

Advanced Placement in
English Literature and Composition

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Grendel

by John Gardner

written by Kay Hampson

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Grendel

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. trace the philosophical development of the narrator and protagonist from solipsism to empiricism.
2. examine the symbolism of the astrological signs.
3. discuss how the use of consonance and alliteration to create emphasis, unity, and rhythm.
4. examine the use of similes, metaphors, and personification.
5. analyze the view of women depicted in the novel.
6. examine the use of Biblical allusion and discuss its contributions to plot, character, and theme.
7. recognize the influence of the author's upbringing on his work.
8. explain how the retelling of a familiar story allows the author to concentrate on developing philosophical viewpoints.
9. interpret examples of dramatic and verbal irony.
10. identify and discuss the main themes:
 - Art has the power to change the world.
 - Emotional humanity in an indifferent, mechanical universe.
 - The meaning or meaninglessness of life.
 - The need for community.
11. respond to multiple-choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition Exam.
12. respond to writing prompts similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition Exam.

Background Lecture

John Gardner was born in Batavia, New York on July 21, 1933. His mother taught English, and his father was a lay preacher and a farmer. Gardner entered DePaw University in 1951, and graduated Phi Beta Kappa with his A.B. in 1955 from Washington University in Saint Louis. He received his M.A. from the State University of Iowa in 1956, and he finished his Ph.D. two years later, in 1958. Gardner began his career teaching medieval literature and creative writing at colleges. He moved around frequently because of his philosophical views and his strange teaching style. In 1969, he received a grant to work on the story of Grendel, a monster from the 8th century epic of *Beowulf*. His early writings had received mixed reviews, but *Grendel*, published in 1971, was named one of the year's best fiction books by *Time* and *Newsweek*.

In 1973, Gardner stopped teaching to concentrate on writing. Known by his contemporaries as a "Literary Outlaw," he caused debate with his controversial ideas about what fiction should be. His 1978 book *On Moral Fiction* was particularly controversial because Gardner criticized several contemporary authors.

In addition to *Grendel*, Gardner wrote several other novels, including *The Wreckage of Agathon*, *The Sunlight Dialogues*, and *October Light*. He also wrote children's books based on classic works of literature. Gardner divorced twice and was engaged a third time when he died in a motorcycle accident in Pennsylvania on September 14, 1982.

Grendel is the monster in the eighth-century epic *Beowulf*. John Gardner retells the tale from the monster's point of view. He uses the circumstances surrounding the beast and the beast's response to them to explore the philosophies of solipsism, existentialism, and empiricism, among others. Speaking of the monster, Grendel, John Gardner says he "wanted to go through the main ideas of Western Civilization...and go through them in the voice of the monster, with the story already taken care of, with the various philosophical attitudes, and see what I could do." Because the tale of *Beowulf* already had a familiar plot and established characters, Gardner was able to focus his attention on theme.

Philosophical Ideas Pertaining to *Grendel*

ASTROLOGY

The astrological cycle comprises twelve signs, each associated with a earth's position in space relative to the sun and other celestial bodies. The cycle begins in March, with Aries—the Ram—and ends in February, with Pisces—the Fish. Each of the signs is represented by a symbol, and those born under a particular sign are said to exhibit some common personality traits.

John Gardner weaves astrological symbolism into each chapters, following the annual cycle from Aries to Pisces. For example, the first chapter contains a ram, the symbol for Aries. Characters or situations exhibit traits common to each sign.

ASTROLOGICAL SIGN REFERENCE CHART

Astrological Sign	Symbol	Traits
Aries	Ram	Brave; acts before thinking, cyclical
Taurus	Bull	Objective, concrete, usually calm but narrow-minded and stubborn, exists alone
Gemini	Twin lambs	Versatile, superficial, quick witted, good with words, dual-natured
Cancer	Crab	Creative, close to family, nourishes
Leo	Lion—king of all Zodiacs	Dramatic, cheerful, bounces back from disappointment
Virgo	Virgins	Studious, knowledge seeking, uses common sense, can exchange old ideas for new ones (reborn)
Libra	Scale	Prefers peaceful environment, balanced personalities, conciliators
Scorpio	Scorpion	Persistent, fights for beliefs, drifts toward “dark side”
Sagittarius	Archer	Adventurous, impassioned, spontaneous, open-minded but devoutly religious
Capricorn	Horned goat	Determined, sense of obligation to care for dependents, somewhat pessimistic
Aquarius	A water bearer	Self-centered and somewhat aloof, focuses on individuality rather than being part of the group
Pisces	Fish	Sensitive and helpful, intuitive and not easily deceived, focuses on connectedness rather than individuality

SOLIPSISM

The fundamental basis for the philosophy of solipsism is a claim of unique existence; solipsism is the theory that the self is the only thing that can be known and verified. In the second chapter, Gardner begins exploring this philosophy through the character of Grendel. He says, “I alone exist...I create the whole universe, blink by blink.” After arriving back in his cave, Grendel says, “The world is all pointless accident...I exist, nothing else.”

