



# British Literature

## Summer Assignment – 2010/11 SY

Your job this summer is to have a little fun...reading.☺ You have two books to read for “Brit-Lit”: *Beowulf* translated by Seamus Heaney, *Grendel* by John Gardner. (The [reading guides](#) for both *Beowulf* and *Grendel* are attached to help you focus on the important aspects of the texts; however, they are not mandatory nor will they be evaluated.)

You should also have a copy of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster; however, you are not required to read this text for the summer as we will be using it as a part of the class throughout the year. (This book is available in the school library for temporary loan.)

### **Beowulf – Translation by Seamus Heaney**

This classic poem is translated by Seamus Heaney who has won numerous awards for the translation. This is a story of a hero who overcomes great physical feats to become legendary. It is also the definitive medieval epic poem. The story is interesting and easy to follow so you will enjoy reading it. The only struggle...the names☺

### **Grendel by John Gardner – please note this is an American text**

This post-modern contemporary classic turns *Beowulf*'s story “on its ear.” As you begin reading *Grendel*'s version of events you will see why you need to read this text with *Beowulf* (even though Gardner is American). The change in point-of-view calls into question the reliability of the narrator and that every story has two sides. This text is much easier to read than *Beowulf* because the language is contemporary English; however, its ideas are more difficult because this text is also philosophical—at its heart it asks the question, what is our purpose?

### **The Summer Assignment:**

1. Read and [annotate](#). All of you have spent time annotating your texts in grade 10 and we will expect you to continue, and build on that habit in grade 11. Below is an annotation guide that takes you beyond what you learned in grade 10 and prepares you for the learning you will do in grade 11. Your annotated texts are due for the very first day of class. The [rubric](#) is also below.
2. Write a narrative that shows two points of view – recall an real event in your life that you shared with someone else (or more than one person) and first write down the details (minor and major details) as you remember them. Then interview the other person and write down how they remember the details from that same event. You should have two distinct paragraphs explaining the same event – how are the stories different? How are they the same? Does it depend on the importance of the details? Or who tells the story? (If you are struggling to find an event...try to think when you were young and then interview your mom or dad.)

While this written portion of the assignment is informal, it is also an important concept – please put your best effort into your writing as we will be working with it in class. You will need to have this for the very first day of class.

If you really get stuck, or some other assignment-threatening event happens, you can email us at:

Mr. Rider – [riderj@siskorea.or.kr](mailto:riderj@siskorea.or.kr)

Ms. Trueman – [truemank@siskorea.or.kr](mailto:truemank@siskorea.or.kr) or [ktrueman@canada.com](mailto:ktrueman@canada.com)

Enjoy your holiday and we look forward to welcoming you to your **junior** year!

# Annotating

for grade 11

Inside Front Cover – Character list with a small space for character summary and for references for key scenes, moments of character development, etc.

Inside Back Cover – Themes, allusions, images, motifs, key scenes, plot line, epiphanies, etc. List and add page references and/or notes as you read.

Bottom and Side Page Margins: Interpretive notes, questions, and /or remarks that refer to meaning of the page. Markings or notes to tie in with information on the inside back cover.

Top Margins or the end of a chapter: Plot notes – a quick few words or phrases which summarize what happens here (useful for quick location of passages in discussion and for writing assignments). We do not expect plots notes on every page but rather that you have a good understanding of what happens in the story and can recall that information.

### **Additional Markings:**

- Underlining: done while or after reading to help locate passages for discussion, essays, or questions. Please note down the purpose of the underline.
- Brackets: done while or after reading to highlight key speeches, descriptions, etc. that are too long to underline easily.

### **Marking and note-taking tips (optional):**

- Use one color ink to do initial marking while reading, then go back with another color/colors to mark more thoroughly once you have finished a larger section, have had time to think about it and are able to see development of images, characters, etc. more clearly.
- At chapter or section ends, stop to index page numbers on your front cover list of character information and traits as well as on your back cover list of themes, images, allusions, etc.
- Underlining as you read and add side margin notes to explain.
- Add to side margin notes during class discussion also.

