke. The battle was over, Beowulf
Had been granted new glory: Grendel escaped,
But wounded as he was could flee to his den,
His miserable hole at the bottom of the marsh,
Only to die, to wait for the end
Of all his days. And after that bloody
Combat the Danes laughed with delight.
He who had come to them from across the sea,
Bold and strong-minded, had driven affliction
Off, purged Herot clean. He was happy,
Now, with that night’s fierce work; the Danes
Had been served as he’d boasted he’d serve them; Beowulf,
A prince of the Geats, had killed Grendel,
Ended the grief, the sorrow, the suffering
Forced on Hrothgar’s helpless people
By a bloodthirsty fiend. No Dane doubted
The victory, for the proof, hanging high
From the rafters where Beowulf had hung it, was the monster’s
Arm, claw and shoulder and all.

And then, in the morning, crowds surrounded
Herot, warriors coming to that hall
From faraway lands, princes and leaders
Of men hurrying to behold the monster’s
Great staggering tracks. They gaped with no sense
Of sorrow, felt no regret for his suffering.
Went tracing his bloody footprints, his beaten
And lonely flight, to the edge of the lake
Where he’d dragged his corpse-like way, doomed
And already weary of his vanishing life.
The water was bloody, steaming and boiling
In horrible pounding waves, heat
Sucked from his magic veins; but the swirling
Surf had covered his death, hidden

Vocabulary Support
afflictor (line 331), “someone who causes suffering or injury”
sinews (lines 338), “tendons”
purged (line 349), “freed from something bad”
Surf (line 372), “the foam and splash of breaking waves”

For struggling readers:

For English Language Learners:
Related Vocabulary
Great staggering tracks (line 363)
no regret for his suffering (line 364)
beaten / And lonely flight (lines 365–366)
dragged his corpse-like way, doomed / And already weary of his vanishing life (lines 367–368)
Deep in murky darkness his miserable
End, as hell opened to receive him. 

Then old and young rejoiced, turned back
From that happy pilgrimage, mounted their hard-hooved
Horses, high-spirited stallions, and rode them
Slowly toward Herot again, retelling
Beowulf’s bravery as they jogged along.

And over and over they swore that nowhere
On earth or under the spreading sky
Or between the seas, neither south nor north,
Was there a warrior worthier to rule over men.
(But no one meant Beowulf’s praise to belittle
Hrothgar, their kind and gracious king!)

And sometimes, when the path ran straight and clear,
They would let their horses race, red
And brown and pale yellow backs streaming
Down the road. And sometimes a proud old soldier
Who had heard songs of the ancient heroes
And could sing them all through, story after story,
Would weave a net of words for Beowulf’s
Victory, tying the knot of his verses
Smoothly, swiftly, into place with a poet’s
Quick skill, singing his new song aloud
While he shaped it, and the old songs as well...
Although one monster has died, another still lives. From her lair in a cold and murky lake, where she has been brooding over her loss, Grendel’s mother emerges, bent on revenge. 

So she reached Herot,
Where the Danes slept as though already dead;
Her visit ended their good fortune, reversed
The bright vane of their luck. No female, no matter
How fierce, could have come with a man’s strength,
Fought with the power and courage men fight with,
Smashing their shining swords, their bloody,
Hammer-forged blades onto boar-headed helmets,
Slashing and stabbing with the sharpest of points.
The soldiers raised their shields and drew
Those gleaming swords, swung them above
The piled-up benches, leaving their mail shirts
And their helmets where they’d lain when the terror took hold of them.
To save her life she moved still faster,
Took a single victim and fled from the hall,
Running to the moors, discovered, but her supper
Assured, sheltered in her dripping claws.
She’d taken Hrothgar’s closest friend,
The man he most loved of all men on earth;
She’d killed a glorious soldier, cut
A noble life short. No Geat could have stopped her:
Beowulf and his band had been given better

The very dark storm clouds behind the structures and the light shining through the open door create a mood of danger and mystery.

**Vocabulary: Idioms**
- **bent on revenge** (section introduction), “determined to cause harm in return for harm sustained”
- **took hold of** (line 409), “affected”
- **cut . . . short** (lines 416–417), “ended too soon”

**Tiered Discussion Prompts**
For lines 397–417, use these prompts to help students understand the poet’s descriptive comparison:

**Recall** Who has “reversed / The bright vane of [the Danes’] luck”? **Answer:** Grendel’s mother

**Interpret** Why does Grendel’s mother take and kill one of the Danes? Explain the significance of the “single victim” (line 411) that she chooses. **Possible answer:** Grendel’s mother takes and kills a soldier to avenge her son’s death. The victim she chooses is “Hrothgar’s closest friend, / The man he most loved of all men on earth” (lines 414–415).

**Evaluate** In your opinion, does the poet’s description capture the ferocity of battle? Explain. **Possible answer:** Yes; the poet’s vivid verbs (“Smashing,” “Slashing,” “stabbing”) and adjectives (“shining,” “bloody,” “Hammer-forged,” “boar-headed”) strongly convey the brutality of war.

**Analyze Visuals**
**Possible answer:** The very dark storm clouds behind the structures and the light shining through the open door create a mood of danger and mystery.
Beds; sleep had come to them in a different Hall. Then all Herot burst into shouts: She had carried off Grendel’s claw. Sorrow had returned to Denmark. They’d traded deaths, Danes and monsters, and no one had won, Both had lost! . . .

Devastated by the loss of his friend, Hrothgar sends for Beowulf and recounts what Grendel’s mother has done. Then Hrothgar describes the dark lake where Grendel’s mother has dwelt with her son.

“They live in secret places, windy
Cliffs, wolf-dens where water pours
From the rocks, then runs underground, where mist
Steams like black clouds, and the groves of trees
Growing out over their lake are all covered
With frozen spray, and wind down snakelike
Roots that reach as far as the water
And help keep it dark. At night that lake
Burns like a torch. No one knows its bottom,
No wisdom reaches such depths. A deer,
Hunted through the woods by packs of hounds,
A stag with great horns, though driven through the forest
From faraway places, prefers to die
On those shores, refuses to save its life
In that water. It isn’t far, nor is it
A pleasant spot! When the wind stirs
And storms, waves splash toward the sky,
As dark as the air, as black as the rain
That the heavens weep. Our only help,
Again, lies with you. Grendel’s mother
Is hidden in her terrible home, in a place
You’ve not seen. Seek it, if you dare! Save us,
Once more, and again twisted gold,
Heaped-up ancient treasure, will reward you
For the battle you win!” . . .

