

Beowulf: Epic Poetry Analysis Worksheet



Excerpt 1

After was borne him
A son and heir, young in his dwelling,
Whom God-Father sent to solace the people.
[...]
The Lord, in requital,
Wielder of Glory, with world-honor blessed him.
Famed was Beowulf, far spread the glory
Of Scyld's great son in the lands of the Danemen.

Excerpt 1 questions

1. Which of the following is an example of a kenning?

- A) "Famed was Beowulf"
- B) "Wielder of Glory"
- C) "lands of the Danemen"
- D) "Scyld's great son"
- E) "A son and heir"

2. What heroic quality of Beowulf's family is shown in excerpt 1, and why was it important in Anglo-Saxon society?

3. Identify one literary device in excerpt 1. Explain its effect on its tone.

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Excerpt 2

A numerous band. It burned in his spirit
To urge his folk to found a great building,
A mead-hall grander than men of the era
Ever had heard of, and in it to share
With young and old all of the blessings.

Excerpt 2 questions

4. What device is present in the line “It burned in his spirit”?

- A) Caesura
- B) Imagery
- C) Kenning
- D) Alliteration
- E) Allusion

5. What heroic quality is shown by the leader’s desire to build a mead-hall, and what does it reveal about leadership?

6. How does imagery in this excerpt help you picture the role of the mead-hall in the community? Support your answer with a direct quote.

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Excerpt 3

So blessed with abundance, brimming with joyance,
The warriors abided, till a certain one gan to
Dog them with deeds of direfullest malice,
A foe in the hall-building:
this horrible stranger
Was Grendel entitled, the march-stepper famous
Who dwelt in the moor-fens, the marsh and the fastness.

Excerpt 3 questions

7. Which of the following are examples of kennings?

- A) "march-stepper"
- B) "brimming with joyance"
- C) "deeds of direfullest malice"
- D) "moor-fens"
- E) "horrible stranger"

8. How does the poet's description of Grendel (e.g., "march-stepper") contrast with Beowulf's heroic traits?

9. What might Grendel symbolize about the fears or dangers faced by Anglo-Saxon society? Use evidence from the text.