

Socratic Seminar Preparation for *Beowulf*

Seminar takes place TUESDAY 9/26

Directions: To participate in this SUMMATIVE assessment activity, you must come to class fully prepared to demonstrate your reading and analysis of this text.

Required prep:

1. You **MUST** come to class having “ACE’d” at least 4 of the questions. Paragraphs should be typed and printed **or** written neatly on separate paper.

ACE means:

- Answer the question (fully and completely),
- Cite quoted textual details (**at least 2 quotes per question**), and
- Explain fully how the evidence supports your answer.

****ALL STUDENTS should answer question #1, and then choose 3 other questions to answer in ACE form prior to the discussion (4 total must be answered).****

1. *(choose any character that interests you in the story to answer the following questions): What is your character’s purpose in the text’s plot, in its themes, and in its reflection of the historical context?*
2. What symbolism and themes can be determined from each of the 3 foes Beowulf fights? What conclusions can you draw by comparing the three battles of the text? (analyze significance, characterization, theme, etc. – don’t give just facts!)
3. What is the point of studying *Beowulf*? What are we supposed to learn from it and how is it a reflection of **or** contrast of our own societal values?
4. Consider the characteristics of a hero in our modern society. How do we define heroic traits and what does it reveal about what we see as important/value as a modern society? The Geats and Danes consider Beowulf a hero. Is Beowulf a **true** hero? What heroic traits does he possess? What does his heroism reveal about the culture of the time?
5. Wealhtheow, Hygd, Hildeburh, Grendel’s mother – what do the female characters in *Beowulf* do? How do they do it? How might they offer alternative perspectives on the heroic world (so seemingly centered around male action) of the poem?
6. Why are there so many stories-within-the-story in the poem? What is the relation between these so-called “digressions” and the main narrative in *Beowulf*?
7. What is the overall, universal theme of *Beowulf*? What literary elements are used to develop this theme? (literary elements are things like tone, mood, imagery, symbolism, metaphor, simile, conflict, characterization, etc.) – *should be a universal theme statement introducing a new and original interpretation of the text and its meaning and purpose*