

# British Literature

## Oak Meadow

### Teacher Manual

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# Introduction

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Prepare to dive into the worlds of heroes, monsters, fairies, and kings. This course presents a selection of works of British literature beginning with *Beowulf* and spanning through the 20th century. You will explore classic stories written by some of the most widely read literary icons.

In this course, there are 36 lessons divided equally into two semesters. Each lesson represents one week of study (approximately five hours of work). This teacher manual can serve as your support as you guide and evaluate your student's work. In it you will find the full text for all assignments and activities. Teacher manual answers are seen in color.

You will also find sample student responses throughout this teacher manual. These are included to help you determine what to expect, to see examples of exemplary responses, and to provide inspiration and guidance to students who might benefit from a model to follow. The student responses appear as submitted, which few changes made. Simple corrections have been made to correct typos or fix punctuation to improve clarity, but for the most part, they have been left alone. These sample responses are not perfect in form but they are authentic examples of student work.

The following texts are used in this course:

*Beowulf: An Illustrated Edition*. Trans. Seamus Heaney. Illus. Ed. John D. Niles. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008. Print. ISBN 13: 978-0-393-33010-6

White, T.H. *The Once and Future King*. New York: Ace Trade Edition, 1996. Print. ISBN 13: 978-0441003839

Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Ed. Roma Gill Oxford School Shakespeare Series. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. Print. ISBN 978-0-19-832150-7

Dickens, Charles. *David Copperfield*. New York: Penguin. 2004. Print.

Byatt, A.S., Ed. *Oxford Book of English Short Stories*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. Print. ISBN 978-0-19-956160-5

You are highly encouraged to join your student in reading the literature selections whenever possible. This will make it easier for you to enter into deeper discussions about the material and to guide your student and assess student work in a more comprehensive manner.

In each lesson, you will find sections to guide your student and deepen his or her understanding of the material:

- **Digging Deeper** gives background information, enabling students to interpret the literature within its historical and cultural background.
- **Along the Way** highlights essential text to help students identify core themes and concepts. These questions provide excellent discussion points for you and your student.
- **Writing Tips** are designed to improve and refine writing skills.

You will find many of the Digging Deeper and Along the Way sections and all of the Writing Tips included in this teacher manual. For other lesson material, please see the student coursebook.

The written work for this course includes comprehension questions, critical thinking skills, interpretive essays, journaling, creative writing, and doing creative projects.

Students should follow the assignments in order and write out all their responses in full sentences, maintaining clear paragraph structure. Whenever possible, students are expected to support their observations with examples, specific details, and direct quotations from the readings. These guidelines, as well as the writing tips, provide you with a framework of student expectations that you can use when assessing student work.

When a student makes an error or omission, or gets a factual answer wrong, you can share the correct answer and address any underlying misconceptions. The focus should always be on the learning process rather than on a sense of judgement. The goal is to see your student's skills develop over time. Each "mistake" can be seen as an opportunity to learn and grow. If you find yourself repeating the same corrections over and over, this points to an area of writing or comprehension in which the student needs more specific support.

In general, it is best not to share a teacher manual with your student. However, this teacher manual is a little different in that it includes sample student responses from previous Oak Meadow students. If your student needs guidance in a particular area or feels stuck, sharing a sample response can help him or her gain a clearer understanding of what is expected and provide inspiration and impetus. The sample student responses are also included for your benefit—you can use them as a model when assessing your student's work. Seeing a strong example can help you determine areas in which your student needs work and ways in which your student is excelling.

Ultimately, each student is expected to produce original work, and any incidence of plagiarism should be taken very seriously. If you notice a student's answers matching those of the teacher manual word for word, or the student response sounds like it came directly from a website or book, a discussion about plagiarism and the importance of doing original work is necessary. While students in high school are expected to be well aware of academic honesty, any discussion about it should be approached as a learning opportunity. Make sure your student is familiar with when and how to properly attribute sources.

We hope you enjoy Heroes, Monsters, Fairies, and Kings, and that you discover within these classic stories new ways to share your student's discoveries and growth. Enjoy the adventure!

# Lesson 4

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## Beowulf: The Hero's Return

### Lesson Goals

- Identify the purpose and effectiveness of manipulating a story's timeline
- Examine how character develops in complexity
- Write a comprehensive essay supported by specific textual details

### Digging Deeper

Pay attention to how the author manipulates the timeline: First the thief steals from the dragon (2215), then there is a flashback to explain the history of the treasure hoard (2233), then the dragon claims the barrow (2271), and finally we are moved back to the present when the “intruder” (the thief) unknowingly becomes the cause of all the current trouble.

