Anglo-Saxon Literature/*Beowulf* Test Study Guide

Test Date: September 10, 2015

**Directions: Complete ALL parts of the study guide. You do NOT have to use complete sentences. Try to answer as much as you can without your notes or textbook to give yourself a better idea of how prepared you are for the test. *Turning in a COMPLETED study guide the day before the test will earn you 10 points added to your average for the test.***

**Anglo-Saxon Background**

1. Describe the lives of the Celtic people. **Pagan, soldiers, lived in tribes, care about loyalty; war culture**
2. What was the Celtic religion? **Pagan; animism**
3. Why was it so easy for groups to invade Britain? **No army or solid government**
4. List groups who invaded and conquered Britain. **Angles, jutes, Saxons, Romans, Normans**
5. The collapse of what empire left Britain vulnerable to invasions? **Roman**
6. What improvements did the Romans bring when they invaded? **Baths, walls, houses, roads**
7. Who ruled after the Romans? **Anglo-Saxons**
8. For how long did they rule? **449-1066 (about 500)**
9. What leader united these clans? **King Alfred the Great**
10. The literature of this time has some common themes and ideals of conduct. List them **Sad, good vs. evil, exile**
11. In 1066, what country invaded England and who led them? **Normans, William the conqueror**
12. In what form was the Anglo Saxon literature (poetry)? **Epic, elegiac**
13. How was Anglo-Saxon literature passed down from generation to generation? **By song (orally)**
14. Who eventually wrote down pieces of Anglo-Saxon poetry? **Christian monks**
15. What changes did they make? **Added Christianity**
16. Define Alliteration. **Repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words**
17. What is a scop? How important were these men? **Sang the poetry; just as important as soldiers (very important)**
18. Define kenning. **2 descriptive words that replace a noun**
19. What is epic poetry? **Long, narrative poems that tell the story of a hero**
20. According to the Anglo-Saxons, what was the only thing that prevented “death”?  **fame and legacy**
21. Describe the hierarchy of the following (slaves, churls, thanes, and king). **King, thanes, churls, and slaves**
22. What is the *Exeter Book*? Why is it so important today? **Book with all of the Anglo-Saxon poems, only collection of poetry to survive to today**

**Anglo-Saxon Poetry**

1. What are the core values of the Anglo-Saxon culture? **Loyalty, honor, bravery, fate, friendship, generosity**
2. What is a Mead hall? Why is it significant? **A building where the soldiers met to eat and drink; it is considered home**
3. What is a caesura? Why are they needed? **A pause in the middle of a line of poetry; gives singers a place to breathe**

\*\*Know the following concepts\*\*

*The Seafarer*

Theme of exile

Imagery that shows isolation and despair

Christian vs. Pagan elements

Shift in the middle of the poem

*The Wanderer*

Theme of exile

Imagery that shows isolation and despair

*The Wife’s Lament*

Theme of exile

Setting

Shift in purpose in final stanza

**Beowulf**

26. What is the name of Hrothgar’s hall? **Herot**

27. Beowulf was the strongest and bravest of which group of people? **Geats**

28. How many men did Grendel snatch up on his first bloody trip into Herot? **30**

1. Who was Grendel the descendent of? **Cain**
2. Why did Grendel not attack the throne of Hrothgar? **Protected by God**
3. What was the “weapon” Beowulf used against Grendel? **His hands**
4. How did Beowulf’s men react as Beowulf fights Grendel? **brave**
5. What does Beowulf hang from the rafters after his fight with Grendel? **Grendel’s arm**
6. How many giants did Beowulf boast to have killed, making him qualified to fight Grendel? **5**
7. Beowulf represents this quality in the poem and Grendel represents this quality, the opposite. **Good vs. evil**
8. The line, “fate that night intended Grendel to gnaw the broken bones of his last human supper” foreshadow this… **Grendel’s death**
9. Why can’t Beowulf and the other soldiers’ swords hurt Grendel? **He put a spell on them**
10. What is the name of a story that is only spread by word of mouth? **Oral tradition**
11. What is the definition of an epic? **A long narrative poem about the doings of a hero**
12. Define elegy. **A sad poem mourning the loss of someone or something**
13. Who is responsible for writing down the epic *Beowulf*? How did it change with the written recording? **Christian monks; added in Christianity**
14. Be able to identify the following:
    1. Mankind’s enemy **Grendel**
    2. Wextan’s son **Wiglaf**
    3. The Geat’s great prince **Beowulf**
    4. The greedy she-wolf **Grendel’s mother**
    5. The great king of the Danes **Hrothgar**
    6. Whale-road  **the ocean or sea**
15. What does Beowulf take from the lake? **Sword hilt and Grendel’s head**
16. Who remains loyal to Beowulf during his last battle? Where did the rest of his men go **Wiglaf; they run away**
17. What motivates Beowulf? **Immortality through fame**
18. Explain the motivation behind each of the three monsters in Beowulf. **Grendel is angry about the music; Grendel’s mother is mad about her son’s death; dragon is protecting his treasure**
19. Why is Wiglaf a worthy successor to Beowulf? **He is the only one who stayed with Beowulf**
20. How do the warriors honor Beowulf after he dies? **Build a monument and tell stories about him**