



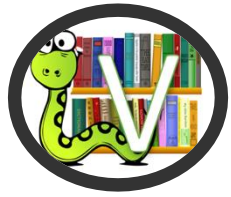
Beowulf

Stage 6

Unit Focus: Myths and Legends

Text Focus: Narrative

Today we are Learning to...



identify new words and discuss their meaning in context



discuss how an author uses figurative language, considering the impact on the reader



Before reading...

What do you already know about Beowulf?

This short narrative is full of tension. What figurative language devices could be used to build the tension?

Task 1: Read 'Beowulf' independently

While you are reading, you may wish to:

- Underline and identify any new, unknown words.
- Underline the names of the main characters.

Challenge:

- If you finish early, you could create a timeline of key events in the narrative.

Beowulf

- Crack...a fallen branch snapped under Beowulf's heavy foot. He froze instinctively, the silent drumbeat of his heart the only movement. When he was sure that he hadn't been exposed, he let out a heavy breath and grumbled to himself. He'd slain monsters before, that wasn't what was scaring him. The legend of Grendel was far worse than anything he'd encountered, though. Behind him, the sound of singing and feasting filtered through the wooden walls of Herot. The great hall was the home of Beowulf's good friend King Hrothgar.
- Deep in his heart, the mighty warrior knew he didn't have a choice but to stay out in the cold. He'd made a solemn promise to the king that he would defeat the mighty beast that had been terrorising the king's lands. That was the plan tonight. Beowulf knew that the monster would attack and he wanted to be there to fight him when he did.

- Suddenly, a deep and mournful cry swirled through the night sky. Beowulf shivered. Instinctively, he reached for his trusted sword before remembering that he'd left it back in the great hall. He'd argued that the only noble choice was to match the monster unarmed. Partly, he'd made the promise out of honour but equally, it was out of sheer devilment after the devious thane Unferth had questioned his bravery. He was beginning to regret his decision.
- The howl continued for such a long time that Beowulf began to wonder what creature could possess such big lungs. Eventually, it died down, and silence once again snatched the night in its grasp. At least he knew where the monster lay now, and Beowulf slunk deeper into the shadows to wait for his prey. Once again, the deathly silence was broken by a scream; this time of a smaller animal and cut off mid-shriek.
- Beowulf stood as still as he could until the shadows darkened, and chilled air filled his nostrils. He knew the ogre was close. Grunts and groans of something substantial moved up ahead. Again, he paused and waited. This time, a pair of blood-shot eyes pierced the black velvet a hundred yards in front of him.

- “Hello, Grendel.” Beowulf stepped forward into the weak and flickering light of the reed torches on the front of the hall and tried to make his voice sound as brave and confident as he could. “I have heard that your scorn of men is so great that you need no weapon and fear none. Therefore, I am here unarmed to bring an end to your reign of terror.”
- For a second, Grendel didn’t answer. When he did, it was nothing more than a short grunt. A cloud shifted in the sky, allowing the moonlight to break through and cast a tunnel of light onto the ogre. Beowulf held his tongue. The monster stood a dozen feet tall and was as broad as an ox. Scales and open sores that oozed thick green blood covered his skin. Sharp teeth thrust out of his mouth at odd angles, and his nose had long ago been flattened against his face. Many brave men had tried to defeat Grendel in the past, but none had succeeded. They’d left their mark, though, and his body told the tale of every battle.
- Sensing an attack, Beowulf clenched his fists. He’d have one chance to overwhelm the ogre. He had to be ready. He leaned back on his heels, his bare feet sinking into the mud, and took a deep breath. Grendel lunged forward and covered the distance between them in one step. Beowulf leapt...

Task 1: Read 'Beowulf' together

Read this extract from the story aloud. How can you make it sound frightening and tense?

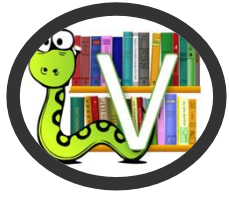
Crack...a fallen branch snapped under Beowulf's heavy foot. He froze instinctively, the silent drumbeat of his heart the only movement.



