

# BEOWULF

This book, based on the epic poem Beowulf, tells the story of Beowulf, a warrior who becomes famous by helping Hrothgar, King of the Danes. Beowulf kills first Grendel, a horrible monster that terrifies the Danes every night, and then Grendel's mother. Beowulf returns to his own country to become king. Late in life he decides to fight a dangerous dragon and...

**In this reader (a prose translation) you will find:**

- Background information about this poem
- Culture and society in the Middle Ages
- Glossary of difficult words
- Comprehension and grammar activities including B1 Preliminary style exercises
- Final test

**Tags**

Adventure Fantasy

Downloadable  
**Audio Files**

**Look at the inside front cover flap to find out how to download your free Audio files.**

STAGE 1	600 headwords	Elementary	A1	Movers
STAGE 2	800 headwords	Pre-Intermediate	A2	Key
<b>STAGE 3</b>	<b>1000 headwords</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>Preliminary</b>
STAGE 4	1800 headwords	Upper Intermediate	B2	First
STAGE 5	2500 headwords	Advanced	C1	Advanced
STAGE 6	Unabridged Texts	Proficiency	C2	Proficiency

Classic

[www.eligradereaders.com](http://www.eligradereaders.com)

 The pleasure of Reading

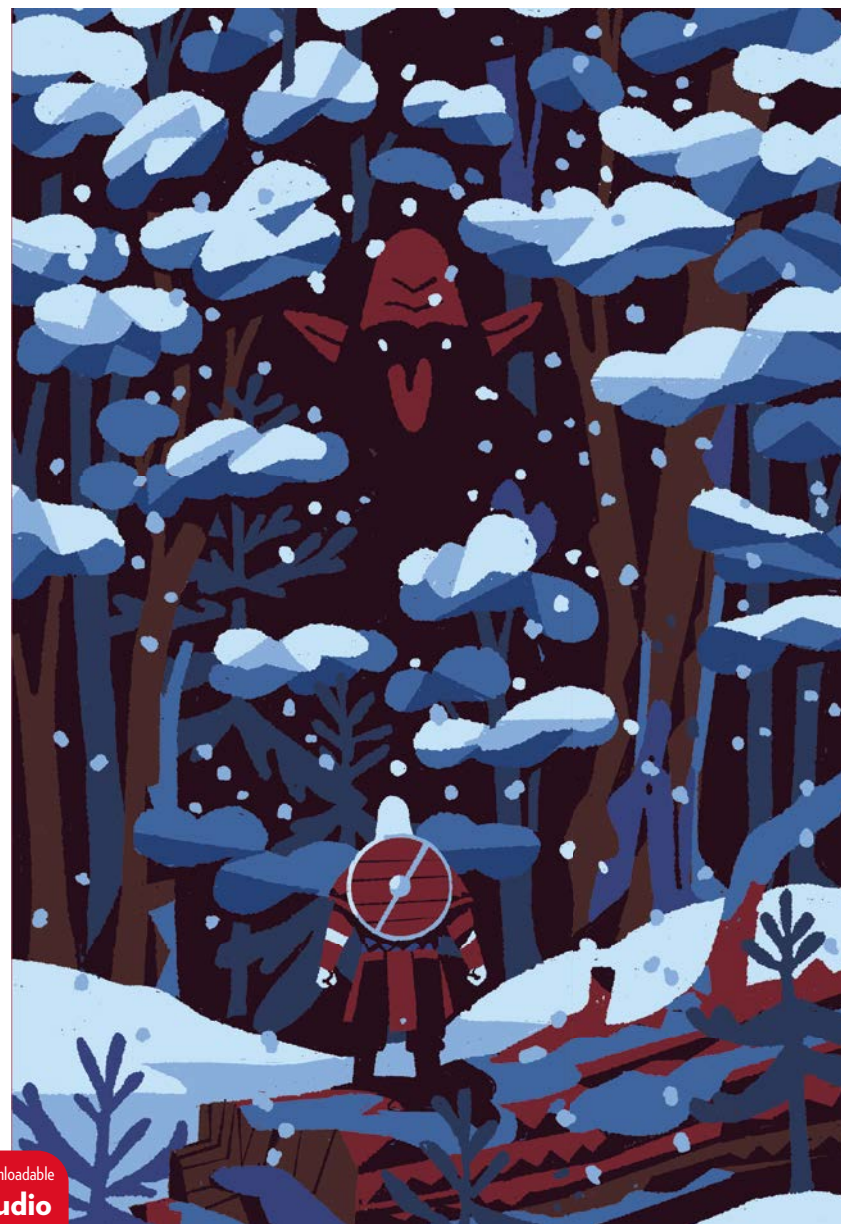
*Eli Readers is a beautifully illustrated series of timeless classics and specially-written stories for learners of English.*

