

## English 11H- Beowulf Literary Analysis Paper Description

### **THE OVERVIEW**

The *Beowulf* literary analysis paper gives you a chance to research and analyze the significance of *Beowulf* in an individual way. In the paper you will demonstrate your knowledge of the text, develop an argument about the work, and explore a published analysis of *Beowulf* to enfold into your own complex and deep analysis of the text. As long as your paper is rooted in a discussion and analysis of *Beowulf*, you can take your paper in almost any direction you want to go. You will be proposing your thesis to me before you begin writing to get approval and feedback.

### **WHAT IS A LITERARY ANALYSIS?**

A literary analysis is not a summary. A literary analysis is an ARGUMENT about the work that shows that you are *thinking critically* about the purpose, perspective, interpretations, judgments, social comments, etc. of the author or piece. It is an exploration of the DEEPER MEANINGS in a text via specific themes, character traits, settings, relationships between characters and society, morals, etc.

### **THE TASK AND REQUIREMENTS**

Your paper **MUST** do the following:

- Define an argument (thesis) about *Beowulf* and explore it in its complexity
- Include thorough and apt references to a literary critic's published, academic work
- Include paragraphs of CEW that each have specific, quoted evidence from *Beowulf*
  - Quotes are wrapped into the writer's own words with proper formatting
- Be 3-5\* pages in length
- MLA Formatting and MLA Works Cited page
  - With *Beowulf* citation:

Anonymous. "Beowulf." Trans. Burton Raffel. *Holt McDougal Literature: British Literature*. Evanston, IL: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2010. 42-70. Print.

*(Note: the reason the Beowulf title above is in quotes is because this version is a chapter in the 1000+ page textbook, not a stand-alone text)*

### **FORMAT**

Google Docs or Word document. You will be turning them in electronically.

### **DUE DATES**

<b>Due Dates</b>	<b>What is Due</b>
Wednesday, November 11 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Beowulf</i> Paper Proposal (thesis and short description of your plan) Respond to the email from Mrs. Henning
Tuesday, November 17 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Beowulf</i> Draft Check-in Should have paper to a point where you can ask questions about where you are stuck, get peer feedback, etc.
Monday, November 23 <sup>rd</sup> At the beginning of class	<i>Beowulf</i> Full, Polished Paper Due Submit an <b>electronic version</b> of your paper to me by email. <b>MUST be Google Doc or Word.</b>

\*\*Optional: Conference with Mrs. Henning before or after school throughout the process

\*\*\*OPTIONAL: *Beowulf* Finished Draft to Mrs. Henning for feedback by Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup>

## RUBRIC

SAT Rubric Style with the following sections: Analysis, Writing, and Publishing

## REMINDERS

- Example of wrapping a quote into your own words: *The narrator describes Beowulf as "greater/And stronger than anyone anywhere in the world (110-111).*
- *Use the slash (/) to indicate line breaks and maintain all punctuation and capitalization as it is found in the original text.*
- Start out your paragraphs with claims (arguments) and not summary
- Thesis- arguable (Example: The epic poem, *Beowulf*, is an exploration of a society's fears, values, and hopes as told through an exemplar hero: Beowulf.)
- Your quoted evidence needs to support/prove your argument, not just be for summary
- So what?? (Always warrant your quotes/evidence and tie up your paragraphs by connecting back to the paragraph's claim and your paper's thesis)

