

Hero and beowulf

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The Anglo-Saxon hero had to have a strong sense of duty, possess honor, be courageous and lastly they had to have incredible strength. In the case of Beowulf, even though he boasted of his feats and his ability to defeat anyone placed before him, he was still perceived as humble. A hero must be willing to sacrifice his or her own life without giving a second thought. An excellent example of a hero in Anglo-Saxon literature is Beowulf. The first heroic characteristic that Beowulf possesses is honor. Honor is showing a sense of integrity in one's actions. When Beowulf went to the land of the Danes to kill Grendel, he did it not because he wanted money, but because he wanted to help out the Geats. Beowulf felt as if it was the right thing to do since he had been successful in past deeds, which he proudly says in lines 321-322, where he says, " They had in remembrance my courage and might. Many had seen me come safe from the conflict,". Beowulf expected no reward for his action, but rather just being able to " put another notch in his belt." _ Another important aspect of an Anglo-Saxon hero was their intense level of courage. Even when Beowulf was old in age he readily wanted to fight the dragon even though he knew it would kill him. In line 1493, he says " Not one foot's space will I flee from the monster," thus showing his true bravery by not giving up to the more powerful foe. He was never worried about his own safety; he was prepared for what ever happened. All that come across Beowulf's path, because of his courageous deeds, often admired him. This is apparent in the following quote, " I have never seen a mightier warrior on earth than is one of you, a man in battle-dress". Beowulf was not only considered the strongest warrior but people often exaggerated his strength because of their admiration. Warriors had to be willing to sacrifice

themselves for glory or for the betterment of the country all without a trace of regret. Beowulf's strength and courage are unmatched, and he is much more humble than the other important characters that are introduced in the book. Beowulf displays his great strength time after time when he defeats characters that were at one time considered unbeatable by other men. An example of his heroism can be seen when he comes to protecting the Danish from the monster Grendel. The fact that Beowulf is able to kill Grendel and his mother easily reconfirms to the reader that he is a true hero. In the following quote Beowulf's fighting ability is highlighted: Beowulf gained glory in war; and Grendel went off bloody and bent to the boggy hills, sorrowfully seeking his dreary dwelling. Beowulf swore to kill Grendel without using any weapons and he accomplished this feat easily. This again adds to the fact that Beowulf is a hero. An additional heroic characteristic of Beowulf is his strong sense of duty. This means that he is always devoted to his people, his king, and their security. An example of this is again when he goes to slay the dragon. He has no help, he realizes that the dragon is more powerful, and most importantly, he realizes that he will probably not be returning victorious from this battle. In other words, he will die. In lines 1470-1474, it says " Sad was his spirit, restless and ready, And the march of Fate immeasurably near; Fate that would strike, seek his soul's treasure, And deal asunder the spirit and flesh. Not long was his life encased in the body!" This basically means that Fate was soon to run its course and he would lose his life in battle. He had to and did go along with this because he was the king and it was his responsibility to provide security for his people. Even though it was his responsibility, he didn't have to do it; he could have run away like

others may have. In Anglo-Saxon culture and literature a hero is best defined as an honorable warrior who is not out for fame and fortune but they are out to better their leader. Generally, Anglo-Saxon heroes are not afraid or scared and they are extremely patriotic. Heroes such as Beowulf are strong, intelligent, courageous, and humble. Beowulf is a perfect example of an Anglo-Saxon hero.