

Reading Comprehension

Directions Read the following excerpt from “The Battle with Grendel” in *Beowulf*. Then answer the questions that follow.

from *Beowulf*

translated by **Burton Raffel**

- ... Then he stopped, seeing the hall
 Crowded with sleeping warriors, stuffed
 With rows of young soldiers resting together.
 And his heart laughed, he relished the sight,
 Intended to tear the life from those bodies
 By morning; the monster’s mind was hot
 With the thought of food and the feasting his belly
 Would soon know. But fate, that night, intended
 Grendel to gnaw the broken bones
 10 Of his last human supper. Human
 Eyes were watching his evil steps,
 Waiting to see his swift hard claws.
 Grendel snatched at the first Geat
 He came to, ripped him apart, cut
 His body to bits with powerful jaws,
 Drank the blood from his veins and bolted
 Him down, hands and feet; death
 And Grendel’s great teeth came together,
 Snapping life shut. Then he stepped to another
 20 Still body, clutched at Beowulf with his claws,
 Grasped at a strong-hearted wakeful sleeper
 —And was instantly seized himself, claws
 Bent back as Beowulf leaned up on one arm.
 That shepherd of evil, guardian of crime,
 Knew at once that nowhere on earth
 Had he met a man whose hands were harder;
 His mind was flooded with fear—but nothing
 Could take his talons and himself from that tight
 Hard grip. Grendel’s one thought was to run
 30 From Beowulf, flee back to his marsh and hide there:
 This was a different Herot than the hall he had emptied.
 But Higlac’s follower remembered his final
 Boast and, standing erect, stopped
 The monster’s flight, fastened those claws

UNIT 1, TEST A CONTINUED

In his fists till they cracked, clutched Grendel
Closer. The infamous killer fought
For his freedom, wanting no flesh but retreat,
Desiring nothing but escape; his claws
Had been caught, he was trapped. That trip to Herot
40 Was a miserable journey for the writhing monster!

The high hall rang, its roof boards swayed,
And Danes shook with terror. Down
The aisles the battle swept, angry
And wild. Herot trembled, wonderfully
Built to withstand the blows, the struggling
Great bodies beating at its beautiful walls;
Shaped and fastened with iron, inside
And out, artfully worked, the building
Stood firm. Its benches rattled, fell
50 To the floor, gold-covered boards grating
As Grendel and Beowulf battled across them.
Hrothgar's wise men had fashioned Herot
To stand forever; only fire,
They had planned, could shatter what such skill had put
Together, swallow in hot flames such splendor
Of ivory and iron and wood. Suddenly
The sounds changed, the Danes started
In new terror, cowering in their beds as the terrible
Screams of the Almighty's enemy sang
60 In the darkness, the horrible shrieks of pain
And defeat, the tears torn out of Grendel's
Taut throat, hell's captive caught in the arms
Of him who of all the men on earth
Was the strongest.

That mighty protector of men
Meant to hold the monster till its life
Leaped out, knowing the fiend was no use
To anyone in Denmark. All of Beowulf's
Band had jumped from their beds, ancestral
70 Swords raised and ready, determined
To protect their prince if they could.

From *Beowulf*, translated by Burton Raffel. Translation copyright 1963 by Burton Raffel.
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COMPREHENSION

Directions Answer the following questions about the excerpt from *Beowulf*.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Which words from line 1 are examples of alliteration?</p> <p>A. Then, seeing C. stopped, seeing
 B. he, the D. Then, hall</p> <p>2. Based on the details in lines 13–15, you can best make the inference that Grendel is</p> <p>A. strong C. enthusiastic
 B. sociable D. modest</p> <p>3. Grendel’s actions in lines 13–19 show that he is</p> <p>A. worried C. lazy
 B. cruel D. angry</p> <p>4. Which words in line 26 are examples of alliteration?</p> <p>A. Had, man C. met, harder
 B. man, were D. hands, harder</p> | <p>5. What universal or timeless value is shown in lines 32–36?</p> <p>A. courage C. hope
 B. loyalty D. love</p> <p>6. Based on the details in lines 36–39, you can best make the inference that Grendel is</p> <p>A. bored C. displeased
 B. annoyed D. frightened</p> <p>7. Lines 59–64 show that Beowulf is an epic hero because he has</p> <p>A. incredible strength
 B. superhuman eyesight
 C. great intelligence
 D. extraordinary hope</p> |
|---|--|

Written Response

SHORT RESPONSE

Directions Write two or three sentences to answer the following question on a separate sheet of paper.

- 8.** Identify two kennings in this excerpt from *Beowulf*.

EXTENDED RESPONSE

Directions Write two or three paragraphs to answer this question on a separate sheet of paper.

- 9.** What universal theme is reflected in this excerpt from *Beowulf*? Give three examples from the excerpt to support your response.