EXISTENTIALISM

Existentialism states that *existence precedes essence*. This means that people are not defined by inherent qualities, but are instead defined by what they do. People are free to create their own meaning in life. There is, in fact, no meaning except what people create for themselves.

The philosophy embraces the idea that *humans* exist with individuality, with some distance between them and an indifferent, uncaring universe. Everything else (including monsters) simply exists without the freedom of choice, all part of a mechanical universe. Grendel realizes that he is simply one of the universe’s mechanical elements. He is merely a part of the universal clutter.

ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD’S METAPHYSICAL POSITION

“Importance is primarily monistic in its reference to the universe. Importance, limited to a finite individual occasion, ceases to be important...But expression is founded on the finite occasion.” In Chapter 5, the dragon’s ideas exalt the individual and present moment over caring for others or the eternal reign of the laws of nature.

Another of Whitehead’s concepts explored in Chapter 5 is that matter is divided into classes by its capacity for expression. Expression, in this case, can be loosely defined as the reaction to received stimuli. Therefore, inorganic matter lacks the capacity for individual expression. Vegetation, having no singular center of experience, has the capacity only for survival. Animal life has a singular center of experience, and can therefore express itself beyond purposes of survival; animals can have emotions. Human life moves beyond the degree of expression exhibited by animal life; humans not only have emotions, but also can conceive of an idea and then put that idea into effect.

Whitehead’s process philosophy defends theism but differs from the God of Abrahamic religions. Where the God of Abrahamic religion is above change, Whitehead views God as a growing and changing deity affected by temporal happenings. This view of God is explored in Chapter 9.

MACHIAVELLI'S PHILOSOPHY

Machiavellian philosophy is based on the premise that, after establishing power over a kingdom, the only matter of importance is to maintain that power with no sentiment toward obligations of any sort. Violence is an acceptable means of maintaining that power. This concept is developed in Chapter 8.

EMPIRICISM

Empiricism is the theory asserting that knowledge arises from sensory experience. When the empiricist begins questioning the existence of objects outside themselves, he begins thinking like a solipsist, who denies objects outside of themselves real existence. Chapter 12 explores empiricism, which will lead the monster back to solipsism.

NIHILISM

Nihilism is defined as an extreme form of skepticism denying the possibility of an objective basis for truth; in fact, a denial of all real existence. If all real existence is denied, then existence is meaningless. Nihilism shows itself in a total rejection of established laws and institutions.

PLATO'S PARABLE OF THE CAVE

In *The Republic*, Plato tells of a group of prisoners who have lived their entire lives in a cave, chained up and facing a wall. There is a fire behind the prisoners, and as things move around in front of this fire, shadows are cast onto the wall. The shadows are all the prisoners know of reality. When a prisoner is freed, that prisoner leaves the cave and discovers that the shadows on the wall are not reality; the prisoner can now see the true forms of reality rather than the shadows of reality the other prisoners see.

JOHN GARDNER (1933 – 1982)

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Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Which characters of the novel come closest to each of the heroic types: epic, tragic, romantic, and anti-hero?
2. Examine the ways in which Wealtheow is a foil for Grendel.
3. Consider the denotation of “mechanical.” Examine how Gardner uses “mechanical” to develop ideas and create unity.
4. Grendel is an observer of humans. Trace the evolution of his thoughts regarding man from when he was a young monster to after his visit with the dragon.
5. In what ways did *Grendel* serve as a vehicle for John Gardner to explore and comment on various philosophies?
6. Examine one of the novel’s themes. What techniques does Gardner use to develop that theme?
7. John Gardner’s father was a lay minister and raised his son with Christian beliefs. How does this novel reflect the influence of his family’s belief? In what other ways does John Gardner express himself in this novel?
8. Gardner assigns a different astrological sign to each chapter. Do the signs enhance or distract from the story? Do they suggest the meaning in each chapter, or does their use seem contrived?
9. Gardner introduced many philosophical viewpoints: solipsism, existentialism, Machiavellian theory, Whitehead’s metaphysics, empiricism, and nihilism. Choose one of the theories and explain how it applies to this novel.
10. Gardner uses several rhetorical devices in *Grendel*, including alliteration, consonance, personification, simile, and metaphor. Choose one and explain how Gardner uses it to construct and convey meaning.
11. Chart the appearances of women in the novel. What was the role of women in medieval times? How are they portrayed?