Germanic warriors placed great importance on amassing treasure as a way of acquiring fame and temporarily defeating fate.

420 Hall. Then all Herot burst into shouts:
She had carried off Grendel’s claw. Sorrow
Had returned to Denmark. They’d traded deaths,
Danes and monsters, and no one had won,
Both had lost! . . .

425 “They live in secret places, windy
Cliffs, wolf-dens where water pours
From the rocks, then runs underground, where mist
Steams like black clouds, and the groves of trees
Growing out over their lake are all covered
With frozen spray, and wind down snakelike
Roots that reach as far as the water
And help keep it dark. At night that lake
Burns like a torch. No one knows its bottom,
No wisdom reaches such depths. A deer,
Hunted through the woods by packs of hounds,
A stag with great horns, though driven through the forest
From faraway places, prefers to die
On those shores, refuses to save its life
In that water. It isn’t far, nor is it
A pleasant spot! When the wind stirs
And storms, waves splash toward the sky,
As dark as the air, as black as the rain
That the heavens weep. Our only help,
Again, lies with you. Grendel’s mother
Is hidden in her terrible home, in a place
You’ve not seen. Seek it, if you dare! Save us,
Once more, and again twisted gold,
Heaped-up ancient treasure, will reward you
For the battle you win!” . . .

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Language Coach

Homophones Answer: Wind rhymes with kind in this line. You can say that roots wind (wind) but not that they wind (w/ind). Ask students to identify the parts of speech that “wind” can have. Ask them to pronounce it as a noun and to pronounce it as a verb. Then have students write a pair of sentences, one using wind as a noun and the other using it as a verb.
Beowulf accepts Hrothgar's challenge, and the king and his men accompany the hero to the dreadful lair of Grendel's mother. Fearlessly, Beowulf prepares to battle the terrible creature.

He leaped into the lake, would not wait for anyone's Answer; the heaving water covered him Over. For hours he sank through the waves; At last he saw the mud of the bottom. And all at once the greedy she-wolf Who'd ruled those waters for half a hundred Years discovered him, saw that a creature From above had come to explore the bottom Of her wet world. She welcomed him in her claws, Clutched at him savagely but could not harm him, Tried to work her fingers through the tight Ring-woven mail on his breast, but tore

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP
Use Descriptive Details Have students reread lines 425–443. Then ask students to write a prose description of the dwelling place of Grendel's mother, using sensory images and descriptive details. Challenge students to create vivid images and establish a definite mood. Encourage them to use their imagination to develop their description. Have students share their work with the class.

REVISIT THE BIG QUESTION
Where do MONSTERS lurk?
Discuss What specific details in lines 450–458 suggest that the underwater lair of Grendel's mother is an evil place? Possible answer: Evil is associated with darkness. In addition, Beowulf sinks “for hours . . . through the waves” until he finally reaches the bottom. This long downward movement suggests a descent into hell.
And scratched in vain. Then she carried him, armor
And sword and all, to her home; he struggled
To free his weapon, and failed. The fight
Brought other monsters swimming to see
Her catch, a host of sea beasts who beat at
His mail shirt, stabbing with tusks and teeth
As they followed along. Then he realized, suddenly,
That she’d brought him into someone’s battle-hall,
And there the water’s heat could not hurt him,
Nor anything in the lake attack him through
The building’s high-arching roof. A brilliant
Light burned all around him, the lake
Itself like a fiery flame. Then he saw

The mighty water witch, and swung his sword,
His ring-marked blade, straight at her head;
The iron sang its fierce song,
Sang Beowulf’s strength. But her guest
Discovered that no sword could slice her evil
Skin, that Hrunting could not hurt her, was useless
Now when he needed it. They wrestled, she ripped
And tore and clawed at him, bit holes in his helmet,
And that too failed him; for the first time in years
Of being worn to war it would earn no glory;
It was the last time anyone would wear it. But Beowulf
Longed only for fame, leaped back
Into battle. He tossed his sword aside,
Angry; the steel-edged blade lay where
He’d dropped it. If weapons were useless he’d use
His hands, the strength in his fingers. So fame
Comes to the men who mean to win it
And care about nothing else! He raised
His arms and seized her by the shoulder; anger
Doubled his strength, he threw her to the floor.
She fell, Grendel’s fierce mother, and the Geats’
Proud prince was ready to leap on her. But she rose
At once and repaid him with her clutching claws,
Wildly tearing at him. He was weary, that best
And strongest of soldiers; his feet stumbled
And in an instant she had him down, held helpless.
Squatting with her weight on his stomach, she drew
A dagger, brown with dried blood, and prepared
To avenge her only son. But he was stretched

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EPIC

Possible answer: The setting is on a grand
scale—an underwater battle-hall with a
“high-arching roof,” a fiery lake—and the
battle pits a fearless hero against power-
ful, supernatural creatures (“a host of sea
beasts”). Beowulf performs in remarkable
heroic fashion, holding off the monsters
and remaining alive underwater without
air for hours.

IF STUDENTS NEED HELP . . .
• Have them discuss the specific sur-
roundings in which the battle occurs, as
described in lines 469 and 472–474.
• Ask them to identify aspects of the
battle and Beowulf’s actions that are
larger than life.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
Related Vocabulary  Point out the poet’s
use of strong verbs to convey the furious
action of the battle between Beowulf and
Grendel’s mother. Discuss these related
“fighting” words:
• wrestled, ripped (line 481)
• tore, clawed (line 482)
• leaped (line 486)
• clutching (line 497)
• tearing (line 498)

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP
Analyze Technique  As students read the account of Beowulf’s battle
with Grendel’s mother, have them reflect on
the poet’s technique. How does the poet use
language to add tension and excitement to
the struggle? Have pairs or small groups of
students share and compare their observations.
On his back, and her stabbing blade was blunted
By the woven mail shirt he wore on his chest.
The hammered links held; the point
Could not touch him. He'd have traveled to the bottom of the earth,
and died there, if that shining
Woven metal had not helped—and Holy
God, who sent him victory, gave judgment
For truth and right, Ruler of the Heavens,
Once Beowulf was back on his feet and fighting.

