

# Anglo-saxon hero vs. modern day hero



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The Anglo- Saxons had Beowulf. The Greeks had Ulysses. The Americans had Paul Bunyan. Every culture has its own hero, and each hero has many different qualities that make them stand out from the rest. Beowulf is the representation of an Anglo- Saxon hero and Thor is the reflection of a modern day hero. Although both of these men are known as heroes they each possess different characteristics that allow them to gain this title. In the epic poem Beowulf and the modern film Thor, the hero reflects the values and traits of his culture.

To understand the famous Anglo- Saxon hero Beowulf, one must understand the culture that created Beowulf. The Anglo- Saxons were influential, strong, and loyal people. Research has found that, “ the Anglo- Saxons arrived in Britain in about 449 A. D. ”(BBC). This shows that Anglo- Saxon culture has had an influence on American history for a long duration of time because they are still discussed today. And were probably some of the first heroes that ever lived. This culture showed a great deal of braveness throughout their time.

The men were put in many different situations, but their daring drive, and courageousness allowed them to persevere. According to the Germanic (Anglo Saxon) Warrior, “ A glorious and courageous death was the only fitting end to a glorious life” (Hammack). This statement shows that the men took pride in fighting to protect their citizens, no matter what adversities came their way. It also shows that they had no fear and dying to save someone else, which was a very brave thing to do. Another characteristic displayed in Anglo- Saxon culture was loyalty. The warriors would never leave any of their comrades behind in battle.

Hammack described this idea in this way: Having sworn allegiance, the comitatus must not fall short: they would die in battle before they would leave the battlefield, especially once their chief was killed. The death of the hunno must be avenged by his comitatus. Disloyalty to the chief resulted in exile (Hammack). This statement indicates that the men under the chief would stick by his side even after death. Its also shows that the men were prepared to defeat any entity for their ruler. The influential, brave, and loyal life of Anglo- Saxons led to the creation of a hero that is strong, fearless, and has pride.

The epic poem Beowulf is about an Anglo- Saxon Geat that saves the day by defeating the cruel monster that has been terrorizing the town. This monster, Grendel was feared by many for they could not fight him do to his supernatural strength, but Beowulf challenged this beast and was able to outlast him. In the epic poem it is stated that “ a prince of the Geats, had killed Grendel, ended the grief, the sorrow, the suffering forced on Hrothgars helpless people by the bloodthirsty fiend” (Allen 53). This statement displays how much physical strength that Beowulf acquired seeing as how he was the only one that could take out Grendel.

It also shows the mental strength that Beowulf went through to prepare to take on the dreaded monster. Anglo- Saxon hero Beowulf also displays fearlessness throughout the epic poem. He musters up the confidence to take on Grendel’s mom. The story states, “ Fearlessly, Beowulf prepares to battle the terrible creature” (Allen 57). He had no worries about fighting Grendel’s mother. It takes a lot to beat such a dangerous character, but

Beowulf defeated the creature without a second thought in order to protect his people. One of the greatest characteristics that Beowulf shows is pride.

According to Beowulf, “ I feel no shame with shield and sword and armor, against this monster: when he comes to me I mean to stand, not run from his shooting flames, stand till fate decides which of us wins” (Allen 63). By this statement he displays pride by not backing out even though he knows that the battle might not end well. He was okay with fighting with his weapons in order to cease the dragon. All three of these characteristics are what make up the Anglo- Saxon hero Beowulf. The idea of the hero continues in our modern world in the character of Thor.

The modern day film Thor, shows an arrogant yet unselfish and loyal hero, who realizes his ways and tries to refine himself throughout the movie.

According to the film, “ Thor lives on a planet known as Asgard, and is in training to become the God of thunder” (Thor). But due to his arrogance he is “ stripped of his powers and unable to wield his mighty hammer, Thor will come to know what it means to be a real hero, especially when those on earth are put in danger” (Thor). When Thor is cast down to Earth he learns what it means to become a humble person and he realizes that the world does not revolve around him.

Unfortunately Thor’s undermining brother Loki tries to steal Thor’s powers and take over the planet of Asgard after Thor is vanished to Earth. He shows that he is an unselfish man in this movie; in dialogue with his conniving brother Loki, Thor says “ Brother forgive me for whatever wrong I did to you. But these people are innocent; taking their lives will change nothing. So take

mine” (Thor). He is willing to die in order to save people that he does not even know. He also shows that he does not want any trouble with his brother, he just wants peace.

Hero Thor shows his loyalty to his people of Asgard and tries to defeat his evil brother even though his powers are limited and he can not enter planet Asgard. “...Thor’s faithful friends travel to Earth to bring him back so he can restore peace” (Thor: The God of Thunder). Even though Thor no longer lives on planet Asgard he has not given up hope on his homeland and wants to help his people out. Through the help of some of Thor’s closest allies he is able to gain his powers back and defeat Loki, resulting in saving the planet of Asgard as well as Earth.

Just as values of Anglo- Saxon culture shaped the creation of Beowulf, so does modern American culture shape the character of Thor. Thor is arrogant, unselfish, and loyal because of the admirable, trustworthy, and caring modern day culture that has been bestowed upon him. Modern day heroes are often admired because they aim to save the human race by protecting society from evil. They are also admirable because they never quit when something goes wrong, they keep fighting till their opponent is defeated.

Modern day heroes are trustworthy because when they say they are going to do something they follow through and get things accomplished. Lastly, the modern day hero is a caring person. He will fight any evil being no matter what size in order to protect the citizens of his society. In the epic poem Beowulf and the modern film Thor, the hero reflects the values and traits of his culture. According to the Anglo- Saxon Hero article, “ The modern day

hero shares similarities and differences with the idea of the Anglo- Saxon hero.

The modern day hero is also looked upon as a near perfect representation of what it is to live in our culture” (The Anglo- Saxon Hero). Both heroes have common characteristics that reflect their culture, but they also possess characteristics that make them different and help reflect their culture as well. Beowulf’s strength, fearlessness, and pride reflect his Anglo- Saxon background, and Thor’s arrogance, unselfish ways, and loyalty reflect his modern day background. As time has changed the heroes’ appearance has become more distinguished, but overall his drive and determination to save another humans life has remained intact.