BRITISH COUNCIL Aptis

Task 4 Reading Unit 8

Reading: Part 4

Read the text below. Match the headings to the paragraphs 1-7. There is one more heading than you need. The answer to paragraph 0 is given as an example.

0. **THE FIRST TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION**

Between 4000 and 3000 B.C., significant technological developments began to transform the Neolithic towns. The invention of writing enabled records to be kept, and the use of metals marked a new level of human control over the environment and its resources. Already before 4000 B.C., craftspeople had discovered that metal-bearing rocks could be heated to liquefy metals, which could then be cast in molds to produce tools and weapons that were more useful than stone instruments.

1.

Although copper was the first metal to be utilized in producing tools, after 4000 B.C. craftspeople in western Asia discovered that a combination of copper and tin produced bronze, a much harder and more durable metal than copper. Its widespread use has led historians to call the period the Bronze Age; thereafter, from around 3000 to 1200 B.C., bronze was increasingly replaced by iron.

2.

At first, Neolithic settlements were hardly more than villages. But as their inhabitants mastered the art of farming, more complex human societies emerged. As wealth increased, these societies began to develop armies and to build walled cities. By the beginning of the Bronze Age, the concentration of larger numbers of people in the river valleys of Southwest Asia and Egypt was leading to a whole new pattern for human life.

3.

As we have seen, early human beings formed small groups that developed a simple culture that enabled them to survive. As human societies grew and developed greater complexity, a new form of human existence—called civilization— came into being. A civilization is a complex culture in which large numbers of human beings share a number of common elements. Historians have identified a number of basic characteristics of civilization, most of which are evident in the Southwest Asian and Egyptian civilizations.

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4.

These include (1) an urban focus: cities became the centres of political, economic, social, cultural, and religious development; (2) new political and military structures: an organized government bureaucracy arose to meet the administrative demands of the growing population while armies were organized to gain land and power and for defense; (3) a new social structure based on economic power: while kings and an upper class of priests, political leaders, and warriors dominated, there also existed large groups of free people (farmers, artisans, craftspeople) and at the very bottom, socially, a class of slaves.

5.

The development of writing was a milestone in the evolution of these societies: kings, priests, merchants, and artisans used writing to keep records; As a consequence of this, the spread of new forms of significant artistic and intellectual activity: monumental architectural structures, usually religious, occupied a prominent place in urban environments.

6.

Why early civilizations developed remains difficult to explain. Since civilizations developed independently in India, China, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, can general causes be identified that would explain why all of these civilizations emerged? A number of possible explanations of the beginning of civilization have been suggested. A theory of challenge and response maintains that challenges forced human beings to make efforts that resulted in the rise of civilization. Some scholars have adhered to a material explanation.

7.

Material forces, such as the growth of food surpluses, made possible the specialization of labour and development of large communities with bureaucratic organization. But the area of the Fertile Crescent, in which civilization emerged in Southwest Asia, was not naturally conducive to agriculture. Abundant food could be produced only with a massive human effort to carefully manage the water, an effort that created the need for organization and bureaucratic control and led to civilized cities. Finally, some scholars doubt that we are capable of ever discovering the actual causes of early civilization.

A. INFLUENCE ON WESTERN CULTURES
B. ADVANCES IN METALLURGY
C. NEW COMPLEX POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES
D. ACADEMIC SCEPTICISM
E. CULTURAL ACTIVITY
F. **THE FIRST TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION**
G. DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES
H. THE BIRTH OF CIVILIZATION
I. CHALLENGES AS THE CAUSES OF DEVELOPMENT

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Reading: Part 4

Read the text below. Match the headings to the paragraphs 1-7. There is one more heading than you need. The answer to paragraph 0 is given as an example

1.

Shanghai is the largest Chinese city by population. It is one of the four direct controlled municipalities of China and has a population of more than 24 million as of 2014. It is a global financial centre, and transport hub containing the world's busiest container port.

2.

