

Focus Question:

What is a hero?

Book Summary

Text Type: Fiction/Classic

Derived from the classic tale, *Beowulf* is the story of a mighty warrior and king. Through his super-human strength and noble qualities, Beowulf is able to slay monsters and dragons that no other man can defeat. Detailed illustrations support a rich and engaging text. The book can also be used to teach students how to analyze characters and to identify irregular past-tense verbs. The book and lesson are also available for levels U and X.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Summarize to understand text
- ☐ Analyze characters within a text
- ☐ Describe information provided by illustrations
- ☐ Recognize and use irregular verbs
- ☐ Identify and use suffix -ly

Materials

- ☐ Book: *Beowulf* (copy for each student)
- ☐ Analyze character, irregular past-tense verbs, suffix -ly worksheets
- ☐ Discussion cards
- ☐ Book quiz
- ☐ Retelling rubric

Vocabulary

Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

• Words to Know

Story critical: *fate* (n.), *mail* (n.), *moors* (n.), *perish* (v.), *spoils* (n.), *thanes* (n.)

Enrichment: *bade* (v.), *buckler* (n.), *grappled* (v.), *hoarded* (adj.), *mead* (n.), *skald* (n.)

- **Academic vocabulary:** *became* (v.), *cease* (v.), *forever* (adv.), *seek* (v.), *show* (v.), *through* (prep.)

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

- Write the word *hero* on the board and read it aloud to students. Discuss with students the meaning of the word *hero*. Place students into small groups and provide each group with a piece of chart paper. Have each group record as many examples of heroes. Invite each group to share its work. Point out that there are many different kinds of heroes.
- Ask students to discuss the qualities of a hero. Provide students with a lined sheet of paper and have them write their definition of a hero. Have students share their writing in small groups. If time allows, invite volunteers to share with the class.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *Beowulf*. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: Summarize

Explain to students that engaged readers *summarize*, or create a brief overview, as they read. Explain to students that when readers summarize what they read it helps them remember the most important parts and the sequence of events in a story. Point out that a summary often answers the questions *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*. Create a chart on the board with the headings *Who*, *What*, *When*, *Where*, and *Why*. Read aloud a summary from the back of a familiar book. Ask students what information is included in the summary and what information is omitted. Remind students that a summary includes only the most important details.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

Analyze character

- Write the phrase *The Hero's Journey* on the board and explain to students that the Hero's Journey is a particular sequence of events that a character must undergo through the plot of a story. Point out that this series of events is cyclical and that a character may engage in the Hero's Journey several times throughout the plot. The first phase is *The Call to Adventure*, when the hero is called to go on a quest, often meeting helpers along the way as he or she crosses into the unknown, often supernatural, world. Phase two is *The Challenges*, and includes encounters with enemies that threaten to end the journey. Over time, the hero gains important knowledge or an object he or she is seeking. The third phase is *The Supreme Ordeal*, which refers to a transformation that occurs within the hero that guides his or her actions and decisions. *The Supreme Ordeal* is often, but not always, the climax of the story. The final phase of the Hero's Journey is *The Return*, when the hero returns to the ordinary world, having been altered by the challenges he or she faced along the way. Understanding The Hero's Journey helps readers to better understand the development of the main character.
- Remind students that character traits explain a character's actions, thoughts, and feelings. Encourage them to pay attention to what character traits Beowulf exhibits during each phase of his journey.

Vocabulary

Have students turn to the "Words to Know" box on the copyright page. Discuss each word with students. Then, have students turn to the glossary on page 20. Explain that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Point out the use of each content word and academic vocabulary word in the book, and then use each word in a different model sentence. Have students work in groups to create posters for these words. Have them include on each poster the word and its part of speech, the definition, the word in an example sentence, and a picture illustrating the meaning of the word.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about the adventures of Beowulf. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer to the question.
- Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be addressed in a future discussion.

During Reading

Text-Dependent Questions

As students read the book, monitor their understanding with the following questions. Encourage students to support their answers by citing evidence from the book.

