



This film clip and worksheet form an integral part of *Literature for Life's* mini-syllabus for film and can be used accordingly, regardless of whether the literary text it is based on has been studied or not.

Film Worksheet 2.1

▶ EXTRA FILM

Beowulf

Knowledge base

1. Find out about or review your knowledge of the poem by completing the tasks.
 - a. Read the brief summary of the storyline.
 - b. Say where Beowulf is from, where he goes and who he helps there, and what happens when he returns home.

Summary

Hrothgar, King of the Danes, has become a powerful leader with a mighty army and his mind now turns to hall-building: he intends to build a magnificent hall where he can hold ceremonies and celebrate victories. The hall is named Heorot and, once it is completed, celebrations soon begin. Not far away, a monster is angered by the joyful sounds coming from the hall and decides to attack. The monster is Grendel and on his first foray he grabs thirty men from the hall, kills them and takes them back to his lair. In the nearby territory of the Geats, a brave warrior, Beowulf, hears about Hrothgar's problems. He musters an army, sails to the land of the Danes and offers his services to Hrothgar. He fights and defeats Grendel. Grendel's mother is infuriated by the death of her demon-son and she, too, attacks. Beowulf seeks her out in her underwater lair and kills her too. Times pass and Beowulf becomes King of the Geats who he rules for 50 years until a sleeping dragon is awoken and begins to wreak havoc in Beowulf's realm. Beowulf fights the dragon but his sword fails him. The warrior Wiglaf comes to his aid. Beowulf receives a fatal wound but he and Wiglaf succeed in killing the dragon. Beowulf dies and is given a great warrior's funeral.

2. The clip you will watch concerns the moment when Grendel is about to make his first attack on the hall Heorot.
 - a. Why is Grendel angered?
 - b. What will he do once he arrives at the hall?
3. Use the knowledge you have gained from reading the texts and documents in reference to the society of the time and the story.
 - a. What will the hall look like? What will be going on there?
 - b. Where will the hall be situated?
 - c. What will Grendel look like, in your opinion?
4. Watch the clip for the first time.
Did the film match your expectations?

First impressions



Beowulf

(see film clip on the Class Video DVD)

In more detail

Content

5. Watch the clip again.

- a. Which of the following activities are going on in Heorot in the clip?

story-telling	sleeping	fighting
ring-giving	drinking	celebrating victory
chanting	cooking	singing
eating	playing music	

- b. What is the hall made of and where is it situated?
 c. Where is King Hrothgar and what is he doing? Why, do you think?
 d. What can you understand about the village in which Heorot stands and the surrounding landscape?
 e. Where is Grendel's lair?

Montage

6. How is continuity achieved between the inside shots and the outside ones, and between the shots of the village and of the lair?

Shots

7. Different types of shot are used.

- a. Why is a high-angle shot used in the hall?
 b. Many shots are tracking shots. When are they used and to what effect?

Conclusions

8. Read the information about the film adapted from *Wikipedia* and answer the questions.

- a. Which actors and actresses names do you recognise?
 b. Who was the director?
 c. What process was used in the making of the film and how does the process work?
 d. What have critics liked and not liked about the film?



Beowulf is a 2007 American 'performance capture' fantasy film based on the Old English epic poem of the same name, directed by Robert Zemeckis. The cast includes Ray Winstone, Anthony Hopkins, Robin Wright Penn, Brendan Gleeson, John Malkovich, Crispin Glover, Alison Lohman, and Angelina Jolie.

The film was created through a motion capture process similar to the technique used in *The Polar Express*. The cast members of *Beowulf* were filmed on a motion capture stage. Actors on set wore seventy-eight body markers. The cameras recorded real time footage of the performances, the shots were reviewed and the director then used a virtual camera to choose camera angles from the footage which was edited together. Next, two teams of animators worked on the film, with one group working on replicating the facial performances, the other working on body movement. The animators worked very hard to replicate the human characters as closely as possible, but the character of Grendel, the monster, was almost totally reworked.

The film has been praised for its potent use of technology but criticised for its storyline which often differs from the original.