Shanghai is located in the Yangtze River Delta in East China, and borders the provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang to the north, south and west, and is bounded to the east by the East China Sea.

3.

For centuries it was a major administrative, shipping, and trading town, and grew in importance in the 19th century due to its location and economic potential. The city was one of five forced open to foreign trade following the British victory over China in the First Opium War. After some time the city then flourished as a centre of commerce between east and west. After the Communist Party takeover of the mainland in 1949, trade focused on socialist countries, and the city's global influence declined. In the 1990s, Deng Xiaoping started economic reforms which led to re-development of the city, and foreign investment to the city.

4.

Shanghai is a popular tourist destination renowned because of its historical landmarks such as the Bund, City God Temple and Yu Garden. Other sites include major museums such as the Shanghai Museum and the China Art Museum. From these examples, it can be understood that it has been described as the "showpiece" of the booming economy of mainland China.

A. SHANGHAI OVERVIEW
B. A PLACE TO VISIT
C. HISTORY
D. A CONVENIENT LOCATION
E. THE POPULATION OF SHANGHAI

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BRITISH COUNCIL **Aptis**

Reading: Part 4

Read the text below. Match the headings to the paragraphs 1-7. There is one more heading than you need. The answer to paragraph 0 is given as an example

SMOKING BAN AT 10: THINGS THAT HAVE CHANGED SINCE CIGARETTES PROHIBITED IN PUBLIC A DECADE AGO

1.
It's hard to think back to what pubs and clubs were like before the law about smoke-free public places came into force ten years ago. Do you remember the dense fog, the smell of tobacco smoke on your clothes and hair after a night out, and the ashtrays loaded with cigarette butts? The change in law has been described as: the most important piece of public health legislation for a generation. Of course, bringing it in had its challenges. Various options were proposed, including a plan to exempt private clubs and pubs that didn't serve food – so-called "wet pubs" – but in some parts of England this would have excluded over half of all licensed premises. Eventually, this proposal was quashed, mainly because of public health concerns. People with jobs forcing them to remain in smoke environments often had no choice but to do so – and why should they be
subject to the health risks of second-hand smoke? Various options were proposed, including a plan to exempt private clubs and pubs that didn't serve food – so-called "wet pubs" – but in some parts of England this would have excluded over half of all licensed premises. Eventually, this proposal was quashed, mainly because of public health concerns. People with jobs forcing them to remain in smoke environments often had no choice but to do so – and why should they be subject to the health risks of second-hand smoke?

2.
There was a spike in people deciding to quit smoking as a result of the ban. Everyone knew the health risks of smoking – the ban simply cut out many of the places where people might have wanted to light up. Ever since the law came into force, smoking rates have gone down year-on-year. And increasingly young people in particular seem to be going off the idea. The number of children under 16 who regularly smoke has halved to 3% since 2007 – the lowest figure on record.

3.
Figures also soon showed a significant decline in hospital admissions for heart attacks, asthma and lung infections. In the year following the law, there were 2.4% fewer heart attack cases recorded in Accident and Emergency departments than the year before. This might not sound very much, but that is 1,200 fewer cases in the country as a whole. These figures are even more dramatic if you bear in mind that many workplaces had already gone smoke free before the law came into effect. This makes the fact we can see a distinct drop before and after the ban came into place even more remarkable.

4.
The success of the ban also gave people the courage to tackle other smoking-related issues that might once have seemed impossible to address – such as plain packaging and other forms of advertising at the point of sale. Figures from Australia – which imposed plain packaging three years before the UK – found that restricting the colour, size and font on cigarette packets led to a noticeable drop in the number of people smoking. Similar projections were made for the UK, with scientists claiming plain packets could encourage more than 300,000 Britons to quit smoking for good.

