

Name: _____

English 11 - Maxwell



Literary Analysis: Focus Areas

- 1) The Hero's Journey & Circular Tale
- 2) Literary Binaries
 - a) Good vs. Evil
 - b) Christianity vs. Paganism
- 3) Epic Hero / Tragic Hero

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Beowulf Background Notes

Anglo-Saxon Literature

- Few people read in this period
- _____ – was performed and/or sung by a Bard (Scop) from memory in Old English
- This is why there are often several versions of the same story.
- _____

The Story of Beowulf

- Beowulf marks the beginning of _____
- Beowulf is one of the earliest known pieces of literature known in the English language; written in _____
- The story of Beowulf wasn't written down until about _____ by "The Beowulf Poet" who is unknown. He wrote down the poem which for many years had been only sung or spoken.
- Scholars believe "The Beowulf Poet" was most likely a _____, thus adding a Christian perspective.
- There is only one original Beowulf manuscript existing today. It is in the _____.

Motifs

- **Motif** – _____
 - Biblical and Christian Allusions
 - Pagan Customs

- _____
- Traits of the Warrior
- _____

Epic Poem

- **EPIC** – a long, narrative poem that relates the great deeds of a larger-than-life hero who _____.

- Examples of Epic Poems:

- Greek “_____” and “_____”

Characteristics of an Epic Poem

- A long narrative poem
- Larger than life hero; often with _____ characteristics
- Concerned with everlasting human problems like the struggle between _____
- Presented in a serious manner using elevated (poetic) language
- Hero represents widespread national, cultural, or religious values

The Epic Hero

- Must undertake a quest to achieve something of tremendous value to _____

Where Does it Take Place?

- Geatland and Denmark
 - (Modern _____)

