



Introduction

The objective of this material is to give a succinct view of the historical development of the English language, which can be seen in selected literary texts, starting from the very beginning up to present day use in England and in the United States.

At the beginning of each lesson there will be a brief presentation of the historical and social background of the time, to enable the student to contextualize the text so he may understand how history influences literature and how literature is a reflection of the period in which it was written.

Discussion questions will be presented at the

end of each lesson so that the student is stimulated to read the selected texts carefully and critically, to perceive beyond the simple meaning of isolated words, and to study how the English language is used by a few of the greatest authors using the English language.

This material is intended for students who have a considerable knowledge of English grammar and a good vocabulary in order to understand the meaning of what is written here. Nevertheless, further study will still be necessary so that the student might elicit greater advantage from this material.

The Origins of English Language (up to the year 1066)

Historical Background

A relatively primitive society lacking organization and literary culture known as the Celts and Britons populated the British Isles until A.D. 43 when the Romans colonized Britain.

Britain was a part of the Roman Empire for approximately four hundred years, during this period the Romans and Britons bonded and the structure of society was established. With the downfall of the Roman Empire in the 5th Century, the Romans fled Britain, and those inhabitants left behind became engrossed in clashes with neighboring peoples. In time whatever remained of the Roman domain was conquered by Germanic Anglo Saxon invaders coming from the Northern part of Europe who established themselves in the territory which is now England. For two hundred years these invaders occupied themselves in defending their own kingdoms against European invaders. The history of England from about 600 to 850 A.D. is one of the rise and fall of small Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and their unsuccessful attempts to unify England.

The Anglo-Saxons conceived a social order which was beyond the individual and due to a predominant state of fear of aggression, it was the warrior who held a dominant position in their society. Huge banquets were common to Anglo-Saxon life during which legends describing the feats of celebrated Germanic heroes of the

past were told. An entertainer told the story in a rhythmic kind of chant which was sometimes accompanied by a harp, but usually, there was little decoration and the story was a straightforward narrative verse on the subject of a great warrior and his achievements.

The Anglo-Saxon king was converted to Christianity by a Catholic mission from Rome in the year A.D. 597. Yet there still is evidence of Anglo-Saxon paganism to be found in the English language, for example, in the names of the days of the week:

Monday	- from the Anglo-Saxon <i>monandaeg</i> . For them the second day was sacred to the goddess of the moon
Tuesday	- named for the Norse god of war, Tiu, or Tyr
Wednesday	- named to honor Odin, or Woden, chief god in Norse mythology
Thursday	- named for Thor, Norse god of thunder
Friday	- Germanic peoples held the day sacred to the Norse goddess of love, Freya
Saturday	- named in honor of the Roman god Saturn
Sunday	- derived from the Latin <i>dies solis</i> , "sun's day," the name of a pagan Roman holiday

Finally, after incessantly fighting hordes of European invaders, the Anglo-Saxons were subdued by the Normans from Northern France in 1066, which brought an end to the Anglo-Saxon history of England.

The Cultural influences and the development of the language

The first inhabitants of Britain, the Celts spoke a variation of the Germanic language and when they were forced into the highlands known today as Scotland, Wales and Ireland, their language was taken with them and is still spoken today by a small part of the population in that region.

Oddly enough the four hundred years of Roman occupation, did not bring many Latin words into the English language. The Latin influence was to be seen much later.

The various invaders from different regions of Europe who settled in different regions of Britain greatly influenced the development of the language. The Angles took the East ("Angleland" = "England") and the Saxons the South. These local invasions are the main reason for so many different dialects and accents in relatively small a country.

Christianity contributed to the language by bringing Latin words concerning the Church. Roman Christianity also brought a general cultural progress by introducing words such as '*school*', '*master*' and '*grammar*'. In addition, Church schools widened the spiritual and intellectual outlook of the Anglo-Saxons. The Anglo-Saxons not only learned about the Scriptures but also about the classical writings of Virgil and of the ancient Greeks. This cultural advance helped coin Anglo-Saxon words to express new ideas.

In the North, Scandinavian words were adopted, e.g. '*law*', '*egg*' and '*window*', '*they*', '*their*' and '*them*'. The forms of speech of invaders were continually being mixed into the language.