Practice Free Response Questions

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 1

In many novels and plays, a seemingly-common object takes on significance as a symbol, thus helping to shape the meaning of the work. Consider John Gardner's use of astrological signs in *Grendel* and write a well-organized essay in which you explain the significance of the signs and how they function as a symbol in this novel.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 2

Literary allusion is a common device for authors to introduce new themes and concepts into their work. Identify a literary allusion in John Gardner's *Grendel* and examine how Gardner uses this reference to emphasize his own theme. Do not merely compare and contrast this novel with the work alluded to.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 3

The essential nature of humankind has been a fundamental philosophical and religious issue since the beginning of recorded history. Write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how John Gardner examines this issue and the conclusions to which he arrives in *Grendel*.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 4

Read the passage from the middle of Chapter 8 of John Gardner's *Grendel*, beginning with "To step out of the region of legality requires an extraordinary push of circumstance" and ending on with "Hrothulf puckered his lips, stared thoughtfully past him." Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze the ideas that Red Horse presents and examine how they resonate with Machiavellian thought.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 5

Carefully read the passage beginning near the middle of Chapter 8 of John Gardner's *Grendel* with "Hrothgar's nephew was kind..." and ending with "I cannot believe such monstrous energy of grief can lead to nothing!" Then, write a well-organized essay in which you examine the character of Hrothgar as Grendel perceives him. Be certain to include some discussion of the extent to which Grendel is a reliable narrator. Be certain not to summarize the plot or offer a mere character description.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 6

Carefully read the following four passages from John Gardner's *Grendel*:

- the opening paragraph of Chapter 2
- the paragraph near the end of Chapter 8 that begins, "How, if I know all this, You may ask, could I hound him...",
- the paragraph in the middle of Chapter 11 that begins, "So now, for once unsure of victory, I might set limits to desire...",
- and the paragraph in the middle of Chapter 12 that begins, "The world is my bone-cave, I shall not want..."

Then write a well-reasoned and –supported essay in which you analyze Gardner's use of the word *coffin* to both provide unity and propel the development of plot, theme, and character. Do not merely summarize the plot or describe how the word is used.

PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 7

Read the passage in Chapter 2 of John Gardner's *Grendel*, beginning, "That night, for the first time, I saw men," and ending, "...I felt the two trees that held me falling, and I was tumbling, free, into the grass." In a well-organized essay, examine Grendel's first impression of man and man's first impression of Grendel and the techniques Gardner uses to provide the reader a glimpse of both the human characters and Grendel himself. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Practice Multiple-Choice Questions

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 1-8

Carefully read the passage in Chapter 1 beginning with “The first grim stirrings of springtime come (as I knew they must, having seen the ram)...” and ending with “They’d map out roads through Hell with their crackpot theories! I recall his laugh).” Then, select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

1. The “Tuberstirrings in the backsweet duff of the forest overhead” are among the indications that the
 - A. cave is fertile.
 - B. season is changing.
 - C. moon and stars are shining.
 - D. winter is approaching.
 - E. food will be plentiful.
2. As used in this passage, the different forms of the word *mechanic* most nearly mean
 - A. spontaneous.
 - B. perfunctory.
 - C. individually.
 - D. spirited.
 - E. materialistic.
3. One primary feature of Grendel’s home is that it is
 - A. subterranean.
 - B. flooded with starlight.
 - C. beneath the woods.
 - D. occupied by his brothers.
 - E. near the sea.
4. From these passages the reader can infer that the author

“They will not snatch me in a thousand years, unless, in lunatic fit of religion, I jump.”

“Some god is angry.”

“I hear the people praying—whimpering, whining, mumbling, pleading—to their numerous sticks and stones.”

- A. entertains a Christian worldview.
- B. has a high opinion of religion in general.
- C. has no opinion about the validity of religion.
- D. entertains negative views about religion.
- E. does not have strong feelings about religion.

5. All of the following are effects Grendel has on the animals as he approaches EXCEPT
 - A. owls move silently.
 - B. lizards sneak away.
 - C. wolves glance awkwardly.
 - D. hedgehogs scamper.
 - E. stags cower.
6. In answer to Grendel's question, "Why are we here?" his mother responds
 - A. "Don't ask!"
 - B. "It is a terrible secret."
 - C. "Ask the dragon."
 - D. "I have human in me."
 - E. by saying nothing.
7. Which of the following is an incident that occurs each year when Grendel arrives at Hrothgar's meadhall?
 - A. Hrothgar rushes forward wielding his sword.
 - B. Grendel finds the door off the hinges.
 - C. The drunken Thanes hardly rise from their beds.
 - D. The blind Shaper blows out the lights.
 - E. Hrothgar's wife makes a scene.
8. From the personification "Morning nails my eyes," the reader can conclude that
 - A. light is painful.
 - B. Grendel has a headache.
 - C. some god is angry.
 - D. punishment is on its way.
 - E. Grendel can see as clear as day.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 9-15

