

Beowulf Study Questions

Copy the questions on your own paper. Answer the questions completely, citing the line numbers where you find the answers.

Lines 1-500

1. Describe Heorot.
2. Describe Grendel's lair. How does it compare to Heorot?
3. What is the significance of Grendel being descended from Cain?
4. Why does Grendel attack Heorot?
5. What had Heorot symbolized before the coming of Grendel? After?
6. Why is Hrothgar's lieutenant concerned about the arrival of Beowulf and his men?
7. How does the lieutenant recognize Beowulf as a hero?

Lines 500-1060

1. Why does Unferth bring up Beowulf's swimming match with Breca? How does Beowulf respond?
2. What is Wealhtheow's role in Heorot? What does the narrator praise her for?
3. What is the significance of Hrothgar's speech in ll. 655-661?
4. What are Beowulf's thoughts as he waits for Grendel's arrival?
5. Why does Beowulf wait, allowing Grendel to kill one of the Geats, before he attacks Grendel?
6. Describe the battle between Beowulf and Grendel. (ll. 744-835)
7. Why can't the other warriors come to Beowulf's aid?
8. How does Beowulf wound Grendel?
9. What purpose does the comparison between Beowulf and Sigemund? The comparison between Beowulf and Heremod? (ll. 883ff)
10. How does Beowulf respond to Hrothgar's praise? (ll. 957-978)
11. How does Hrothgar reward Beowulf? (ll. 1019-1048)
12. What does Hrothgar's generosity say about his character?