

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Beowulf Writing a Boast



In today's society, we consider boasting to be rude and arrogant. Our opinion of the person boasting lowers and we lose respect. However, in Anglo Saxon society (the society in which Beowulf is set), boasting served a much different purpose. The boast was an accepted, almost expected part of warrior culture. It celebrated family, lord, and tribe, and functioned as a warrior's promise to his people. The fulfillment of the boast (or death while trying to) brought honor and respect; failure brought shame.

Task: For this assignment, you will write a formal boast about yourself. In the boast, you should tell us about any, perhaps all, of the following:

- Your mom, dad, grandparent, guardian, or other family member
- What you plan to do in the future
- Your toughness, bravery, loyalty, or other outstanding characteristics
- Your accomplishments (academic, athletic, musical, social, artistic, etc.)
- Anything else of which you are proud

Guidelines:

- Leave humility and shyness behind!
- Must be **16-20 lines** long
- Must include alliteration in each line

Example of a boast:

***Beowulf*, lines 415-455 (excerpt below)**

*“So every elder and experienced councilman
 Among my people supported my resolve
 To come here to you, King Hrothgar,
 Because all knew of my awesome strength.
 They had seen me bolstered in the blood of enemies
 When I battled and bound five beasts,
 Raided a troll-nest and in the night sea
 Slaughtered sea-brutes. I have suffered extremes
 And avenged the Geats (their enemies brought it upon
 Themselves, I devastated them). Now I mean to be a match
 For Grendel settle the outcome in single combat.”*

Example of kenning:

- A. *Helmberend* – “Helmet bearer”= “Warrior”
- B. *Beadoleoma* – “Battle light”= “Flashing sword”
- C. *Swansrad* – “Swan road”= “Sea”

Ultimately, a kenning is a compact metaphor that functions as a name or epithet; it is also, in its more complex forms, a riddle in miniature.

Examples of alliteration:

- A. Cunningly creeping, a spectral stalker
- B. Hot-hearted Beowulf was bent upon battle
- C. He had often haunted Hrothgar’s house
- D. How glutted with gore he would guzzle his fill