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5.
The smoke-free law also made people more aware of the dangers of second-hand smoke everywhere, including in their own homes. This is a step in the right direction for people with long-term lung conditions – as the Life of Breath project at Durham and Bristol universities shows how sensitive to air quality these people are. For them a smoke-filled environment is a nightmare. Just in European
Union, millions of European citizens are going to be protected from the harmful effects caused by passive smoking. As seen, tobacco industry predictions of economic doom for the hospitality industry have failed to materialise; whereas independent studies consistently show that smoke free laws have a neutral or positive effect on businesses.

6.
Vending machines, where young people could often obtain their cigs out of the watchful eye of adults, are also a thing of the past. And it is now illegal to buy cigarettes if you are under 18. This was previously set at the age of 16 before 2007.Taxes on tobacco products have also continued to rise, making it even more difficult for young people with less money in their pocket.

7.
Whatever your view on that score, support for smoke free places is higher now than it was when the law first came in. In other words, there are very few people – both smokers and nonsmokers – who would like to return to those foggy days of smoke-filled clubs and bars. It is a fact that smoke free legislation in the European Union has come a long way in recent years with17 Member States having introduced comprehensive smoke free policies and public opinion strongly
supporting such legislation.

A. Lower tolerance for people smoking around
B. The less eye-catching, the better
C. The measure and its beginning
D. Drop in teen smokers
E. The habit is dropping
F. Many proposals were squashes
G. Many countries impose the law to tackle health problems
H. Health issues are cutting short

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Reading: Part 4

Read the text below. Match the headings to the paragraphs 1-7. There is one more heading than you need. The answer to paragraph 0 is given as an example.

IMMIGRATIONS TO THE UNITED STATES

A. **REASONS FOR IMMINGRATION.**
B. EUROPEAN INMMIGRANTS.
C. AMERICAN INMMIGRATION IN THE 60S.
D. PROHIBITION OF SLAVERY IN 19THC,
E. MEASURES TO REDUCE INMMIGRATION.
F. LOOKING FOR A NEW OPPORTUNITY.
G. SURVIVAL OF IMMIGRATION DESPITE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

1. **REASONS FOR IMMINGRATION**

The United States of America has long been the world's chief receiving nation for immigrants. An immigrant is a person who leaves his or her country to settle and live in another country. Over the years, many millions of people have uprooted and left family and friends to move to America. Some felt forced to leave because they feared for their lives due to dangers present in their home countries. For example, many immigrants left countries that were at war or that didn't give them the freedom to practice their faith. Immigrants also left their native lands if they couldn't find work or enough food to live. Whatever the reason, immigrants usually have had to sacrifice a life that is familiar for one that is unknown.

2.

The United States was founded by immigrants. From the 1600s through 1775, European colonists settled in the land that is now the United States. Most of these immigrants were from England. Others arrived from France, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, and Spain. Many of these colonists came here looking for economic opportunity. They wanted better land to farm or better work. Others came to escape religious persecution. Some were even convicts brought over from English jails. West Africans also immigrated to the American colonies, but they came against their will. They were captured, sold into slavery, and shipped to the colonies.

3.

Since the United States was established in the late 1700s, it has seen three waves of immigration. The first wave of American immigration took place from 1820 to 1870. Over seven million people made the voyage to America, mostly from northern and western Europe. About a third of these immigrants were Irish people trying to escape a famine that plagued Ireland in the mid-1840s. Another third of the immigrants from this wave were German. The Chinese also began to immigrate to America during this time. They got word of the Gold Rush in California. They came to work in the mines and get rich.

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4.

This flood of immigrants wasn't always welcome by those already in America. Some feared these newcomers would take away their jobs. Others didn't like the politics, customs, and/or religions the new immigrants brought with them. For example, many Irish people were discriminated against for being Roman Catholic. The Chinese also suffered greatly from discrimination.

5.

