

Qualities of a hero

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Qualities of a Hero In the epic poem Beowulf, one learns about one of the first known great heroes. Although heroes don't always wear capes or bear superpowers, some people choose to think that these are the only heroes that exist. In truth, heroes are people who do extraordinary things, even in small measures. A hero can be defined as a person who does great deeds for another or that has admirable traits and abilities. In the time period of the story, heroes are usually great warriors. They receive honor, glory, respect, and fame for their heroic deeds. Modern heroes are similarly recognized, but are often ordinary citizens. They possess traits shared with Beowulf such as strength, self-sacrifice, and loyalty. Beowulf's physical strength is boasted in the story as "in strength he outstripped the strongest of men". However, strength is not only physical, but it is mental and emotional as well. Beowulf exemplifies these types of strength fighting Grendel. His physical strength helps him overtake the monster, but his emotional and mental strength give him the courage and readiness to face Grendel. Heroes today have such strength as well. Doctors need mental strength to make important decisions for their patients and physical strength to carry out treatments. In addition, parents can be considered heroes as their strength is the base for a family's support and stability. Self-sacrifice and strength go hand in hand. One has to have strength to be willing to sacrifice their self for the good of others. Beowulf shows this during his conversation with King Hrothgar when he says, "no need for thee then to think of my burial if I lose my life, the lonely prowler my blood-stained body will bear to his den". Grendel murders and maims many men, and no weapon can harm him. Yet, Beowulf still decides to fight him. He is willing to risk his life to save the townspeople from the

horrible creature. In comparison, firefighters sacrifice life and limb entering hazardous buildings to put out fires and save lives. Strength and self-sacrifice are sometimes rooted by loyalty. If a person is truly loyal to something, he or she will do almost anything for it. Beowulf is loyal to King Hrothgar by asking permission to fight Grendel. Likewise, soldiers are loyal to their country just as Beowulf is loyal to the king. A soldier's loyalty to their country is a big reason they enlist. Another example would be blood donors. They weaken themselves to provide a chance of life to others because of their loyalty to a good cause. Whether a person thinks of Beowulf, Batman, or a blood donor as a hero is simply a matter of opinion. Furthermore, different views of heroes lead to different definitions of a hero. While the definition of a hero has changed over the course of history, strength, bravery, and loyalty summarize most hero definitions, old and new.