ISBN 978-88-536-3243-2



9 788853 632432

# BEOWULF



Downloadable  
**Audio Files**

# Book brief

- 1** The story is based on the Old English epic poem *Beowulf*, one of the most important works of old English Literature.
- 2** It talks about events of the early 6<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3** Set in Denmark and Sweden, it tells the story of the brave warrior hero, Beowulf, and his battles with Grendel the monster, Grendel's evil mother and finally with a dragon.
- 4** Through the story, we learn about medieval values and the importance of heroic actions so that people will remember you after you die.
- 5** Main themes include courage, loyalty and generosity.

For Review Only

# Beowulf

*Retold and Activities by*  
**Claire Moore**

*Illustrated by*  
**Matteo Berton**

For Review Only

## Contents

6	Main Characters	
8	Before you Read	
10	Chapter 1	Terror in Heorot Hall
18	Activities	
20	Chapter 2	Brave Beowulf arrives
28	Activities	
30	Chapter 3	Beowulf confronts Grendel
38	Activities	
40	Chapter 4	A Celebratory Banquet
48	Activities	
50	Chapter 5	Grendel's Mother's Revenge
58	Activities	
60	Chapter 6	Beowulf confronts Grendel's mother
68	Activities	
70	Chapter 7	Beowulf leaves Denmark
78	Activities	
80	Chapter 8	The Dragon
88	Activities	
90	Chapter 9	Beowulf's End
100	Activities	
102	Focus on...	Beowulf
104	Focus on...	Medieval Denmark
106	Focus on...	Medieval Navigation
108	Focus on...	Daily Life in Medieval Times
110	Test yourself	
111	Syllabus	

*Main Characters*



beowulf

*A young, brave warrior from Geatland.*

*A monster  
that terrifies  
King Hrothgar  
and his people.*



grendel

*King of Denmark.*



king  
hrothgar

*She  
fights  
Beowulf  
after her  
son's  
death.*



grendel's  
mother

A Danish warrior  
who's jealous of  
Beowulf.



unferth



queen

wealhtheow

The King of  
Denmark's wife.



wiglaf

He helps Beowulf  
in his last fight.

Beowulf fights  
the dragon  
at the end  
of the story.



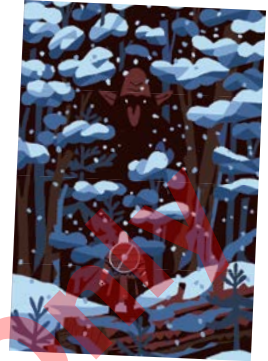
the dragon

## Before you Read

### Writing

- 1 Look at the picture on the front cover of this book and describe it.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