The next wave of U.S. immigration was by far the greatest. It started in 1881 and ended in 1920. Over 23 million people immigrated to the United States during this period, most of whom came from southern and eastern Europe. But by this time, anti-immigration sentiments had become so strong that a growing number of people demanded laws to make it harder for foreigners to become American citizens. In 1875, Congress passed its first immigration law intended to limit immigration. It kept people who were viewed as undesirable out, including convicts. In 1882, Congress also passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. It prohibited Chinese workers from coming to the United States. A few years later, other laws were passed. One required adult immigrants to have literacy skills. Another limited the number of immigrants from countries outside the Western Hemisphere. However, one of the greatest blows to immigration was the Great Depression of the 1930s. Immigration sharply declined. In fact, there were more people leaving America than coming to America during this time.

6.

The third wave of immigration began in 1965 and continues today. Most immigrants in this wave have come from Asian countries as well as South American countries, Caribbean countries, and Mexico. A large number of these immigrants have settled in the East and Midwest. However, many others have moved to California.

7.

Most immigrants have come to America with the hope of building a better life. However, they were sometimes met with hatred by the people already living in the country who feared the economic and cultural impacts of these newcomers. While this discrimination and the economic downfall of the Great Depression had a negative effect on immigration, American immigration has managed to survive.

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Reading: Part 4

Read the text below. Match the headings to the paragraphs 1-7. There is one more heading than you need. The answer to paragraph 0 is given as an example.

- **A.** SOURSOP FRUIT
- **B.** HEALTH BENEFITS OF SOURSOPS
- **C.** **THE SOURSOP TREE**
- **D.** SIDE EFFECTS OF SOURSOPS
- **E.** EFFECTIVENESS IN DESTROYING CANCEROUS CELLS
- **F.** RECENT SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES ON THE TREE
- **G.** NUTRIENTS IN SOURSOP FRUITS
- **H.** THE SOURSOP FRUIT
- **I.** THE USE OF VARIOUS PARTS OF THE TREE

1. The soursop tree

The soursop tree is an evergreen flowering tree of the genus Annona and the family, Annonaceae. It is also known by the name of Graviola. The scientific name of soursop is Annonamuricata, and it is native to the regions of Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and northern South America. Today, it is grown in some other parts of the world, especially in Southeast Asia.

2.

The soursop tree is known for its delicious fruits. The fruit is large with a thin, greencolored skin covered with conical nibs. The pulp is white and soft, and quite delicious. It has both sweet and sour taste. The fruit can be eaten directly, or its pulp can be pressed and strained to extract the juice, which is not only delectable, but also rich in many essential nutrients.

3.

The flesh or pulp of the fruit, from which the juice is extracted, is very rich in fiber, carbohydrates, and other nutrients, like vitamin B1 and B2, vitamin C, and potassium. On the other hand, it is quite low in saturated fats and sodium. About 1 cup of undiluted juice or nectar contains 160 calories.

4.

The soursop tree is mainly known for its medicinal properties. Certain compounds found in the extracts derived from the fruits, seeds, bark, and the leaves of the soursop tree have been observed to be effective in destroying cancerous cells in some laboratory studies. The leaves of this tree have been found to be particularly effective in killing cancer cells without harming the healthy cells of the body. Moreover, the extract derived from the leaves does not affect the immune system adversely, unlike the chemotherapy drugs.

5.

Apart from the ability to kill cancer cells, the soursop tree has several other health benefits. The seeds of this fruit can be used for inducing vomiting, while the juice can be immensely beneficial for treating urethritis. It can also help treat hematuria which is a condition characterized by the presence of blood in

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urine. Soursop juice can help alleviate liver ailments as well. The juice is usually taken while fasting in order to cure liver problems. It may also prove beneficial in conditions like leprosy.

6.

The various parts of the tree, including its leaves and the young shoots have been used for conditions, like cough, catarrh, fever, gallbladder problems, inflammation and swelling, diarrhea, indigestion, rheumatism, dysentery, eczema, and some other skin problems. The pulp of the fruit, as well as the crushed leaves of the tree, can be used as a poultice to ensure fast healing of wounds.

7.