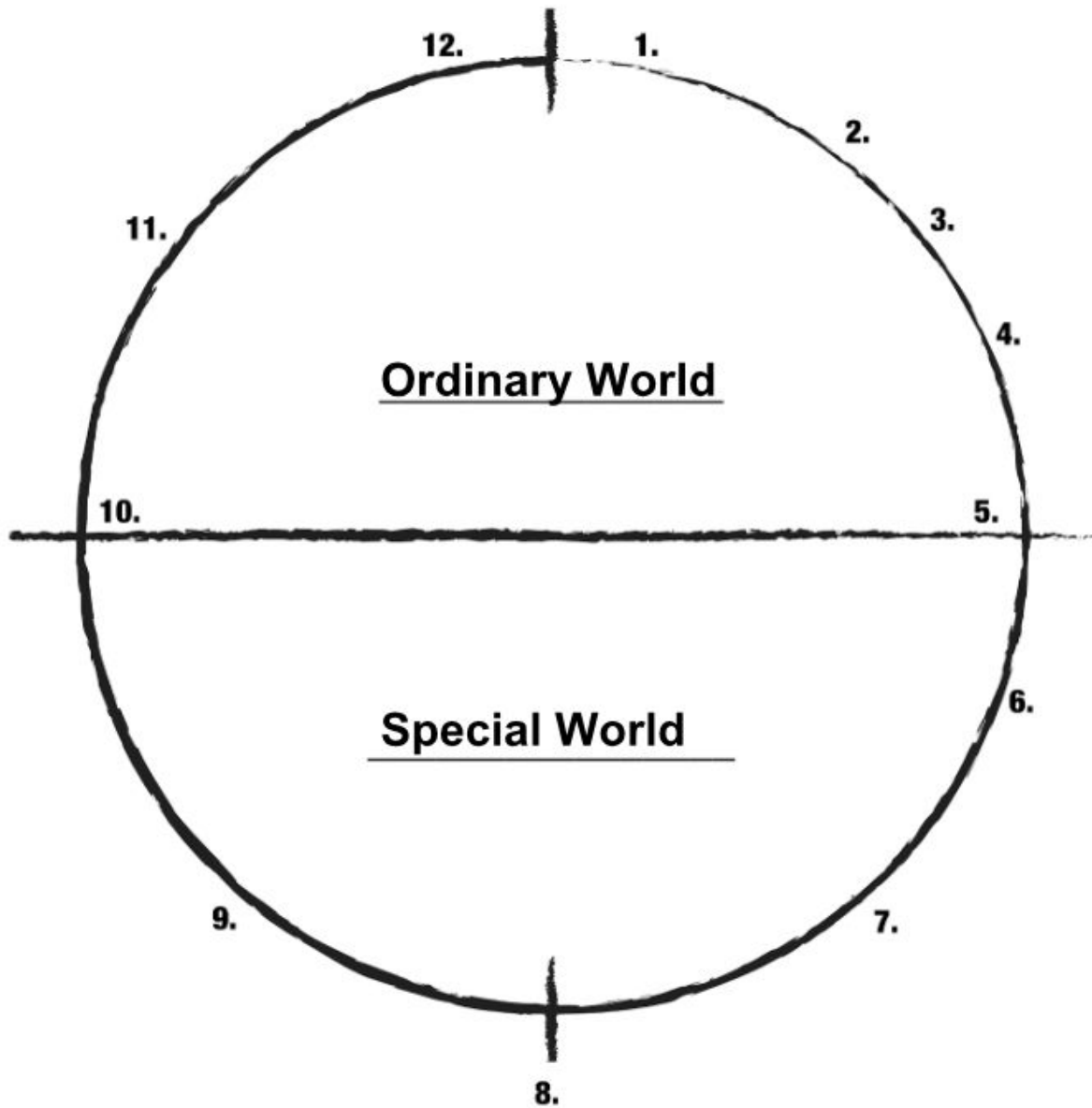


Characteristic features of Anglo-Saxon Literature

- **Alliteration** - the repetition of beginning consonant sounds (ex: _____)
- Tongue twisters rely on alliteration
 - She sells sea shells by the sea shore
- Many common expressions contain alliteration
- Fit as a fiddle; _____; Turn the Tables

- **Kenning** - a _____ phrase used to replace a concrete noun
 - Sea = whale's home
 - Book = word-lister
 - Battle = spear play
 - Beowulf = glory-seeker
 - Body = bone-house

THE HERO'S JOURNEY



Circular Tale: _____

English 11- Beowulf Literary Analysis Paper Description

THE OVERVIEW

The *Beowulf* literary analysis paper gives you a chance to research and analyze the significance of *Beowulf* in an individual way. In the paper you will demonstrate your knowledge of the text, develop an argument about the work, and conduct a complex and deep analysis of the text.

As long as your paper is rooted in a discussion and analysis of *Beowulf*, you can take your paper in almost any direction you want to go. You will be proposing your thesis to Ms. Maxwell before you begin writing to get approval and feedback.

WHAT IS A LITERARY ANALYSIS?

A literary analysis is not a summary. A literary analysis is an ARGUMENT about the work that shows that you are *thinking critically* about the purpose, perspective, interpretations, judgments, social comments, etc. of the author or piece. It is an exploration of the DEEPER MEANINGS in a text via specific themes, character traits, settings, relationships between characters and society, morals, etc.

THE TASK AND REQUIREMENTS

Your paper MUST do the following:

- Pose an argument (thesis) about *Beowulf* and explore it in its complexity
- Include paragraphs of CER that each have specific, quoted evidence from *Beowulf*
 - Quotes are wrapped into the writer's own words with proper formatting
- Be 2-3 pages in length
- MLA Formatting and MLA Works Cited page
 - With *Beowulf* citation:

Anonymous. "Beowulf." Trans. Burton Raffel. *Holt McDougal Literature: British Literature*. Evanston, IL: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2010. 42-70. Print.

*(Note: the reason the Beowulf title above is in quotes is because this version is a chapter in the 1000+ page textbook, not a stand-alone text)

FORMAT

Typed in proper MLA format (Times New Roman, 12 pt font, Double Spaced, Paragraphs indented, No extra spaces between title and text or between paragraphs, Last name and page # in the top right corner header)

Turned into Google classroom ON TIME.

DUE DATES (fill in due dates in the spaces below)

Due Dates	What is Due
November 1	Paper Proposal (thesis and short description of your plan) hard copy w/ Ms. Maxwell's initials.
November 11	Rough Draft Your entire argument written out to a point where you can receive peer feedback; should be at or near length requirement.
November 13	Final Draft Submit an electronic version of your paper in Google Classroom. MUST be Google Doc.

