

Subject Code: **Eng3**  
LG Code: 3.0 **Old English Literature (499-1066): The Anglo-Saxon Influence**  
Lesson Code: 3.1 **Old English and Epic**  
Time Limit: **30 minutes**  
Materials: Progress tracking sheet

*The features of effective writing were presented in Module 2.0. In this module, you will read the journey of the epic hero “Beowulf” of the Anglo-Saxon period. This epic is considered the genesis of English classic literature. Discover the archetypal characteristics of the hero and the culture of the Anglo-Saxon people.*



### **Target**

TA: 1 min ATA: \_\_\_\_\_

*By the end of this module, the students will have been able to:*

- describe the cultural environment of the chosen selection;**
- explain the world view of the period; and**
- plot the significant events in the epic narration.**



### **Hook**

TA: 4 mins ATA: \_\_\_\_\_

**Task 1. Rainbow Challenge.** Try to do at least three of the following missions in the rainbow boxes. The first three students who can finish the missions win the game.

Mission 1: Spell your full name backward

Mission 2: Share your last dream

Mission 3: Introduce yourself using the British accent

Mission 4: Do the moonwalk dance

Mission 5: Tell a funny joke

Mission 6: Lick your elbow

Mission 7: Recite the alphabet without showing your teeth

Processing questions:

Are the missions easy to accomplish? Why or why not?

What did you gain from doing the missions

What did you discover about yourself after the game?

What other impossible missions can you think of?

What are the possible reasons for joining a quest?



### Ignite

Missions are part of the adventures of an epic hero. You are about to read the epic of Beowulf particularly his fight with the monster Grendel.

The story opens in Denmark where Heorot, the great mead hall of King Hrothgar, has been ruined by Grendel for 12 years. Beowulf of Southern Sweden arrives in Denmark to offer his service to the King and vow to kill the monster. Hrothgar welcomes the geats with feasting and merrymaking. After the drinking and dancing, the king retires and let Beowulf take control over the arrival of Grendel later that night.

**Beowulf** is the oldest surviving epic of the English literature. It was composed by an unknown Anglo-Saxon poet around 700 A.D. The material had been passed on through oral narrative for many years. It was originally untitled but was later named after the hero Beowulf. The poem appeared in its print version in the 1800s.

An **epic** is a lengthy narrative in verse that features the life of a hero. The epic narrative often shows the realities of the dark ages of the Anglo-Saxon period during the time of bloody conflicts, ignorance, violence, and barbarism. England has many invaders namely the Celts, Romans, and the Anglo Saxons.

TA: 10 mins ATA: \_\_\_\_\_



### Think about it!

How will you describe a Filipino epic?

Like any other nations of the world, Filipinos had their epic literature handed down orally from generation to generation. In the Philippines, some of the surviving epics include Hudhud of the Ifugao, Biag ni Lam-Ang of the Ilocano, Parang Sabil of the Tausog, Hinilawod of the Sulod, and Darangen of the Maranao.



### Think about it!

The Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian peoples had invaded Britain Their Germanic languages later evolved into the Old-English. Here are some of the words used in the epic:

bard – a poet singer that recites the verses of the epic narrative

scop- composers and storytellers of Anglo-Saxon poetry

Dane- a native inhabitant of Denmark

geat- a member of the Scandinavian people

kinsmen- male relatives

mead- an alcoholic drink made from fermented honey and water

thane- a free retainer of an Anglo-Saxon lord

**Task 2.** Read the epic of Beowulf and answer the guide questions during the online discussion. Discover how he led his team to defeat the monster Grendel.



## GRENDEL AND BEOWULF

Neath the cloudy cliffs came from the moor then  
Grendel going, God's anger bare he.  
The monster intended some one of earthmen  
In the hall-building grand to entrap and make way with:

5

He went under welkin where well he knew of  
The wine-joyous building, brilliant with plating,  
Gold-hall of earthmen. Not the earliest occasion  
He the home and manor of Hrothgar had sought:  
Ne'er found he in life-days later nor earlier

10

Hardier hero, hall-thanes<sup>1</sup> more sturdy!  
Then came to the building the warrior marching,  
Bereft of his joyance. The door quickly opened  
On fire-hinges fastened, when his fingers had touched it;  
The fell one had flung then—his fury so bitter—

15

Open the entrance. Early thereafter  
The foeman trod the shining hall-pavement,  
Strode he angrily; from the eyes of him glimmered  
A lustre unlovely likest to fire.

