

*Module I: Anglo-Saxon Literature*

**Beowulf Vocabulary Assignment**

**Directions:** Fill out the chart below. Consider each word below in the context of the poem. The line number is provided for your convenience. Take a guess at what you think the word means. Next, use the internet or a good dictionary to discover its actual meaning and a few synonyms. How often were you able to guess the definition of each word correctly based on context?

Word	Line	What do you think this word means based on context?	What is this word's actual definition?	What are some synonyms for this word?
Fief	103			
Hapless	104			
Wight	104			
Exile	105			
Laden	124			
Wassail	127			
Succor	176			
Assuaged	190			
Valor	195			
Stalwart	197			

**For fun!** Write a sentence that uses three of the words above. The sentence should use each word correctly, but feel free to be humorous with this!

## Beowulf Understanding Plot and Character Assignment

**Directions:** After reading about each of the three major battles in the text, answer the following questions. By answering these questions, you will further solidify your understanding of key events in the text.

### Battle #1--Battle with Grendel

- Why does the battle take place?
- Where does the battle take place?
- How long is the battle?
- What challenges must Beowulf overcome?
- What is the overall mood during this scene?
- What is the battle's outcome?

### Battle #2--Battle with Grendel's Mother

- Why does the battle take place?
- Where does the battle take place?
- How long is the battle?
- What challenges must Beowulf overcome?
- What is the overall mood during this scene?
- What is the battle's outcome?

### Battle #3--Battle with the Dragon

- Why does the battle take place?
- Where does the battle take place?
- How long is the battle?
- What challenges must Beowulf overcome?
- What is the overall mood during this scene?
- What is the battle's outcome?

**Reflection:** In a short paragraph, discuss how Beowulf evolves as a hero from the beginning of the poem to the end. In your writing, consider the following questions: How does he change? How does he present himself at the beginning versus the end of the poem? What is the mood like in the early battles compared to the later ones? How do others see/perceive Beowulf?

## Beowulf Paragraph Structure Assignment

**Directions:** Read the following paragraph from a literary analysis entitled, “*Beowulf as Romance: Literary Interpretation as Quest*,” and answer each of the following questions. Then write a summary of this paragraph in your own words, remembering to include the main idea and details that support the main idea.

1. Why is the author writing this analysis?
2. Who is the author’s audience?
3. What is the author’s main idea or main point?
4. What details does the author use to support this main idea?

*“In romance the hero’s character is central. To understand this character it is crucial to read and interpret the hero’s words and actions. Furthermore, being aware of the fictional nature of the work, the author of romance attaches particular importance to the act of composition and writing – to such an extent that he allows his characters to share in the creative aspect of this process. Romance represents the individual as both the object and subject of literary production: he is the hero and the creator of his own story, as well as a contributor to the larger narrative of his culture. As a consequence, romance characters are often found listening to and telling stories – stories about themselves and others. It can be noted that Beowulf abounds with such stories, from the protagonist’s monologue accounts of his exploits to extended legendary narratives.”*

Breizmann, N. ““Beowulf” as Romance: Literary Interpretation as Quest.” *MLN*, vol. 113 no. 5, Comparative Literature Issue (Dec., 1998), pp. 1022-1035. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/mln.1998.0081

**Follow-Up:** Take a few moments to compare your summary with the original. Compare your summary with a partner’s summary. What do they all have in common? How are they different? What elements do you feel must be present in order to summarize the contents effectively?

**Module I: Anglo-Saxon Literature**

**“The Seafarer” Reading Comprehension Assignment**

**Directions:** As you read “The Seafarer,” respond to the following guided reading questions to gauge your understanding and comprehension.

**Lines 1-26**

1. Identify three different images within these lines.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. List three references to misery or miserable circumstances at sea. Use short quotes and line numbers.

**Lines 27-28**

3. What calls the poem’s speaker out to sea?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Find the line that shows the speaker is actually excited about going to sea in spite of all its hardships. Write the line and the number.

**Lines 39-57**

5. What do all men feel, however, when the sails unfurl?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. How is the sea unlike land? What does the sea lack?

**Lines 58-80**

7. What are Fate's three threats?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Find three examples of alliteration within these lines. Be sure to provide line numbers as well.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. What is meant by lines 66-67: "The wealth/Of the world neither reaches to Heaven nor remains" (lines 66-67)?

**Lines 81-102**

10. How was the past unlike the present? What has vanished?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. The speaker of the poem goes on to mention other things that do not last or will never rise to heaven. Name two.

**Lines 103-125**

12. According to the speaker, why should we fear God?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. What happens to "fools who forget their God"? (line 106) What happens to those who "live humbly" (line 107)?

14. Name three ways a man should act (lines 109-114).

15. What two things are stronger than a man's mind?

16. In line 117, what is "home" most likely?

17. The last lines of the poem show what type of attitude towards God?

**The Poem as a Whole**

18. List several emotions that are expressed by the poet throughout the poem.

19. Explain how a person can dislike something as much as the sailor dislikes life at sea and yet keep going back to it.

20. Do you like the poem? Why or why not?

**“The Wife’s Lament” Reading Comprehension Assignment**

**Directions:** As you read “The Wife’s Lament,” complete the following guided reading questions:

1. What does the speaker say her subject matter will be in this poem?
2. What happened to the wife’s lord that has left her alone?
3. How did the man’s kinfolk behave when the wife sought shelter with them?
4. Where did the wife’s lord command her to live?
5. The wife “weeps her exile” when she sees what lying together?
6. Why do you think the wife says that a young person must have a “glad countenance even though that person experiences heartache?