The author often uses the *story within a story* technique to provide background information, but the flashback technique gives a different feel, as in the way Beowulf looks back over his life before facing the dragon (2425). Each of these literary devices regarding the timeline produces a different effect and is used for a different purpose. Give some thought to why the author uses them and how effective they are.

### Along the Way

- When Beowulf arrives home and is asked by his king to give an accounting of his deeds, note how the hero is humble in his retelling, refusing to take full credit for his actions: “so won credit for you, my king, and for all your people” (2094); “Geats had slain Grendel” (2120); “I barely managed to escape with my life; my time had not yet come” (2140). Note the way in which he presents his hard-won treasures as gifts to his king, saying, “It is still upon your grace that all favour depends” (2149). Do these humble words befit a hero's actions? Or do they make him even more a hero?
- Beowulf's noble nature is further expressed in lines 2177–2183. His character consistently lives up to his well-earned reputation, right down to the last, when Beowulf claims the dragon battle as his own (2532). At the end of his life, his honor comforts him (2736): “I took what came, cared for

and stood by things in my keeping, never fomented quarrels, never swore to a lie. All this consoles me . . .”

- Near the very end, we glimpse the birth of a new hero as Beowulf’s sole defender hastens to his side (2651).

## Assignments

### Reading

Read from line 1906 to the end of the poem. In this section, the third monster is unleashed and Beowulf charges into his final battle.

### Writing

1. Write definitions (including the part of speech) for each of the following vocabulary words.
  - accoutrement (2085) *n*: apparel, outfit or equipment; the equipment of soldier other than arms and dress.
  - barrow (2213) *n*: a mound of earth or stone erected in early times, over a grave.
  - trove (2217) *n*: a repository of treasure or other valuable things.
  - cache (2236) *n*: a hiding place, especially of goods, treasure etc.
  - harrower (2271), as a form of harrowing *n*: someone or something that rips up the land, a spoiler.
2. Write a comprehensive one-page essay about the poem’s conclusion. Use the following thoughts and questions on “The Buried Treasure” to shape your essay. Please provide specific details and examples to support your point of view, and write a minimum of three paragraphs.

### The Buried Treasure

The contents of the dragon’s hoard were riches left from very long ago, and they were cursed. The first person who buried them “foresaw that his joy in the treasure would be brief” (2241). He was the last in a long line of ancient peoples. These ancient people felt as old to Beowulf as Beowulf and Wiglaf seem to us today.

The man who first buried the treasure, who buried it because all his people had passed away, was very despairing of its worth (2245–70). We find out later that the treasure was cursed: “The huge cache, gold inherited from an ancient race, was under a spell” (3051); “It was cursed by those who buried it” (3069).

As he lies dying, Beowulf asks to look at the ancient gold and jewels, and when Wiglaf goes back to get some for him, Wiglaf sees that a lot of it is tarnished, corroded, and rusty. When Beowulf dies, the treasure is buried in Beowulf’s barrow: “They let the ground keep that ancestral treasure, gold under gravel, gone to earth, as useless to men now as ever it was” (3166–3168).

If the dragon's ancestral treasure is deemed "useless," lost, what does the poem leave behind that has lasting value, lasting worth? Is this ending a fitting conclusion to this epic, archetypal story?

In this comprehensive essay, students are asked to interpret and critique the poem's ending. Look for students to express original thoughts and use specific passages to support their ideas. A strong response will include well-crafted sentences, organized thoughts, expressive language, and a varied vocabulary. The final essay should be polished, showing evidence of revision, editing, and proofreading. Two sample essays follow for those who would like a basis of comparison or read examples of exemplary essays other students have produced.

#### Student sample essay A:

When he spoke to Hrothgar after defeating Grendel, Beowulf told him that it is important how you die: "For everyone of us, living in this world means waiting for our end. Let whoever can win glory before death. When a warrior is gone, that will be his best and only bulwark." (1386–1389). Beowulf believed that you should die in a way that will gain you glory after death.

Beowulf's death is a fitting end to this poem. Beowulf lived a legendary life, known for dominating anyone or anything that opposed him. He killed the man-eating troll-monster Grendel with his bare hands. He killed nine sea monsters in their own element with a sword. He killed Grendel's mother in her lair with a giant's sword. He spent fifty years leading a small nation to prosperity despite being surrounded by powerful enemies. And if that weren't enough, he slew a dragon with a belt knife—after being mortally wounded. If he had failed, he knew the dragon would have destroyed his country and his people.

In his final moments, Beowulf told Wiglaf that he had no heirs, and that enemies like the Swedes would attack the Geats after news of Beowulf's death spread. So, if the treasure was worthless, and if the Geat nation would soon, in all likelihood, be conquered, and as Beowulf has no descendants, there is only one thing that the poem leaves behind that has lasting worth. The Geats have Beowulf's story to tell. They can say for the rest of time that a Geat killed monsters with his bare hands.

