

level  
B2.1

## READING ACTIVITY 1/6



### BEOWULF

**Beowulf** is the greatest surviving poem in Old English. Set in 6<sup>th</sup>-century Scandinavia, it tells a story that comes from myth, legend and history. Beowulf is a great warrior and a hero of the Geats. He agrees to help, Hrothgar, the king of the Danes and bravely defeats the savage monster Grendel. Later in his life, he faces a fire-breathing dragon.

The Anglo-Saxon values of courage and pride are set against the terrifying monsters that threaten society.

### PREDICTION

What do you think? Are the following sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- |  |                            |                            |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Beowulf comes from a family of warriors and heroes. | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F |
| 2. The king of the Danes is his old enemy.             | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F |
| 3. There are elements of magic in the story.           | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F |
| 4. Beowulf becomes a king during his life.             | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F |
| 5. Beowulf will also defeat the fire-breathing dragon. | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F |

Mark your answers and when you finish reading the story, check them to see if you predicted correctly.



level  
B2.1

## READING ACTIVITY 2/6



### READING ACTIVITY

**Read the excerpt and then do the activity below.**

*The great Danish king, Hrothgar, built a huge building with high towers, Heorot Hall, as a sign of his power. And now he and his people are celebrating it.*

There were feasts and singing every day in Heorot Hall. Harpists played their music, and poets told the story of how God created the earth, the sun and the moon.

But there was a demon<sup>1</sup> that hated the happiness of Heorot Hall. His name was Grendel, and he lived on a bleak part of the coastal lands. Grendel had previously lived in exile with the family of Cain, who had murdered his brother Abel.<sup>2</sup>

One night Grendel came to Heorot Hall to look at the Danes feasting and enjoying themselves there. He found them asleep after their drinking, and he seized<sup>3</sup> thirty men and carried them away with him. He returned to the Hall later that night, and left thirty bloodstained<sup>4</sup> corpses<sup>5</sup> there.

When morning came the Danes woke up and saw the bodies of their friends. They wept<sup>6</sup> at the sight. King Hrothgar did not know what to do, and he was ashamed that he had not been able to prevent the terrible deed. He was sad for the loss of his men.

The next night Grendel came back again, and killed more of Hrothgar's men. The Danes were now afraid, and they began to leave Heorot Hall.

Grendel now ruled. Heorot Hall was abandoned. King Hrothgar suffered for twelve long years. Musicians carried the story of Grendel all over the world. They sang about the horrible murders, and the long war between the demon and the king.

(from Chapter One)

1 **demon** : evil spirit

2 **Cain and Abel** : the sons of Adam and Eve, who in the Bible are the first people on Earth.

3 **seized** : took hold of violently.

4 **bloodstained** : covered in blood.

5 **corpses** : dead bodies

6 **wept** : cried.



level  
B2.1

## READING ACTIVITY 3/6



### 1. Choose the correct answer—a, b or c.

- Who was Grendel?
  - the king's evil brother
  - Cain's brother
  - a demon
- How many men were seized and murdered by Grendel?
  - thirteen
  - thirty
  - three
- How did King Hrothgar feel when he saw the dead bodies?
  - He felt ashamed and sad.
  - He felt afraid and worried.
  - He felt shocked and surprised.
- Why did the Danes leave Heorot Hall?
  - because the king was dead
  - because Heorot Hall was completely destroyed
  - because Grendel now ruled there
- Where did the musicians carry the story of Grendel?
  - to the nearby village
  - to a bleak part of the coastal lands
  - all over the world

### QUICK QUIZ!

### 2. Watch the video ([https://youtu.be/OVC\\_QStlw-U](https://youtu.be/OVC_QStlw-U)). Then match the word with its synonym.

- |                  |       |               |
|------------------|-------|---------------|
| 1. enormous      | ..... | a. monster    |
| 2. demon         | ..... | b. escape     |
| 3. scary         | ..... | c. powerful   |
| 4. strong        | ..... | d. huge       |
| 5. run away from | ..... | e. terrifying |



level  
B2.1

## READING ACTIVITY 4/6



### PART 2 – Read the excerpt and then do the activity below.

*Beowulf and his Geat warriors go to Heorot Hall because Beowulf wants to help King Hrothgar.*

The Danes were curious about the newcomers, and asked them questions:

‘Who are you, and why have you come here carrying your weapons?’

The Great warrior gave this answer:

‘We are Hygelac’s men. Beowulf is my name. I will tell your king the purpose of our visit if he will see me.’

A Wendel<sup>1</sup> chief called Wulfgar agreed to take Beowulf’s message to the king. He said that a group of people from Geatland had come ashore, led by a warrior called Beowulf, who seemed a strong man.

Hrothgar replied:

‘I know Beowulf. I remember him as a young boy. They say he has the strength of thirty men. God has sent him here to defend us against Grendel. I’ll give him a large reward. Now go and ask the Geats to come in, and be sure to tell them they are welcome in Denmark.’

The Geat warriors went into the throne toom, and Beowulf spoke to the king.

‘I am Beowulf. I have had great victories against my enemies, and now I have heard the story of Grendel land the destruction he has brought to Denmark. Travellers have told us how Heorot Hall has been abandoned by its people because they are afraid of the demon. Hygelac’s advisers encouraged me to come here to help you, because they know how strong I am. They know I have fought against men and sea-monsters, and have always avenged<sup>2</sup> the Geats. I want to fight Grendel in single combat.<sup>3</sup>

(from Chapter Two)

1 **Wendel** : the Wendels were a Germanic tribe who lived in North Denmark, where Beowulf lands.

2 **avenged** : done something to hurt people who have hurt the Geats.

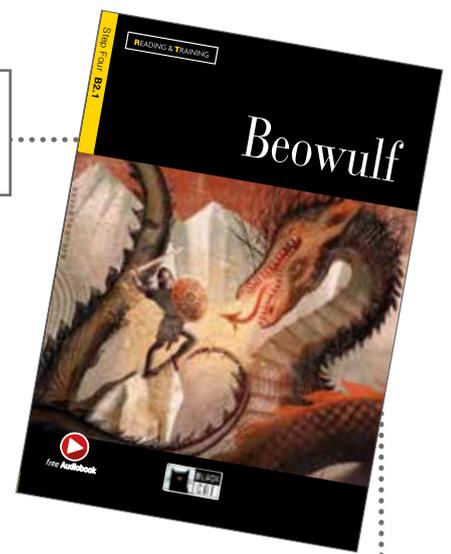
3 **single combat** : one against one



level  
B2.1

## READING ACTIVITY

5/6



### ODD ONE OUT!

**3A. Choose the word that does not belong to the group.**

1. reward   prize   payment   punishment
2. enemy   ally   friend   colleague
3. frail   strong   robust   powerful
4. build   construct   create   destroy
5. hate   detest   loathe   appreciate
6. brave   cowardly   bold   courageous

**3B. 3B. Now complete the sentences with the odd words.**

1. The old man was sick and .....
2. He ran away from the battle because he was .....
3. In the old prison, the ..... was very severe.
4. 'We ..... your courage and we thank you,' said the king.
5. Grendel wanted to ..... the village.
6. 'He's not my friend,' cried the woman, ' he's my ..... !'

### QUICK QUIZ!

**4. Watch the video again and complete the sentences with the correct word from the basket below.**

• appetite • hide • demon • deformed • terrifying • hell • flesh

1. Look! That creature has three heads, eight legs and five eyes!  
It's .....
2. The child started crying because the monster in the film  
was .....
3. Grendel had an ..... for human .....
4. Grendel was a ..... from .....
5. She wanted to ..... from the strange creature.

