

Socratic Seminar: *Beowulf* and *Grendel*

Main Characters

Beowulf

The portrayal of Beowulf is one of the most important aspects of both the poem and the novel. How is Beowulf portrayed in the poem? What are some of the traits he exhibits? How is this different from the way he is portrayed in the novel? How is it similar? Does this change the way we see him? If so, how?

Grendel

The character Grendel is among the more ruthless monsters in literature. How is Grendel portrayed in the poem? Think about his reasons for attacking Heorot. How is he portrayed in the novel? How is this different? Does this affect the way we see him? If so, how? What emotions do the changes evoke?

Satellite Characters

The Shaper

While the poem is spoken by the Shaper, the novel has him as a significant character. What is his significance in the novel? What purpose does he serve for the people of Heorot and for Grendel? How does this contribute to the novel's idea that art is comprised of lies?

Hrothgar

Hrothgar, king of the Danes, plays an important part in both media. How is he portrayed in each? For Hrothgar, Heorot is a hall of sorrow. What are the reasons for sorrow in each one? Are they different? How does this affect our feelings about Hrothgar? Do we have more pity in one rather than in the other?

Argumentation

Primary Argument

Both the poem and the novel revolve around an argument regarding good and evil. What statement does the poem make regarding good and evil? What is the main argument of the novel? How do you know? Which medium creates the more effective argument? Why?

Rhetorical Appeals

In both media, the authors use ethos, pathos, and logos to create and solidify their arguments. How does *Beowulf* use ethos, pathos, and logos? How does *Grendel*? Which work uses these rhetorical appeals more effectively? Why?

Rhetorical Situation

Purpose

Each of these works of literature was written with a specific purpose in mind. Based on the events, what was the author's purpose in writing *Beowulf*? What is the purpose of *Grendel*? Was each author successful in his purpose? How so?

Audience

In addition to purpose, authors write with a specific audience in mind. Who is the intended audience of *Beowulf* and of *Grendel*? How do you know? What about each story suggests that this is true? Is each work successful in reaching the intended audience? How so?