

English Literature

'Poetry and Prose of England' pages 1-54

Anglo Saxon England up to 1066

Week 1

Read 'Anglo Saxon England, pages 3-15

Week 2

Read Beowulf part 1 pages 16-22 (up to 'Grendel's arm)

Read Beowulf part 2 pages 22 to end. **NB Note down any kennings which you come across.**

Week 3

Questions:

- i) Are swords effective against Grendel? (see lines 259-270). How does Beowulf cause Grendel's fatal wound? (see lines 276-289)
- (ii) Who was slain by Grendel's 'dam'? Was Beowulf there when it happened? (lines 290-304)
- (iii) How does Beowulf first try to kill the she-hag? What happens? (lines 377-382). What did kill her in the end? (see explanation bottom of page 24, and lines 391-393)
- (iv) What does Beowulf request be done after he is dead? (lines 475- 483)
- (v) How do the Geats remember their king? (lines 503-4)

Week 4

Questions

- (i) List the *kennings* you have found and try to explain what they mean in your own words.
- (ii) Write a description of Grendel based mainly on lines 37-49.
- (iii) Can you give any reasons why Beowulf might be considered a model for a Christian king? (e.g. does he display any Christian virtues?)

Week 5

Questions

Write a prose description based on Hrothgar's description of the monsters' home (lines 314-337)

Week 6

Questions

Write a prose description based on the description of the voyage of Beowulf, lines 65- 82

If you have time and feel inclined, you might draw a picture of Beowulf's barrow (and /or of Beowulf himself, or Grendel) based on the descriptions given in the poem.

Week 7

Read Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History of England' pages 30-32. Note down any kennings you find.

Questions

1. Bede wrote this story in Latin. Who translated it into English and when? (see page 6 paragraph 5 if you can't remember!)
2. Where did the Abbess Hilda once live? (starts with 'H' – you've been there!)
3. What is so special about Bede's recording of Caedmon's Song? (see page 6 paragraph 5 if you need help).
4. Try to explain the meaning of some of the kennings you found. If you haven't included the following in your list, have a go at explaining them too: *song-speech, holy-lore, song-craft, first-shaping and town-reeve.*

Week 8

Read Aelfric's homily for St Edmund's day, pages 32-35, noting any kennings you come across.

Questions

1. Try to explain (or give one modern English word for) the kennings you found. Include these if you haven't done so: *well-willingness*, *ship-army* and *earth-fast*
2. Did Edmund follow the advice of the Bishop concerning the demand of the Danes for the East Anglian treasure? Explain.
3. How was Edmund martyred? Briefly explain how the head of Saint Edmund was preserved.

The Middle English Period: Part 1 (c1066 – c. 1250)

Week 9

Read pages 37-44 on Middle English literature

Read St Patrick Spens, pages 44-5

Questions

1. In stanza 5, what suggests that Sir Patrick believes an enemy has done this to him?
2. What are '*cork – heeled schoone*'? Is there any connection between drowning and cork?
3. What does '*Thair hats they swam aboone*' mean?
3. Ask daddy to play Fairport Convention's 'Sir Patrick Spens'!

Week 10

Read Edward, Edward, pages 46-7.

Questions

1. Do you think Edward is a poor man or a knight? Explain your answer (if you need clues, look at the things he possesses lines 1, 5, 15 and 33)
2. Tell the story in your own words, in prose. Start with Edward's mother asking him why his sword drips with blood, and end with the final line of the ballad.

Week 11

Read the Ballad of Lord Thomas and Fair Annet, pages 51-54

Questions

1. What does Lord Thomas ask his mother? (stanza 4). What advice ('rede') does his mother give him? (stanza 5)
2. What advice does his brother give him? (Stanza 7). What does he reply? (stanza 8)
3. What advice does his sister give him? (stanza 10). What does he reply? (stanza 11)

Week 12 (The Ballad of Lord Thomas continued)

Questions

4. In stanzas 14 and 15, explain briefly what Fair Annet is telling her maids to do (she wants them to make her as as possible)
5. In stanzas 16,17 and 18, what suggests that Fair Annet is not so poor as has been made out by various people?
6. Why is the nut-brown bride so jealous of Fair Annet (apart from the fact that Thomas gives her a rose). See stanzas 23 and 24.
7. What does the nut-brown bride do? What is Lord Thomas' reaction?
8. How do the last two stanzas show how much Lord Thomas and Fair Annet loved one another?