BEOWULF ASSIGNMENTS (rev. 2012)

WA___: NAMES and HEROES (2 sides min.)

1. **NAMES** (one-side minimum = 5 pts.)

   a. Read through the NAMES PACKET. Choose a few you feel strongly about. Think about this concept of names.
      Names were a big deal during the Anglo-Saxon times and in Beowulf. Is this also true still in our society today? Where did you get your name? What weight has your name been given through-out your life? Has your name ever brought you privilege or the cause of a negative situation? What name would you rather have? Do you have a nickname? How/why did that come about? Will you change your name after marriage? What do you think of the increasingly popular option of a woman (man?) retaining her (his) childhood family name? What about double or hyphenated last names? "What's in a name, anyway?"

   b. Taking into consideration the ideas reflected in the paragraph above, the articles you just read on names, and your own ideas on the topic of names, write at least a one-sided page response for your WA. Make sure you identify the name of the article you are reacting to before your actual reaction to each specific article.

2. **“HEROES”** (one-side minimum = 5 pts.)

   You will use a packet of articles (as well as one article about a female "hero" and a male "hero") as a basis for this **HEROES JOURNAL ENTRY**. **CLICK HERE IF YOU NEED THE HEROES PACKET!**
   Furthermore, one of the most popular topics regarding Beowulf is the concept of "heroism" and whether Beowulf, the character, measures up to the Anglo-Saxon definition, a modern definition, and, ultimately, your personal definition. This packet of articles helps tremendously in reviewing the concepts out there in our world today regarding a "MODERN HERO." So, again, read the articles carefully.

   For this minimum of two-sided journal entry, comment on several of the following:
   
   a. the article entitled "Learning the Power and the Point of Communication" on the reverse side of the salmon cover sheet
   b. the article in the packet by Paul Levy entitled "What Makes a Hero?"
   c. the article in the packet from Psychology Today entitled "How to Be Great!"
   d. at least ONE other article from this packet (or another cool article you find on your own about a "hero"--be sure to attach a copy of this article to your journal)
   e. two articles included in this packet about two individual heroes (a male and a female)

   Taking these articles into consideration and your own ideas about what a hero is, address all or any of the following:

   Talk about your own as well as what you think our society's perceptions of a hero are. In addition, reflect on what you think the early English people thought of when defining a hero. Think about who your heroes were (and why) as you were growing up and how those people might have faded from your memory. What heroes do you have now (or would like to have)? What heroes would you wish for your children to have? What heroes do you think they will have (regardless of your input)?

   NOTE You might even take Professor Chiodo's suggestion (as mentioned in Dale Dauten's article on the reverse side) and turn what you have written into a letter to actually send to your personal "hero" (or someone you admire most if the word "hero" sounds too weird/powerful/trendy.)

   ☺ What better gift to give that special person during your senior year??????? ☻
WA ___ Beowulf PART ONE (p. 1-89) (minimum of 3 sides)

SIDE 1:
1. BACKGROUND NOTES on the Anglo-Saxon Heroic Ideal from blue pages in Beowulf Packet
   “The Middle Ages” (Norton Anthology) (1 page minimum)

SIDE 2:
2. SET UP A BATTLE CHART—list the key elements of battle #1 with GRENDEL. Eventually, you
   will look specifically for comparisons and contrasts between the battles once the second battle and
   third battle take place. Some say the battles mirror the three stages of life—adolescence, middle
   age, and old age. You will be trying to look for elements of each battle which relate to the stages
   of life. Also, you will be looking for elements which characterize Beowulf’s personality as well as
   Anglo-Saxon values. ONLY DO THE FIRST COLUMN NOW!

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<thead>
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SIDE 3:
Beowulf part 1: Quotes 1 – 19 and LAYS

SIGNIFICANT QUOTE:
Your first task is also to focus on one significant quote in part 1.

Look over quotes 1-19 (or find your own quotes from part one), and choose the ONE quote
that you think is MOST significant for part one.

