

"End of Beowulf" Discussion

Prepare thoughtful responses (at least 1 page each) in your journal for the "End of Beowulf" discussion. Use specific references to events and evidence in the text.

1. 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?

2. Why is Beowulf included in the canon of English literature?

3. How are history ("true stories") and fiction co-dependent? (Hint: think back to Forest Gump example)

4. What aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture are most apparent in Beowulf? Explain.

5. Discuss how the story was recorded by a Christian monk. How does this influence the story? How may the story have differed when it was told orally before Christianity was introduced to the Anglo-Saxons?

6. What symbolism is apparent in the poem? What purpose does it serve?

Hint: light vs. darkness, Godly vs. demonic, etc.

7. 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?

8. What is the overarching message of Beowulf? (Consider- this message may have changed over time depending on the audience.)

9. Which of the 3 battles is most significant in terms of the overarching message of the poem? Why?

10. Is Beowulf a good king? How does the poem show this?

11. What aspects make Beowulf an epic story and Beowulf himself an epic hero?

12. Was there any other way for a hero's story to end? Explore the options.

13. Should Beowulf be required reading in high school for English speakers?

14. What is worth fighting or dying for?

15. What scenes most vividly stuck in your mind and why?

16. How is Beowulf a circular tale?

17. While reading Haroun we said stories teach audiences. What does Beowulf teach? Are these still lessons we value in modern society? Explain.

18. Option for **one of the two entries**- Sketch one of the scenes from the epic poem. You **must** include lines of text somewhere in your entry that support your artistic decisions, but you may be creative as well.