Reading Comprehension

Directions Read the following selection. Then answer the questions that follow.

from The Prologue in The Canterbury Tales

Geoffrey Chaucer, translated by Nevill Coghill

Our *Host* gave us great welcome; everyone
Was given a place and supper was begun.
He served the finest victuals you could think,
The wine was strong and we were glad to drink.
A very striking man our Host withal,
And fit to be a marshal in a hall.
His eyes were bright, his girth a little wide;
There is no finer burgess in Cheapside.
Bold in his speech, yet wise and full of tact,
10 There was no manly attribute he lacked,
What's more he was a merry-hearted man.
After our meal he jokingly began
To talk of sport, and, among other things
After we'd settled up our reckonings,
He said as follows: "Truly, gentlemen,
You're very welcome and I can't think when
—Upon my word I'm telling you no lie—
I've seen a gathering here that looked so spry,
No, not this year, as in this tavern now.
20 I'd think you up some fun if I knew how.
And, as it happens, a thought has just occurred
To please you, costing nothing, on my word.
You're off to Canterbury—well, God speed!
Blessed St. Thomas answer to your need!
And I don't doubt, before the journey's done
You mean to while the time in tales and fun.
Indeed, there's little pleasure for your bones
Riding along and all as dumb as stones.
So let me then propose for your enjoyment,
30 Just as I said, a suitable employment.
And if my notion suits and you agree
And promise to submit yourselves to me
Playing your parts exactly as I say
Tomorrow as you ride along the way,

UNIT 1, TEST A CONTINUED

Then by my father's soul (and he is dead)
If you don't like it you can have my head!
Hold up your hands, and not another word."

Well, our opinion was not long deferred,
It seemed not worth a serious debate;

- 40 We all agreed to it at any rate
And bade him issue what commands he would.
"My lords," he said, "now listen for your good,
And please don't treat my notion with disdain.
This is the point. I'll make it short and plain.
Each one of you shall help to make things slip
By telling two stories on the outward trip
To Canterbury, that's what I intend,
And, on the homeward way to journey's end
Another two, tales from the days of old;
- 50 And then the man whose story is best told,
That is to say who gives the fullest measure
Of good morality and general pleasure,
He shall be given a supper, paid by all,
Here in this tavern, in this very hall,
When we come back again from Canterbury.
And in the hope to keep you bright and merry
I'll go along with you myself and ride
All at my own expense and serve as guide.
I'll be the judge, and those who won't obey
- 60 Shall pay for what we spend upon the way.
Now if you all agree to what you've heard
Tell me at once without another word,
And I will make arrangements early for it."
Of course we all agreed, in fact we swore it
Delightedly, and made entreaty too
That he should act as he proposed to do,
Become our Governor in short, and be
Judge of our tales and general referee,
And set the supper at a certain price.
- 70 We promised to be ruled by his advice
Come high, come low; unanimously thus
We set him up in judgment over us.

From *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer, translated by Nevill Coghill. Penguin Classics 1951,
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COMPREHENSION

Directions Answer the following questions about the excerpt from “The Prologue” of *The Canterbury Tales*.

1. In lines 5–8, the Host is described as
 - A. overweight
 - B. red-haired
 - C. short
 - D. squinty-eyed
2. What makes lines 16–19 ironic?
 - A. The Host told the pilgrims where to travel.
 - B. Other pilgrims received cheaper rooms.
 - C. The Host flattered all pilgrims the same way.
 - D. All the pilgrims were given similar meals.
3. You know that line 20 contains verbal irony because the
 - A. Host really has a plan for the pilgrims
 - B. pilgrims have already made a plan
 - C. Host isn’t good at planning
 - D. pilgrims are too tired for fun and games
4. Based on the Host’s words in line 36, you can best make the inference that he is
 - A. worried about his tavern
 - B. concerned about feelings of others
 - C. alarmed by the pilgrims
 - D. confident about his plan
5. Based on lines 38–41, you can best make the inference that the pilgrims are
 - A. clever
 - B. easygoing
 - C. sympathetic
 - D. compassionate

Written Response

SHORT RESPONSE

Directions Write two or three sentences to answer the following question on a separate sheet of paper.

6. What makes line 22 ironic? Support your answer with details from “The Prologue.”

EXTENDED RESPONSE

Directions Write two or three paragraphs to answer this question on a separate sheet of paper.

7. Describe two character traits of the Host. Use three examples from “The Prologue” to support your response.

Reading Comprehension

Directions Read the following selection. Then answer the questions that follow.

from A History of the English Church and People

The Venerable Bede

translated by Leo Sherley-Price

King Oswin was a man of handsome appearance and great stature, pleasant in speech and courteous in manner. He was generous to high and low alike, and soon won the affection of everyone by his regal qualities of mind and body, so that nobles came from every province to serve him. But among his other especial endowments of virtue and moderation, the greatest was what one may describe as the singular blessing of humility, of which a single instance will be sufficient.