Write the quotation in its entirety on your journal entry (along with its page number) and
underneath it, comment on each of the following:
   a. the quote's context
   b. its possible meaning and relevance to part 1
   c. possible larger meaning for us today or you personally

SIGNIFICANT LAY:
Your second task is also to focus on one lay in part 1.
Choose one of these three lays:
"The Lay of Breca" pp. 35-39
"The Lay of Siegmund and Hermod" pp. 59-61
"The Lay of Finnsburg" pp. 71-81

For the lay you choose, discuss the significance of the lay to Beowulf (the character)
or any of the other characters AND/OR to the plot or themes you are seeing
surface in the story. Why was the lay included? How necessary is it?
A. EXCERPT FROM GARDNER’S GRENDEL

1. Actively read the excerpt from John Gardner’s Grendel carefully. This is in your Beowulf packet. You might want to read the 5 questions in the lower right hand corner first so that you can key into some of the main points early.
2. Write a minimum of a half page reaction to this work. Did you like it? Was it as good, worse, better than Beowulf? What parts confused or delighted or repulsed or intrigued you? Share what you’d like. You may write down some questions you have about the work itself, too.

Now, continue in your journal with answering the 5 questions listed in the corner of your copy Gardner’s Grendel. Number each question and either rewrite it or include the question in the frame of your answer.

3. Read the article attached to Gardner’s Grendel about the controversy of this short novel. It is called “Grappling with Grendel or What We Did When the Censors Came” by Kenneth L. Zeeman who teaches English at Viewmont High School in Bountiful, Utah. Write down a brief response to this article.

B. READ PART 2 of Beowulf (pp. 89-149) Complete BATTLE CHART COLUMN 2.

After reading, go back to your part 1 WA. Now, complete the second column of the BATTLE CHART for the battle with Grendel’s mom:

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C. Beowulf part 2: Quotes 20-29 and LAYS

SIGNIFICANT QUOTE:

Look over quotes 20-29 (or find your own quotes from part 2), and choose the ONE quote that you think is MOST significant for part 2.

Write the quotation in its entirety on your journal entry (along with its page number) and underneath it, comment on each of the following:

a. the quote's context
b. its possible meaning and relevance to part 2
c. possible larger meaning for us today or you personally

SIGNIFICANT LAY:

"The Lay of Higd and Thryth" pp. 131-135

Discuss the significance of this lay to Beowulf (the character) or any of the other characters AND/OR to the plot or themes you are seeing surface in the story. Why was the lay included? How necessary is it?
A. Now read part three of *Beowulf* (pp. 149-213).

After reading, consider the following question: “TO BE MOVED OR NOT—by *Beowulf*?”

J. R. R. Tolkien, known to most of you as the author of that fantastical trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*, was by training an academician—in fact, a medieval scholar. In his now famous 1936 essay, "*Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics,*" Tolkien writes:

> *It* [*Beowulf*] *is an heroic-elegiac poem; and in a sense all of its first 3136 lines are a prelude to a dirge [. . . ] one of the most moving ever written.*

Write about this quote in your entry. What do you imagine he meant by such a statement? You might begin by considering what it makes it a "heroic" poem.

What does it show us of the "heroic ideal"? And what is elegiac about it? (Be sure to look up “elegiac” and “elegy.”) The phrase “heroic-elegiac” is paradoxical, no? And there's the idea of a dirge. (Be sure to look up “dirge.”) How so?

Finally, where are you on the moving part? Think about what constitutes "moving" to you. To others?

Tolkien actually calls it--yes, the same *Beowulf* we read--"most moving ever written." What do you think? Was *Beowulf* moving to you? What would most people find it moving? Why or why not?

B. READ PART 3 of *Beowulf* (pp. 149-213). Complete BATTLE CHART COLUMN 3.

After reading, go back to your part 1 WA. Now, complete the second column of the BATTLE CHART for the battle with the dragon.

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C. *Beowulf* part 3: Quotes 30-51 and LAY

**SIGNIFICANT QUOTE**: Look over quotes 30-51 (or find your own quotes from part 3), and choose the ONE quote that you think is MOST significant for part 3.