Then he saw, hanging on the wall, a heavy
Sword, hammered by giants, strong
And blessed with their magic, the best of all weapons
But so massive that no ordinary man could lift
Its carved and decorated length. He drew it
From its scabbard, broke the chain on its hilt,
And then, savage, now, angry
And desperate, lifted it high over his head
And struck with all the strength he had left,
Caught her in the neck and cut it through,
Broke bones and all. Her body fell
to the floor, lifeless, the sword was wet
With her blood, and Beowulf rejoiced at the sight.
The brilliant light shone, suddenly,
As though burning in that hall, and as bright as Heaven's
Own candle, lit in the sky. He looked
At her home, then following along the wall
Went walking, his hands tight on the sword,
His heart still angry. He was hunting another
Dead monster, and took his weapon with him
For final revenge against Grendel's vicious
Attacks, his nighttime raids, over
And over, coming to Herot when Hrothgar's
Men slept, killing them in their beds,
Eating some on the spot, fifteen
Or more, and running to his loathsome moor
With another such sickening meal waiting
In his pouch. But Beowulf repaid him for those visits,
Found him lying dead in his corner,
Armless, exactly as that fierce fighter
Had sent him out from Herot, then struck off
His head with a single swift blow. The body
Jerked for the last time, then lay still.

505  By the woven mail shirt he wore on his chest.
510  God, who sent him victory, gave judgment
515  For truth and right, Ruler of the Heavens,
520  Once Beowulf was back on his feet and fighting.
525  With her blood, and Beowulf rejoiced at the sight.
530  As though burning in that hall, and as bright as Heaven's
535  Own candle, lit in the sky. He looked
540  At her home, then following along the wall
545  Went walking, his hands tight on the sword,
550  His heart still angry. He was hunting another
555  Dead monster, and took his weapon with him
560  For final revenge against Grendel's vicious
565  Attacks, his nighttime raids, over
570  And over, coming to Herot when Hrothgar's
575  Men slept, killing them in their beds,
580  Eating some on the spot, fifteen
585  Or more, and running to his loathsome moor
590  With another such sickening meal waiting
595  In his pouch. But Beowulf repaid him for those visits,
600  Found him lying dead in his corner,
605  Armless, exactly as that fierce fighter
610  Had sent him out from Herot, then struck off
615  His head with a single swift blow. The body
620  Jerked for the last time, then lay still.

TIERED DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Use these prompts to help students understand the battle between Beowulf and Grendel's mother (lines 458–512):

Recall Where does the battle take place?
Possible answer: The battle takes place inside a battle-hall, at the bottom of the lake in which Grendel's mother resides.

Analyze How does the poet create suspense in the narrative? Possible answer: The poet shows Beowulf in a vulnerable position for the first time. Beowulf's sword proves ineffective against Grendel's mother, and his protective helmet fails him. Then, just when the reader thinks that Beowulf has gained the upper hand by throwing the monster to the floor, she turns the tables and takes him down, drawing a dagger with which to kill him. Only his mail shirt saves him.

Synthesize In what ways is the account of the struggle between Beowulf and Grendel's mother very contemporary? Possible answer: This kind of fierce, seesawing struggle between a fearless hero and a super-powerful enemy occurs in many modern-day novels and movies, such as in the Superman and Spider-Man movies and the comics they are based on.

TEXT ANALYSIS

What does the light described in lines 526–528 suggest about Beowulf's victory?

Possible answer: The light suggests that good has triumphed over evil, and heaven has triumphed over hell.

OWN THE WORD

Loathsome: Reread the definition of loathsome to students. Then have them name words with similar meanings, but that carry less intensity. Possible answers: unlikeable, distasteful, disliked, offensive
The wise old warriors who surrounded Hrothgar,
Like him staring into the monsters’ lake,
Saw the waves surging and blood
Spurting through. They spoke about Beowulf,
All the graybeards, whispered together
And said that hope was gone, that the hero
Had lost fame and his life at once, and would never
Return to the living, come back as triumphant
As he had left; almost all agreed that Grendel’s
Mighty mother, the she-wolf, had killed him.
The sun slid over past noon, went further
Down. The Danes gave up, left
The lake and went home, Hrothgar with them.
The Geats stayed, sat sadly, watching.
Imagining they saw their lord but not believing
They would ever see him again.
—Then the sword
Melted, blood-soaked, dripping down
Like water, disappearing like ice when the world’s
Eternal Lord loosens invisible
Fetters and unwinds icicles and frost
As only He can, He who rules
Time and seasons, He who is truly
God. The monsters’ hall was full of
Rich treasures, but all that Beowulf took
Was Grendel’s head and the hilt of the giants’
Jeweled sword; the rest of that ring-marked
Blade had dissolved in Grendel’s steaming
Blood, boiling even after his death.
And then the battle’s only survivor
Swam up and away from those silent corpses;
The water was calm and clean, the whole
Huge lake peaceful once the demons who’d lived in it
Were dead.

Then that noble protector of all seamen
Swam to land, rejoicing in the heavy
Burdens he was bringing with him. He
And all his glorious band of Geats
Thanked God that their leader had come back unharmed;
They left the lake together. The Geats
Carried Beowulf’s helmet, and his mail shirt.
Behind them the water slowly thickened
As the monsters’ blood came seeping up.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR STRUGGLING READERS

Vocabulary Support
- **triumphant** (line 553), “victorious”
- ** Fetters** (line 565), “chains; restraints”
- **hilt** (line 570), “handle”

Concept Support
Ask students to identify the alliteration in lines 546–549 (wise . . .
warriors; surrounded . . . staring . . . Saw . . .
surging . . . Spurting) and the kenning in line 578 (noble protector of all seamen). You may also want to point out the figurative language in lines 561–568: similes making comparisons to water and ice and a metaphor describing God loosening “invisible / Fetters.”

TEXT ANALYSIS

**Epic**
Possible answer: The lines suggest that people judged a man’s life by his actions and that fame was of paramount importance.

TIERED DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Use these prompts to help students understand the poet’s narrative technique in lines 540–583:

**Recall** What are the Danes and the Geats doing while Beowulf is battling Grendel’s mother? Possible answer: They are waiting at the edge of the lake, staring down into the water.