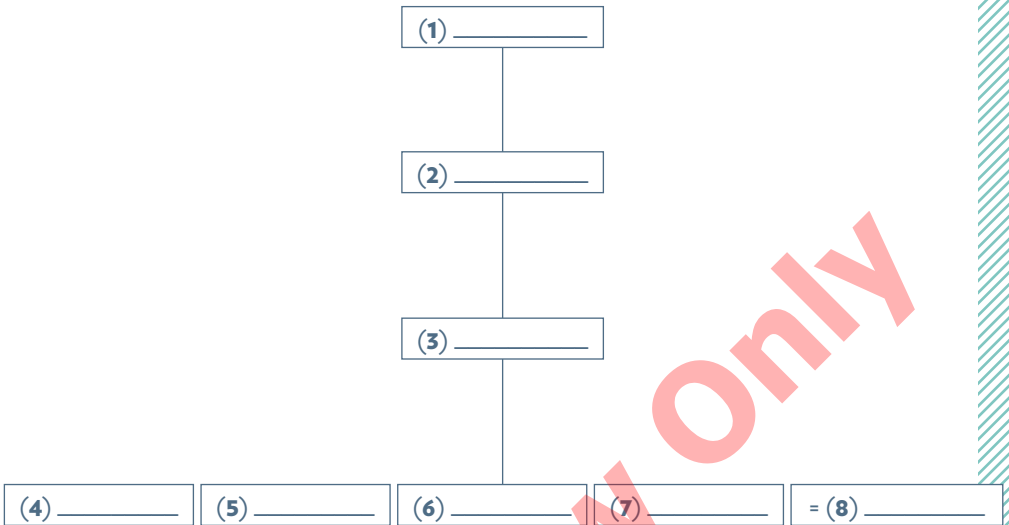
### Reading BI Preliminary

- 2 Read about the story of *Beowulf* below and choose the correct word for each space (A, B, C or D).

*Beowulf* is an Old English Anglo-Saxon epic poem (1) ..... tells the story of a young Geatish warrior who (2) ..... Hrothgar, the King of the Danes, whose people are terrified of a monster called Grendel. Along (3) ..... 14 of his strongest men, Beowulf bravely kills Grendel and later Grendel's mother, as a way of thanking Hrothgar (4) ..... helping his own father many years before. He (5) ..... to Hrothgar with the monster's head. He goes back to his (6) ..... home, Geatland, a hero and later becomes king of the Geats and is (7) ..... leader for 50 years. In his last battle, Beowulf kills a dragon which is attacking Geatland, but is (8) ..... in the battle and dies.

- |              |          |             |           |
|--------------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| 1 A who      | B which  | C where     | D whose   |
| 2 A helps    | B goes   | C looks     | D wants   |
| 3 A by       | B at     | C with      | D on      |
| 4 A to       | B for    | C by        | D in      |
| 5 A returned | B return | C returning | D returns |
| 6 A a        | B own    | C an        | D owns    |
| 7 A their    | B our    | C there     | D they're |
| 8 A lost     | B won    | C hurt      | D hurting |

- 3 Read the first two paragraphs of page 10 and complete the family tree with the Danish kings and their children.



## Speaking - Pair Work 21st Century Skills

- 4 A Look at the pictures of Grendel and the dragon on pages 6 and 7. Describe them and discuss the following questions with a partner.

- 4 B How do you think Beowulf felt during his battles with Grendel and the dragon? Write five adjectives to describe his feelings.

- 4 C How do you think life was different in Beowulf's times? Think about:

- a Houses and homes
- b Transport
- c Food and drink



# Terror in Heorot Hall

- ▶ 2 The stories about the brave kings of the Danes starts with the very first king, Shield Sheafson, who arrived alone in Denmark as a baby on a boat filled with gold and jewels. He was a good king and a courageous\* warrior\*. When he died, his people put his body in another boat and sent him back to sea with weapons\*, treasure and jewels. They pushed the boat out to sea and said goodbye to their great leader.

Shield Sheafson's son, Beow, then became king. He too was a wise\* and good king who ruled\* his land for a long time. When he died, the next king was his son Healfdene, who had three sons, Heorogar, Hrothgar and Halga, and a daughter Elan, who became Queen of Sweden when she married the Swedish king Onela.

It was Healfdene's second son Hrothgar, a great warrior and leader of men, who after his father died, became the next king. To show how powerful and strong he was, Hrothgar ordered his men to build a great mead-hall, a place from where he could rule but also a place of celebration. Heorot Hall was built quickly and then every night there were banquets\*. Hrothgar gave jewels and gold to his people, who came to Heorot Hall to eat and drink, sing and listen to stories of heroes and battles in far away places.