Carefully read the passage starting at the beginning of Chapter 4 and ending with “Oh what a conversion!” Then, select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

9. The theme most supported by this passage is
 - A. the power of art.
 - B. the mechanical universe vs. emotions of man.
 - C. the meaninglessness of life.
 - D. the struggle of man with society.
 - E. the importance of family.
10. The inspiration for the Shaper came from the
 - A. throne of God.
 - B. reader's imagination.
 - C. glory of generations of sons.
 - D. dragon.
 - E. greatest meadhall ever built.
11. Which of the following lines supports the astrological motif of this chapter?
 - A. “His fingers picked infallibly...”
 - B. “I backed away, crablike.”
 - C. “A blind selector, almost mindless; a bird.”
 - D. “I snatched up a snake from beside my foot.”
 - E. “The honeysweet lure of the harp no longer mocked me.”
12. The following, “...the words stitched together out of ancient songs, the scenes interwoven out of dreary tales, made a vision without seams...” contains an example of a
 - A. chiasmus.
 - B. zeugma.
 - C. metaphor.
 - D. personification.
 - E. simile.
13. There are many allusions to Judeo-Christian scripture in this passage including all of the following EXCEPT
 - A. feuding brothers.
 - B. creation.
 - C. a snake.
 - D. a psalmist.
 - E. virgin birth.

14. The tears that Grendel sheds at the end of the passage indicate the
- A. depth of his relationship with humans.
 - B. depth of his religious experience.
 - C. complete rejection of Shaper's songs.
 - D. victory of evil over good.
 - E. new understanding that his race was not cursed.
15. Why is Grendel baffled after stepping on something fleshy?
- A. Someone had stolen the man's clothes.
 - B. Someone cut the man's throat.
 - C. Humans all seem to be hypocrites.
 - D. He could not figure out why someone hadn't eaten him.
 - E. The words to the song being sung in the meadhall.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 16-21

Carefully read the passage from the beginning of Chapter 5 and ending, “So much for free will and intercession!” Then, select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

16. Grendel has sought out the dragon in order to
 - A. confiscate his gold.
 - B. learn about the Shaper.
 - C. learn about free will.
 - D. worship at his feet.
 - E. seek prophecy of his future.
17. Each of the following could be used to describe the dragon EXCEPT that he
 - A. has a loud voice, but not too loud.
 - B. laughs uncontrollably.
 - C. smiles a most grotesque smile.
 - D. has man-sized talons.
 - E. has eyes that betray his youth.
18. Using an all-seeing dragon to represent God, the author presents a worldview that includes which of the following ideas?
 - A. free will can change things in the future.
 - B. events are set from the beginning and therefore unchanging.
 - C. intercession by supplicants can influence the future.
 - D. knowledge is a cause of the future.
 - E. perception of future events is normal for humans.
19. After initial introductions, the dragon’s primary concern becomes that Grendel
 - A. has spoiled his treasures.
 - B. may not have come alone.
 - C. is disinterested.
 - D. has come to remove some of his jewels.
 - E. may be too weak to carry out the dragon’s plans.
20. Grendel decides to steer clear of humans because
 - A. he fears them.
 - B. the dragon mocks his size.
 - C. his breath may burn them.
 - D. the dragon advises him to.
 - E. he doesn’t want to frighten them.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 21-27

Carefully read the passage starting with the opening of Chapter 8 and ending, “There are plenty of fools who would.” Then, select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

21. The purpose of Wealtheow’s poetic discourse beside Hrothulf’s bed is to
 - A. examine the relationship of the cousins.
 - B. foreshadow impending doom.
 - C. explain her sweet disposition.
 - D. indicate the older cousins may rule the kingdom.
 - E. interpret the distribution of the gold rings.
22. All of the following statements may be concluded about Red Horse EXCEPT that Red Horse
 - A. believes Hrothulf may usurp the authority.
 - B. is an old man with white hair who appears startled perpetually.
 - C. encourages the violence already growing in Hrothulf.
 - D. counsels Hrothulf to find a strong man to overthrow his uncle.
 - E. considers the total ruin of existing government to be positive.
23. “Law rules the land. Men’s violence is chained to good (i.e., to the king): legitimate force that chops the bread-thief’s neck and wipes its ax.” is an example of _____ thought.
 - A. transcendental
 - B. existentialistic
 - C. solipsistic
 - D. Machiavellian
 - E. metaphysical
24. The astrological sign of Scorpio is represented in this chapter by
 - A. Wealtheow.
 - B. the Shaper.
 - C. the king.
 - D. Hrothulf.
 - E. Grendel.
25. Which of the following best describes Hrothulf?
 - A. King Hrothgar’s cousin
 - B. Halga’s son
 - C. heir to the throne
 - D. Grendel’s nemesis
 - E. an orphaned infant

26. All of the following are true of Hrothulf EXCEPT that he is
- A. uncouth in manners.
 - B. gifted with a proud heart.
 - C. a fourteen-year-old.
 - D. as quiet as a moon.
 - E. ungraceful in movement.
27. The nut tree metaphorically represents
- A. the king.
 - B. a mild deception.
 - C. the queen.
 - D. strange providence.
 - E. the nephew.

