

AP English Notes for Major Test
October 20, 2004

Beowulf First Masterpiece in English Literature

English Literature

Old English Literature

‡ 450-1100

– **Beowulf**

Middle English Literature

‡ 1100-1500

– **Canterbury Tales**

Modern English Literature

‡ 1500-Present

Germanic tribes bring the stories to the English shores.

Hero is from southern Sweden Travels to Denmark

Around 725 AD

‡ The orally transmitted story is recorded

Beowulf

does name an actual

king, Hygelac who died in battle in 521.

By the age of twelve, Hygelac was too large to ride a horse.

Hygelac, Beowulf's uncle and liege lord, was pulled into battle on a sled and he dies wearing a gold necklace/collar.

Beowulf

Scyld

Beowulf (not our hero)

Healfdene

Hrothgar--Wealtheow

Hrethic Hrothmund Frewaru

+ Ingeld

Geats

Hrethel

Hygelac (daughter) +Ecgtheow

Beowulf

Weder-Geats

Hrothgar

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builds a Mead Hall

**Heorot
(Hall of the Hart)**

**Danish Court
Spear Danes
Entertainment**

**Scop
Mead
Drink of honey, water, malt, and yeast**

**Scop
Composed Stories
If a warrior king desires to be a bretwalda, the scop must tell hero stories about him.**

**Scop
(like a Public Relations person)**

**“Scyld, Son of Scaef (Shaf)
‡ Sea Burial Described
Hrothgar (Scyld’s Descendant)
‡ “To Hrothgar was granted glory in war” (Kennedy 38)
‡ Band Grew Mighty
‡ “high-built hall . . . a mightier mead hall than man had known” (Kennedy 42-43)
Hall of the Hart
‡ Stag is a Germanic symbol of kingship**

**“They call him Grendel, a demon grim” (61)
“He bore the curse of the seed of Cain” (65)**

“Grendel raided and ravaged” (Kennedy 105)

“Grim and greedy the gruesome monster . . . slew thirty spearman asleep in the hall . . . sped away gloating, gripping the spoil . . . dragging the dead men home to his den” (Kennedy 80-84).

“By favor of God we won the fight” (Kennedy 698).

“To save his life he left his shoulder and claw” (Kennedy 719).

**“The fiend’s hand fastened by hero’s might
On the lofty roof. Most like to steel” (721-22).**

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“The demon’s battle-claw dripping with blood . . .” (Kennedy 727).

Hrothgar bestowed
a standard of gold
a banner embroidered
a byrny and helm
a costly sword
helmet
‡ a crowning wreath
‡ “woven of wire-work” (750)

“Eight horses with plated headstalls . . .
On one a saddle fashioned and set with jewels, the battle seat of the king himself, when the son of
Healfdene” (Kennedy 754-58).

Wealhtheow (wife of Hrothgar):

“Take, dear Beowulf, collar and corselet,
Wear these treasures with right good will!
Thrive and prosper and prove your might!
Befriend my boys with your kindly counsel;
I will remember and I will repay’ ” (Kennedy 775-79)

“The mother of Grendel, a monstrous hag,
Brooded over her misery, doomed to dwell
In evil waters and icy streams. . . .” (Kennedy 814-16)

“She tore from its place
The bloodstained claw”
(834-35).

“Of slaughtered AEschere’s severed head” (932).

Hrunting an ancient heirloom given to Beowulf by
Herald of Hrothgar-?Unferth?

Hrunting means *Thruster*

“plunged into the
swirling pool”

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**After Hygelac sank in the surges of war. . . . the kingdom came into Beowulf's hands.
For fifty years he governed it well / Till a fire-drake flying in darkness of night (1370-74)**

**A thief broke in on the heathen treasure
Laid hand on a flagon all fretted with gold . . . the mood of the dragon was roused to wrath (1379-83).**

**"Stole the rich beaker and bore to his master
Imploring his lord for a compact of peace" (1387-88).**

**With eleven comrades, kindled to rage
The great lord went to gaze on the dragon. . . .
The thirteenth made in the hurrying throng
Was the sorrowful captive who caused the feud. (1453-59)**

"While the sword holds out that has served me well" (1484).

"As Fate shall allot" (1496).

**It was not his portion to prosper in war;
Fate did not grant him glory in battle! (1541-42)**

"But the brown edge failed as it fell on bone" (1545).