**Analyze** What shifts in setting occur in this passage? How do they heighten the narrative tension? Possible answer: The action moves from the bottom of the lake, where Beowulf battles Grendel’s mother and cuts off Grendel’s head, to the edge of the lake, where Hrothgar, the Danes, and the Geats are waiting to see if Beowulf will return. Then the setting shifts back to Beowulf, who swims back up to land. These shifts heighten the tension, because readers know that Beowulf has survived. Readers are eager for the skeptical onlookers to learn that they have drawn the wrong conclusion regarding “the waves surging and blood / Spurting through” (lines 548–549).

**Evaluate** Is the poet effective in holding the reader’s interest? Explain. Accept all thoughtful responses.

**EPIC**
Possible answer: The lines suggest that people judged a man’s life by his actions and that fame was of paramount importance.
They walked quickly, happily, across Roads all of them remembered, left The lake and the cliffs alongside it, brave men
Staggering under the weight of Grendel's skull,
Too heavy for fewer than four of them to handle—
Two on each side of the spear jammed through it—
Yet proud of their ugly load and determined That the Danes, seated in Herot, should see it.

Soon, fourteen Geats arrived
At the hall, bold and warlike, and with Beowulf,
Their lord and leader, they walked on the mead-hall Green. Then the Geats' brave prince entered Herot, covered with glory for the daring
Battles he had fought; he sought Hrothgar
To salute him and show Grendel's head.
He carried that terrible trophy by the hair,
Brought it straight to where the Danes sat,
Drinking, the queen among them. It was a weird
And wonderful sight, and the warriors stared. . . .

Text Analysis

1. Clarify Why does Hrothgar ask Beowulf to battle Grendel's mother?

2. Summarize What does Beowulf do after he kills Grendel's mother?

3. Compare and Contrast Compare the two monsters. Does the behavior of Grendel's mother seem as wicked or unreasonable as Grendel's behavior? Support your opinion with evidence from the text.

Answers

1. Grendel's mother killed Hrothgar's closest friend, and Hrothgar believes that only Beowulf can slay her.

2. Beowulf finds Grendel's body, cuts off his head, and carries the head and "the hilt of the giants' Jeweled sword" (lines 570–571) back up to the surface.

3. The behavior of Grendel's mother is more understandable, because she is motivated by a desire for revenge for her son's death, not just by a lust for killing.

For Struggling Readers

Concept Support Point out that Beowulf single-handedly carries Grendel's head "by the hair" (line 602), but in lines 589–592 the poet describes how four men were "staggering" under the head's weight. Ask what this contrast suggests about Beowulf as an epic hero (Beowulf has remarkable, perhaps superhuman, strength).
With Grendel’s mother destroyed, peace is restored to the land of the Danes, and Beowulf, laden with Hrothgar’s gifts, returns to the land of his own people, the Geats. After his uncle and cousin die, Beowulf becomes king of the Geats and rules in peace and prosperity for 50 years. One day, however, a fire-breathing dragon that has been guarding a treasure for hundreds of years is disturbed by a thief, who enters the treasury tower and steals a cup. The dragon begins terrorizing the Geats, and Beowulf, now an old man, takes on the challenge of fighting it.

And Beowulf uttered his final boast:

“I’ve never known fear, as a youth I fought
In endless battles. I am old, now,
But I will fight again, seek fame still,
If the dragon hiding in his tower dares
To face me.”
Then he said farewell to his followers:

Each in his turn, for the last time:

“I’d use no sword, no weapon, if this beast

Could be killed without it, crushed to death

Like Grendel, gripped in my hands and torn

Limb from limb. But his breath will be burning

Hot, poison will pour from his tongue.

I feel no shame, with shield and sword

And armor, against this monster: when he comes to me

I mean to stand, not run from his shooting

Flames, stand till fate decides

Which of us wins. My heart is firm,

My hands calm: I need no hot

Words. Wait for me close by, my friends.

We shall see, soon, who will survive

This bloody battle, stand when the fighting

Is done. No one else could do

What I mean to, here, no man but me

Could hope to defeat this monster. No one

Could try. And this dragon’s treasure, his gold

And everything hidden in that tower, will be mine

Or war will sweep me to a bitter death!”

Then Beowulf rose, still brave, still strong,

And with his shield at his side, and a mail shirt on his breast,

Strode calmly, confidently, toward the tower, under

The rocky cliffs: no coward could have walked there!

And then he who’d endured dozens of desperate

Battles, who’d stood boldly while swords and shields

Clashed, the best of kings, saw

Huge stone arches and felt the heat

Of the dragon’s breath, flooding down

Through the hidden entrance, too hot for anyone

To stand, a streaming current of fire

And smoke that blocked all passage. And the Geats’

Lord and leader, angry, lowered

His sword and roared out a battle cry,

A call so loud and clear that it reached through

The hoary rock, hung in the dragon’s

Ear. The beast rose, angry.

Knowing a man had come—and then nothing

But war could have followed. Its breath came first,

A steaming cloud pouring from the stone,

Then the earth itself shook. Beowulf

648 hoary (hôr’ê): gray with age.

Tiered Discussion Prompts

For lines 616–644, use these prompts to help students understand the poet’s technique:

Connect: What stories have you read, and what films have you seen, that end with a final battle between good and evil characters? How do those stories and films help you appreciate this passage? Accept all reasonable responses.

Analyze: What imagery does the poet use to set the stage for Beowulf’s climactic battle with the dragon? Possible answer: The poet uses strong imagery to establish the dragon as a fearsome creature: “his breath will be burning / Hot, poison will pour from his tongue” (lines 616–617); “a streaming current of fire / And smoke that blocked all passage” (lines 643–644). The poet simultaneously establishes Beowulf’s fearless readiness for battle: “when he comes to me / I mean to stand, not run from his shooting / Flames” (lines 619–621); “my heart is firm / My hands calm” (lines 622–623).

Evaluate: Do you think the poet wants to depict the battle as a contest of equals, or does he view Beowulf as the underdog? Explain your answer. Accept all thoughtful responses.