**Some ideas** (see list from “End-of-Beowulf” Discussion too):

**Typical English class essay:**

- In what ways was Beowulf the epitome of an Anglo-Saxon warrior-king?
- Was Beowulf a great king or not (considering the time period)?
- What would have been the most significant Christian message for Anglo-Saxons to have learned? (Consider: what parts of their culture were most un-Christian? What is the most significant or obvious Christian message in the poem, perhaps in an effort to correct Anglo-Saxon ways?)
- Does *Beowulf* still make a good role model and teach lessons that we value today, in our modern English-speaking cultures?
- The key theme/overarching message in *Beowulf* is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Symbolism (Example: Grendel symbolizes evil; Beowulf symbolizes Christian values.)
- Should *Beowulf* be required reading in schools of English-speaking countries?
- What aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture are presented in *Beowulf*?
- Which shorter Old English poem best complements Beowulf?
- Should *Beowulf* be required reading in high school for English speakers?
- *Beowulf* and Tolkein → argument
- Explain how the use of allusions (to the *Bible* and other works) helps illuminate the theme of *Beowulf*
- Analyze the differences in the three fights and explain how they trace the development of *Beowulf* as a hero. Which is most significant or most difficult?
- How much do you need to understand about a culture to understand its stories?
- OR: How does reading a culture's stories inform your understanding of that culture?
- How are history (“true stories”) and fiction co-dependent? (Hint: Forest Gump example)
- Is evil inherent, or is it learned? Discuss this in general and also in terms of Grendel. What would today's equivalent of a “Grendel” be?
- What were some real life evils and fears that Grendel could represent?
- What is the overarching message of *Beowulf*? (Consider- this message may have changed over time depending on the audience.)
- What literary devices [imagery, alliteration, symbolism, characterization, etc.] does the poet use to develop a theme or message in *Beowulf*?

\*\*You are welcome to propose other ideas as well.

## SAT Essay Scoring Rubric for Literary Analysis

Score Point	Reading	Analysis	Writing	Publishing
4	<p><b>Advanced:</b> The response demonstrates <b>thorough comprehension</b> of the source texts (supplemental and original). The response shows a <b>deep</b> understanding of the texts' central idea(s) and of most important details and how they <b>interrelate</b>, demonstrating a <b>comprehensive</b> understanding of the text.</p> <p>The response makes <b>skillful</b> use of textual evidence (quotations, paraphrases, or both), demonstrating a complete understanding of the source text.</p>	<p><b>Advanced:</b> The response offers an <b>insightful analysis</b> of the source texts and demonstrates a <b>sophisticated</b> understanding of the analytical task.</p> <p>The response contains thorough use of <b>relevant, sufficient, and strategically</b> chosen evidence for claim(s) from each text. Evidence is <b>explained and connected to</b> claims and overarching thesis.</p> <p>The response focuses <b>consistently</b> on those features of the text that are most relevant to addressing the task.</p>	<p>The response includes a <b>precise, arguable, and complex</b> central thesis.</p> <p>The response includes a <b>skillful introduction and conclusion</b>. The response demonstrates a <b>deliberate and highly effective progression</b> of ideas both within paragraphs and throughout the essay.</p>	<p><b>Advanced:</b> The response is <b>cohesive</b> and demonstrates a <b>highly effective</b> use and command of language.</p> <p>The response has a <b>wide variety</b> in sentence structures. The response demonstrates a <b>consistent use</b> of precise word choice. The response maintains a formal style and objective tone.</p> <p>The response shows a <b>strong command</b> of the conventions of standard written English and is free of distracting or careless errors.</p>
3	<p><b>Proficient:</b> The response demonstrates <b>effective comprehension</b> of the source texts.</p> <p>The response shows an understanding of the texts' central idea(s) and important details.</p> <p>The response makes <b>appropriate</b> use of textual evidence (quotations, paraphrases, or both), demonstrating an understanding of the source text.</p>	<p><b>Proficient:</b> The response offers an <b>effective analysis</b> of the source text and demonstrates an understanding of the analytical task.</p> <p>The response contains <b>much relevant and sufficient support</b> for claim(s) made. Evidence is mostly warranted.</p> <p>The response focuses <b>primarily</b> on those features of the text that are most relevant to addressing the task.</p>	<p><b>Proficient:</b> The response is <b>mostly cohesive</b> and demonstrates <b>effective use</b> and control of language.</p> <p>The response includes a central thesis, but is <b>less specific or deep</b> than the 4, or the thesis is an implicit controlling idea.</p> <p>The response includes an <b>effective introduction and conclusion</b>. The response demonstrates a <b>clear progression</b> of ideas both within paragraphs and throughout the essay.</p>	<p><b>Proficient:</b> The response is <b>nearly perfectly</b> formatted including in-text citations, MLA, Works Cited and grammar/mechanics.</p> <p>References outside supplemental text and main text <b>regularly</b>.</p> <p>The response has variety in sentence structures. The response demonstrates some precise word choice. The response maintains a formal style and objective tone.</p> <p>The response shows a <b>good control</b> of the conventions of standard written English and is free of significant errors that detract from the quality of writing</p>