Write the quotation in its entirety on your journal entry (along with its page number) and underneath it, comment on each of the following:

a. the quote’s context
b. its possible meaning and relevance to part 3
c. possible larger meaning for us today or you personally

**SIGNIFICANT LAY**: Before writing up the significance of the lay, review the lays in part 3:

"*The Lay of the Last Survivor*” p. 151-155
"*The Lay of Heordred*” pp. 161-163
"*The Lay of the Three Brothers: Herbald, Hathcyn, Higlac,*” pp. 163-169
"*The Messenger Lay of Ongentho*” pp. 197-203

Now focus on the most important lay of all: "*The Lay of the Last Survivor*" pp. 151-155

Discuss the significance of this lay to *Beowulf* (the character) or any of the other characters AND/OR to the plot or themes you are seeing surface in the story. Why was the lay included? How necessary is it?
The Lay of the Last Survivor

http://faculty.virginia.edu/OldEnglish/Beowulf/Readings/Survivor.html

It's worth 10 points total by doing the following 3 things more than just the writing during class:

1. First, re-read everything you wrote during class today. Add anything more you'd like. Look for patterns, themes, whatever jumps out at you. Comment in your journal about your findings and how doing this journal felt during and after.

2. Now read the buff-colored sheets in your Beowulf packet with the biographical information on Gustav Mahler. Jot down some thoughts about this in light of the piece of music, etc.

3. Finally, read the buff-colored essay at the end of your Beowulf packet by Lewis Thomas called "Late Night Thoughts." For a copy of Thomas's essay, click HERE or go to this website: http://cscs.umich.edu/~crshalizi/Thomas/mahlers-ninth.html Add your comments/response to this essay. What you tell Mr. Thomas if he were to visit our classroom tomorrow?
**BEOWULF EXTRA CREDIT +5 COUPON ASSIGNMENTS**

**CHOICE 1   Journal Entry: “WANTED”**

After reading part 1 in Beowulf, do this entry. You do not have to do both choice A and B. Choose the one below in which you are most interested.

- **CHOICE A**  Write a want ad or write/design a job description poster for the monster-slayer Hrothgar might have advertised for in order to restore peace in his kingdom.

- **CHOICE B**  Design the resume and/or the completed job application that you think Beowulf would have turned in if necessary to do such a job or a job like killing Grendel.
  
  (HINT! Quality/creativity are highly encouraged.)
  
  **NOTE**  This does not have to be a traditional full-page of writing. You may choose to illustrate, use graphics, write a poem, song, etc. This would be a good time to see what your computer can create.
  
  **NOTE**  To make sure both choices are covered, be sure to discuss ahead of time who wants to do which choice so your group has at least one of each choice represented.

**CHOICE 2   Journal Entry: BEOWULF VS. ___________: Another Point of View**

Choose one of the two first battles and rewrite the battle from either Grendel's point of view or Grendel's mom's point of view. Really try to imagine what might be going on inside their heads. Have fun with this one! Parody is welcome. Don't spare the gore!

---------- IMPORTANT NOTE: WRITE THE BATTLE IN FIRST PERSON!

**CHOICE 3   Journal Entry: SOME POETRY CONNECTIONS TO BEOWULF**

1. Read these poems which can be connected to Beowulf: Shelley's "Ozymandias" (on p. 638 in our black LBT text), Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (on p. 531--intro; 532-536--poem in our black LBT text), and Wilbur's "Beowulf" (if your teacher gives you a copy of this last one).

2. Now respond to the ideas in TWO of these three poems and how each connects to Beowulf and/or Beowulf.

**CHOICE 4   Create The Game of Beowulf**

Knowing what you know of popular board games and the story of Beowulf, create a board game that would re-enact the story's events, characters, and themes. Actually create the rules, board, playing pieces, etc. YOU MAY COLLABORATE AND PRODUCE THIS GAME WITH ONE OTHER STUDENT IN OUR CLASS IF YOU WANT.
Read Gardner's *Grendel*, do the prep work on the green worksheet, and do a 2 sided journal: **WA___** :Gardner's Grendel--2 topics. For a copy of the "Gardner's Grendel Discussion Prep. Worksheet," click [HERE](#)! As you read, do the following on your own notebook paper (unless you buy your own book--available in the school store--in which case you can do this note-taking right on the covers and extra pages in the book):

1. keep a character list,

2. on the Zodiac Wheel (the second page of the hand-out "Gardner's Grendel Discussion Prep. Worksheet"), jot down a quick **plot synopsis** for each chapter.