He had given Bishop Aidan a very fine horse, in order that he could ride whenever he had to cross a river or undertake any difficult or urgent journey, although the bishop ordinarily travelled on foot. Not long afterwards, when a poor man met the bishop and
 10 asked for alms, the bishop immediately dismounted and ordered the horse with all its royal trappings to be given to the beggar; for he was most compassionate, a protector of the poor and a father to the wretched. When this action came to the king's ears, he asked the bishop as they were going in to dine: "My lord bishop, why did you give away the royal horse which was necessary for your own use? Have we not many less valuable horses of other kinds which would have been good enough for beggars, without giving away a horse that I had specially selected for your personal use?" The bishop at once answered, "What are you saying, Your Majesty? Is this foal of a mare more valuable to you than this child of God?" At this they went in to dinner, and the bishop sat down in his place; but the king, who had come in from hunting, stood warming himself by the
 20 fire with his attendants. As he stood by the fire, the king turned over in his mind what the bishop had said; then suddenly unbuckling his sword and handing it to a servant, he impulsively knelt at the bishop's feet and begged his forgiveness, saying: "I will not refer to this matter again, nor will I enquire how much of our bounty you give away to God's children." The bishop was deeply moved, and raising him immediately, assured him of his high regard, begging him to sit down to his food without regrets.

From *A History of the English Church and People*, by Bede, translated by Leo Sherley-Price.
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COMPREHENSION

Directions Answer the following questions about the excerpt from *A History of the English Church and People*.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Which tone does the writer use that gives you clues to his motive for writing?</p> <p>A. sincere C. pessimistic
B. whimsical D. aggravated</p> <p>2. Based on his actions, you can best make the inference that King Oswin is</p> <p>A. calm C. generous
B. shy D. talented</p> | <p>3. Based on the excerpt, which inference can you best make about the bishop?</p> <p>A. The bishop loves big dinners.
B. He cares for the poor.
C. The bishop owns several horses.
D. He likes walking in nature.</p> |
|---|---|

Written Response

SHORT RESPONSE

Directions Write two or three sentences to answer the following question on a separate sheet of paper.

4. You can make the inference that the king is willing to recognize his mistakes and learn from them. Give one example from the text to support this inference.

EXTENDED RESPONSE

Directions Write two or three paragraphs to answer this question on a separate sheet of paper.

5. What is the writer's overall motive for writing this excerpt from *A History of the English Church and People*? Give three examples from the text to support your response.

Vocabulary

Directions Use context clues and the Latin word and root definitions to answer the following questions.

1. The Latin root *reg* means “king.” What is the most likely meaning of the word *regal* as it is used in line 3 of *A History of the English Church and People*?

<p>A. rich</p> <p>B. fancy</p>	<p>C. magnificent</p> <p>D. arrogant</p>
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2. The Latin root *pass* means “to suffer.” What is the most likely meaning of the word *compassionate* as it is used in line 11 of *A History of the English Church and People*?

<p>A. sympathetic</p> <p>B. hopeful</p>	<p>C. respectful</p> <p>D. energetic</p>
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3. The Latin word *unanimis* means “one mind.” What is the most likely meaning of the word *unanimously* as it is used in line 71 of “The Prologue” of *The Canterbury Tales*?

<p>A. in a large group</p> <p>B. in full agreement</p> <p>C. with enthusiasm</p> <p>D. in a loud voice</p>	
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4. The Latin root *do* means “to give.” What is the most likely meaning of the word *endowments* as it is used in line 4 of *A History of the English Church and People*?

<p>A. rumors</p> <p>B. gifts</p> <p>C. feelings</p> <p>D. offerings</p>	
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Directions Use context clues and your knowledge of multiple-meaning words to answer the following questions.

5. Which meaning of the word *striking* is used in line 5 of “The Prologue” of *The Canterbury Tales*?

<p>A. creating a strong impression</p> <p>B. launching a military attack</p> <p>C. producing a spark</p> <p>D. refusing to work</p>	
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6. Which meaning of the word *slip* is used in line 45 of “The Prologue” of *The Canterbury Tales*?

<p>A. shift position</p> <p>B. lose balance</p> <p>C. get away from</p> <p>D. move smoothly</p>	
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7. Which meaning of the word *bolted* is used in line 16 of *Beowulf*?

<p>A. gulped down</p> <p>B. blurted out</p> <p>C. ran away suddenly</p> <p>D. fastened with a metal bar</p>	
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8. Which meaning of the word *measure* is used in line 51 of “The Prologue” of *The Canterbury Tales*?

