Beowulf Study Guide
Honors English IV

Prologue

1. Describe some of the accomplishments of Shild.

2. What “bound” Shild’s soldiers to his son, Beo? How does this relate to the characteristics of an epic?

3. Describe the funeral rituals of the Danish people.

Part 1

4. What does Hrothgar, king of the Danes, decide to build for his people? What was its purpose?

5. Describe Herot.

6. Lines 82-85 read, "That towering place, gabled and huge, stood waiting for time to pass, for war to begin, for flames to leap as high as the feud that would light them, and for Herot to burn." What are we led to believe is the fate of Herot, and of Hrothgar’s people?

7. What irritates the “powerful monster, living down in the darkness”?

8. Who is the “monster”? How did he come to be?

Part 2

9. What did Grendel do when “darkness had dropped”? 
10. What did Hrothgar do when he saw the destruction? What did he fear?

11. What was the only way for a soldier to escape Grendel's wrath?

12. How long did Herot stand empty?

13. What did Grendel dare not to touch in Herot? Why did he avoid that object?

14. What did the councils do to try to ward off Grendel that could possibly have hurt their cause?

15. Beowulf was thought to have been composed around the 8th century, less than two hundred years after the beginning of the Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons. How do you see both Christian influence AND pagan influence in the text so far?