



500 North Dearborn Street, suite 825
Chicago, IL, 60610
tel: 312.661.1028 ext.
fax: 312.661.1018
web: www.chfestival.org
email: chf@chfestival.org

Education Programs Department 2007 Curriculum Collection

Our Mission

The mission of the CHF Education Programs Department is to plant and cultivate a passion for the humanities in educational communities, offering educators and students diverse, dynamic learning opportunities. By nurturing an active personal relationship with the humanities, the CHF ignites life long learners.

Classics in Context

Sometimes, all it takes to change your mind is to consider a new perspective. CHF seeks to build upon each year's Fall Festival theme with every new season of *Classics in Context*, a seminar sequence for teachers led by renowned humanities scholars.

The series takes a fresh look at universally established and contemporary literary classics. Giving teachers a chance to renew professionally and personally, the Chicago Humanities Festival supports you in your pursuit to revive seasoned and the contemporary classic books through study and conversation, alongside your colleagues.

Within the past year we have become more dedicated to providing you with curriculum based specifically on the texts that we focus on through our *Classics in Context* literature series. With a Curriculum Developer on board to be a part of each session – to hear, firsthand, your questions, your ideas, your concerns about adapting these texts to the classroom – we are focused on helping you feel supported.

While CHF Education programs reflect the yearly, orbiting themes of the Fall Festival, our core concern remains offering programs that provide professional development resources that are both intelligent and encouraging. The determination of a teacher often informs the atmosphere of a classroom; CHF Education is dedicated to fortifying you in any way we can.

How CHF Boosts Teachers...

- Publishing valuable print & on-line educational resources
- Providing professional development programs
- Fostering a distinctive forum of ideas & supportive network.
- Helping you fulfill your CPDU and other certification requirements.
- Offering our student & teacher FREE TICKET program for Festival and year-round programs

How teachers Boost CHF...

- Using us as your first resource.
- Telling your friends and colleagues about FREE programs.
- Utilizing our great website resources.
- Posting our flyers at your school – share us with others!
- Telling us what you think about our programs - online or by mail.
- Sharing your lesson and unit plan ideas with us
- Using our student & teacher FREE TICKET program for Festival and year-round programs

Contact the Education Programs Department at 312.661.1028 x22 or education@chfestival.org



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Beowulf



THE MEAD HALL

GOALS:

- 1.B.5d Read age-appropriate material with fluency and accuracy.
- 1.C.5e Evaluate how authors and illustrators use text and art across materials to express their ideas (e.g., complex dialogue, persuasive techniques).
- 2.A.5d Evaluate the influence of historical context on form, style and point of view for a variety of literary works.
- 2.B.5a Analyze and express an interpretation of a literary work.
- 2.B.5b Apply knowledge gained from literature as a means of understanding contemporary and historical economic, social and political issues and perspectives.

1. Read lines 64-84.

*Then success in war was given to Hrothgar,
honor in battle, so that his beloved kinsmen
eagerly served him, until the young soldiers grew
into a mighty troop of men. It came to his mind
that he should order a hall-building,
have men make a great mead-house
which the sons of men should remember forever,
and there inside he would share everything
with young and old that God had given him,
except for the common land and the lives of men.
Then the work, as I've heard, was widely proclaimed
to many nations throughout this middle-earth,
to come to adorn the folk-stead. It came to pass
swiftly among men, and it was soon ready,
the greatest of halls; he gave the name "Heorot",
he who ruled widely with his words.
He remembered his boast; he gave out rings,
treasure at table. The hall towered
high and horn-gabled – it awaited hostile fires,
the surges of war; the time was not yet near
that the sword-hate of sworn in-laws
should arise after ruthless violence.*

- a. What did Heorot, the mead hall mean to the Danes? Brainstorm a list of words (community, safety, protection, gift-giving, feasting, boasting, drinking, loyalty, etc.)
- b. Analyze the balance of juxtaposition of safety and danger in the description of Heorot.



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c. Create your own Heorot. Have students transform the classroom into their version of a mead hall. Or, have each individual create a visual representation of a mead hall (it could be literal or symbolic)



WRITE AND SHARE A BOAST

GOALS:

- 3.C.5a** Communicate information and ideas in narrative, informative and persuasive writing with clarity and effectiveness in a variety of written forms using appropriate traditional and/or electronic formats; adapt content, vocabulary, voice and tone to the audience, purpose and situation.
- 4.A.4a** Apply listening skills as individuals and members of a group in a variety of settings (e.g., lectures, discussions, conversations, team projects, presentations, interviews).
- 4.A.5b** Use techniques for analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of oral messages.
- 4.B.5a** Deliver planned and impromptu oral presentations, as individuals and members of a group, conveying results of research, projects or literature studies to a variety of audiences (e.g., peers, community, business/industry, local organizations) using appropriate visual aids and available technology.

1. After the mead hall is complete, ask students to review some of Beowulf's boasts. Ask students to create and write a boast about themselves. This can be shared in the mead hall.

*"We are men of the Geatish nation
and Hygelac's hearth-companions.
My father was well-known among men,
a noble commander named Ecgtheow:*

(260-3)

*Beowulf spoke, son of Ecgtheow:
"I resolved when I set out over the waves,
sat down in my ship with my troop of soldiers,
that I would entirely fulfill the wishes
of your people, or fall slain,
fast in the grip of my foe. I shall perform
a deed of manly courage, or in this meadhall
I will await the end of my days!"*

(632-8)



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HEROES AND MONSTER

GOALS:

- 2.B.4c** Discuss and evaluate motive, resulting behavior and consequences demonstrated in literature.
- 3.C.5a** Communicate information and ideas in narrative, informative and persuasive writing with clarity and effectiveness in a variety of written forms using appropriate traditional and/or electronic formats; adapt content, vocabulary, voice and tone to the audience, purpose and situation.
- 3.C.4b** Using available technology, produce compositions and multimedia works for specified audiences.
- 4.A.4c** Follow complex oral instructions.
- 4.A.5b** Use techniques for analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of oral messages.
- 4.B.4a** Deliver planned informative and persuasive oral presentations using visual aids and contemporary technology as individuals and members of a group; demonstrate organization, clarity, vocabulary, credible and accurate supporting evidence.