A large building with just one room, it was usually the great hall of the king.

**courageous** very brave  
**warrior** a soldier  
**weapon** something used to kill or hurt people

**wise** good at judging people and having a lot of knowledge  
**rule** be the leader of a group of people  
**banquet** big meal for many people

## Beowulf

The happiness and celebration, however, only lasted for a short time because of an evil\* monster called Grendel. Living alone on the cold, dark hills, Grendel was an angry and envious\* monster who hated the music, singing and good fun coming from Heorot Hall.

So one night, Grendel left his dark home and decided to go to Heorot Hall. When he got there, he found everyone sleeping after a long evening of feasting\*, drinking and singing. He was so angry to find these sleeping men, who knew nothing about hardship\* or being sad, that he quickly took thirty men and ran home to his miserable lair\*. Here he too feasted...on the thirty men, who he later took back to Heorot Hall for all to see.

The next morning, as people woke from their night's sleep, they screamed in horror at the sight of their friends' dead bodies. King Hrothgar too was filled with horror and shocked to find his trusted men dead, and he was scared of what was to come.

The very next night, Grendel returned to Heorot Hall and killed more men. Once a place of laughter and happiness, Heorot Hall suddenly became a place of horror and fear. Hrothgar's people were too scared to sleep in Heorot Hall anymore, so they went to sleep in other houses and buildings and Heorot Hall was closed at night. But even here Hrothgar's people weren't safe. The evil, strong, enormous Grendel came out of the dark night and killed whoever he found in his way, young or old, man or woman. *He* was now the real ruler of Heorot Hall.

**evil** very bad  
**envious** feeling jealous of something others have  
**feasting** eating

**hardship** difficulty  
**lair** a place where a wild animal lives

## Chapter One

The monster Grendel kills many of the King's subjects.

Grendel continued to terrify everyone for twelve very long years, as he wickedly\* murdered Hrothgar's people with his hate and evil. Grendel didn't want to make peace or come to any kind of agreement with King Hrothgar, and soon everyone in the middle-earth\* heard about stories of Grendel's horror.

King Hrothgar was sad and heartbroken at the terror Grendel was bringing to his people. He often met with his council\* of men to discuss what to do about Grendel. They tried to find a way to kill Grendel and stop his horror and murder, but nobody ever succeeded.

Bards were usually singers and musicians. Some of them were also poets. They usually wrote poems to show their respect of brave kings and warriors in medieval times.

So, this was the story that a bard\* told in another king's mead-hall in Geatland. King Hygelac of the Geats and his subjects\* lived over the sea from Denmark and they listened in silence to the horror Grendel was bringing to King Hrothgar's people. Then, suddenly, a man called Beowulf shouted 'I'll kill Grendel!' Everyone in the mead-hall clapped and cheered\* at Beowulf, who was a brave and strong man. King Hygelac was happy that Beowulf, his nephew, wanted to help King Hrothgar.

King Hygelac ordered a boat for Beowulf and the fourteen men he chose to go with him to Denmark. The brave men were ready to kill Grendel. They said goodbye to their families and got onto the boat, which was full of their battle weapons.

The warriors sailed across the sea in their boat to Denmark. Then on the second day, they saw the coast of Denmark and went towards

**wickedly** that's wrong and will hurt others  
**middle-earth** old English word for the world of humans  
**council** (here) a group of men who gave him advice

**bard** a poet  
**subjects** the people he's king of  
**cheer** shout to encourage someone or show you're happy



## Chapter One

some cliffs. Here they got out of the boat and walked up the shore. They all thanked God for their safe journey.

From the high cliffs, a Danish soldier saw the boat arrive on the shore. He wondered who these fifteen warriors were, so he left the cliffs and took his horse to the beach where he met them.