To sum up, soursop is not only a delicious, but also a very nutritious fruit. However, it is imperative to talk to a physician before considering to use it for medicinal purposes. If taken in large dosage, it can induce vomiting and depress the cardiovascular system. It can also induce uterine contractions, for which pregnant women should not use this fruit for medicinal purposes. All these possible side effects need to be considered before using this fruit, or any other part of the tree for the treatment of cancer and other ailments.

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Reading: Part 4

Read the text below. Match the headings to the paragraphs 1-7. There is one more heading than you need. The answer to paragraph 0 is given as an example.

A. THE 'EYE' OF THE STORM.
B. STORM IN THE GREAT PLAINS
C. THE UNCONTROLLED POWER OF NATURE
D. FINANCIAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE STORMS
E. DANGEROUS STORMS IN AMERICA
F. TORNADOES
G. THE FURY OF TORNADO
H. HURRICANES

HURRICANES AND TORNADOES

1.

Two of the most dangerous storms which afflict America are hurricanes and tornadoes. They are very much feared by anyone who may live in the path of their destruction and cause millions of dollars worth of damage to life and property every year.

2.

The storm that usually develop between July and October are called the hurricanes. They are similar to cyclones and originate over the waters in the Caribbean Sea. They move upwards hitting the mainland of America somewhere in the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic Ocean. Once they hit land, they carry tremendous power with driving rain and wind. These winds can attain speeds of over 75 mph. And cover an area of over 500 miles in diameter. Every year homes are destroyed by their fury and often lives are lost.

3.

At the centre of the storm there is an "eye" with relatively fair weather and warm, dry air aloft. The diameter of the eye is usually about 32 kilometres. When the eye passes the relief is only temporary but soon the wind and rain will suddenly reappear from the opposite direction.

4.

Hurricanes brings both the heavy rains and a storm tides which causes floods along the coasts areas. The high winds and torrential rains associated with this storm are the main causes of the severe flood. The flooding causes enormous damage and most people who live near the coast are forced to evacuate their homes and to move to safer areas until the storm passes. People living in the wake of a storm are given ample warning to protect their homes. Flashlights or candles are kept prepared in case of electric-power failures and plenty of fresh water should be saved as precautions against the pollution of water supplies by flooding.

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5.

There is another kind of storm in the Midwest of America which is equally feared. It is called a tornado. This type of storm is experienced if one should travel inland across the Great Plains and the prairie states of America. In these regions, one will most likely not encounter a hurricane but a tornado. Tornadoes are violent low-pressured storms with an intense updraft near their centre which is capable of lifting quite heavy objects from the ground. A tornado, therefore, is a dark, funnel-shaped cloud containing violently rotating air.

6.

It can pick up trees and cars right into the air and even uplift heavier objects such as homes and railway cars. Like a vacuum cleaner across a rug, it sucks up into the air anything which may lie in its path. These storms occur most often during the summer months and are noticeable by their strong wind and lack of rain. The sky turns black as dust is sucked up into the air.

7.

Tornadoes travel normally at around 60 kilometres per hour and the winds can reach 800 kilometres per hours in the most violent storms. Tornadoes are most frequent in the United States east of the Rocky Mountains and especially in the central plains area of the Mississippi basin where about 150 occur each year. Tornadoes may also strike the southern states in winter and have even been known to develop in the northeast. Both hurricanes and tornadoes cause millions of dollars worth of damage each year. Today they can be predicted more easily than in the past, but they cannot be stopped or ignored. When they come they must be endured with the hope that one survives their fury and wrath.

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Reading: Part 4

Read the text below. Match the headings to the paragraphs 1-7. There is one more heading than you need. The answer to paragraph 1 is given as an example.