1. Half the class will create a monster and half will create a hero. Determine what elements should be created: appearance and physical traits, origin, personality traits, habitat/environment, time period, special powers, etc. Perhaps each student creates a portfolio for his or her hero or monster. This portfolio can include visual as well as written descriptions.
2. Each student will write a monologue for their hero or monster about a challenge faced by the character or an obstacle they had to overcome. The monologue could also explain how they came to be who they are.
3. Pair one monster with one hero and ask the pair to write a scene in which the two encounter each other. Scenes can be acted out in class.
4. Create a panel discussion consisting of an equal number of heroes and monsters. Discussion topics could include themes from Beowulf. You could also put monsters and heroes on a talk show. You can also place them in certain environments and ask them to improvise a scene.
5. Values Clarification. Ask students to stay in character as a hero or monster and respond to the statements as their character. You need three areas in the room where students can move. Label the areas in the room as "agree," "disagree," "undecided." Read a statement aloud and ask characters to move to one of the areas based on their response.



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You can create statements that relate to the poem,

I think heroism is overrated.
Physical violence is acceptable if it is justified.
All individuals should be held accountable to the same moral code.
I believe in poetic justice.

After students move to their response area, you can open the floor for discussion. Why are you standing where you are? If a character feels persuaded to move to another area based on someone's response, they may do so. They are not allowed to criticize anyone for their opinion. You can only justify your own response.



THE EPIC HERO – FACT OR FICTION

GOALS:

3.C.5a Communicate information and ideas in narrative, informative and persuasive writing with clarity and effectiveness in a variety of written forms using appropriate traditional and/or electronic formats; adapt content, vocabulary, voice and tone to the audience, purpose and situation.

4.A.4a Apply listening skills as individuals and members of a group in a variety of settings (e.g., lectures, discussions, conversations, team projects, presentations, interviews).

4.B.5a Deliver planned and impromptu oral presentations, as individuals and members of a group, conveying results of research, projects or literature studies to a variety of audiences (e.g., peers, community, business/industry, local organizations) using appropriate visual aids and available technology.

1. Ask students to brainstorm the qualities of an epic hero. Here is some basic info:

Although length and complexity are hallmarks of the epic poem, the most important element is the hero. The hero of an epic is a human being with characteristics a society admires and often wishes to emulate. The hero is male, attractive, and unusually strong and able. He is a trained soldier or warrior and believes in and follows the code of honor for which he is willing to sacrifice his life. He fights for the noble cause: those who cannot defend themselves, usually women and children; the preservation of a society; honor; and the noble way of life. The hero is considered better in most respects than the common man.

However, the hero is also in many ways the same as the ordinary man. He has the same longings and desires as any man might have: the desire to be beloved and respected by his own people; the desire for some degree of wealth or material comfort; the desire for a family with children, especially sons like himself; the desire to stand out above his fellow human beings in some way; the desire not to bring shame to himself or his family in any way. The hero also hopes that the divine will favor him and his cause.



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The Epic Hero is found in many cultures, and regardless of where he comes from, there are some points in common. Not every Epic Hero story will have all of these elements, but many will be present.

- The Hero's mother is a royal virgin
- The Hero's father is a king
- The Hero's father is a near relative of the mother
- The Circumstances of the Hero's birth are unusual
- The Hero is reputed to be the son of a god
- At the birth of the Hero, there is often an attempt by the father or paternal grandfather or uncle to kill him. He may be kidnapped or sent away for his protection or that of his parents.
- The Hero is often reared by foster parents in a distant land.
- The Hero is told almost nothing about his childhood.
- When the Hero reaches manhood, he returns or goes to a future kingdom
- After victory over a king, dragon, giant, or wild beast, he marries a princess (sometimes the daughter of the king)
- The Hero then becomes the king
- For a time the Hero reigns uneventfully
- The Hero proclaims laws, or he bestows blessings or gifts on the community
- Later, the Hero loses favor with the gods and his subjects
- The Hero is driven from the throne, power, or city
- After the Hero is driven away, he meets a mysterious death (often at the top of a hill)
- If the Hero had any children, they do not succeed him
- The Hero's body is not buried
- The Hero will often have one or more holy sepulchers.

There are also a number of standard characteristics of an Epic Hero.

- The Epic Hero is a larger-than-life hero who embodies the values of a particular society.
- An epic hero is superhuman. He is braver, stronger, smarter, and cleverer than an ordinary person
- The epic hero is on a quest for something of great value to him or to his people
- The villains who try to keep the hero from his quest are usually uglier, more evil, and more cunning than anyone we know in ordinary life
- The epic hero is often of mixed divine and human birth and so possesses human weakness
- The divine world (the gods) interferes with the human world

a. Do epic heroes exist in our world today? If yes, write a story or poem about an epic hero you know. If you don't think they exist, either create a fictional epic hero who could live in our world today or write a persuasive essay refuting the existence of the epic hero based on the above criteria.

b. Oral Tradition. Instead of reading each story or poem, have students tell the story the way a scop would have done.