

Elements of Anglo-Saxon Literature

Today's Goals:

- × With a partner, complete Elements of Anglo-Saxon Literature worksheet.
- × You can work together, but no “divide and conquer”
- × To aid you in your understanding, use your device or a laptop to go to my webpage to download this PPT.
- × Yes...Google can also answer most of these questions, but this PPT goes in order of the worksheet, and has the information I have condense for you. Save yourself time!

Epic Poem

- × Now that we know archetypes and epic heroes and a bit about their society/culture, it is time to talk about our text: an epic poem.
- × An epic poem is a long, often book-length narrative in verse form that retells the heroic journey of a single person or a group of persons.

Beowulf's origin story

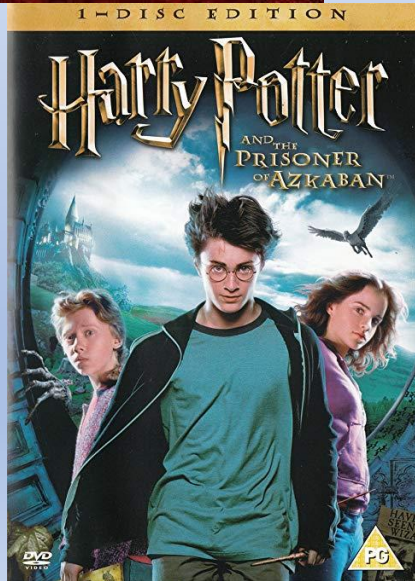
- × Beowulf marks the beginning of English literature as it is one of the earliest known pieces of literature in the English language
 - × Think: Beowulf is to England what Homer's Iliad and Odyssey are to ancient Greece.
- × The poem existed originally as a story that was passed down orally. The origins of this story only existed in people's memories.

An Oral Tradition, rewritten

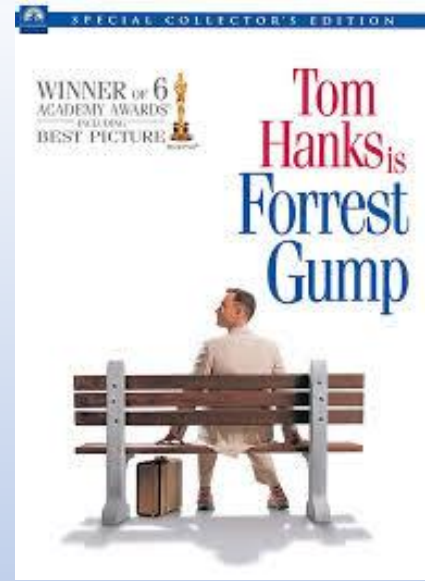
- ✗ Like other oral art, *Beowulf* was handed down, with changes and embellishments, from one story teller to another.
 - ✗ Think: Phone Tag, gossip
- ✗ The story *Beowulf* wasn't actually written down until about 700AD by an unknown poet.
- ✗ Many scholars believed that this poet was most likely a Christian monk, because of the elements of Christianity in the story.
- ✗ Before this time, Christianity didn't exist in England, so scholars have created an estimated time frame.

What makes up an Epic Poem?

- × **An epic poem is a long, often book-length narrative in verse form that retells the heroic journey of a single person or a group of persons.**
- × What is a narrative?
- × A story
- × What is verse?
- × writing arranged with a metrical rhythm, typically having a rhyme.
 - × Meter= pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables to make words easier to remember
 - × Also = props for artistry
 - × Many rappers and lyrists today use meter (we'll talk more when we get to Shakespeare!)
- × What is a heroic journey?
- × The journey the epic hero takes, of course! (More on this later, in this unit).