PRACTICE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS 28-33

Carefully read the passage from Chapter 11 beginning with “Afraid or not, I would go to the meadhall,” and ending approximately three pages later with “But wait up for Grendel for one night’s space and all your glorious successes will be done with.” Then select the best answers to the multiple-choice questions that follow.

28. Grendel’s thoughts, “*Then I alone exist*, I said” emphasize the philosophy of
- A. existentialism.
 - B. transcendentalism.
 - C. solipsism.
 - D. Machiavellian.
 - E. Empiricism.
29. Up to this point, what had Grendel lived for?
- A. to gain understanding of the human race
 - B. to challenge Beowulf
 - C. to murder the Scyldings
 - D. to sing songs of creation
 - E. to take care of his mother
30. How did the beardless leader of the Geats stop Unferth’s mockery?
- A. He shifted his weight and placed his hand on his sword.
 - B. He convinced the crowd by his calmness, proving his insanity.
 - C. He exposed Unferth’s lack of glorious deeds, save murdering his brothers.
 - D. He joined the laughter and continued eating, disarming most in the meadhall.
 - E. He convinced all in attendance of his superhuman strength.
31. It can be concluded from this passage that Unferth has which of the following attitudes toward Grendel?
- A. great respect
 - B. utter disdain
 - C. no opinion
 - D. deep friendship
 - E. utter control
32. With both the Danes and the Geats at the meadhall, the King’s main focus was to
- A. keep the men from fighting each other.
 - B. keep the Queen from entering the hall.
 - C. enjoy a brawl before the end of the meal.
 - D. see Unferth destroyed.
 - E. see his nephew killed.

33. "Theology does not thrive in the world of action and reaction, change: it grows on calm, like the scum on a stagnant pool." This statement may indicate that the author regards theology with
- A. esteem.
 - B. disdain.
 - C. indifference.
 - D. incuriousness.
 - E. respect.

Answers and Explanations

1. Since there is not light under the ground where Grendel lives the cave being fertile (A) is not a possibility. The tuberstirrings and the forest being overhead are indicators that Grendel is in a cave and therefore cannot see the moon and stars shining ruling out (C). Answer (D) is the opposite of the correct answer and (E) there is no indication of food being plentiful although in the springtime it may be. **The correct answer is (B). The topic sentence in this paragraph begins “the first grim stirrings of springtime come.” The ram and tuberstirrings are two springtime occurrences. A tuber is the part of the root where nutrients are stored for the winter and in the spring provide energy for regrowth. The season is changing.**
2. The different forms of the word mechanic(al) in this passage most nearly mean habitual, routine, automatic. (A) Spontaneous and (D) spirited are antonyms of this meaning. Individually (C) is incorrect because the mechanical routine is followed by many. (E) materialistic is simply a distracter. Perfunctory, meaning performed as a routine duty is the most correct. **The correct answer is (B).**
3. Grendel’s home is occupied by his mother but no mention is made of siblings. Therefore (A) is incorrect. The only light is the red from the fires, thus ruling out (C). The mention of a snow-capped mountain has to do with Grendel’s extreme weight and not place; therefore (D) is not correct. (E) is not correct because Grendel stands on the cliff-edge challenging fate. **Therefore (B) is correct. Grendel swims up through the luminous green of the mere.**
4. Answer choice (A) is the antithesis of the correct answer and (B) is very much of the same persuasion. (C) and (E) can be ruled out because of the word choice of the author; he uses words with negative connotation such as whimpering, whining. By using the word lunatic, he obviously has strong feelings about religion. **The correct answer is (D). Since the author uses a lower case “g” in god and says they are praying to sticks and stones, he does not entertain a Christian worldview.**
5. Each of the answer choices reflect an effect Grendel has on the animals as he approaches Hrothgar’s Hall. However, the hedgehogs are included with the cowering stags. **They do not scamper, therefore the correct answer is (D).**
6. Each of the answers (A) through (D) can be ruled out because the mother doesn’t speak. The correct answer is (E). Although her wiggling claws implore, “Don’t ask,” the paragraph states that she never speaks.
7. Four of the answers can be ruled out because each of the events is associated with the wrong perpetrator. Grendel normally tears the door off its hinges. The Shaper goes out the back window, and the Thanes blow out the lights. The King simply peers in from his bedroom in back while the Thanes bear the sword. The correct answer is (E). Hrothgar’s wife does make a scene.