NON-COLONISTS-IN-THE-AMERICAN-REVOLUTION

- **A.** DEVOTED TO THE AMERICAN CAUSE
- **B.** GEORGE WASHINGTON'S HERITAGE
- **C.** IMPOSSIBLE TO REMAIN NEUTRAL
- **D.** MERCENARY SOLDIERS FROM EUROPE
- **E.** A VALUABLE SUPPORT AND NEW EXPECTATIONS
- **F.** UNDERCOVER SUPPORT
- **G.** FRENCH WITHDRAWAL FROM NORTH AMERICA

1. ENLIGHTENMENT IDEAS

From the point of view of some Europeans, the American Revolution pitted the ideals of the Enlightenment, republicanism, and democracy against Europe's established order, as exemplified by Britain. Some countries found that watching wasn't enough—they joined the fight.

2.

One of these countries was France. Without France, a very important ally of America in the Revolutionary War, the Americans might not have defeated the British army. The French supported the Americans for a number of reasons. A weakened England could only heighten France's status and influence—both in Western Europe and around the world as various countries competed to establish colonies. Some French might have been seeking payback. Only twelve years before the American Revolution, France was at war with Britain in the Seven Years' War, and they lost. This resulted in France being forced to give North American territories to Britain.

3.

Five months after the Declaration of Independence was signed, Benjamin Franklin travelled to Paris. He hoped to explain the revolutionary cause to the French and enlist their support. Franklin was already popular in France for his writings and scientific discoveries, and he was able to secure French support. At first, France supported the Americans only in secret. Gunpowder, ammunition, weapons, and money were smuggled into the country, hidden in commercial ships. Military strategists crossed the Atlantic to advise Continental Army military commanders.

4.

In February 1778, France officially recognized the United States (following the Battle of Saratoga, in which the Continental Army decisively defeated the British army and gave a resurgence of hope to the Americans' fight for independence), and the countries signed an alliance. French soldiers fought alongside Americans; French and British fleets clashed from Rhode Island down to Georgia. In addition to manpower, France contributed money and weapons. For helping the American cause, France spent the equivalent of what would be about 13 billion dollars in the U.S. today.

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5.

Spain also supported the Americans. First, like France, the Spanish contribution consisted of money and weapons. But in 1779, Spain joined France with military support. Also like France, the Spanish navy played an important role in combating the formidable British fleet. Land and sea battles were sometimes fought far from the North American continent—in the Mediterranean and West Africa. But French, Spanish, American, and British armies were not the only armies fighting in the American Revolution. A quarter of all soldiers under the British flag were actually from the area known as Germany today—30,000 hired men in all. These soldiers were known as Hessians, because many of them were from the independent principality of Hesse-Cassel.

6.

Native Americans also fought in the American Revolution. Most considered the United States to be a threat to their territory, so they fought on the British side. In total, approximately 13,000 Native Americans fought for the British. But other Native Americans fought against them. The Revolution was, for some Native Americans, a controversial and divisive matter. For instance, the Iroquois Confederacy, also known as the Six Nations, was a powerful organization of tribes that tried to stay neutral. But pressed to choose a side, the Confederacy could reach no agreement; it split up, with two tribes pledging their allegiance to the Americans, and four to the British.

7.

Other notable figures were two men from Poland: Tadeusz Kościuszko and Casimir Pulaski. Tadeusz Kościuszko was born in Poland, moved to France, sailed to America, and rose to the rank of brigadier general. His countryman, Casimir Pulaski, has been called the "father of the American cavalry." Pulaski organized and trained the Continental Army's horsemen, which had been used mostly for scouting. Pulaski was also promoted to general but was killed in the war. Pulaski and Kościuszko joined the Americans out of idealism. They believed in the struggle for freedom and self-governance. As Pulaski wrote to George Washington after his arrival in Massachusetts, "I came here, where freedom is being defended, to serve it, and to live or die for it."

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Reading: Part 4

Read the text below. Match the headings to the paragraphs 1-7. There is one more heading than you need. The answer to paragraph 1 is given as an example.