Epics you
may kn



Features of an Epic

- × A long narrative poem
- × Larger than life hero; often with super-human characteristics
- × Concerns eternal human problems like the struggle between **good and evil**
- × Hero represents widespread national, cultural, or religious values
- × Presented in a serious manner using:
- × **elevated (poetic) language**

elevated (poetic) language in Anglo-Saxon Literature

Alliteration

Caesura

Epithet

Kenning
(+ hyphens)

Alliteration

- ✘ Alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds in words close to one another in lines of poetry.
- ✘ Instead of rhyme unifying a poem, the Anglo-Saxon poet used alliteration to connect the narrative structure of the epic

“...A powerful monster, living down in the darkness, growled in pain, impatient as day after day the music rang loud in the hall...”

Alliteration

- × Consecutive-
 - × Dunkin' Donuts
- × Non consecutive
 - × Do or Die
- × Tongue Twisters- rely on alliteration
 - × Frank's **frog** friended Foozie's **frog** on Facebook on Friday
- × Familiar phrases- often use alliteration
 - × Fit as a fiddle

CAESURA

- “SAY-zur-UH”
- the verse line is divided into two halves separated by a rhythmical pause, or caesura.
- In one half, two words would commonly alliterate; in the other half, one word alliterates with the two from the first half.

**“Then, when darkness
had dropped, Grendel
went up to Herot,
wondering what the
warriors would do in
that hall when their
drinking was done.”**

Caesura

- Marks that indicate a caesura in poetry:

double pipe ||

double dash - - en dash –

Comma , Colon :

Semi-colon ; Period .

Epithets

- ✘ an epithet is an adjective that expresses a quality or attribute considered characteristic of a person or thing.
- ✘ It is also an appellation or descriptive term which is common in historical titles, such as “Catherine the Great.”

Modern Epithets

- ✗ While the term may seem a bit odd to us, we use epithets all the time.
- ✗ Have you ever given your friend a nickname based on the way he looks or because of something about him?
- ✗ So your friend with red hair becomes 'Red' and your friend whose last name is Beckingham is just called 'Beck.'
- ✗ Epithets are nicknames that help us remember the person.

Epithets in *Beowulf*

- ✘ In *Beowulf* there are many epithets for different people that help us understand what they look like or what their role is in the kingdom.
- ✘ These nicknames add depth to their character in a way that is easily understood.
- ✘ They also serve to provide a reminder to the reader of the character's greatest assets.

Epithets in Beowulf

- ✗ Employing this technique helps the reader/listener to keep track of characters in these long poems.
- ✗ This technique can also create an associative symbolism with characters.
- ✗ When certain characters are constantly described as a hero or a villain, they not only become a name, but also a symbol within the text.
- ✗ “Gold-ringed Queen”- highlights wealth of queen

Kenning

- × The kenning is a specialized metaphor made of compound words
 - × They are still used today (gas guzzler, and headhunter)
- × The earliest and simplest kennings are compound words form from two common nouns
 - × “Sky-candle” for sun
 - × “Whale-road” for sea

Kennings

- × Later, Kennings became much more elaborate
 - × A ship became a “foamy-throated ship,” then a “foamy-throated sea-stallion,” and finally, a “foamy-throated sea-stallion of the whale-road.”
- × Once a kenning was formed, it was used over and over by the oral poets

What am i?

An example of this kind of simple kenning

Round-facer

No-smiler

Still-stander

Two-hander

Night-friendly

Heart-beater

Time-keeper

Sudden-shrieker



An alarm clock

Exeter Book

When English books were rare all the "literature" in a particular part of the country might be all put together in one book. The great book we know as the "**Exeter Book**" was given to the library of Exeter Cathedral by the first bishop of Exeter, Leofric, who died in 1072.



The **Exeter book** contains many riddles referring to things like a 'thief-guest who was no wiser for having swallowed words' (a bookworm)

Formatting kennings

- ✘ Kennings were originally written without hyphens, but many modern English translations do add them
 - ✘ “Sky-Candle”
- ✘ Kennings can also be written as prepositional phrases
 - ✘ “wolf of wounds”
- ✘ Or as possessives
 - ✘ “The sword’s tree”

Kennings filled 3 needs:

1. Old Norse and Anglo-Saxon poetry depended heavily on alliteration, but neither language had a large vocabulary. Poets created the alliterative words they needed by combining existing words.