8. While it is true that Grendel has a headache (B) or may be true that some god may be angry (C), these explanations do not interpret the personification. There is no indication that (D) punishment is on the way. (E) can be ruled out as it does not match the tone of the personification. The verb, nailing, is strong and surely would be painful. **Therefore the reader can discern that the correct answer is (A). The light is painful, as well it would when one is coming out from a dark cave.**
9. Each of the answer choices is a thematic possibility. Some of the choices apply to other sections of this novel. The beginning of the novel discusses the mechanical universe (B) but does not compare it to the emotions of man and are not addressed in this section. Answer (C), the meaninglessness of life, may be discernible from Grendel but is not addressed here. Answer (E) is discussed in other section, but this section is all about the Shaper and his singing, the power of his song to create, the power of his song that built the hall. Songs are art. **The correct answer is (A) the power of art.**
10. The Shaper is associated with several allusions throughout but the passage does not indicate his inspiration came from the throne of God (A), as God in this writing has a lowercase “g.” The reference to the generations of sons (C) is speaking of the future generations, not past generations, and therefore their glory could not have inspired the Shaper. There is no mention of a dragon (D). (E) can be ruled out because it is from his songs the meadhall was built, not the other way around. **The correct answer is (B). The author writes that the Shaper is “inspired by winds (or whatever you please).” Wind is not an option, therefore the “you” referred to—the reader—can imagine whatever he would like.**
11. There are twelve astrology signs. (A) and (E) do not mention any of the astrological symbols. (C) mentions a bird and (D) mentions a snake, which are both not astrological symbols. **The correct answer is (B). Of all the items mentioned in the sentences, the crab is the only one that is associated with an astrological sign.**
12. The example does not contain a chiasmus (A), a reversal of words; a zeugma (B), a word used to modify a group of words having different applications to each; a simile (E), a comparison using like or as; nor does the example give human qualities (D) to an inanimate object. **The correct answer is (C).**
13. The feuding brothers (A) alluded to are Cain and Abel. The entire passage alludes to the idea of creation (B). The psalmist (D) is alluded to by the Shaper. The snake (C) is an allusion to the snake in the Garden of Eden. **The correct answer is (E). All five options are interwoven into scripture, but the story does not allude to the virgin birth.**

14. This passage does not deal with Grendel's relationship with humans and therefore (A) can be ruled out. Grendel is not rejecting the Shaper's songs (C) or there would be no tears. While there may be a victory of evil over good (D), it does not seem to be the reason for Grendel's tears. (E) cannot be the answer as he learns just the opposite: he is the dark side, the cursed race. **The correct answer is (B). Grendel has a deep religious experience. This passage is a microcosm of a church service. The harp begins to play, the crowds hush, the message is delivered, Grendel believes and is converted as evidenced by his tears.**
15. Someone had stolen the man's clothes (A) and cut the man's throat (B), but those acts alone do not baffle Grendel. The singing and talking, which continue in the hall (E) as though nothing has happened are also confusing but not the most baffling. Grendel understands that men do not eat men, so he does not find it strange that the man isn't eaten (D). Grendel is, however, baffled by the hypocrisy of humans. It is the cumulative effect of (A), (B), and (E) that baffles Grendel. **These are summed up in the correct answer (C).**
16. Grendel has not come for gold (A), to seek prophecy (E), gain understanding about free will (C), nor to worship the dragon (D). **The correct answer is (B). Late in this passage the Dragon states, "You want to know about the Shaper."**
17. Each of the answers (A) through (D) is included in the description of the dragon in some form or fashion **except (E), youthful.**
18. The worldview expressed does not embrace the idea that either free will (A) or intercession by supplicants (C) can change the future. Nor does it present the idea that knowledge (D) or perception of (E) of the future can change anything. The dragon, representing an all-seeing God, is used to present the worldview that God set events in motion from the beginning and they are not changed by prayers. **Therefore answer (B) is correct.**
19. While there are many jewels in the cave, Grendel is too frightened to remove any; therefore answer (D) is not correct. Grendel is anything but disinterested, thus eliminating (C). The dragon has no plan for Grendel to carry out, so Grendel's weakness (E) is not an issue. There is no indication that anyone else came with Grendel, eliminating (B). The dragon is making fun of humans and the way they get scared enough to pee in their pants. He thinks the unpleasant thought and then asks Grendel, "You didn't [pee your pants] did you?" After Grendel denies urinating the dragon comments "Good ... That's valuable stuff you're standing on." **Therefore the correct answer is (A). Grendel's urine had not spoiled the treasures under where he was standing.**
20. Grendel has no fear of the humans, so (A) can be ruled out. It is not Grendel who breathes fire, so (C) can be ruled out. While the dragon does make fun of Grendel's small size (B), it is not the reason that Grendel avoids humans. **The correct answer is (E). Grendel has decided that scaring the humans isn't very nice and so he will eat one occasionally but avoid scaring them.**