Annotating a text is a lot of work; however, this is the best way (that we know about) to engage in a text and really get to know and be ready to discuss and write about it. If you find it distracting to annotate while you are reading the text – don't; however, it means that you will need to reread the text so that you can annotate it – it also means that you will know the novel twice as well. Some of you might be tempted to annotate just for the grade—this is not a good idea. You are trying to build your reading and critical thinking skills...this one of the best ways to do that—please put your best effort into this assignment.

**Note: You can still use the annotation starters from grade 10; however, we want you to now move to identifying and consider the elements of fiction: plot, setting, character, theme, and point of view.**

## Rubric for Annotations

	Excellent (5)	Very Good (4)	Adequate (3)	Below grade level/ partial work only (2/1)	No annotations/ not submitted (0)
Number of Annotations					
Consistency/ frequency throughout text					
Significance of thought (includes connections, inference, etc.)					
Front cover information is conclusive and detailed					
Back cover information shows variety in thought and a focus towards the literary.					

## **Beowulf Reading Guide**

The page and line references may not be exactly the same – it will depend on your version; however, they should be close.

### *Section 1 (Page 3 to Page 15 [line 193])*

1. Who is Shield Sheafson? What qualities did he have? How are they viewed? (3)
2. Describe Shield's funeral. (5)
3. All right, now that we learned all that family history, who is the current ruler of the Shieldings? (7)
4. What is the mead-hall called? What social qualities do you think this mead-hall represents? (7)
5. What made Grendel attack the mead-hall? (9)
6. From whom is Grendel descended?
7. For how long has Grendel been attacking the mead hall?
8. What does the author say about the Shieldings on page 15 that introduces a possible Christian element?

### *Section 2 (Page 15 [line 194] to Page 35 [line 498])*

In this section find examples of

9. This group journeys across the sea. What do they do when they land that tells the readers that they are different from the Shieldings? (17)
10. How are the Geats dressed when they present themselves to Hrothgar? What epic characteristic can we apply to this?
11. Around line 407, Beowulf starts to deliver his resume in a form called the **boast**. What has Beowulf done that makes him qualified to fight Grendel? (29)
12. How does Beowulf plan to fight Grendel? What reason does he have for it? (31)
13. What does Hrothgar imply about the men who tried to defend Heorot before? (33)

### *Section 3 (Page 35 [line 499] to Page 47 [line 702])*

14. What is the quality, which the author subtly points out, that made Unferth challenge Beowulf's credibility? (35)
15. What incident does Unferth bring up to embarrass Beowulf? (35)
16. What actually happened, according to Beowulf's account? How does Beowulf defend himself against Unferth's taunts? (39)
17. How is the role of Wealhtheow, Hrothgar's wife, described? (41)
18. How is Beowulf given Christ-like attributes on pages 45 and 47?

### *Section 4 (Page 47 [line 703] to Page 57 [line 862])*

19. As Grendel eyes up Heorot, how is he described in a way that assures us he's a complete villain? (51)
20. Describe the fight between Beowulf and Grendel. (51-55)
21. How did Grendel finally die?

### *Section 5 (Page 57 [line 863] to Page 89 [line 1250])*

22. Why does the poet tell the story of Sigemund?
23. How does Hrothgar demonstrate comitatus? (63)
24. How was Grendel's defeat commemorated? (65)
25. What detail on page 67 lets us know this is a community of good people?
26. Summarize the next story performed by the minstrel.
27. What special gifts are bestowed upon Beowulf? (85)
28. Beyond winning material goods, Wealhtheow announces that Beowulf has won what quality? (87)

### *Section 6 [Page 89 [Line 1251] to Page 113 [Line 1631]]*

29. How are the Danes praised?
30. Who does Grendel's mother first kill? Why is this such a terrible transgression? (See page 93.)
31. What is Beowulf's attitude towards the death (especially murder)? (97)

32. What sight do Hrothgar's men witness at the swamp? (99)
33. How does Unferth help? (101)
34. Where does Beowulf travel for his battle? (103)
35. Why is Beowulf in jeopardy? (105)
36. How does Beowulf succeed? (109)
37. Describe the two miracle-like events that occur after the battle.
  - a. Miracle #1 (page 109):
  - b. Miracle #2 (page 111):
38. What does Beowulf do to Grendel's corpse? (109)

*Section 7 (Page 113 [line 1632] to Page 129 [line 1887])*

39. How do the men prove/celebrate the death of Grendel's mother?
40. For what purpose does Hrothgar discuss Heremod? (117)
41. At Line 1726, Hrothgar transitions into a sermon-like speech. Summarize the points he makes for Beowulf.
42. What event does Hrothgar use as an example of fallibility/fragility? (123)
43. What symbolizes happiness in the land? (113)
44. Despite Beowulf's history with Unferth, how does he show (again) that he's a good guy? (125)
45. What does Hrothgar say in his final praise of Beowulf? (127)
46. What do Beowulf and Hrothgar reveal about their personalities when they part?