Differentiated Instruction

For Struggling Readers

Compare and Contrast: Use a Comparison Matrix to help students compare the Beowulf of the past with Beowulf at the time of his last battle. Encourage students to think in terms of Beowulf’s abilities, his attitude, and his vision of the battle’s outcome. Here are some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Beowulf of the past</th>
<th>Beowulf during his last battle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>young</td>
<td>old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons</td>
<td>bare hands</td>
<td>sword and shield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>eager to fight</td>
<td>resigned to battle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Best Practices Toolkit—Transparency

Comparison Matrix p. A24
Swung his shield into place, held it
In front of him, facing the entrance. The dragon
Coiled and uncoiled, its heart urging it
Into battle. Beowulf’s ancient sword
Was waiting, unsheathed, his sharp and gleaming
Blade. The beast came closer; both of them
Were ready, each set on slaughter. The Geats’
Great prince stood firm, unyielding, prepared
Behind his high shield, waiting in his shining
Armor. The monster came quickly toward him,
Pouring out fire and smoke, hurrying
To its fate. Flames beat at the iron
Shield, and for a time it held, protected
Beowulf as he’d planned; then it began to melt,
And for the first time in his life that famous prince
Fought with fate against him, with glory
Denied him. He knew it, but he raised his sword
And struck at the dragon’s scaly hide. The ancient blade broke, bit into
The monster’s skin, drew blood, but cracked
And failed him before it went deep enough, helped him
Less than he needed. The dragon leaped
With pain, thrashed and beat at him, spouting
Murderous flames, spreading them everywhere.
And the Geats’ ring-giver did not boast of glorious
Victories in other wars: his weapon
Had failed him, deserted him, now when he needed it
Most, that excellent sword. Edgetho’s
Famous son stared at death,
Unwilling to leave this world, to exchange it
For a dwelling in some distant place—a journey
Into darkness that all men must make, as death
Ends their few brief hours on earth.

Quickly, the dragon came at him, encouraged
As Beowulf fell back; its breath flared,
And he suffered, wrapped around in swirling
Flames—a king, before, but now
A beaten warrior. None of his comrades
Came to him, helped him, his brave and noble
Followers; they ran for their lives, fled
Deep in a wood. And only one of them
Remained, stood there, miserable, remembering,
As a good man must, what kinship should mean.

**TEXT ANALYSIS**

**EPIC**

Possible answer: The lines suggest that an epic hero never gives up. He fights on, even when he knows that fate has turned against him. He faces death courageously, just as he has always faced danger.

**TEXT ANALYSIS**

**EPIC**

Possible answer: The lines imply the importance of loyalty, courage, and kinship, and suggest that too many people have forgotten what these values mean and why they must be preserved.

Extend the Discussion Why do you think “None of his comrades / Came to him, helped him” (lines 691–692)?

**DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION**

**FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

Vocabulary: Idioms and Phrasal Verbs [mixed-readiness pairs] Discuss the meaning of these expressions, and then help students use them in original sentences:

- set on (line 660), “intending to do”
- came at (line 687), “attacked”
- Mind was made up (line 704), “had made a decision”
- over and gone (line 721), “ended”

**FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP**

Anglo-Saxon Fatalism Lines 681–686 reflect the fatalistic Anglo-Saxon view that life is short and fragile (discussed in the historical essay). Ask students to consider whether contemporary literature generally reflects a similar philosophy. Have them express their opinion in a brief essay, supporting their viewpoint with specific details and examples from contemporary works they have read.
His name was Wiglaf, he was Wexstan's son
And a good soldier; his family had been Swedish,
Once. Watching Beowulf, he could see
How his king was suffering, burning. Remembering
Everything his lord and cousin had given him,
Armor and gold and the great estates
Wexstan's family enjoyed, Wiglaf's
Mind was made up; he raised his yellow
Shield and drew his sword. . . .

And Wiglaf, his heart heavy, uttered
The kind of words his comrades deserved:
“I remember how we sat in the mead-hall, drinking
And boasting of how brave we'd be when Beowulf
Needed us, he who gave us these swords.
And armor: all of us swore to repay him,
When the time came, kindness for kindness
—With our lives, if he needed them. He allowed us to join him,
Chose us from all his great army, thinking
As in the days when his strength and daring dazzled
Men's eyes. But those days are over and gone
And now our lord must lean on younger
Arms. And we must go to him, while angry
Flames burn at his flesh, help
Our glorious king! By almighty God,
I'd rather burn myself than see
Flames swirling around my lord.
And who are we to carry home
Our shields before we've slain his enemy
And ours, to run back to our homes with Beowulf
So hard-pressed here? I swear that nothing
He ever did deserved an end
Like this, dying miserably and alone,
Butchered by this savage beast: we swore
That these swords and armor were each for us all!” . . .

Tiered Discussion Prompts
For lines 708–735, use these prompts to help students understand the character of Wiglaf:

Connect Have you ever chosen to do what was right, even though you were afraid? Accept all thoughtful responses.

Analyze How does Wiglaf’s speech show that he is different from his comrades? Possible answer: Unlike his comrades, who have abandoned Beowulf and fled for their lives, Wiglaf places high value on honor and loyalty. He makes the point that this is the time for them to prove that their earlier promises of bravery were more than just idle boasts. Wiglaf recognizes their debt to Beowulf and intends to repay it by coming to his aid, even at his own peril.

Evaluate Does Wiglaf qualify as an epic hero? Why or why not? Possible answer: Wiglaf displays courage and loyalty, two admirable traits associated with epic heroes. However, readers cannot yet judge whether he qualifies as an epic hero, because they have not seen him in action.
Wiglaf joins Beowulf, who again attacks the dragon single-handed, but the remnant of his sword shatters, and the monster wounds him in the neck. Wiglaf then strikes the dragon, and he and Beowulf together finally succeed in killing the beast. Their triumph is short-lived, however, because Beowulf’s wound proves to be mortal.

Beowulf spoke, in spite of the swollen, 
Livid
(loid)
adj. discolored from being bruised
wound, knowing he’d unwound
His string of days on earth, seen
As much as God would grant him; all worldly
Pleasure was gone, as life would go,
Soon:
“I’d leave my armor to my son,
Now, if God had given me an heir,
A child born of my body, his life
Created from mine. I’ve worn this crown
For fifty winters: no neighboring people
Have tried to threaten the Geats, sent soldiers

VOCABULARY
OWN THE WORD
livid: Have students reread the description of Beowulf’s wound and then describe in their own words what a livid wound would look like. Possible answers: The wound would look discolored, black and blue, although in the case of Beowulf, the wound would probably be bloody and red colored.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION
FOR STRUGGLING READERS
Develop Reading Fluency Point out that lines 736–740 show good examples of the caesuras (pauses dividing lines) typical of Old English poetry. Read the lines aloud for students, or have a volunteer do so. Discuss how the caesuras help to maintain the rhythm.
Against us or talked of terror. My days
Have gone by as fate willed, waiting
For its word to be spoken, ruling as well
As I knew how, swearing no unholy oaths,
Seeking no lying wars. I can leave
This life happy; I can die, here,
Knowing the Lord of all life has never
Watched me wash my sword in blood
Born of my own family. Belovèd

Wiglaf, go, quickly, find
The dragon’s treasure: we’ve taken its life,
But its gold is ours, too. Hurry,
Bring me ancient silver, precious
Jewels, shining armor and gems,
Before I die. Death will be softer,
Leaving life and this people I’ve ruled
So long, if I look at this last of all prizes.”