Generally though, the language was simple, and characterized by many changes in words and inflections to

show case, tense, gender, number and person. There were several declensions of nouns and adjectives agreed with nouns. Verbs were highly inflected e.g. 'sing, sang, sung'. Fewer than 25% of modern words are derived from Old English as it is called, but they are the most frequently used common nouns, verbs, pronouns, connectives and articles.

An example of Old English of A.D. 900 can be seen in *The Voyage of Ohthere*:

Ohthere sæde his hlaforde, Ælfrede cyninge, þæt he ealra
Nordmonna norþmest bude.

Which is:

Othere said to his lord, King Alfred, that he lived
northernmost of all the Northmen (or Norwegians).

Unfortunately only one Heroic Epic in old English has survived times - 'Beowulf' - written around the A.D. 800 its author is unknown.

Beowulf is an epic narrative poem which was usually chanted to the assembled warriors. It has great influence of Northern European legend. The theme is heroic in which Beowulf, the hero, kills the evil monster Grendel who is harassing the Danish king. Later Beowulf himself becomes king and rescues his kingdom from a fire breathing dragon. The great theme of struggle between Good and Evil forces is to be seen for the first time in English literature. It contains a union of paganism, fatalism and Christian morality.

Without verses or rhyme the lines of the poem have a pause for flexibility so that the chanter may achieve a musical effect. The decoration is obtained using alliteration, which remains a popular device even today, together with metaphorical compound words. The author possessed a keen sense for drama, for music and an ability to produce word images. In the following extract, accompanied by a translation into Modern English, Beowulf slays Grendel's mother.

Beowulf

LINE	Old English	Modern English
1555	rodera rædend, hit on rylt gesced	The Lord of Heaven allowed his cause;
1556	ýdelice, sylþdan he eft astod.	and easily rose the earl erect.
1557	Geseah ða on searwum sigeeadiġ bil,	'MID the battle-gear saw he a blade triumphant,
1558	eald sweord eotenisc, eġum þyltig,	old-sword of Eotens, with edge of proof,
1559	wigena weordmýnd; þæt wæs/ wæpna cyst,	warriors' heirloom, weapon unmatched,
1560	buton hit wæs mare ðonne ænig mon oder	-- save only 'twas more than other men
1561	to beadulace ætþeran meahte,	to bandy-of-battle could bear at all --
1562	god ond geatolic, gíganta geweorc.	as the giants had wrought it, ready and keen.
1563	He gefeng þa fetelhilt, freca Scýldinga	Seized then its chain-hilt the Scyldings' chieftain,
1564	hreoþ ond heorogrim hringmæl gebræġð,	bold and battle-grim, brandished the sword,
1565	aldres orwena, ýrringa sloh,	reckless of life, and so wrathfully smote
1566	þæt hire wið halse heard grapode,	that it gripped her neck and grasped her hard,
1567	banhringas bræt. Wil eal durhwod	her bone-rings breaking: the blade pierced through
1568	fæġne flæschoman; heo on flet geġrong.	that fated-one's flesh: to floor she sank.
1569	Sweord wæs swatig, seġg weorce gefeh.	Bloody the blade: he was blithe of his deed.
1570	Lixte se leoma, leoht inne stod,	Then blazed forth light. 'Twas bright within
1571	efne swa of hefene hadre scined	as when from the sky there shines unclouded
1572	rodores candel. He æfter recede wlat;	heaven's candle. The hall he scanned.
1573	hwearf þa he wealle, wæpen hafenade	By the wall then went he; his weapon raised
1574	heard be hiltum Higelaces deġn,	high by its hilts the Hygelac-thane,
1575	ýrre ond anræð. Næs seo eġ fracod	angry and eager. That edge was not useless
1576	hilderince, ac he hraþe wolde	to the warrior now. He wished with speed
1577	Grendle forġýldan gudræsa fela	Grendel to guerdon for grim raids many,
1578	ðara þe he ġeworhte to Westðenum	for the war he waged on Western-Danes
1579	oftor micle ðonne on ænne sið,	oftener far than an only time,
1580	þonne he Hrodġares heordġeneatas	when of Hrothgar's hearth-companions
1581	sloh on sweofote, slæpende fræt	he slew in slumber, in sleep devoured,
1582	folces Denigea fyftýne men	fifteen men of the folk of Danes,
1583	ond oder swýlc ut offerede,	and as many others outward bore,
1584	ladlicu lac. He him þæs lean forġeald,	his horrible prey. Well paid for that

DISCUSSION:

1. Describe some of the characteristics of Beowulf?
2. Point out examples of pagan and Christian elements being blended together.
3. Show examples of alliteration, the metaphorical compound nouns, dramatic phrases and images in the epic.
4. How does the epic "Beowulf" reflect the society and times in which it was written?

