

Beowulf Quiz

The Coming of Grendel

1. What is the name of the mead-hall for his warriors? What eventually happens to the mead-hall (foreshadowed in lines 21-22)?
2. Where does Grendel live? Why is it in pain?
3. Who, according to the poem, is Grendel's infamous ancestor? What happened to him, and to the "children" he "spawned"?
4. How does Hrothgar and his warriors react to the murders of their comrades? How does Grendel respond?
5. How long do the murders last? What was the only option for Hrothgar's men to do in order to survive?
6. Why can't Grendel approach Hrothgar's throne? Whose support did some of the older warriors seek to rid themselves of Grendel?
7. How is Beowulf, "Higlac's follower," first described in the poem? Why does he come to aid the Danes and how do the elders of the Geats respond to his leaving?

The Coming of Beowulf

8. Beowulf's long speech to Hrothgar (lines 63-188) serves two purposes: to honor Hrothgar and declare his own greatness. Identify the two accomplishments Beowulf gives making him best qualified to fight Grendel.

9. What favor does Beowulf ask in fighting Grendel? How does he say he will defeat the monster?
10. Who, according to Beowulf, will decide who wins the battle? (Give ENTIRE answer.)

Unferth's Taunt

11. Why is Unferth angry with Beowulf? How does Unferth insult Beowulf?
12. What, according to Beowulf, why does Unferth insult the hero? How does Beowulf respond to Unferth's accusations?
13. According to Beowulf, when does "Fate [save] the living"?
14. What crime does Beowulf accuse Unferth of committing?
15. How does Beowulf characterize Unferth and the rest of the Danes?
16. What does Beowulf say is his purpose "when [he] crossed the sea"?

The Battle with Grendel

17. Why is Grendel described as being "forever joyless"?

18. What does Grendel do to the first of the Geats in the mead-hall? Who is the second of his victims?

19. Several kennings are used in this section to describe Grendel. Find two of them.

20. Why is Grendel unable to escape from Beowulf?

21. Why are the rest of the Geats unable to harm Grendel with their swords? How is Beowulf able to kill the monster?

22. What does Beowulf hang in the mead-hall as proof of his—and God's—power?

23. Why do the lines 499-504 use so many references to heat, steam, and boiling?

24. What, according to the author, do “proud old soldiers” sometimes do?