He beheld in the hall the heroes in numbers,

20

A circle of kinsmen sleeping together,  
A throng of thanemen: then his thoughts were exultant,  
He minded to sunder from each of the thanemen  
The life from his body, horrible demon,  
Ere morning came, since fate had allowed him

25

The prospect of plenty. Providence willed not  
To permit him any more of men under heaven  
To eat in the night-time. Higelac's kinsman  
Great sorrow endured how the dire-mooded creature  
In unlooked-for assaults were likely to bear him.

30

No thought had the monster of deferring the matter,  
But on earliest occasion he quickly laid hold of  
A soldier asleep, suddenly tore him,  
Bit his bone-prison, the blood drank in currents,  
Swallowed in mouthfuls: he soon had the dead man's

35

Feet and hands, too, eaten entirely.  
Nearer he strode then, the stout-hearted warrior  
Snatched as he slumbered, seizing with hand-grip,  
Forward the foeman foined with his hand;  
Caught he quickly the cunning deviser,

40

On his elbow he rested. This early discovered  
The master of malice, that in middle-earth's regions,  
'Neath the whole of the heavens, no hand-grapple greater



In any man else had he ever encountered:  
Fearful in spirit, faint-mooded waxed he,

45

Not off could betake him; death he was pondering,  
Would fly to his covert, seek the devils' assembly:  
His calling no more was the same he had followed  
Long in his lifetime. The liege-kinsman worthy  
Of Higelac minded his speech of the evening,

50

Stood he up straight and stoutly did seize him.  
His fingers crackled; the giant was outward,  
The earl stepped farther. The famous one minded  
To flee away farther, if he found an occasion,  
And off and away, avoiding delay,

55

To fly to the fen-moors; he fully was ware of  
The strength of his grapple in the grip of the foeman.  
'Twas an ill-taken journey that the injury-bringing,  
Harrying harmer to Heorot wandered:  
The palace re-echoed; to all of the Danemen,

60

Dwellers in castles, to each of the bold ones,  
Earlmen, was terror. Angry they both were,  
Archwarders raging. Rattled the building;  
'Twas a marvellous wonder that the wine-hall withstood then  
The bold-in-battle, bent not to earthward,

65

Excellent earth-hall; but within and without it  
Was fastened so firmly in fetters of iron,  
By the art of the armorer. Off from the sill there  
Bent mead-benches many, as men have informed me,  
Adorned with gold-work, where the grim ones did struggle.

70

The Scylding wise men weened ne'er before  
That by might and main-strength a man under heaven  
Might break it in pieces, bone-decked, resplendent,  
Crush it by cunning, unless clutch of the fire  
In smoke should consume it. The sound mounted upward

75

Novel enough; on the North Danes fastened  
A terror of anguish, on all of the men there  
Who heard from the wall the weeping and plaining,  
The song of defeat from the foeman of heaven,  
Heard him hymns of horror howl, and his sorrow

80

Hell-bound bewailing. He held him too firmly  
Who was strongest of main-strength of men of that era.

### **GRENDDEL IS VANQUISHED**

For no cause whatever would the earlmen's defender  
Leave in life-joys the loathsome newcomer,  
He deemed his existence utterly useless



To men under heaven. Many a noble

5

Of Beowulf brandished his battle-sword old,  
Would guard the life of his lord and protector,  
The far-famous chieftain, if able to do so;  
While waging the warfare, this wist they but little,  
Brave battle-thanes, while his body intending

10

To slit into slivers, and seeking his spirit:  
That the relentless foeman nor finest of weapons  
Of all on the earth, nor any of war-bills  
Was willing to injure; but weapons of victory  
Swords and suchlike he had sworn to dispense with.