	Reading	Analysis	Writing	Publishing
2	<p><b>Partial:</b> The response demonstrates some comprehension of the source texts. The response shows an understanding of the texts' central idea(s) but <b>not focused</b> on the most important details.</p> <p>The response makes limited and/or haphazard use of textual evidence (quotations, paraphrases, or both), demonstrating some understanding of the source text.</p> <p>Or, the response gets <b>some</b> information <b>incorrect</b> from any of the texts.</p>	<p><b>Partial:</b> The response offers <b>limited analysis</b> of the source text and demonstrates only partial understanding of the analytical task.</p> <p><b>Merely asserts</b> rather than explains the importance of textual evidence, or one or more aspects of the response's analysis are <b>unwarranted</b> based on the text.</p> <p>The response contains little or no support for claim(s) made. It makes <b>use mostly of summary</b>.</p> <p>The response may lack a clear focus on those features of the text that are most relevant to addressing the task.</p>	<p>The response may lack a clear central thesis or controlling idea or may <b>deviate</b> from the thesis or idea over the course of the response.</p> <p>The response may include an <b>ineffective or repetitive</b> introduction and/or conclusion. The response may demonstrate some progression of ideas within paragraphs but not throughout the response.</p> <p>The response has limited variety in sentence structures; sentence structures may be repetitive.</p>	<p><b>Partial:</b> The response contains <b>more than a few minor errors</b> in formatting including in-text citations, MLA, Works Cited and grammar/mechanics.</p> <p>References outside supplemental text and main text <b>irregularly</b>.</p> <p>The response demonstrates <b>general or vague word choice</b>; word choice may be <b>repetitive</b>. The response may <b>deviate</b> noticeably from a formal style and objective tone.</p> <p>The response shows a <b>limited control of the conventions of standard written English</b> and contains errors that <b>detract</b> from the quality of writing and may impede understanding.</p>
1		<p><b>Inadequate:</b> Offers <b>little or no</b> analysis or <b>ineffective</b> analysis of the source text. Demonstrates <b>little or no</b> understanding of the analytic task.</p> <p>The response <b>fails to show</b> an understanding of the text's central idea(s), and may include only details without reference to central idea(s).</p> <p>The response makes little or no use of textual evidence (quotations, paraphrases, or both), demonstrating <b>little or no understanding</b> of the source text.</p>	<p><b>Inadequate:</b> The response demonstrates <b>little or no cohesion</b> and <b>inadequate skill</b> in the use and control of language.</p> <p>The response may <b>lack a clear central claim or controlling idea</b>.</p> <p>The response <b>lacks</b> a recognizable introduction and conclusion. The response does not have a discernible progression of ideas.</p>	<p><b>Inadequate:</b> The response has <b>multiple errors</b> in formatting that <b>detract significantly</b>. MLA formatting may have significant errors. In-text citations and Works Cited may be <b>non-existent</b> or overall <b>incorrectly inserted</b>.</p> <p>The response <b>lacks variety</b> in sentence structures; sentence structures may be repetitive. The response demonstrates <b>general and vague</b> word choice; word choice may be <b>poor or inaccurate</b>. The response may lack a formal style and objective tone.</p> <p>The response shows a <b>weak control of the conventions of standard written English</b> and may contain numerous errors that undermine the quality of writing.</p>