BEOWULF

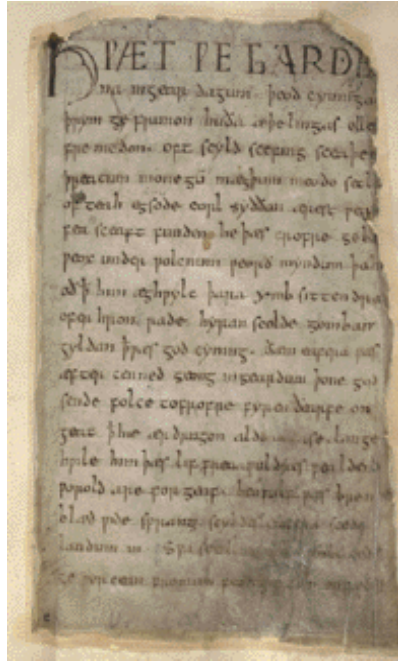
(notes on the epic)

Although the manuscript which contains the epic of Beowulf was written about 1000 A.D., the poem itself was known and had been elaborated upon for centuries by minstrels who recited the heroic exploits of the son of Ecgtheow and nephew of Hygelac, King of the Geats, whose kingdom was what is now Southern Sweden.

In his boyhood Beowulf gave evidence of the great feats of strength and courage which in manhood made him the deliverer of Hrothgar, King of Denmark, from the monster, Grendel, and later in his own kingdom from the fiery dragon which dealt Beowulf a mortal blow. Beowulf's first renown followed his conquest of many sea-monsters while he swam for seven days and nights before he came to the country of the Finns. Helping to defend the land of the Hetware, he killed many of the enemy and again showed his prowess as a swimmer by bringing to his ship the armor of thirty of his slain pursuers. Offered the crown of his native land, Beowulf, just entering manhood, refused it in favor of Heardred, the young son of the queen. Instead, he acted as guardian and counselor until the boy-king grew old enough to rule alone.

For twelve years, Hrothgar, King of Denmark, suffered while his kingdom was being ravaged by a devouring monster, named Grendel. This Grendel bore a charmed life against all weapons forged by man. He lived in the wastelands and nightly prowled out to visit the hall of Hrothgar, carrying off and slaughtering many of the guests.

Beowulf, hearing from mariners of Grendel's murderous visits, sailed from Geatland with fourteen stalwart companions to render Hrothgar the help of his great strength. Landing on the Danish coast, Beowulf was challenged as a spy. He persuaded the coastguards to let him pass, and he was received and feasted by King Hrothgar. When the king and his court retired for the night, Beowulf and his companions were left alone in the hall. All but Beowulf fell asleep. Grendel entered. With a stroke he killed one of Beowulf's sleeping men, but Beowulf, unarmed, wrestled with the monster and by dint of his great strength managed to tear Grendel's arm out at the shoulder. Grendel, mortally wounded, retreated, leaving a bloody trail from the hall to his lair.



All fear of another attack by Grendel allayed. the Danes returned to the hall, and Beowulf and his companions were sheltered elsewhere. Grendel's mother came to avenge the fatal injury to her monster son and carried off a Danish nobleman and Grendel's torn-off paw. Following the blood trail, Beowulf went forth to dispatch the mother. Armed with his sword, Hrunting, he came to the water's edge. He plunged in and swam to a chamber under the sea. There he fought with Grendel's mother, killing her with an old sword he found in the sea cavern. Nearby was Grendel's body. Beowulf cut off its head and brought it back as a trophy to King Hrothgar. Great was the rejoicing in the hall and greater was

Beowulf's welcome when he returned to Geatland, where he was given great estates and many high honors.

Shortly afterward, Heardred, the boy-king, was killed in the war with the Swedes. Beowulf succeeded him to the throne.