3. **Chapter Analyses Charts on Grendel Worksheet**: Each group will be assigned 2 chapters to become experts on. Here are the assigned chapters: **GROUP 1**--chaps. 1-3, **GROUP 2**--chaps. 4-6, **GROUP 3**--chaps. 7-9, **GROUP 4**--chaps. 10-12.

On the front of the "Gardner's Grendel Discussion Prep. Worksheet" (click [HERE](#) for a copy of this worksheet), there is a a chart for you to fill out for your group's assigned chapters.

4. consult a copy of a zodiac chart (see [HERE](#) for a list of the zodiac signs, or click [http://www.psychicguild.com/horoscopes_explained.php](http://www.psychicguild.com/horoscopes_explained.php) or click [HERE](#) for the Zodiac wheel in your "Gardner's Grendel Discussion Prep. Worksheet") and discuss how one of the zodiac signs is present/symbolic in each of the 12 chapters.

5. Also, as you read, jot down a list of your personal questions. **NOTE**: When you finish the novel, you also will do **WA___**: (worth 10 journal points--a 2 sider!). You are to choose 2 of the 5 choices "GG" Journal Topics. For a copy of the topics, click [HERE](#).
GG (Gardner’s Grendel) #1: Personal Response
Patrick Galloway, who has a B.A. in English Literature from San Francisco State University, said, “As much as I enjoyed reading the exploits of the great Geat, I must say that Grendel resonated at a deeper level for me. In the title character’s first-person narrative I found a personal corollary: Gardner’s Grendel, though man-eating beast, is a thinker, an intellectual trapped (isolated) in a world without peers. As strange as it might sound to say that I identified with a monster, that is exactly how I felt reading this novel. To experience acutely the scorn and/or fear of a world with which one feels no affinity, and yet, at the same time, to perceive the vapidity and obviousness of that world; to feel ostracized by a race of beings whose own fatuity and turpitude makes one ashamed for having relished the thought of acceptance; to be lonely. This, to me, is the crux of the matter regarding Grendel. Loneliness can drive an individual to monstrous extremes. Eating Danes, for instance.”

What was your personal reaction to reading Grendel? How did it compare to reading Beowulf? Comment on Galloway’s quote and how much his reaction to Grendel resonated with your own experience with the novel as well as the idea of being “an intellectual trapped (isolated) in a world without peers.”

GG (Gardner’s Grendel) #2: Four Characters
Patrick Galloway also states, “The most intriguing aspect of Grendel is the background we receive on primary characters such as Hrothgar, Wealtheow, Unferth, and, of course, Grendel. Gardner, while admittedly taking full advantage of his poetic licence, provides biographical data for each of these individuals which lays a groundwork for subtle, psychological insights into the personalities and actions of each.”

Take these four primary characters, and based on what you already know from reading Beowulf, comment on what it is that Gardner’s Grendel does to enhance, shed deeper insight on, and further develop these characters.

GG (Gardner’s Grendel) #3: Choose a Topic
Take one of the following topics and trace its presence in Grendel:
- Grendel’s attitude toward language
- Choose an astrological sign and follow it through its associated chapter. Look at its relevance and what it comes to signify in Grendel as a whole.
- Trace Gardner’s use of “cartoon imagery” throughout the novel. Why is the use of grotesque, exaggerated humor appropriate in the novel?

GG (Gardner’s G Grendel) #4: Extra Credit or Required?
Take up the idea of this being an extra credit option during our study of Beowulf, not a required assignment. After reading Grendel, thinking about it, and doing a few journals, do you think this should be extra credit or required? Give a full account as to why it should be required or extra credit.

GG (Gardner’s Grendel) #5: Humanizing the Monster?
Read Jay Ruud’s article “Gardner’s Grendel and Beowulf: Humanizing the Monster”—the last green essay in the Beowulf packet which addresses Gardner’s Grendel and Beowulf’s Grendel as both monster and human. Jot down some of Ruud’s main points, and write a page response.