15

His death at that time must prove to be wretched,  
And the far-away spirit widely should journey  
Into enemies' power. This plainly he saw then  
Who with mirth<sup>1</sup> of mood malice no little  
Had wrought in the past on the race of the earthmen

20

(To God he was hostile), that his body would fail him,  
But Higelac's hardy henchman and kinsman  
Held him by the hand; hateful to other  
Was each one if living. A body-wound suffered  
The direful demon, damage incurable

25

Was seen on his shoulder, his sinews were shivered,  
His body did burst. To Beowulf was given  
Glory in battle; Grendel from thenceward  
Must flee and hide him in the fen-cliffs and marshes,  
Sick unto death, his dwelling must look for

30

Unwinsome and woful; he wist the more fully  
The end of his earthly existence was nearing,  
His life-days' limits. At last for the Danemen,  
When the slaughter was over, their wish was accomplished.  
The comer-from-far-land had cleansed then of evil,

35

Wise and valiant, the war-hall of Hrothgar,  
Saved it from violence. He joyed in the night-work,  
In repute for prowess; the prince of the Geatmen  
For the East-Danish people his boast had accomplished,  
Bettered their burdensome bale-sorrows fully,

40

The craft-begot evil they erstwhile had suffered  
And were forced to endure from crushing oppression,  
Their manifold misery. 'Twas a manifest token,  
When the hero-in-battle the hand suspended,  
The arm and the shoulder (there was all of the claw

45

Of Grendel together) 'neath great-stretching hall-roof.

### REJOICING OF THE DANES



At early dawn, warriors from far and near come together to hear of the night's adventures.

In the mist of the morning many a warrior  
Stood round the gift-hall, as the story is told me:  
Folk-princes fared then from far and from near  
Through long-stretching journeys to look at the wonder,

5

The footprints of the foeman. Few of the warriors  
Who gazed on the foot-tracks of the inglorious creature  
His parting from life pained very deeply,  
How, weary in spirit, off from those regions  
In combats conquered he carried his traces,

10

Fated and flying, to the flood of the nickers.  
There in bloody billows bubbled the currents,  
The angry eddy was everywhere mingled  
And seething with gore, welling with sword-blood;1  
He death-doomed had hid him, when reaved of his joyance

15

He laid down his life in the lair he had fled to,  
His heathenish spirit, where hell did receive him.  
Thence the friends from of old backward turned them,  
And many a younker from merry adventure,  
Striding their stallions, stout from the seaward,

20

Heroes on horses. There were heard very often  
Beowulf's praises; many often asserted  
That neither south nor north, in the circuit of waters,  
O'er outstretching earth-plain, none other was better  
'Mid bearers of war-shields, more worthy to govern,

25

'Neath the arch of the ether. Not any, however,  
'Gainst the friend-lord muttered, mocking-words uttered  
Of Hrothgar the gracious (a good king he).  
Oft the famed ones permitted their fallow-skinned horses  
To run in rivalry, racing and chasing,

30

Where the fieldways appeared to them fair and inviting,  
Known for their excellence; oft athane of the folk-lord,2  
A man of celebrity, mindful of rhythms,  
Who ancient traditions treasured in memory,  
New word-groups found properly bound:

35

The bard after 'gan then Beowulf's venture  
Wisely to tell of, and words that were clever  
To utter skilfully, earnestly speaking,  
Everything told he that he heard as to Sigmund's  
Mighty achievements, many things hidden,

40

The strife of the Wælsing, the wide-going ventures  
The children of men knew of but little,  
The feud and the fury, but Fitela with him,  
When suchlike matters he minded to speak of,  
Uncle to nephew, as in every contention



45

Each to other was ever devoted:

A numerous host of the race of the scathers  
They had slain with the sword-edge. To Sigmund accrued then  
No little of glory, when his life-days were over,  
Since he sturdy in struggle had destroyed the great dragon,

50

The hoard-treasure's keeper; 'neath the hoar-grayish stone he,  
The son of the atheling, unaided adventured  
The perilous project; not present was Fitela,  
Yet the fortune befell him of forcing his weapon  
Through the marvellous dragon, that it stood in the wall,

55

Well-honored weapon; the worm was slaughtered.  
The great one had gained then by his glorious achievement  
To reap from the ring-hoard richest enjoyment,  
As best it did please him: his vessel he loaded,  
Shining ornaments on the ship's bosom carried,

60

Kinsman of Wæls: the drake in heat melted.  
He was farthest famed of fugitive pilgrims,  
Mid wide-scattered world-folk, for works of great prowess,  
War-troopers' shelter: hence waxed he in honor.  
Afterward Heremod's hero-strength failed him,

65

His vigor and valor. 'Mid venomous haters  
To the hands of foemen he was foully delivered,  
Offdriven early. Agony-billows  
Oppressed him too long, to his people he became then,  
To all the athelings, an ever-great burden;