For fifty years Beowulf ruled his people in peace and serenity. Then suddenly a dragon, furious at having his treasure stolen from his hoard in a burial mound, began to ravage Beowulf's kingdom. Like Grendel, this monster left its den at night on its errand of murder and pillage.

Beowulf, now an aged monarch, resolved to do battle, unaided, with the dragon. He approached the entrance to its den, whence boiling steam issued forth. Undaunted, Beowulf strode forward shouting his defiance. The dragon came out, sputtering flames from its mouth. The monster rushed upon Beowulf with all its fury and almost crushed him in its first charge. So fearful grew the struggle that all but one of Beowulf's men deserted and fled for their lives. Wiglaf remained to help his aged monarch. Another rush of the dragon shattered Beowulf's sword and the monster's fangs sunk into Beowulf's neck. Wiglaf, rushing into the struggle, helped the dying Beowulf to kill the dragon.

Before his death, Beowulf named Wiglaf his successor to the throne of Geatland and ordered that his own ashes be placed in a memorial shrine at the top of a high cliff commanding the sea. Beowulf's body was burned on a vast funeral pyre, while twelve Geats rode around the mound singing their sorrow and their praise for the good and great man, Beowulf.

Beowulf

Retold by Gordon Walsh

The soldiers are singing in the king's hall.
They are eating and drinking in the big room.
The king is there.
His soldiers are with him.
5 The hall is happy.
But over the fields, Grendel waits.
The monster is grim.
He hears the noise, but he is alone.
The monster is waiting for the dark night.
10 He will go to the hall.

Now it is night.
The soldiers are sleeping.
Now it is quiet, and Grendel can go.
15 Grimly, he moves out of his den.
He walks alone over the fields.
He comes to the hall.
The door stands open, and Grendel moves into the quiet room.
20 The men do not see him.
Angry and grim, he stands alone.
He looks at the soldiers.
"Why can they be happy?", the monster asks.
"I live alone."
25 I can't sing with happy men.
The soldiers must die!"
Some men are sleeping near the door.
Grendel goes to the first man.
He takes the soldier in his strong arms, and kills him
30 quickly.
His sleep will be long.
The monster is gloating.
A second dies, and a third, and a fourth.
The monster kills thirty men in his wicked work without
35 a sound.
And grim Grendel stands and gloats.
Now those men will not drink or sing.
Quickly he goes to his dark den.
The soldiers' sleep is deep and quiet, but the blood of
40 their friends covers the walls.
And arms and heads, and legs and bodies, cover the floor.
The hall is red.

45 Morning comes.
A soldier wakes.
Slowly, he sees the monster's work.
His shouts and cries wake his friends.
The king comes.
50 Sadly, he asks "Which wicked thing did this? Did a monster come to Heorot?"
A warrior speaks.
"There is a monster in the dark woods. He is wicked and strong. His name is Grendel. Now he knows Heorot, and

55 he will return."
That day, the king and his warriors clean the hall.
They burn the bodies on a big fire.
Night comes, and the tired men sleep in the hall.
And Grendel returns.
60 The night is his time.
He takes some men, and he drinks down their warm blood.
He leaves quietly.
Morning comes, and the soldiers see their dead friends.
65 The fires burn in their sad work For twelve years, grim Grendel visits Heorot.
The hall is dark.
The warriors sleep in their little homes, and the nights are quiet in the king's hall.

70 One day, a warrior is watching the summer sea.
A boat is coming.
Fifteen warriors with weapons and armor jump to the land.
The soldier meets them with his sword in his hand.
75 "Stop!" he tells them.
"Why are you wearing armor here? Do you want to fight us?"
"We don't want to fight," a warrior answers.
He is young and strong.
80 "My name is Beowulf.
We're Geats, and we're friends.
We're carrying weapons because we want to help you.
We want to fight your wicked monster."
The warrior laughs.
85 "I'll take you to the king," he tells the Geats, "but Grendel is strong and your fight will be hard. He's already killed hundreds of men in the dark nights."
They follow the soldier.
In Heorot hall, the warriors are working with their
90 weapons and armor.
Hrothgar their king stops and looks.
Some men are coming, but he does not know them.
"My name is Beowulf," a big man says.
"My uncle is Hygelac, the king of the Geats."
95 "Sit down, my friend," old Hrothgar answers.
"I know your uncle. But why are you here?"
"You helped my father," Beowulf tells him.
"Men tried to kill him, but you stood with him. Now I'll help you. Can we stay in this hall and fight your
100 monster?"
"You are young and strong," the king tells him.
"Yes, you can stay; but Grendel will give you a hard fight."
So Beowulf's soldiers sit at the tables.