<p>A. moderation</p> <p>B. poetic meter</p> <p>C. extent</p> <p>D. action</p>	
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Revising and Editing

Directions Read the interpretive essay and answer the questions that follow.

(1) *The Canterbury Tales* is a collection of stories told by pilgrims who are traveling to a shrine. (2) We meet the pilgrims in “The Prologue” at an inn near London. (3) By describing people from all walks of life, “The Prologue” paints a picture of fourteenth-century England.

(4) The pilgrims range from the top of the social hierarchy, represented by the Knight, to the bottom, represented by an assortment of peasants. (5) The narrator describes each pilgrim in great detail. (6) Each character is a unique individual, but each one also represents a social class. (7) Perhaps that’s why the pilgrims are referred to not by their names, but by their professions. (8) We have a Knight, a Monk, a Doctor, and others.

(9) The Knight, for example, represents the military, a profession that the narrator holds in high esteem. (10) He describes the Knight as a most distinguished man. (11) He is a good warrior, but he is also wise and modest. (12) He embodies ideal skills and attributes. (13) The narrator offers him as a role model.

(14) Later in “The Prologue,” the narrator turns his attention to the Doctor. (15) His thumbnail sketch gives us an idea of how medicine was practiced in medieval England and how doctors were regarded. (16) No one alive the narrator says could talk as well as he did on points of medicine and of surgery.

(17) To sum up, the narrator’s descriptions are not only character sketches, but also social commentaries. (18) He often catches people acting in ways that do not fit their social status. (19) A good example is the Prioress, who wears her prayer beads as jewelry. (20) The narrator’s astute observations hold true even today.

- Which sentence contains the thesis statement?
 - sentence 1
 - sentence 3
 - sentence 18
 - sentence 20
- Choose the correct way to add a subordinate clause to sentence 2.
 - We meet the pilgrims in “The Prologue” at an inn near London on the eve of their journey.
 - The pilgrims gather at an inn near London, and we meet them there.
 - We meet the pilgrims in “The Prologue” as they gather at an inn near London.
 - In “The Prologue” to the tales, we meet the pilgrims at an inn near London.
- Which is a participial phrase you might add to sentence 5?
 - staying at the inn
 - who enters the inn
 - an astute observer
 - individual pilgrim
- Which is a prepositional phrase you might add to sentence 6?
 - a well-known social class
 - possessing unique traits
 - although unique
 - from that period

UNIT 1, TEST A CONTINUED

5. Identify the transition in sentence 9.
- A.** for example **C.** the narrator
B. the military **D.** in high esteem
6. Choose the correct way to punctuate the quotation in sentence 10.
- A.** “as a most distinguished man.
B. as “a most distinguished man.”
C. as a most distinguished man”.
D. “as a most distinguished man”
7. Choose the correct way to add a subordinate clause to sentence 12.
- A.** As a knight, he embodies a set of ideal skills and attributes.
B. He embodies ideal skills and attributes that people tried to attain.
C. He embodies ideal skills and attributes for a knight.
D. He embodies ideal skills and attributes worthy of admiration.
8. Which is a participial phrase you might add to sentence 13?
- A.** who praises him
B. in praise of his virtues
C. praising his virtues
D. to praise his virtues
9. The transition in sentence 14 indicates that the essay
- A.** follows the organization of “The Prologue”
B. uses reverse chronological order
C. presents the most significant characters first
D. moves back and forth in time
10. Choose the correct way to punctuate the quotation in sentence 16.
- A.** “No one alive the narrator says / could talk as well as he did on points of medicine and of surgery”.
B. No one alive “the narrator says”, could talk as well as he did on points of medicine and of surgery.
C. “No one alive the narrator says,” “could talk as well as he did/on points of medicine and of surgery.”
D. “No one alive,” the narrator says, “could talk as well as he did / On points of medicine and of surgery.”
11. How might you add a prepositional phrase to sentence 20?
- A.** His astute observations and witty insights hold true even today.
B. His astute observations, seven hundred years old, hold true even today.
C. His astute observations about human nature hold true even today.
D. His astute observations are timeless and hold true even today.
12. The conclusion is effective because it
- A.** offers an insight into human behavior
B. leaves the reader with a question
C. challenges the thesis statement
D. urges readers to be virtuous

Writing

Directions Read the following quotation. Then read the prompt that follows and complete the writing activity.

“Fortune favors the brave.”

Virgil

Prompt: Write an interpretive essay explaining the ways in which Beowulf exhibits the qualities of an epic hero.

Now write your essay. The following reminders will help you.

Reminders

- Be sure your writing does what the prompt asks.
- Include a thesis statement that clearly expresses your point of view.
- Use quotations from the source work to support your thesis.
- Write an insightful conclusion.
- Check for correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.