BEOWULF

A. **ORIGINS OF BEOWULF**
B. APPEAL AND VALUE
C. PROUD ACCEPTANCE OF HIS FATE
D. AN ANONYMOUS AUTHOR
E. LEARNING FROM THEIR PREDECESSORS
F. THE BEOWULF MANUSCRIPT
G. RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE IN ANGLO-SAXONS
H. ADVANCES IN WEAPONRY

1. **ORIGINS OF BEOWULF**

The epic poem Beowulf, written in Old English, is the earliest existing Germanic epic and one of four surviving Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. Although Beowulf was written by an anonymous Englishman in Old English, the tale takes place in that part of Scandinavia from which Germanic tribes emigrated to England. Beowulf comes from Geatland, the southeastern part of what is now Sweden. Hrothgar, king of the Danes, lives near what is now Leire, on Zealand, Denmark's largest island. The Beowulf epic contains three major tales about Beowulf and several minor tales that reflect a rich Germanic oral tradition of myths, legends, and folklore.

2.

The Beowulf warriors have a foot in both the Bronze and Iron Ages. Their mead-halls reflect the wealthy living of the Bronze Age Northmen, and their wooden shields, wood-shafted spears, and bronze-hilted swords are those of the Bronze Age warrior. However, they carry iron-tipped spears, and their best swords have iron or iron-edged blades. Beowulf also orders an iron shield for his fight with a dragon. Iron replaced bronze because it produced a blade with a cutting edge that was stronger and sharper.

3.

The Northmen learned how to forge iron in about 500 B.C. Although they had been superior to the European Celts in bronze work, it was the Celts who taught them how to make and design iron work. Iron was accessible everywhere in Scandinavia, usually in the form of "bog-iron" found in the layers of peat in peat bogs. The Beowulf epic also reveals interesting aspects of the lives of the Anglo-Saxons who lived in England at the time of the anonymous Beowulf poet. The Germanic tribes, including the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes, invaded England from about A.d. 450 to 600. By the time of the Beowulf poet, Anglo-Saxon society in England was neither primitive nor uncultured.

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4.

Although the Beowulf manuscript was written in about A.d. 1000, it was not discovered until the seventeenth century. Scholars do not know whether Beowulf is the sole surviving epic from a flourishing Anglo-Saxon literary period that produced other great epics or whether it was unique even in its own time. Many scholars think that the epic was probably written sometime between the late seventh century and the early ninth century. If they are correct, the original manuscript was probably lost during the ninth-century Viking invasions of Anglia, in which the Danes destroyed the Anglo-Saxon monasteries and their great libraries. However, other scholars think that the poet's favourable attitude toward the Danes must place the epic's composition after the Viking invasions and at the start of the eleventh century, when this Beowulf manuscript was written.

5.

The identity of the Beowulf poet is also uncertain. He apparently was a Christian who loved the pagan heroic tradition of his ancestors and blended the values of the pagan hero with the Christian values of his own country and time. Because he wrote in the Anglian dialect, he probably was either a monk in a monastery or a poet in an Anglo-Saxon court located north of the Thames River.

6.

Beowulf interests contemporary readers for many reasons. First, it is an outstanding adventure story. Grendel, Grendel's mother, and the dragon are marvellous characters, and each fight is unique, action-packed, and exciting. Second, Beowulf is a very appealing hero. He is the perfect warrior, combining extraordinary strength, skill, courage, and loyalty. like Hercules, he devotes his life to making the world a safer place. He chooses to risk death in order to help other people, and he faces his inevitable death with heroism and dignity. Third, the Beowulf poet is interested in the psychological aspects of human behaviour. For example, the Danish hero's welcoming speech illustrates his jealousy of Beowulf. The behaviour of Beowulf's warriors in the dragon fight reveals their cowardice. Beowulf's attitudes toward heroism reflect his maturity and experience, while King Hrothgar's attitudes toward life show the experiences of an aged nobleman.

7.

Finally, the Beowulf poet exhibits a mature appreciation of the transitory nature of human life and achievement. In Beowulf, as in the major epics of other cultures, the hero must create a meaningful life in a world that is often dangerous and uncaring. He must accept the inevitability of death. He chooses to reject despair; instead, he takes pride in himself and in his accomplishments, and he values human relationships.

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