- *What does Beowulf's reaction to King Hrothgar's need for help reveal about Beowulf's character?* (level 2) pages 4 and 5
- *Who is Grendel, and why couldn't any of the thanes do battle with him?* (level 1) page 3
- *In what ways does Beowulf prove his loyalty to the king?* (level 2) pages 4–8
- *What can you tell about Beowulf on the basis that he took off his helmet and mail before Grendel arrived?* (level 3) multiple pages
- *How does the slaying of Grendel's mother affect Beowulf's hero's journey?* (level 1) pages 14–15
- *How do the king and his men feel about Beowulf after he defeats Grendel and his mother?* (level 1) page 14
- *What traits does Beowulf reveal that define him as a hero?* (level 3) multiple pages
- *How is Beowulf similar to your definition of a hero? How is he different?* (level 3) multiple pages

Text Features: Illustrations

Explain that illustrations provide readers with detailed images of the characters and setting of the story. Discuss that they also give information that is additional to what is written in the text about the characters, the setting, and the plot. Have students work with a partner to review the illustration on page 6. Ask students: *What information is shown in this illustration that is not written in the story? How does this illustration help you analyze and understand the characters Grendel and Beowulf?* Have students review other illustrations in the book and discuss in groups how they help to create strong images and aid the reader in understanding the story.

Skill Review

- Remind students that a summary of a story describes the most important events and characters. Have students work in groups to describe the characters in the story and identify the most important events. Direct them back to the chart on the board and review that a summary often includes *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why*. Invite students to share details with the rest of the class and record this information on the board.
- Have students work in groups to create a summary of what they are reading, referring to the information on the board. Call on groups to share their summary with the rest of the class.
- Model analyzing character.
Think-aloud: *As I read the story, I pause often to examine Beowulf's relationship to The Hero's Journey and what qualities are revealed about him as he*

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

responds to each phase of the journey. For example, when King Hrothgar is in need of someone to help defeat Grendel, Beowulf eagerly accepts the call to action with confidence and courage; he does not hesitate to face danger or evil for the good of others. I can tell that Beowulf is a noble, brave, and selfless hero. Additionally, when Grendel's mother attacks the king's men and he is in need again, Beowulf proves his loyalty to the king by once again responding with courage and a complete lack of fear.

- Model how to complete the **analyze character worksheet**. Have students identify character traits that describe Beowulf during each phase of his journey. Then, have them share their ideas with the class and discuss how Beowulf compares to other heroes.

After Reading

Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Skill Review

Graphic Organizer: **Analyze character**

Review the analyze character worksheet that students completed. Have students share their work in groups. Review students' findings as a class.

Comprehension Extension

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided for extension activities.

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers will vary but may include the following: *A hero is a person admired for his or her courageous acts, strength of heart, noble deeds, and ability to risk everything for the good of the whole.*)

Comprehension Checks

- **Book quiz**
- **Retelling rubric**

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: **Irregular verbs**

- Ask students whether this book describes events that occurred in the past, present, or future and how they know. Review or explain that a *verb* is an action word. Have students provide examples of verbs. Point out that adding the suffix *-ed* to a verb makes it a *past-tense* verb, or a word that describes an action that happened in the past. Have volunteers provide several examples of regular past-tense verbs.

- Point out that past-tense verbs are not always created by adding the suffix *-ed* to a verb. Write the word *sink* on the board. Invite a student to the board to change the word *sink* to its past-tense form (*sank*). Explain that past-tense verbs that have a different spelling compared to their present-tense form are called *irregular past-tense verbs*.
- Have students return to pages 5 and 6. Invite them to work in their small groups to circle the regular past-tense verbs and underline the irregular past-tense verbs. Have volunteers share their findings and record the words on the board. Then invite students to identify the present-tense form of each word.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work independently to reread pages 7 and 8. Guide them to circle the regular past-tense verbs and underline the irregular past-tense verbs. Discuss these verbs as a class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **irregular-past-tense-verbs worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: **Suffix -ly**

- Write the following sentence on the board: *The king sprang up gladly, and Beowulf and his friends set out.* Underline the word *gladly* and ask students to define the word. Erase the suffix *-ly* from the word *gladly* to create the root word *glad*. Have students explain or locate in the dictionary the meaning of the root word. Discuss how the meanings of the words differ. Point out that the suffix *-ly* means having the characteristics of.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *Hrothgar loved the youth for his noble words and bade him and his men sit down to the table and merrily share the feast.* Underline the word *merrily* and ask students to define the word. Ask students to identify the base word (*merry*). Point out that when a word ends in the letter *y*, the *y* is dropped and replaced with the letter *i* before adding the suffix *-ly*.
- Write the following words on the board: *angry, slow, quick, happy, lazy, gentle, swift, easy.* Have students work with a partner to add the suffix *-ly*. Then have them use both the root word and the word containing the suffix *-ly* in complete sentences. Invite volunteers to share their complete sentences.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work in pairs to reread pages 8 and 9 to locate and circle all the words containing the suffix *-ly*. Have students write the root word in the margins. Invite students to share their findings with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **suffix -ly worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Connections

- See the back of the book for cross-curricular extension ideas.