

<p>In the mid-1970s, lines formed outside cinemas all over the Western world to see one of the most dramatic horror films ever made.</p>	
	<p>There is a tremendous climactic fight, with much severing of limbs and thrashing about underwater, until at last the shark is slain.</p>
	<p>Steven Spielberg's Jaws told how the peace of a little Long Island seaside resort, Amity, was rudely shattered by the arrival offshore of a monstrous shark, of almost supernatural power</p>
	<p>For weeks on end the citizens are thrown into a stew of fear and confusion by the shark's savage attacks on one victim after another. Finally, when the sense of threat seems almost too much to bear, the hero of the story, the local police chief Brody, sets out with two companions to do battle with the monster.</p>
<p>The community comes together in universal jubilation. The great threat has been lifted. Life in Amity can begin again.</p>	

<p>The first part of Beowulf tells of how the peace of the little seaside community of Heorot is rudely shattered by the arrival of Grendel, a monster of almost supernatural power, who lives in the depths of a nearby lake.</p>	
	<p>There is a tremendous climactic fight, with much severing of limbs and thrashing about underwater, until at last both monsters are slain. The community comes together in jubilation. The great threat has been lifted. Life in Heorot can begin again.</p>
	<p>The inhabitants of Heorot are thrown into a stew of fear and confusion as, night after night, Grendel makes his mysterious attacks on the hall in which they sleep, seizing one victim after another and tearing them to pieces.</p>
	<p>Finally, when the sense of threat seems almost too much to bear, the hero Beowulf sets out to do battle, first with Grendel, then with his even more terrible monster mother.</p>
<p>In terms of the bare outlines of their plots, the resemblances between the twentieth-century horror film and the eighth-century epic are so striking that they may almost be regarded as telling the same story. Are we to assume that the author of Jaws, Peter Benchley, had in some way been influenced by Beowulf?</p>	

In the mid-1970s, lines formed outside cinemas all over the Western world to see one of the most dramatic horror films ever made. Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* told how the peace of a little Long Island seaside resort, Amity, was rudely shattered by the arrival offshore of a monstrous shark, of almost supernatural power. For weeks on end the citizens are thrown into **a stew of** fear and confusion by the shark's savage attacks on one victim after another. Finally, when the sense of threat seems almost **too much to bear**, the hero of the story, the local police chief Brody, sets out with two companions to do battle with the monster. There is a tremendous climactic fight, with much severing of limbs and **threshing** about underwater, until at last the shark is **slain**. The community comes together in universal jubilation. The great threat has been lifted. Life in Amity can begin again.

The first part of *Beowulf* tells of how the peace of the little seaside community of Heorot is rudely shattered by the arrival of Grendel, a monster of almost supernatural power, who lives in the depths of a nearby lake. The inhabitants of Heorot are thrown into a stew of fear and confusion as, night after night, Grendel makes his mysterious attacks on the hall in which they sleep, **seizing** one victim after another and tearing them to pieces. Finally, when the sense of threat seems almost too much to bear, the hero Beowulf sets out to do battle, first with Grendel, then with his even more terrible monster mother. There is a tremendous climactic fight, with much severing of limbs and threshing about underwater, until at last both monsters are slain. The community comes together in jubilation. The great threat has been lifted. Life in Heorot can begin again.

In terms of the bare outlines of their plots, the resemblances between the twentieth-century horror film and the eighth-century epic are so **striking** that they may almost be regarded as telling the same story.

killed	remarkable	Too much to support
struggling	grabbing	mixture

Are we to assume that the author of *Jaws*, Peter Benchley, had in some way been influenced by *Beowulf*? Of course not.

Even if he had read *Beowulf*, it is most unlikely that he could have conceived a story with the power of *Jaws* unless it had emerged spontaneously into his own imagination.

Yet the fact remains that the two stories share a remarkably similar pattern

– one which moreover has formed the basis for countless other stories in the literature of mankind, at many different times and all over the world. So, what is the explanation?

1. What is the author's overall attitude towards the authors of *Jaws* and *Beowulf*?
2. What was the name of seaside resort in the film *Jaws*?
3. What is the author's central point?
4. What can be inferred about how and where the characters in *Grendel* sleep?
5. What do you think the moment "Seize the Day" means?
6. What does the author imply about the story structure in *Beowulf*?