#### Student sample essay B:

##### "Integrity Is More Valuable Than Gold"

Though *Beowulf* is full of action and adventures, to me the underlying message could be one of supporting comrades. The first battle we witness Beowulf fight is against the monster, Grendel, for the Danes, as is the second when his mother comes to avenge him. Beowulf sails home with great treasure, and later becomes a great king.

As king, Beowulf is kind to his people and defends them well, making treaties and friends with neighboring domains. When a dragon threatens his lands, he takes up his sword for his third and final battle. He brings eleven handpicked men with him, but insists on advancing into the lair alone. The fight quickly becomes heated, both figuratively and literally, as the dragon is relentless with its flame. All of the men Beowulf brought with him flee to the forest save one, Wiglaf.

Wiglaf believes the only suitable course of action for him to take is to run to help his king as the others should have done, setting yet another example of the importance in aiding allies. Together they slay the dragon, but Beowulf is dealt a fatal wound when the dragon bites his neck. Wiglaf sits with him as he dies, a true friend.

The last scene of the poem takes place at Beowulf's funeral. The poet ends with the lines "they said that of all the kings upon earth/he was the man most gracious and fair-minded,/kindest to his people and keenest to win fame" (3180). I consider this the best evidence for the idea that this poem is one showing the value of peace between human beings, and is a very fitting ending for Beowulf's story.

3. Choose one of following projects:

- a. Draw an illustration of one of the monsters that Beowulf fights. You can draw your own rendition or copy another artist's image. You can show the monster in its habitat, in action, or in battle with Beowulf.

Student sample of artwork



- b. Write a song about Beowulf's heroic deeds. Use language that is reminiscent of the era in which the story is set. If you set it to music, make an audio recording if you can.

**Student sample song:****Song of Beowulf**

Our hero is fallen, he sleeps beneath the ground.

Under the sky, over the ocean he rests. The cursed treasure lies around him.

A hero like none before him or after him.

His strength was unparalleled across the wide world.

Monsters fell to the might of his bare hands and his sword strike was such that the sword would snap in two.

He was the king of a great and prosperous land, and his honesty and generosity were renowned far and wide.

None would dare face him in battle, even his enemies respected him.

He was the chosen champion of the Lord and his thanes were the bravest in the land.

The Lord's champion, he never failed to win honor and glory in battle.

Yet his modesty was such that he was exalted far more than if he had boasted of his deeds.

And his deeds were many, against man and beast he was the scourge of many.

Grendel, descendent of Cain and wrecker of Heorot fell to his hand. His mother soon followed suit.

In the end it was a dragon, a fire-belcher, treasure-hoarder, harrower of the land that was his downfall.

When he was in need all but one of his thanes abandoned him.

Wiglaf son of Weohstan, stood by his lord and together through prowess of their strength they slew the monster.

Now our lord sleeps in eternal peace, looking out to sea, a beacon for travelers and wanderers alike.

And his name, Beowulf, shall ring forth forevermore. Protector of the people, scourge of demons.

- c. Draw an architectural drawing of Heort. You can use details from the text and fill in additional details from your imagination. You can make one detailed drawing or several sketches of various parts: the façade, the Great Hall, doorways, windows, throne, etc. Remember to label your drawings.

**Writing Tips**

Use an outline to organize your thoughts before you begin writing. This will help to ensure you make your points in a logical sequence and cover all the topics you want to include.



# Unit IV: David Copperfield

## Lesson 23

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### David Copperfield: The Hero as a Child

#### Lesson Goals

- Assess effectiveness of foreshadowing
- Evaluate how characters are introduced
- Identify particularly successful language and phrasing

#### Along the Way

As you read *David Copperfield*, keep in mind these thoughts:

- You will see footnotes throughout the text. You may find that these are not worth interrupting your reading for, in general. Occasionally you will want to check one if you are confused by the reference—footnote #2 in chapter 1 is an excellent example. For the most part, however, you will probably find that reading without interruption gives you a better understanding of the story and a more satisfying experience.
- When Davy is about to be sent away, his mother says, “Oh Davy! That you could have hurt anyone I love!” Why is she not equally disappointed and distraught about Mr. Murdstone’s behavior toward Davy, which caused the boy’s desperate, outraged response? Consider whether or not his mother wishes she could say the same thing to her new husband. If you think she might have wished to, consider why she felt she could not.
- The humor in this story asserts itself early and often, despite the frequently grim circumstances. The way Miss Murdstone continually looks for a hidden man in the house or young Davy tries to find out if it is possible to sleep with one eye open borders on hilarity, but is done in such a matter-of-fact, understated way that you almost miss it. This is another aspect of Dickens’s writing that contributes to the popularity and longevity of his books.

