Close Reading Activities from *Beowulf*

**Literary Analysis**

1. **Key Ideas and Details** Epics often center on a battle between good and evil. Find evidence in lines 173–198 to indicate that Beowulf is battling for the good.

2. **Key Ideas and Details** *(a)* What details in the epic show the importance of Christian beliefs? *(b)* What details reveal the importance of pagan warrior values, such as a belief in fate, a taste for boasting, a pride in loyalty, and a desire for fame?

3. **Craft and Structure** *(a)* List two characteristics that make Beowulf a **legendary, or epic, hero**. *(b)* Find a passage that shows his more human side. Explain your choice. *(c)* Identify each main character and the traits that make him a hero.

4. **Key Ideas and Details** Determine the **main idea** of lines 843–861 from *Beowulf* by paraphrasing them.

5. **Key Ideas and Details** *(a)* Explain which details you did not understand before paraphrasing. *(b)* Compare your paraphrase to the original, citing poetic effects that were lost in your paraphrase.

6. **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas** An epic reflects the values of the culture that produced it. Use a chart like the one shown to identify three features of *Beowulf* that probably pleased its original audience. For each, draw a conclusion about Anglo-Saxon tastes and values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Why Pleasing</th>
<th>Values Reflected</th>
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<td>boastful speeches</td>
<td>makes hero seem superhuman</td>
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7. **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas** Frustrated pride may lead to spite, just as loyalty may lead to vengeance, and eagerness for glory may turn into greed. Explain how each creature Beowulf battles represents an extreme and dangerous form of warrior values and behavior.

8. **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas** *(a)* Is Beowulf a believable character, or is he “too heroic”? Explain your answer. *(b)* How does his believability affect your sympathy for him?

9. **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas** Compare the way the epic commemorates Beowulf with the way our culture celebrates its heroes. Cite details that support your response.