‘Who are you? Why are you here?’ he shouted to them. Beowulf answered ‘We come from Geatland. We’re King Hygelac’s men and we’re here to help King Hrothgar, Healfdene’s son. I’m Beowulf. My father, Ecgtheow, is famous across the middle-earth. We heard about the horror of the monster’s terror over your land. We’ll kill this monster, Grendel!’

‘You’re a brave man,’ answered the soldier, ‘I see you have good intentions and I’ll take you to my king. My men will guard\* your ship until those who survive\* return to the great land of the Geats.’

So Beowulf and his men followed the Danish soldier, leaving behind their anchored\* ship on the Danish shore. As they marched\* over the hills, the gold and silver of their battle dress shone brightly in the sunlight. Then they saw Heorot Hall, famous across all the middle-earth. They were amazed at how big it was and at just how beautiful it was too.

The Danish soldier left Beowulf and his men at Heorot Hall. As he started his journey back to the cliffs, he said ‘I must go now back to

**guard** look after a place or person  
**survive** stay alive

**anchored** with something heavy tied to the boat to stop it moving  
**march** how soldiers walk together

## Beowulf

my watch over the seas. But I wish you luck in your battle with this evil monster.’

In the stone street outside Heorot Hall, Beowulf and his men put down their shields\* along the wall. Then they sat down on a bench\* to rest.

As they waited outside Heorot Hall, one of King Hrothgar’s servants\* asked the Geats ‘Who are you? Why are you here? Where did you get your magnificent\* shields and weapons?’

Beowulf answered, ‘We’re King Hygelac’s men. My name’s Beowulf. I want to speak to your king, Hrothgar, son of Healfdene.’

Then Wulfgar, the brave and wise Wendel chief\* , said ‘I’ll tell King Hrothgar, king of the Danes, that you’re here and want to speak to him. I’ll tell him about your journey here and then bring you his answer.’

Wulfgar went quickly to speak to King Hrothgar. He found the Danish king, white-haired and old, with his warriors inside Heorot Hall. He stood in front of the king and said, ‘Some men are here. They’re Geats from King Hygelac’s land across the sea. Their leader is called Beowulf and he wants to speak to you. Please listen to them, my great king, Hrothgar. They’re brave warriors with a good leader.’

After some time, King Hrothgar smiled and finally spoke, ‘Yes, I know Beowulf! I knew his father, Ecgtheow, too. He was married to Hrethel

**shields** used by soldiers to protect themselves  
**bench** a long seat for lots of people

**servant** a person who looks after people in a house, cleaning and cooking  
**magnificent** very big and beautiful  
**chief** leader


## Chapter One

the Geat's daughter. Beowulf is their son. I knew him when he was a little boy. Beowulf is a great warrior, strong and brave. Beowulf is here to help us fight the monstrous Grendel. Thank God! Quickly, bring Beowulf to me now! He and his men are welcome here in Denmark!

So Wulfgar went to the door of Heorot Hall and shouted to Beowulf and his men, 'Beowulf, my King sends you a message. He knows who you are and welcomes you to his land. Now go and meet King Hrothgar!'

Beowulf and some of his men stood up; the others stayed to watch over their weapons. Then they followed Wulfgar into Heorot Hall and standing in front of King Hrothgar, Beowulf said, 'King Hrothgar! We're King Hygelac's men. I'm Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow, and I'm famous for being brave and strong in war. I heard stories of Grendel's terror in my homeland and how this magnificent hall is empty at night. I'm here to help you. My people have seen me return from battle covered in my enemy's blood. I've killed monsters and beasts\* at night. I'll kill Grendel with my bare\* hands for I hear that this terrible monster doesn't use weapons. So I'll leave behind my sword\*, my armour\* and my shield. If I win, I'll be even more famous and bring honour\* to King Hygelac too. If the evil Grendel wins the fight, for sure he'll kill all my men right here in Heorot Hall, as he did to your other good men, and he'll take away my bloody body and feast on it in his lair. If this is the result, please King Hrothgar, I ask you to send my armour to King Hygelac.'