Task 2: Vocabulary Check

What do you think these words mean?

Crack...a fallen branch snapped under Beowulf's heavy foot. He froze instinctively, the silent drumbeat of his heart the only movement. When he was sure that he hadn't been exposed, he let out a heavy breath and grumbled to himself. He'd slain monsters before, that wasn't what was scaring him. The legend of Grendel was far worse than anything he'd encountered, though. Behind him, the sound of singing and feasting filtered through the wooden walls of Herot. The great hall was the home of Beowulf's good friend King Hrothgar...



Task 3: Synonym Match

Can you match the word from the text to its most appropriate synonym?

- He'd made a solemn promise to the king that he would defeat the mighty beast...
- Suddenly, a deep and mournful cry swirled through the night sky....
- it was out of sheer devilment after the devious thane Unferth had questioned his bravery.

solemn

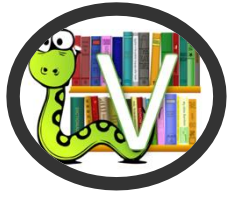
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devious

dishonest and conniving

serious and honest

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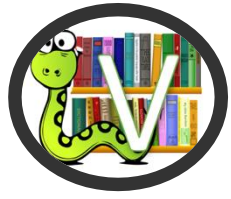
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Task 4: Comparing words

How does the meaning of the sentence change each time?

Beowulf slunk deeper into the shadows to wait for his prey.

Beowulf stomped deeper into the shadows to wait for his prey.

Beowulf skipped deeper into the shadows to wait for his prey.



Task 5: Explain and justify

After the lesson, describe and explain how Beowulf might be feeling at the beginning of the story, using evidence from this text.

Think about:

What Beowulf is doing

What he thinks might happen

Spend some time preparing your answer. Try and use evidence from the story.

Remember to:

- Explain how you think Beowulf is feeling
- Use evidence to support this
- Describe what your evidence means

After lesson task

- 1. Can you research what a “thane” was?
- 2. Explain what “Silence snatched the night in its grasp” means.
- 3. What does “held his tongue” mean?
- 4. Write the definition for “mournful”.
- VIPERS QUESTIONS
- I How does Beowulf feel in the first paragraph? How do you know?
- E Explain how you know that this is a myth or legend.
- R What is the weather like?
- P What happened after Beowulf leapt?

Task 6: Let's look at these answers!



Think about their strengths and weaknesses.

I think Beowulf will be feeling scared because he's scared of the monster and the monster is scary and frightening.

Task 6: Let's look at these answers!



Think about their strengths and weaknesses.

Beowulf is creeping through the dark forest. He can hear the wind whip around him, the leaves rustle and then a terrifying scream. He sees the monster and gets ready to attack it.

Task 6: Let's look at these answers!



Think about their strengths and weaknesses.

I think Beowulf is feeling frightened and confused. It says 'Beowulf shivered' when he hears a mournful cry, which means he might be trembling from fear. He is also confused and puzzled because he doesn't know what the creature looks like and it says 'Beowulf began to wonder what creature could possess such big lungs'. This must add to his feelings of fear because he's going into the unknown. Despite all this, he is determined to defeat the monster, telling me he's brave and selfless.

Task 6: Let's look at these answers!



Think about their strengths and weaknesses.

Frightened and confused.

Frightened – 'Beowulf shivered'

Confused - 'Beowulf began to wonder what creature could possess such big lungs'.



Task 7: How did you do?

Check your partner's answer. What have they done well?

How can they improve their answer? Think about:

- Have they described how Beowulf might be feeling?
- Have they given evidence from the story?
- Have they explained what the evidence means?
- Does the evidence match the point they are making?



Task 8: Class discussion

Beowulf is a foolish show-off.

Find evidence that **SUPPORTS** both parts of this statement. Do you agree? Why? Why not?



**You have reached the end of the
Lesson!**

Rewrite the story as one sentence.

Describe Beowulf in one word and explain your word choice.