#### Assignments

##### Reading

1. Read chapters 1–4.
2. Record your impressions in your Reader’s Journal. While you read, keep your Reader’s Journal nearby to jot down unfamiliar words and keep track of characters and significant events. Include

any questions that come up for you, observations about how Dickens writes, and comments about how you feel about the characters and the story. This Reader's Journal is part of each lesson assignment and can be submitted with lesson 26.

## Writing

1. Use the following vocabulary words to describe characters you have met so far in this story. After looking up each word, write a sentence, in the style of Dickens, which uses each word to describe a character. Feel free to combine words in a single, long, convoluted sentence or to go off on a tangent in order to use a word.

Definitions are included to help when assessing student work. Students are not required to write definitions. When writing sentences in the style of Dickens, students are encouraged toward wordiness, complex descriptions, long sentences, and varied vocabulary.

propitiation *n.* the act of appeasing someone by giving or saying something desired.

perspicuously *adv.* expressing oneself in a clear and precise manner.

expostulate *v.* to express strong disagreement or disapproval.

imprecation *n.* offense or angry word; a curse.

sedulously *adv.* studiously; diligently.

### Student sample sentences:

Mr. Murdstone is a character to whom all around him must pay a propitiation; even when Davy's lesson is most sedulously completed, each bit of material is committed to memory and perspicuously recited, Mr. Murdstone is sure to expostulate about Davy's work and issue every imprecation possible on the poor boy. Mr. Murdstone is never appeased.

2. Create a list of character profiles. Begin by choosing four main characters. For each character, record physical descriptions, gestures, mannerisms or ways of speaking that are unique to that character. From these, find the one gesture, mannerism, or turn of phrase that most epitomizes that character. You will continue to add to this character list until you are finished with this unit. Add four characters for each lesson.

These character profiles will help students differentiate between the many characters, and focus on how Dickens introduces and develops characters. Students will add four characters to this list in each lesson.

### Sample student response:

Clara Peggotty is Mrs. Copperfield's lovable housekeeper. She is a stout figure who has difficulty keeping buttons on her dress. I picture her with curls, but I am again not sure whether that is fact or fiction. She is very kind to both Davy and his mother and is a very good, honest, character. The most distinguishing thing about Peggotty is her difficulty with buttons. They are often sailing off whenever she exerts herself.

3. For each of the four chapters, choose one scene that you find to be the essence or center of that chapter. For each scene you choose, write one paragraph explaining why you found the scene to be crucial. (This assignment is composed of four paragraphs, one for each chapter, each describing a scene and giving reasons why that scene is significant to the chapter.)

Student responses will vary, based on what they see as the emotional highpoint or lowpoint of the chapter. The description of the scene should highlight its significance. Look for students to include specific story details, character and place names, and a chronological retelling of events.

Student sample for Chapter 4:

Obviously, the most important scene from this terrible chapter is when we see Mr. Murdstone for what he truly is. After the marriage, Mr. Murdstone's sister, Miss Murdstone, comes to stay with her brother and his new wife to help keep house. She is a stern and cold woman, much like her brother. She too has a deep hatred for David and Peggotty. Upon her arrival she immediately begins changing things in the house to her approval. It is also decided that it is high time that David received schooling. He is expected to memorize impossible things and do all of his work without mistake. David is often nervous and makes mistake after mistake while they watched him. They begin reinforcing the curriculum by beating him and punishing him. At one point, he is taken to his room for a beating and, in a combination of self-defense, terror, and hatred for his beater, David bites one of Mr. Murdstone's unguarded hands. He is punished severely and we learn that he is to be sent off to boarding school in London.

4. Record your favorite phrases. Dickens writes about life with a familiarity that is comfortable and entertaining. Choose at least five phrases that you especially liked and make a note of why you liked each. For example:
  - Peggotty's finger was roughened "like a pocket nutmeg-grater" (24)—vivid image
  - The storeroom "is a place to be run past at night" (25)—familiar feeling
  - Peggotty watches the house out the church window "to make herself as sure as she can that it is not being robbed, or is not in flames" (27)—funny and revealing about her character

### Writing Tips

Emulating the writing style of someone else is a great exercise because it compels you to analyze what makes a certain style unique. Charles Dickens has a definite style, so when you are writing in Dickens's style, consider which elements of his writing style stand out most for you and attempt to imitate them. Don't be afraid to go overboard and exaggerate his style. Have fun with it!