21. (A) might tempt some students but is too vague and general to satisfy as the best answer. The discourse does not discuss Wealtheow's disposition (C) whatsoever. (D) is not correct because the cousins are not older, they are younger. While Wealtheow does say that soon the gold rings will belong to the younger cousins (E), she does not provide any interpretation. **The correct answer is (B). The final statement in her discourse, "and now I do not sleep," foreshadows upcoming trouble.**
22. Red Horse expresses his belief that Hrothulf may usurp the cousin's authority (A) to the kingdom by calling him "my beloved prince." The description of Red Horse includes all aspects of answer (B). It is true that Red Horse encourages the violence in Hrothulf (C) and that it was already growing, according to Grendel's assessment. Red Horse considers the "total ruin of institutions ... to be an act of creation," so one can deduce that he considers it a positive move (E) as creation has positive connotation. **The only statement that cannot be concluded is (D). Red Horse does not suggest Hrothulf find someone strong to overthrow his uncle but says "if the Revolution comes to grief, it will be because you and those you lead..."**
23. The students should have some background from the book study about each of the terms included as answer choices. Transcendental (A) is the idea of surpassing the normal level of knowledge, and its connotation is peaceful. Existentialistic (B) is the idea that people are individuals and free to create their own meaning in life. Solipsistic (C) is the idea that "I" is what everything is about. Metaphysical (E) is a term closely related in meaning to transcendental. **The correct answer is (D). Machiavellian thought states that all that matters after establishing power over a kingdom are the maintenance of that power with no sentiment toward obligations of any sort.**
24. Each of the answer choices is a character in the story. But **only Hrothulf (D) is described as the "sweet scorpion" while sitting between his two cousins as he cleans his knife.** He is the one foreshadowed to be lying in wait for his prey, his cousins, as a scorpion waits in hiding for its prey.
25. Hrothulf is not King Hrothgar's cousin (A) but is cousin to the king's children. He is not the next heir to the throne (C); his cousins are. He is not Grendel's nemesis (D) for as a nemesis, he would have to be strong and good. While Hrothulf is indeed orphaned (E), he is not an infant. **The correct answer is (B). In the opening it is stated that Halga, King Hrothgar's brother, is killed; and Hrothulf, an orphan, will come to Hrothgar's castle. Hrothulf is the son of Halga, Hrothgar's younger brother.**
26. When Hrothulf arrives we are informed he is 14 (C), quiet as a moon (D), ungraceful in movement (E), and gifted with a proud heart (B). Hrothulf is not unmannerly. At first introduction he says, "It is very kind of you, madam, to take me in." **The correct answer is (A).**

27. The tree represents power so both (B) and (E) can be ruled out, as neither has power. While the phrase “strange providence” (D) is used in the metaphor, it is not part of the interpretation. The queen (C) in some cultures may represent power but in this culture the woman has no power. Wealthow is more of a nurturer than one who would cause desolation. **The correct answer is (A). The tree metaphorically represents the king; he supplies for his people but prevents any powers from prospering in his shadow.**
28. Each of these terms—(B), (C), and (D)—is explored in the study of the book. Empiricism (E) is a philosophy asserting that knowledge arises from sensory experience and can be eliminated. **The correct answer is (A). This passage examines the idea that we create our own nature. I embody...I saw...I glimpsed...I exist. Existentialism is all about “I.”**
29. Much of Grendel’s time is spent studying the humans (A) but it is not what he lives for. Beowulf has not been Grendel’s motivation (B). Singing songs (D) is the job of the Shaper. Grendel does not take care of his mother (E) and in fact humors her as he wills. **The correct answer is (C). Grendel has set his sweet desire on the Scyldings. In fact, if they were gone he asks, “What would I live for? I’d have to move.”**
30. While many stopped laughing after his retelling of the battle, it was his challenge to Unferth identifying the lack of glorious deeds and exposing the horrible deed of his killing his own brothers, **establishing (C) as the best answer.** The other answers contain something mentioned in the section but are misconstrued in some way to make them false.
31. Unferth, being top man in Hrothgar’s hall, had no control (E) and no friendship (D) with Grendel. (B) is eliminated by the fact that Unferth is so certain the Stranger will not be able to defeat Grendel. (C) is clearly eliminated by the very fact that Grendel is a famous and common topic of conversation in the meadhall. **When Unferth speaks of Grendel, he speaks of the creature’s strength and cunning. Thus, (A) is the best answer.**
32. Although the king may suspect his nephew’s intentions, there is no indication in this passage that he wishes for the nephew to be killed (E). Because of the touchy situation, the queen was not present at the meadhall and would not be entering (B). The king did not want to have a brawl (C), as he did not want their abilities to be wasted on each other. The king did not wish to see Unferth (D). **The correct answer is (E). His goal for the evening was to keep the two groups from wasting their fighting skills on each other (B).**
33. The comparing of theology to the scum on a pond would indicate that the author neither esteems (A) nor respects (E) it. Such strong words would rule out indifference (C). **The correct answer is (B). The analogy used has negative connotation and indicates disdain.**