"Wiglaf, Weohstan's son, / A prince of the Scyldings [Swedes]. . ." (1562-63).

**"Beloved Beowulf,
Summon your strength, remember the vow
You made of old in years of youth
Not to allow your glory to lessen
As long as you lived. . . ." (1589-95)**

"I fight at your side." (1595)

**. . . under shield of his kinsman . . . Swung his great sword-blade with all his might / And drove it
home on the dragon's head / But *Naegling* broke. . . (1601-07)**

**The Language of Scops
Each line breaks in the middle --
this pause is called a caesura.
Each half line contains two stressed syllables
and any number of
unstressed syllables.
alliteration
repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning or within words
Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers
grim, greedy Grendel**

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candle of heaven =
sun

kenning

two or more words that name something by metaphor

kennings

H light of battle = sword

H peace weaver = women

hranade

“on the whale-road”

segrade

“on the sail-road”

metaphor

comparison

a transfer of meaning

a word picture to describe

Scop

Has a “word-hoard”--

a great number of words (Kennedy 11)

byrn, freca, wiga --

all mean warrior

beorn, freca, wiga --

bear, wolf, fighter

Beowulf

Beowulf's Father

‡ Ecgtheow

‡ Hyygelac's brother-in-law

‡ Hearth Companion

Unferth's Taunts

Beowulf's Answer

– “My good friend Unferth, addled with beer” (Kennedy 406). . . .

Unferth

Ecglaf's son

“Picking a quarrel--for Beowulf's quest . . . irked him sore” (Kennedy 383-85)

“Are you the Beowulf that strove with Breca / In a swimming match in the open sea . . . risking

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your lives for a silly boast?" (389-93).

Story begins with Scyld

Comes to the Danes over the Sea

At Death Returns with Treasure

‡ Sutton Hoo--Treasure

‡ East Coast of England,

‡ East Anglia

‡ 1939, Estate of Sutton Hoo

‡

Wife of Bath--

Married at the age of twelve

Five husbands and seeking the sixth

She says she got everything she wanted from her husbands

Loved number five the best; she married him for love and not for money.

He was 20 and she was 40.

He reads her the Book of Evil Women.

Friar--

Chaucer's Friar

Undisciplined, reckless, unrestrained (wanton)

Duties: Beg for donations, preach, bury the dead, marry individuals

Spoke well

He states he could hear confessions (?)

Pins and pocketknives to little girls

Liked silver

The Summoner

Carbuncles

Black scabby brows

Scared children

Loved garlic, leeks, and strong red wine

"Speaks" Latin (like a parrot)

Knows secrets of young men

* Humours --Mars

Pardoner--

Pardoner is "just back from visiting the Court of Rome" (689).

Pardoner has yellow hair that hangs like rattails and he does not wear a hood (693-98).

He has bulging eyeballs, like a rabbit (702) and a goat-like voice (706).

He was a male without a beard (707-08).

– Was called a

‡ gelding--a castrated animal.

‡ mare--a female horse

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**When in April the sweet showers fall
And pierce the drought of March to the root, and all
The veins are bathed in liquor of such power
As brings about the engendering of the flower**

Parson--

**Parson
a man of good renown
a poor man
educated
H clerk
H knew the Bible
H kind, hardworking, patient
H handle adversity
H traveled on foot
H If parson misbehaves
H preferred the poor
H never talked down to sinner
H practiced what he preached**

**The Wedding Night: The Knight and the Hag
Is this how knights and wives get on together?
You're of lowly birth
I'm a child of God, my Father a King
You're poor
Seneca
You're old and ugly
But I'm faithful
Give over mastery and kiss me**

Friar--

**Thick, white, neck
Sang and played a stringed instrument, hurdy gurdy
Enjoyed gossip
Knew the bars, barmaids, and tavern keepers better than lepers
Heard confessions (shriff) and gave small penance (task to gain forgiveness) for a gift
Hubert was his name**

Monk--

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H This Monk loved to hunt as a sport, but monks were not allowed to hunt.

H He owned a dainty horse with jingling bridle; however, a monk is not suppose to have possessions or make noise and attract attention.

H The Monk had a fur trimmed robe, and fine clothing which was disobeying his vows.

Also review the Miller