Then Wexstan’s son went in, as quickly
As he could, did as the dying Beowulf
Asked, entered the inner darkness
Of the tower, went with his mail shirt and his sword.
Flushed with victory he groped his way,
A brave young warrior, and suddenly saw
Piles of gleaming gold, precious
Gems, scattered on the floor, cups
And bracelets, rusty old helmets, beautifully
Made but rotting with no hands to rub
And polish them. They lay where the dragon left them;
It had flown in the darkness, once, before fighting
Its final battle. (So gold can easily
Triumph, defeat the strongest of men,
No matter how deep it is hidden!) And he saw,
Hanging high above, a golden
Banner, woven by the best of weavers
And beautiful. And over everything he saw
A strange light, shining everywhere,
On walls and floor and treasure. Nothing
Moved, no other monsters appeared;
He took what he wanted, all the treasures
That pleased his eye, heavy plates
And golden cups and the glorious banner,
Loaded his arms with all they could hold.

Text Analysis

Possible answer: Beowulf’s speech reflects such ideals as peace, justice, family loyalty, honesty, and honor.

IF STUDENTS NEED HELP... Discuss with them the meaning of these difficult phrases:
• “swearing no unholy oaths” (line 750), making no promises to do evil deeds
• “Seeking no lying wars” (line 751), not starting any wars on the basis of lies or deceit
• “wash my sword in blood / Born of my own family” (lines 754–755), kill or injure any person related to me

Possible answer: The lines suggest that gold has only transitory value and represents nothing more than material wealth.

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP

Analyze Although Beowulf is rooted in the pagan spirit of Anglo-Saxon times, by the time the poem was recorded as literature, Christianity had taken firm hold. Have small groups of students explore the resulting conflict between Christian and pagan beliefs, discussing such questions as these:

• In what ways is this conflict reflected in the actions of the characters?
• In what ways is it reflected in the poet’s narrative descriptions?
• Is the conflict successfully resolved in the selection? Explain.

Have students share their observations with the class, supporting their conclusions with specific examples.
Beowulf’s dagger, his iron blade,
790 Had finished the fire-spitting terror
That once protected tower and treasures
Alike; the gray-bearded lord of the Geats
Had ended those flying, burning raids
Forever. Then Wiglaf went back, anxious
795 To return while Beowulf was alive, to bring him
Treasure they’d won together. He ran,
Hoping his wounded king, weak
And dying, had not left the world too soon.
Then he brought their treasure to Beowulf, and found
800 His famous king bloody, gasping
For breath. But Wiglaf sprinkled water
Over his lord, until the words
Deep in his breast broke through and were heard.
Beholding the treasure he spoke, haltingly:
805 “For this, this gold, these jewels, I thank
Our Father in Heaven, Ruler of the Earth—
For all of this, that His grace has given me,
Allowed me to bring to my people while breath
Still came to my lips. I sold my life
810 For this treasure, and I sold it well. Take
What I leave, Wiglaf, lead my people,
Help them; my time is gone. Have
The brave Geats build me a tomb,
When the funeral flames have burned me, and build it
815 Here, at the water’s edge, high
On this spit of land, so sailors can see
This tower, and remember my name, and call it
Beowulf’s tower, and boats in the darkness
And mist, crossing the sea, will know it.”
820 Then that brave king gave the golden
Necklace from around his throat to Wiglaf,
Gave him his gold-covered helmet, and his rings,
And his mail shirt, and ordered him to use them well:
“You’re the last of all our far-flung family.
825 Fate has swept our race away,
Taken warriors in their strength and led them
To the death that was waiting. And now I follow them.”
The old man’s mouth was silent, spoke
No more, had said as much as it could;
830 He would sleep in the fire, soon. His soul
Left his flesh, flew to glory. . . .
And when the battle was over Beowulf’s followers
Came out of the wood, cowards and traitors,
Knowing the dragon was dead. Afraid,
While it spit its fires, to fight in their lord’s
Defense, to throw their javelins and spears,
They came like shamefaced jackals, their shields
In their hands, to the place where the prince lay dead,
And waited for Wiglaf to speak. He was sitting
Near Beowulf’s body, wearily sprinkling
Water in the dead man’s face, trying
To stir him. He could not. No one could have kept
Life in their lord’s body, or turned
Aside the Lord’s will: world
And men and all move as He orders,
And always have, and always will.
Then Wiglaf turned and angrily told them
What men without courage must hear.
Wexstan’s brave son stared at the traitors,
His heart sorrowful, and said what he had to:
“I say what anyone who speaks the truth
Must say. . . .
Too few of his warriors remembered
To come, when our lord faced death, alone.
And now the giving of swords, of golden
Rings and rich estates, is over,
Ended for you and everyone who shares
Your blood: when the brave Geats hear
How you bolted and ran none of your race
Will have anything left but their lives. And death
Would be better for them all, and for you, than the kind
Of life you can lead, branded with disgrace”. . .
Then the warriors rose,
Walked slowly down from the cliff, stared
At those wonderful sights, stood weeping as they saw
Beowulf dead on the sand, their bold
Ring-giver resting in his last bed;
He’d reached the end of his days, their mighty
War-king, the great lord of the Geats,
Gone to a glorious death. . . .