105 Night comes.
The king and his men go to their homes, and the Geats

wait for Grendel.
 "Take off your swords," Beowulf says.
 "Grendel doesn't have a sword, so we'll fight with our
 110 hands."
 The men sleep.
 Beowulf waits.

Now Grendel comes.
 He breaks the door with his big arms.
 115 He sees the warriors, and his face is grim.
 For twelve years he has visited Heorot; now men have
 returned.
 The warriors must die! He takes the first and crushes his
 body.
 120 He pulls off the arms, and drinks the blood.
 Grendel is gloating.
 He drops the body and comes to Beowulf.
 His bloody hands touch the warrior.
 But Beowulf moves.
 125 He jumps to his feet, and he takes the creature in his
 strong arms.
 He tries to crush that wicked creature, but Grendel is
 strong.
 He fights hard.
 130 A table breaks.
 Grendel and Beowulf drop to the floor.
 The creature holds Beowulf's head.
 His fingers find the warrior's eyes.
 The noise of the fight wakes the soldiers, and they move
 135 to Beowulf.
 "Stop!" he tells them.
 "I'm going to kill this creature alone."
 Suddenly he moves.
 He pushes hard with his strong body.
 140 He jumps to his feet.
 The monster waits.
 Beowulf turns.
 His arms crush the creature again.
 Grendel is tired.
 145 He cannot fight.
 The Geat will kill him, Grendel knows.
 He tries to run.
 But Beowulf is holding his big arm.
 The monster moves, and the arm breaks.
 150 With a loud cry, Grendel runs from the grim warriors.
 He leaves his arm in Beowulf's hands.
 Black blood drops to the floor.
 The warriors shout.
 Quickly, the king comes with his men.
 155 Hrothgar is happy.
 Beowulf gives him Grendel's arm.
 "Now you'll remember Beowulf and Grendel," he tells
 the king.
 "Yes, I'll remember," Hrothgar answers.
 160 He puts the arm on the wall of Heorot.
 "Sleep now, my friend. Your fight was hard, and you're
 very tired."
 They drink the blood from the warrior's body.

Beowulf sleeps, and Hrothgar's men watch the hall.

165 Morning comes.
 The warrior wakes and goes outside.
 There is black blood from Grendel's body over the fields.
 "We'll follow the monster," a soldier says.
 "The blood shows us the way to his den. We'll find it,
 170 and kill him."
 They go over the fields, but they do not find Grendel's
 den in the dark woods.
 The blood takes them to a black lake.
 The water is deep, and evil air comes from it to the land.
 175 "This place is evil," a soldier says.
 "We can't stay here." They watch the water, but they do
 not see Grendel.
 They leave the lake.
 Night comes, and the soldiers stay in the king's hall.
 180 Grendel has gone, and they drink and sing.
 But out in the lake a creature is moving.
 Big and black, it comes from the water.
 The moon lights its evil face.
 Grimly, it comes over the fields to Heorot hall.
 185 It is Grendel's mother! Men killed her son; now she will
 kill them.
 She walks to the hall and hears the noise.
 The men can sing now - but they will die in the night.
 Beowulf and Hrothgar leave the hall.
 190 The trees are dark, and the men do not see the angry
 creature.
 The noise stops.
 The soldiers sleep.

Suddenly, the monster breaks the door.
 195 She goes into the hall.
 Sadly, she sees her son's arm in the light of the moon.
 She shouts, and the noise wakes the warriors.
 They grab their swords, but the monster moves very
 quickly.
 200 She grabs the arm and runs to the door.
 An old soldier is sleeping there.
 She stops, and takes the warrior too.
 She leaves with his body under her arm, and runs into the
 night.
 205 The warriors follow.
 They look in the woods and they go to the lake, but they
 cannot find their old friend.
 They sadly return and tell their king.