70

And the daring one's journey in days of yore  
Many wise men were wont to deplore,  
Such as hoped he would bring them help in their sorrow,  
That the son of their ruler should rise into power,  
Holding the headship held by his fathers,

75

Should govern the people, the gold-hoard and borough,  
The kingdom of heroes, the realm of the Scyldings.  
He to all men became then far more beloved,  
Higelac's kinsman, to kindreds and races,  
To his friends much dearer; him malice assaulted.—

80

Oft running and racing on roadsters they measured  
The dun-colored highways. Then the light of the morning  
Was hurried and hastened. Went henchmen in numbers  
To the beautiful building, bold ones in spirit,  
To look at the wonder; the liegelord himself then

85

From his wife-bower wending, warden of treasures,  
Glorious trod with troopers unnumbered,  
Famed for his virtues, and with him the queen-wife  
Measured the mead-ways, with maidens attending.



Guide questions:

What is the origin of Grendel?

How did Grendel devastate the land of Hrothgar?

What trait or action of Beowulf do you find most admirable? Explain.

What are some of the striking lines in the text?

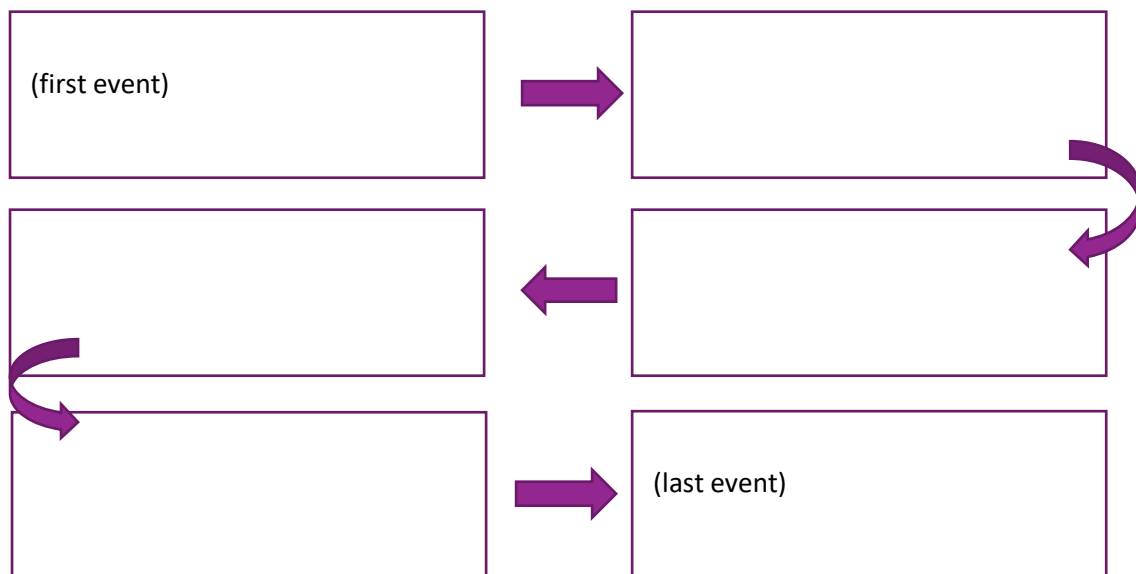
Who could be the contemporary examples of the characters?



**Navigate**

TA: 8 mins ATA: \_\_\_\_\_

**Task 3. Create a sequence chart** showing the major events in the battle of Beowulf with Grendel. Use 1 to 2 complete sentences and appropriate cohesive devices or transition word in each box. (10 pts)



**Knot**



TA: 2 mins ATA: \_\_\_\_\_

**Summary of the Lesson**

An epic is a narrative poem about a legendary hero written in verse that takes several days or months to recite. It reflects the traditions and cultural heritage of the ancestors where the story originated. Discovering our roots can help us plan for a better future. In your family, how do you commemorate your elders?





**Enrichment Activity:**

A.) Read the next parts of the journey of Beowulf: Fight with Grendel's Mother and The Dragon.

B.) Watch the film or animated version of Beowulf. Compare the character of Beowulf in the reading material versus its film version.

*(Note: This lesson will be continued in the next module.)*

**Reference**

- Hall, L. (2005). Beowulf: An Anglo-Saxon Poem. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/16328/16328-h/16328-h.htm>
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