**Optional: Conference with Ms. Maxwell before or after school throughout the process

NOTICE!

Your paper will be marked with a **ZERO** and given back to you to re-submit for late credit if any of the following criteria are missing / incorrect:

- MLA format
 - First page header information
 - Header on every page of essay (Last name pg #)
 - In-text citations
 - Times New Roman, Size 12, Double-Spaced
- 2-page minimum (not including Works Cited Page)
- Works Cited Page

RUBRIC

SAT Rubric Style with the following sections: Reading, Analysis, Writing, and Publishing.

[see attached]

A NOTE ON LITERARY ANALYSES

A literary analysis is focused on how a text is created, written, and argued by the **author**, not just a discussion or summary of the events or characters

- if you're discussing how the text shows the right between good and evil forces, it is not enough to say Beowulf is good and Grendel is bad
- You need to analyze the **language** the author uses to describe these characters or battles and discuss how these choices lead to our understand of Beowulf as good and Grendel as evil

THESIS (MAIN CLAIM):

Examples: Strong or Weak? And WHY?

_____ The fearless warrior, Beowulf, saved the Danish people from Grendel and proved that he was the epitome of a true Hero.

WHY:

_____ The author of *Beowulf* shows that good triumphs over evil through the tales of Beowulf's battle with Grendel, Grendel's Mother, and the dragon.

WHY:

_____ The major themes of *Beowulf* are loyalty, good versus evil, and the switch of power from one generation to the next.

WHY:

_____ The epic poem *Beowulf* is a social commentary on the struggle between good and evil as present through the conflicting religious convictions of the time.

WHY:

_____ Therefore, I think that *Beowulf's* main theme is the tension between good and evil.

WHY:

An optional thesis outline:

In the epic poem *Beowulf*, the author argues that _____ through _____, _____, and _____.

*there are many, many, many other options you can use.

Beowulf Literary Analysis Paper Proposal

(Due _____)

Before you begin writing your literary analysis, it's important that you share your ideas and plan with Ms. Maxwell. For this proposal, you must show me your current working thesis and provide a short description of your plan for your argument.

*Remember, your thesis can be framed as an answer to one of the Beowulf discussion questions in the assignment packet and should be **arguable**. Refer to the assignment packet and class discussion notes for examples of an effective thesis.*

Thesis:

Short Description of Your Plan (1 paragraph):

REMINDERS

- Example of wrapping a quote into your own words: *The narrator describes Beowulf as “greater/ And stronger than anyone anywhere in the world (110-111).*
- Use the slash (/) to indicate line breaks and maintain all punctuation and capitalization as it is found in the original text.
- Start out your paragraphs with claims (arguments) and not summary.
- Thesis - arguable (Example: The epic poem, *Beowulf*, is an exploration of a society’s fears, values, and hopes as told through an exemplar hero: Beowulf.)
- Your quoted evidence needs to support/prove your argument, not just be for summary

So what?? (Always warrant your quotes/evidence and tie up your paragraphs by connecting back to the paragraph’s claim and your paper’s thesis)

EVIDENCE GATHERING: Questions to jumpstart your brainstorming:

- What scenes do you remember reading that support your thesis claim?
- What is your interpretation of the events in the story or characters in the story?
- How did this argument or theme play out in the climax of the story (or the three battles)?

Your evidence should include:

1. Quote, direct text, or summary of a scene.
2. Where to find it in the text (lines or page #)
3. Your interpretation of that text: how it fits into your argument.

Good Example: Beowulf announces that he is capable of saving the Danes because he is a respected warrior. He notes, “However it occurred, my sword had killed nine sea-monsters” (Beowulf, pg 39). *This fearless quote by Beowulf not only shows his confidence in himself, but clearly exemplifies one of his many great accomplishments.*

Bad Example: Beowulf announces that he is capable of saving the Danes because he is a respected warrior. He notes, “However it occurred, my sword had killed nine sea-monsters” (Beowulf, pg 39). *During this scene Beowulf and his warriors have landed on shore and are discussing his ancestry and past battles.*

COMMENTARY VS. SUMMARY:

When writing a literary analysis, the most important part is your own critical thinking ideas. One of the best ways to do this is to put your commentary into the essay.

Commentary is NOT summary. Think of it like a sportscaster.