It is morning, and Beowulf comes to the king.
 210 Sad and grim, Hrothgar waits.
 Beowulf stops.
 "What is it?" he asks.
 He listens quietly.
 "I'll find your friend," he tells the king.
 215 He takes some soldiers.
 They go to the lake, and there they stop.
 They see the head of the old warrior beside the water, but
 the body has gone.

The water is red with the warrior's blood.
 220 "The monster lives at the bottom of the lake," a soldier
 says.
 "The body will be there."
 The brave Weohstan is Beowulf's friend.
 He goes to the lake.
 225 It is an evil place.
 Wicked creatures are swimming in the water.
 "I want to kill this monster," he says.
 But Beowulf stops him.
 "No," he says.
 230 "I killed her son, so she came to Heorot. Wait here,
 Weohstan. I must kill the monster's mother."
 He goes to the water.
 Unferth calls to him.
 He is Hrothgar's man.
 235 "You can take this sword. Its name is Hrunting, and it's
 very old. It has taken the blood of brave warriors. It will
 help you."
 So Beowulf gives his sword to Weohstan.
 With Hrunting in his hand, he goes into the lake.
 240 He swims down in the black water, and the dark
 creatures swim beside him.
 Grendel's mother waits at the bottom.
 The warrior cannot fight in the water.
 He swims, and he finds the monster's den.
 245 It is dry, with a fire.
 He leaves the water and the monster follows.
 He swings his sword at the creature's head, and hits it
 hard.
 But Hrunting does not wound. Angry, he drops it.
 250 The creature grabs him and tries to crush him.
 He drops to the ground, and she swings her knife at
 Beowulf's body.
 But his armor is strong.
 The knife cannot wound him.
 255 He jumps to his feet.
 Suddenly, he sees a sword on the wall.
 It is big and heavy, and very old.
 He grabs it quickly and swings at the creature.
 This weapon is strong.
 260 It wounds her badly.
 She shouts, and stops; and slowly she dies.
 Her black blood covers the floor.
 Now Beowulf stands in her den, and the fire shows him
 Grendel's body.
 265 The dark face looks up from the floor.
 The strong sword cuts off that head, wicked and evil.
 He will take it to Hrothgar.
 The lake is black with the monster's blood.
 The warriors are waiting, and they watch it sadly.
 270 "The monster's killed him," Hrothgar says.
 He leaves the lake.
 His men go with him, but Beowulf's warriors watch and
 wait.
 Down in the den, Beowulf finds the creature's treasure.
 275 But he cannot carry it.
 He is tired, so he takes the sword and the head and

returns to the water.
 He swims to his warriors.
 They shout happily and four men help him to carry
 280 Grendel's head, and two take the heavy sword.
 They come to Heorot.
 The king and his men are talking sadly about the warrior.
 And brave Beowulf comes into the hall.
 The warriors run to him.
 285 They laugh and shout.
 Beowulf gives the sword and the head to happy
 Hrothgar.
 That night, Beowulf and Weohstan drink with the king.
 He gives Beowulf gold and jewels.
 290 The warrior has done his brave work, and the men can
 sleep in Heorot hall.
 Morning comes.
 Now the Geats must return to their land.
 They leave Heorot and go to their boat.
 295 All the people walk sadly by the brave warriors.
 And the Geats go over the sea.
 They come to their king.
 Beowulf gives Hrothgar's treasure to Hygelac the king.
 And Hygelac gives land, and a hall, and a big old sword
 300 to brave Beowulf.
 He takes his men to the new hall.
 Beowulf works and fights with his warriors, and he gives
 them treasure.
 They live happily.
 305 Suddenly, Hygelac dies in his hall.
 He was Beowulf's uncle; and now Beowulf is king of the
 Geats.
 He is strong and kind, and for fifty years he is a good
 310 king.
 Weohstan dies, and Wiglaf, his son, comes to the king.
 He lives in the hall.
 From Beowulf's warriors, the young boy learns to fight.
 And Beowulf loves him.
 315 One night, a slave of the Geats runs away from his angry
 master.
 He is cold and tired.
 He sees the mouth of a cave in a hill, and a light is
 burning.
 320 The slave goes in.
 It is a treasure cave!
 The slave sees gold and jewels, weapons and armor.
 But near the mouth, a dragon is sleeping.
 It watches the treasure.
 325 Quietly, the man moves in the cave and goes to the gold.
 The light dances on a big cup.
 It is heavy with jewels.
 Softly, the slave takes it, and runs.
 He goes to his master and gives him the cup.
 330 The man is happy.
 But morning comes.