**beast** wild animal  
**bare hands** (here) only with his hands, no weapons


**sword**   
**armour** made of metal, it protects a soldier in battle  
**honour** respect

## Beowulf

After listening carefully to Beowulf, King Hrothgar finally spoke, ‘My dear friend Beowulf, I’m honoured that you’ve come to help us in this difficult time. I remember your brave father well.’

King Hrothgar continued, ‘When he killed Heatholaf of the Wylfings, he started a great feud\*. He couldn’t stay in his homeland, he wasn’t safe there. So he came to Denmark for help. This was when we were both young and I became king of this magnificent land when my dear elder brother, Heorogar, died suddenly. To stop the feud, I sent jewels and gold across the sea to the Wylfings and your father was saved.’

King Hrothgar looked\* sad and continued, ‘And now this monster Grendel is bringing horror to my land. Twelve years of death and terror! The people in Heorot Hall, my great warriors are all victims\* of his terror. So many times, I’ve seen my brave warriors try to kill Grendel here in Heorot Hall, only to find them the next morning dead and bloodied. No one is strong enough to kill Grendel but you, my great Beowulf! Thank you for coming... but now, I see you’re tired after your long journey over the sea to Denmark. Come with your men and dine\* with us.’

Then King Hrothgar stood up and led Beowulf into the banquet. Beowulf and his men were tired and hungry. They were happy to sit at King Hrothgar’s table and talk of how they’d kill Grendel and rescue the Danes from his terror. 

**feud** a battle  
**look** seem

**victim** (here) killed by the monster  
**dine** have dinner

## Comprehension

1 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 King Healfdene had five children. ....
- 2 King Hrothgar didn't want to build Heorot Hall. ....
- 3 Grendel killed thirteen men on his first visit to Heorot Hall. ....
- 4 None of King Hrothgar's men succeeded in killing Grendel. ....
- 5 Beowulf arrived by boat in Denmark. ....
- 6 The Danes knew why he was there. ....
- 7 King Hrothgar didn't know who Beowulf was. ....
- 8 Ecgtheow was Beowulf's son. ....
- 9 King Hrothgar stopped a feud many years ago. ....
- 10 King Hrothgar invited Beowulf to dine in Heorot Hall. ....

## Writing

2 Write a short paragraph describing Beowulf. Answer the following questions:

- where's he from?
- who was his father?
- what do you imagine he looks like?
- describe Beowulf's character and strong points.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Vocabulary

### 3 Match the correct definition to each word.

- |                                    |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> jewels  | a a big meal                        |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> wise    | b feeling of shock or fear          |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> banquet | c not frightened                    |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> battle  | d a weapon with a long, sharp point |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> horror  | e expensive, coloured stones        |
| 6 <input type="checkbox"/> brave   | f an area of high land              |
| 7 <input type="checkbox"/> cliffs  | g sensible                          |
| 8 <input type="checkbox"/> sword   | h a fight between two groups        |

### Pre-Reading Activity • Chapter Two

## Listening B1 Preliminary

### ▶ 3 4 Choose the correct answer, A, B or C.

- Beowulf and King Hrothgar  
A  shared a table.  
B  left Beowulf's men outside.  
C  sat in a corner of the hall.
- At the dinner,  
A  King Hrothgar's men were afraid of Beowulf.  
B  Grendel arrived and everyone was terrified.  
C  there was singing.
- Unferth  
A  was sitting opposite King Hrothgar.  
B  didn't like Beowulf.  
C  thought the Geats were great men.
- Unferth asks Beowulf  
A  if he can swim.  
B  if he thinks it's stupid to swim in the sea.  
C  if he wanted to show Breca that he was a stronger swimmer.
- Unferth heard that  
A  Beowulf swam in the sea for seven nights.  
B  the sea was calm.  
C  Beowulf won against Breca.
- Unferth says that  
A  Beowulf will manage to kill Grendel.  
B  Beowulf will be another of Grendel's victims.  
C  everyone in the hall wants to kill Beowulf.