*Section 8 (Page 129 [line 1888] to Page 149 [Line 2199])*

47. The poet introduces the story of Queen Modthryth. How is she different from Hygd, Hygelac's wife?
48. What's the "world's candle"? (135)
49. What will happen when Freawaru gets married, according to Beowulf? (139)
50. In recounting the fight with Grendel, what new detail do we learn from Beowulf? (143)

*Section 9 (Page 149 [Line 2200] to Page 165 [Line 2425])*

51. Suddenly, we jump ahead in time. How long has Beowulf been ruling?
52. What is the latest disturbance in Beowulf's kingdom, and how was it provoked?
53. How did the treasure get to this location?
54. What trouble is the dragon causing specifically? (157)
55. Why does Beowulf believe this destruction happened? (159)
56. Summarize the flashback to how Beowulf became king. (159, 161)
57. Describe Beowulf's state of mind as he prepares to fight the dragon. (165)

*Section 10 [Page 165 [Line 2426] to End]*

58. On the way to finding the dragon, what episode does Beowulf recall from his childhood? (165)
59. Describe the conflict between Beowulf and the dragon.
60. How does Wiglaf reason with the other soldiers? (177-178)
61. How does the battle end?
62. Why is Beowulf satisfied with his life? (185)
63. How will Beowulf be memorialized? (189)
64. What have Beowulf's people seemingly gotten in exchange for his death? (191)
65. Why does Wiglaf speak "disdainfully and in disappointment"? (193)
66. What does the messenger predict? (197)
67. What happens to the treasure?
68. Describe the funeral ceremony.

## *Grendel* by John Gardner

### **Chapter 1: Aries, the Ram.**

1. What does Grendel's relationship with nature -- the ram, the sky, grass, the doe, the baby bird, owls, and wolves -- reveal about his own personality?
2. Quote the various phrases Grendel uses to describe himself. What do they reveal about his self-image and how it was developed?
3. What is the significance of the scene wherein Grendel challenges the "dark chasms"?
4. What does Grendel mean when he speaks of "playing cat and mouse with the universe"? What does it mean to "see all life without observing it"?
5. Describe Grendel's mother and his relationship with her.
6. From Grendel's point of view, what is man?

### **Chapter 2: Taurus, the Bull.**

1. In a flashback to his early childhood, what is Grendel's relationship with the "large old shapes" and with his mother?
2. What is the significance of the scene wherein Grendel catches his foot in the crack in the tree trunks and is attacked by a bull?
3. What does Grendel mean when he says "there was nothing, or, rather, there was everything but my mother"? How is this a loss of innocence?
4. Explain what Grendel means when he says, "I create the whole universe, blink by blink."
5. How does Grendel's first meeting with men affect him? Why does he fear them more than he fears the bull?
6. How is Grendel's world view and self-concept affected by his experience with men? How does this event affect his relationship with the "old shapes" and with his mother?
7. Explain the meaning of "the world is all pointless accident."

### **Chapter 3: Gemini, the Twins.**

1. As a detached observer, what does Grendel learn about Hrothgar and his theories? What shocks Grendel about man's behavior to other men and to nature? Why does Grendel fear Hrothgar?
2. Why is Grendel so impressed and affected by the Shaper? Why does he fear the Shaper?
3. According to Grendel, what is the truth about poetry?
4. Why does Grendel scream "Lost!" and crawl on all fours as the chapter ends?

### **Chapter 4: Cancer, the Crab.**

1. How can mor(t)ality be the creation of the Shaper?
2. Why does Hrothgar build Heorot, the Hall of the Hart?
3. What is the power of the "projected possible"?
4. How does the story of Cain and Abel affect Grendel?
5. What is Grendel's "conversion"?
6. What is "the presence" Grendel feels in the darkness?
7. Why not?