835 javelins (jə’və-linz): light spears used as weapons.
837 jackals (jə’kalz): doglike animals that sometimes feed on the flesh of
dead beasts.
839 bolted: ran away; fled.
859 branded with disgrace: given an ignominious label.
Then the Geats built the tower, as Beowulf
 Had asked, strong and tall, so sailors
 Could find it from far and wide; working
 For ten long days they made his monument,
 Sealed his ashes in walls as straight
 And high as wise and willing hands
 Could raise them. And the riches he and Wiglaf
 Had won from the dragon, rings, necklaces,
 Ancient, hammered armor—all
 The treasures they'd taken were left there, too,
 Silver and jewels buried in the sandy
 Ground, back in the earth, again
 And forever hidden and useless to men.
 And then twelve of the bravest Geats
 Rode their horses around the tower,
 Telling their sorrow, telling stories
 Of their dead king and his greatness, his glory,
 Praising him for heroic deeds, for a life
 As noble as his name. So should all men
 Raise up words for their lords, warm
 With love, when their shield and protector leaves
 His body behind, sends his soul
 On high. And so Beowulf’s followers
 Rode, mourning their beloved leader,
 Crying that no better king had ever
 Lived, no prince so mild, no man
 So open to his people, so deserving of praise.
Comprehension

1. Recall In what way does Beowulf’s sword fail him?
2. Summarize How do the Geats honor Beowulf after he dies?

Text Analysis

3. Examine Epic Characteristics Review the discussion of the characteristics of an epic in the Text Analysis Workshop on pages 38–39. Then use a chart like the one shown to list Beowulf’s traits as an epic hero and the deeds that reveal these traits. Is he a typical epic hero?

4. Analyze Old English Poetry Review the list you created as you read. In what ways might the alliteration, caesuras, and kennings in Beowulf have helped Anglo-Saxon poets chant or sing the poem and convey its meaning?

5. Analyze Theme Beowulf is able to defeat Grendel and Grendel’s mother, yet he loses his life when he battles the dragon. What themes does this suggest about the struggle between good and evil?

6. Compare and Contrast Compare and contrast the portrayals of Beowulf as a young and old man. Also compare Hrothgar’s recollections of his early deeds with his limitations as an aged king. What view of youth and age do these comparisons convey? Support your conclusions with specific evidence.

7. Draw Conclusions Describe Beowulf’s attitude toward death or mortality in each of the following passages: lines 179–189, lines 481–492, and lines 665–691. How does his attitude change over time?

8. Evaluate Author’s Purpose Reread lines 81–85, which reveal the influence of Christianity on the Beowulf Poet. Why might the poet have chosen to describe Hrothgar and Grendel in terms of their relationship to God?

Text Criticism

9. Different Perspectives In his 20th-century novel Grendel, writer John Gardner tells the story of Grendel’s attacks against the Danes from the monster’s point of view. Consider the selection you have read from the perspectives of Grendel, Grendel’s mother, and the dragon. What reasons might each of them have to hate Beowulf and other men?

Where do MONSTERS lurk?
Monsters like Grendel often combine human and animal features. Think of other monsters from literature, television, or film that combine these features. Why are such monsters particularly disturbing?

Practice and Apply

For preliminary support of post-reading questions, use these copy masters:

RESOURCE MANAGER—Copy Masters
Reading Check p. 28
Characteristics of an Epic p. 21
Question Support p. 29
Additional selection questions are provided for teachers on page 15.

ANSWERS

1. Beowulf’s sword breaks against the dragon’s scaly hide, allowing the dragon to attack him.

2. The Geats build a tower, a monument to Beowulf that will help guide sailors. They bury the dragon’s treasure around the tower, proclaiming Beowulf’s heroism.

Possible answers:

3. COMMON CORE FOCUS Characteristics of an Epic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>Deeds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>of noble birth or high position</td>
<td>is born the nephew of king</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has qualities that reflect societal ideals</td>
<td>fights with honor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>does deeds requiring great courage and strength</td>
<td>battles monsters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performs actions that determine fate of nation or group</td>
<td>saves the Danes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students should support their opinion about Beowulf as an epic hero with examples from the text.

4. COMMON CORE FOCUS Analyze Old English Poetry These techniques help to create a strong rhythm and unified sound, as well as a vivid and compelling narrative.

5. Good and evil are engaged in an ongoing battle, and sometimes evil wins.

6. Youth is a time for brave and daring deeds, as evidenced by Beowulf’s defeat of Grendel and Grendel’s mother. Old age is a time of honor and dignity, but also a time when diminishing strength may necessitate dependence on others, as evidenced by Hrothgar’s dependence on Beowulf and Beowulf’s need for Wiglaf’s help.

Where do MONSTERS lurk?
Monsters like Grendel often combine human and animal features. Think of other monsters from literature, television, or film that combine these features. Why are such monsters particularly disturbing?

7. Lines 179–189: Beowulf has a fatalistic attitude toward death; lines 481–492: Driven by his desire for fame, Beowulf faces death fearlessly; lines 665–691: Beowulf resists death, though he realizes it is inevitable. Over time, Beowulf becomes more resigned to his fate.

8. The poet wanted to glorify God while drawing a comparison between the good Hrothgar and the evil Grendel.

9. Grendel might feel excluded from the men’s celebrations and be jealous of their merrymaking; Grendel’s mother wants to avenge her son’s death; the dragon may be angry because men steal from his treasure.
Vocabulary in Context

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
Decide whether the words in each pair are synonyms or antonyms.

1. affliction/blessing
2. gorge/starve
3. infamous/respected
4. lair/hideout
5. livid/bruised
6. loathsome/delightful
7. purge/remove
8. talon/claw

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING
How has the concept of a hero changed since Beowulf’s time? Write a paragraph about how the hero is represented in movies or TV in today’s culture. Refer to at least one section of Beowulf for comparison. Use at least one additional Academic Vocabulary word in your response.

VOCABULARY STRATEGY: THE ANGLO-SAXON SUFFIX -some
Many English words with Anglo-Saxon word parts were born whole into Old English, changing slightly over time. Others developed from the combination of Old English word parts during the time when people spoke Middle English. The adjective-forming suffix -some, which means “like” or “tending to cause,” appears in both types of words. In Old English, -sum occurred in the word wynsum (today’s winsome). Later, the Middle English word loth (“to feel disgust”) combined with the Old English -sum to make lothsum: “tending to cause disgust.” Though the spelling has changed over time, loathsome has the same meaning today.

PRACTICE Use an adjective ending in the suffix -some to describe each person, place, or thing listed. Form the adjective by adding -some to a word shown in the equation.