The dragon wakes.
 It loves that treasure.
 Suddenly, it stops.
 335 It stands and looks.
 Where is the big cup of gold? .
 Quickly, the creature looks in its cave.
 It moves the treasure.
 It looks on the hill.
 340 The cup has gone.
 "A man has taken it," the dragon knows.
 It waits in the cave, alone and angry.
 Night comes.
 The dragon leaves.
 345 In the light of the moon, it follows the slave and comes to
 the town.
 It is breathing fire from its angry mouth.
 It breathes on the houses, and the town burns.
 The people try to run away, but men and women and
 350 children die.
 The dragon comes to Beowulf's hall.
 It breathes, and the hall burns in the fire.
 Grimly, the dragon goes to its cave and the soldiers bring
 the story to Beowulf.
 355 "My people are dying. I must fight this dragon," the old
 king says.
 "I killed Grendel, and the monster's mother. Give me my
 armor."
 The men move, but Wiglaf stops them.
 360 "Years ago," he tells Beowulf, "you killed those
 creatures. You're brave, and the king; but I'm young and
 strong. I'll fight the dragon."
 The old warrior looks at Wiglaf.
 "No, my friend," Beowulf says.
 365 "I'm king of the Geats, and I must do it."
 He tells his men: "Make a shield of strong iron.
 My shield is wood, and the fires will burn it."
 They give him the shield with his weapons and armor.
 Eleven warriors leave with the king.
 370 Wiglaf is one.
 They are on their horses, but the slave and his master
 come with the cup.
 "The creature wants this," the master says.
 He shows it to Beowulf.
 375 The king says to the poor slave: "You must show us the
 way to this treasure cave."
 He wants to stay, but they give him a horse and he must
 ride with the warriors.
 Near to the hill, the slave shows them the mouth of the
 380 cave.
 Beowulf says: "I'll kill this dragon and get its gold, or an
 evil fight will take your king."
 Bravely, he walks to the mouth of the cave.
 He sees the fire.
 385 He stops, and gives a loud shout.

The dragon hears the voice of a man.
 Quickly, it comes.
 It sees the king and it breathes fire.
 Beowulf stands.
 390 The dragon flies at him.
 Its hot fire burns the shield.
 Beowulf fights, but the creature is strong.
 He cannot stop it.
 The king's clothes burn in the fire.
 395 The fight is hard.
 He is going to die.
 His soldiers see this, and they run from the fight.
 But Wiglaf stays.
 He shouts to the warriors: "You wicked men! Why are
 400 you running? The king's given us gold and jewels,
 swords and shields. We must stay and help him!"
 But the men ride quickly away.
 They leave the warriors.
 Wiglaf goes alone to his king, and stops the fire.
 405 The dragon comes.
 Its fire burns Wiglaf's shield.
 Beowulf sees the creature's head, and he hits it hard.
 The sword breaks, but he has hit the creature.
 The dragon is angry.
 410 It swings its foot at Beowulf's head and wounds him
 badly.
 The king's blood runs to the ground.
 Angrily, Wiglaf swings his sword.
 He hits the dragon under the head and the weapon makes
 415 a deep wound.
 The fire stops.
 Beowulf is dying, but he stands on his feet and takes his
 knife.
 The two warriors kill the monster.
 420 Old Beowulf tries to breathe, but his life is going.
 He drops to the ground.
 "I'm dying, Wiglaf," he says slowly.
 "You're young and brave. You stayed and helped me."
 He gives Wiglaf his king's collar.
 425 "Now, son of Weohstan, You must be king of the Geats.
 I must follow your father."
 And Beowulf dies.
 Wiglaf sadly looks on the ground at Beowulf's body.
 The brave warrior has killed the creature, but the king
 430 has died.
 He takes the body in his strong arms and cries alone for
 his king and friend.
 Wiglaf is king.
 On the hill, his soldiers build a fire for the warrior's body.
 435 The men on the sea, and the people in the towns, will see
 the fire.
 They will remember Beowulf.