### **Chapter 5: Leo, the Lion.**

1. Why does Grendel visit the dragon? What does the dragon tell him about himself and about the "word"?
2. How does the dragon's mind differ from Grendel's and from men's?
3. From the dragon's point of view, what is man? What is man's mind?
4. How does the dragon explain the role of the Shaper?
5. Explain the following statements made by the dragon:
  - "Knowledge is not cause."
  - "Connectedness is the essence of everything."
  - "The essence of life is to be found in the frustrations of established order."
  - "Novel order (is) a primary requisite for important experience."
  - "Importance is derived from the immanence of infinitude in the finite."
  - "Expression is founded on the finite occasion. It is the activity of infinitude impressing itself on its environment."
6. In his attempt to explain the difference between Importance and Expression to Grendel, the dragon uses the examples of the difference between vegetables and animals and the difference between an angry man and a rock. Explain.
7. How does Grendel "improve" men?
8. What is the dragon's ambition? His final advice? His motto?
9. How is Grendel "caged in a limited mind"?

### **Chapter 6: Virgo, the Harvest Virgin.**

1. How is the dragon's charm a curse?

2. How does Grendel now react to the Shaper's song?
3. How is Grendel "transformed" by his first raid on Heorot? In what sense does he "become" himself?
4. According to Unferth, what is heroism? What is poetry?
5. Why doesn't Grendel kill Unferth? And why is Unferth so bitter?
6. Who or what is the dragon?

#### **Chapter 7: Libra, the Balance.**

1. What is Grendel's law? What does it mean?
2. How is Wealtheow like the Shaper's songs? How is she different?
3. Why doesn't Grendel rape, torture, and murder Wealtheow? Or does he?
4. What does Grendel mean by "balance is everything"?
5. What is "meaning as quality"?
6. What is the parallel between Wealtheow and Grendel's mother?
7. What has happened to Unferth? How does the Queen affect him?

#### **Chapter 8: Scorpio, the Scorpion.**

1. What threats surround Hrothgar after Hrothulf's arrival? How is Hrothulf like a scorpion?
2. What is Grendel's Theorem? What does it mean?
3. How can violence be creative? What do Grendel and Red Horse have to say about violence and "legitimate force"?
4. Describe Red Horse's political ideology.
5. What is the meaning of the "horrible dream which Grendel imputes to Hrothgar"?
6. How can the old king Hrothgar be a giant? In what ways is he like Job?

#### **Chapter 9: Sagittarius, the Hunter.**

1. What ironies occur in this section?
2. How can Time be inside the hunter and the hart?
3. What is Grendel's opinion of religion?
4. What is the significance of Grendel's encounter with Ork? What does Ork have to say about the King of the Gods and about the nature of Evil?
5. Why is Grendel so disgusted by the speeches of the Fourth Priest?

#### **Chapter 10: Capricorn, the Goat.**

1. Explain the saying "Tedium is the worst pain."
2. Why is Grendel so frightened and so infuriated by the goat?
3. How does the Shaper's death affect Grendel?
4. What is "the pastness of the past"?
5. How has Grendel's mother changed? What is their relationship now?
6. Who is the other monster Grendel meets on the moors?
7. Explain "Nihil ex nihilo, I always say."

#### **Chapter 11: Aquarius, the Water-bearer.**

1. How does Grendel perceive Beowulf and the Geats?
2. In what ways are Beowulf and Grendel alike?
3. What has Grendel come to understand about the "dark realities" of self and the world?
4. What does Grendel mean when he says he has seen "the vision of the dragon"?
5. How does Grendel divide the world?
6. Explain the saying "Things fade; alternatives exclude."
7. What happens when Unferth challenges Beowulf about Breca?
8. How does the Queen respond to Beowulf?

#### **Chapter 12: Pisces, the Fish.**

1. How and why is Grendel defeated?
2. How do illusion and words help cause Grendel's death?
3. Why does Beowulf make Grendel sing of walls?
4. How does this last chapter echo lines, events, characters, and images from early chapters?
5. Explain Grendel's last words: "Poor Grendel's had an accident. . . So may you all."