



BEOWULF
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

PAPER 1

Length: Five to seven pages.

Format: Double-spaced, 12-point serif font (Times, Garamond, Georgia, etc.)

Sources: Use only Klaeber (4th edition), Kiernan's *Electronic Beowulf*, and a good dictionary (not a glossary, but Bosworth-Toller or the *OE Dictionary*)

Aim: This paper is intended to bring together your response sheets. It requires you to read very closely. That means pay attention to the words, sounds, and syntactic patterns; to the precise characteristics of the images including their sources and the order in which they appear; and to the precise scope of any claim or suggestion made by the poet.

Topic: Choose ONE of the following:

1. Discuss two related words and their role in shaping your understanding of the first half of the poem. Define the words. Describe other uses of the words in other Old English texts. List a few translations from reputable translations. Discuss the differences/similarities of those translations. Finally, describe your own impressions.

or

2. Discuss a significant image in the first half of the poem. Define the image as precisely as possible. Describe its appearance in any other Old English, Old Norse, Old Saxon, Old High German, Latin, early Welsh, or Irish poems. (Also look for it in an index of medieval art.) Note differences/similarities to *Beowulf*. Describe your sense of the significance of the image, especially in relation to the first half of the poem.

or

3. Discuss a significant pattern in the words, images, events, characters, or settings of the first half of the poem. Define the pattern. Discuss any similar patterns in the literature or art of the early Middle Ages. Suggest the relevance of the pattern to your sense of the first half of the poem.