Kennings filled 3 needs:

2. Because the poetry was oral and had to be memorized, bards valued ready-made phrases. Such phrases made finished poetry easier to remember, and they gave bards time to think ahead when they were composing new poetry on the spot during a feast or ceremony.

Kennings filled 3 needs:

3. The increasingly complex structure of the kennings must have satisfied the early Norse and Anglo-Saxon peoples' taste for elaboration.

Hyphens in Kennings

- ✘ There are two commandments about this misunderstood punctuation mark. First, **hyphens** must never be used interchangeably with dashes, which are noticeably longer. Second, there should not be spaces around hyphens.
- ✘ *Incorrect: 300—325 people*
Incorrect: 300 - 325 people
Correct: 300-325 people
- ✘ Hyphens' main purpose is to glue words together. They notify the reader that two or more elements in a sentence are linked. Although there are rules and customs governing hyphens, there are also situations when writers must decide whether to add them for clarity.

Hyphens between words

- ✘ **Rule 1.** Generally, hyphenate two or more words when they come before a noun they modify and act as a single idea. This is called a **compound adjective**.
- ✘ **Examples:**
an off-campus apartment
state-of-the-art design
- ✘ When a compound adjective follows a noun, a hyphen is usually not necessary.
- ✘ **Example:** *The apartment is off campus.*
- ✘ However, some established compound adjectives are always hyphenated. Double-check with a dictionary or online.
- ✘ **Example:** *The design is state-of-the-art.*

Hyphens between words

- × **Rule 2a.** A hyphen is frequently required when forming original compound verbs for vivid writing, humor, or special situations.
- × **Examples:**
 - The slacker video-gamed his way through life.*
 - Queen Victoria throne-sat for six decades.*

Hyphens between words

- ✗ **Rule 2b.** When writing out new, original, or unusual compound nouns, writers should hyphenate whenever doing so avoids confusion.
- ✗ **Examples:**
 - I changed my diet and became a no-meater.*
No-meater is too confusing without the hyphen.

 - The slacker was a video gamer.*
Video gamer is clear without a hyphen, although some writers might prefer to hyphenate it.
- ✗ Writers using familiar compound verbs and nouns should consult a dictionary or look online to decide if these verbs and nouns should be hyphenated.

Hyphens between words

- ✘ **Rule 3.** An often overlooked rule for hyphens: The adverb *very* and adverbs ending in *ly* are not hyphenated.
- ✘ **Incorrect:** *the very-elegant watch*
Incorrect: *the finely-tuned watch*
- ✘ This rule applies only to adverbs. The following two examples are correct because the *ly* words are not adverbs:
- ✘ **Correct:** *the friendly-looking dog*
Correct: *a family-owned cafe*

Hyphens Between words

- ✘ **Rule 5.** Never hesitate to add a hyphen if it solves a possible problem. Following are two examples of well-advised hyphens:
- ✘ **Confusing:** Springfield has little town charm.
With hyphen: Springfield has little-town charm.
- ✘ Without the hyphen, the sentence seems to say that Springfield is a dreary place. With the hyphen, *little-town* becomes a compound adjective, making the writer's intention clear: Springfield is a charming small town.
- ✘ **Confusing:** She had a concealed weapons permit.
With hyphen: *She had a concealed-weapons permit.*
- ✘ With no hyphen, we can only guess: Was the *weapons permit* hidden from sight, or was it a permit for concealed weapons? The hyphen makes *concealed-weapons* a compound adjective, so the reader knows that the writer meant *a permit for concealed weapons*.

Resources

- × <https://studylib.net/doc/8673454/alliteration--kenning--and-caesura>
- × <https://www.rhsroughriders.org/ourpages/auto/2012/10/31/44979207/Alliteration%20Kenning%20and%20Epithet%20Handout.pdf>
- × <https://www.grammarbook.com/punctuation/hyphens.asp>