1. a load of books to carry  
2. a city skyline sparkling in the sun  
3. a person who always argues  
4. a smile that charms people  
5. a cockroach

ANSWERS:
1. burdensome  
2. awesome  
3. quarrelsome  
4. winsome  
5. loathsome

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION
FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
Task Support: Vocabulary Practice Point out that the meaning of the English word infamous is not quite as strong as that of the Spanish equivalent infame, which means “loathsome” or “despicable.”

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP
Vocabulary in Writing Have students use as many vocabulary words as they can in a paragraph written in the first person from the point of view of one of the characters of Beowulf.
Language

**GRAMMAR AND STYLE: Create Imagery**

Review the Grammar and Style note on page 54. To describe a scene or convey a mood, the Beowulf Poet uses imagery—words and phrases that create vivid sensory experiences for the audience. The poet frequently creates this imagery through an effective use of adjectives and verbs. Here is an example from the epic:

The dragon leaped
With pain, flashed and beat at him, spouting murderous flames, spreading them everywhere. (lines 675–677)

Notice that the verbs leaped, flashed, and beat suggest a sense of movement and that the adjective murderous conveys the feeling of the flames' heat. The imagery in the sentence helps you envision the scene and experience its intensity.

**PRACTICE** Write down each of the following lines from Beowulf. Identify the adjectives and verbs in each sentence that create imagery and then write your own sentence with similar elements.

**EXAMPLE**

He moved quickly through the cloudy night. / Up from his swampland, sliding silently / Toward that gold-shining hall.

1. … Grendel will carry our bloody / Flesh to the moors, crunch on our bones / And smear torn scraps of our skin on the walls / Of his den.
2. He strode quickly across the inland / Floor, snarling and fierce: his eyes / Gleamed in the darkness, burned with a gruesome / Light.

**READING-WRITING CONNECTION** Expand your understanding of Beowulf by responding to this prompt. Then use the **revising tips** to improve your analysis.

**WRITING PROMPT** Write an Analysis. The review on page 74 describes the experience of listening to an oral performance of Beowulf. Write a three- to five-paragraph analysis of Beowulf in which you describe what features of the poem bring it to life for you. You might focus on its characters, its vivid descriptions, or its use of elements of Old English poetry.

**REVISI NG TIPS**

- Clearly identify the features of the poem that make Beowulf a distinctive and powerful work of literature.
- Include details from the poem to show how each of these features makes the poem come to life for you.

**DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION**

**FOR STRUGGLING WRITERS**
- Provide several sample sentences for students, and have them identify the adjectives and verbs. For example:
  
  The skater skimmed (verb) across the opaque (adjective) ice, graceful (adjective) and confident (adjective). Her hair streamed (verb) behind her, illuminated (verb) by the silvery (adjective) moonlight.

- Encourage students to combine short, simple sentences into one more-complex, longer sentence. For example, ask them to combine these sentences:
  
  He shivered under the flimsy blanket. He trembled with each deafening crash of thunder. (**Possible answer:** He shivered under the flimsy blanket, trembling with each deafening crash of thunder.)

**Assess and Reteach**

**Assess**

**DIAGNOSTIC AND SELECTION TESTS**

Selection Tests A, B/C pp. 25–26, 27–28

**Interactive Selection Test** on thinkcentral.com

**Reteach**

Level Up Online Tutorials on thinkcentral.com
European noblemen of a thousand years ago had much more exciting and intelligent entertainment than anything to be found now. Anyone who doubts that need only look in on Benjamin Bagby’s astonishing performance of the first quarter of the epic poem Beowulf—in Anglo-Saxon, no less—tonight at the Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse at Lincoln Center. It will be the last of his three appearances in the Lincoln Center Festival. From the moment he strode on stage on Sunday for the opening night, silencing the audience with that famous first word, “Hwaet!” (“Pay attention!”), until hell swallowed the “pagan soul” of the monster Grendel 80 minutes later, Mr. Bagby came as close to holding hundreds of people in a spell as ever a man has. As the epic’s warriors argued, boasted, fought or fell into the monster’s maw, there were bursts of laughter, mutters and sighs, and when Mr. Bagby’s voice stopped at the end, as abruptly as it had begun, there was an audible rippling gasp before a thunderclap of applause from cheering people who called him back again and again, unwilling to let him go.

Mr. Bagby—a Midwesterner who fell in love with Beowulf at 12 and who now is co-director of a medieval music ensemble, Sequentia, in Cologne, Germany—accompanies himself on a six-string lyre modeled on one found in a seventh-century tomb near Stuttgart. This surprisingly facile instrument underscores the meter of the epic.
verses and is counterpoint to Mr. Bagby’s voice as he recites, chants and occasionally sings the lines.

On the whole, this is a restrained presentation. The performer captures listeners at once simply by letting us feel his conviction that he has a tale to tell that is more captivating than any other story in the world. He avoids histrionic gestures, letting the majestic rhythms of the epic seize our emotions and guide them through the action. Gradually the many voices that fill the great poem emerge and the listener always knows who is speaking: a warrior, a watchman, a king, a sarcastic drunk. A translation is handed out to the audience, but after a while one notices people are following it less and just letting the sound of this strange and beautiful language wash over them. Perhaps not so strange, after all—enough phrases begin to penetrate the understanding that one finally knows deep down that, yes, this is where English came from.

How authentic is all this? Well, we know from many historical sources that in the first millennium at royal or noble houses a performer called a scop would present epics. Mr. Bagby has lived with this epic for many years, as well as with ancient music, and his performance is his argument that Beowulf was meant to be heard, not read, and that this is the way we ought to hear it. It is a powerful argument, indeed. The test of it is that when he has finished, you leave with the overwhelming impression that you know the anonymous poet who created Beowulf more than a dozen centuries ago, that you have felt the man’s personality touch you. That is a much too rare experience in theater.

How did reading this review affect your appreciation of the written text of Beowulf? Accept all reasonable answers.

What does the reviewer find most striking about Bagby’s performance?

Possible answer: Listeners leave with the feeling that they know the poet who so long ago created Beowulf, that they have been touched by the poet’s personality—“a much too rare experience in theater.”

How does the reviewer feel that a work such as Beowulf compares to modern-day entertainment?

Possible answer: The reviewer feels that Beowulf, particularly when presented in the manner that Bagby has performed it, is superior to modern-day entertainment. As he suggests in his opening sentence, it is “much more exciting and intelligent entertainment than anything to be found now.”