Grendel

Chapter 1

1. In the first paragraph, what do Grendel's actions indicate about him?

Grendel acts like a spoiled child when the old ram doesn't do what he wishes. He stamps his feet, shakes his fist, and lets out a loud cry. These actions are indicative of self-centeredness.

2. From what point of view is the story told?

The story is told in first person, from Grendel's point of view.

3. What astrological sign is implied in Chapter 1? What does the sign represent?

The astrological sign implied is Aries, the ram. Aries represents the beginning of a new cycle, a new season, a new year.

4. What role do cycles, represented by Aries and the cycle of the zodiac, play in the chapter?

Gardner provides several examples of repeating cycles. First, Grendel describes the ram as suffering from the same unrest that he has suffered from year after year. Second, Grendel repeatedly attacks Hrothgar's meadhall, and the humans react the same way every time. Third, the sun drives Grendel back to his cave every morning.

5. "The sun spins mindlessly overhead, the shadows lengthen and shorten as if by plan" is an example of consonance. Why does the author use this consonance?

The repetition of the "s" sound creates unity and emphasizes the unintelligible mindlessness of the cycles being described.

6. What marks the new season for Grendel?

Grendel senses stirrings of new growth in the forest overhead. He is also aware of hunger, which sends him to the oak door of Hrothgar's meadhall.

7. What does Grendel find ironic and humorous when he raids the hall?

Grendel finds it humorous that the first to escape is the blind Shaper, who heads out the back in a single bound as the others blow out the lights thinking that the monster cannot see when it is dark. In fact, the monster sees fine in the dark; it is the Thanes who cannot see.

8. What are Hrothgar's society's views on God? What is Grendel's response?

There is a god, and he must be angry with the people as a result of their sin. As an act of propitiation, the people pray and build a funeral pyre. Singing, they offer to the fire not only the dead, but also golden rings, swords, and helmets. Grendel is enraged by their joy; it seems to him that Hrothgar's people somehow believe they have won.

9. What about the religious act causes Grendel angst?

Grendel himself does not have any hope, and he sees existence as a never-ending cycle leading nowhere. For the people to embrace the idea of a god enrages him because if there were a god then there would be hope, a plan, a reason for living.

Chapter 2

1. Describe Grendel's childhood.

Grendel spends his time playing alone in the underground cave, which is guarded by a pool of firesnakes. He plays with invisible friends as he explores the halls and chambers. Of all the creatures in the cave, only his mother ever pays attention to him. She does not speak, but when he cries, she smashes him to her fat, limp breast and nurses him.

2. What is the purpose of Grendel's encounter with the bull in this chapter?

Just as Grendel's encounter with the ram in Chapter 1 suggested the zodiac sign of Aires and the beginning of a number of cycles, now the encounter with the bull alludes to the second sign in the zodiac cycle: Taurus, the Bull.

3. In what way is Grendel's leaving his cave similar to the experience of the men in Plato's allegory?

On the literal level, Grendel has spent his entire childhood in a cave and is only now coming to see and experience the "outside world." On an allegorical level, just as the residents of Plato's cave had no concept of reality and believed that shadows were truth, Grendel is now growing to begin to understand a reality of which he had not previously conceived.

4. What evidence is there in this chapter that Grendel is a solipsist?

The fundamental basis for the philosophy of solipsism is a claim of unique existence. Grendel says, "I alone exist...I create the whole universe, blink by blink." After arriving back in his cave, Grendel says, "The world is all pointless accident...I exist, nothing else."

5. Why do you suspect Grendel's mother comes to his rescue the second time he calls for her and not the first time?

Knowing Grendel's aversion to daylight, one can assume his mother may not have come to his rescue the first time because of the light.

6. What is Grendel's first assessment of humans?

He notices first that everything else is quiet in the presence of man. The man is small, in comparison to him, and has naked hands. The men speak the same language as Grendel except that while Grendel understands them, they don't seem to understand him. He discerns that humans are rational creatures and not "mechanical."

7. Define *mechanical*. What does Gardner mean when he describes processes and being as "mechanical"?

Mechanical is defined as acting or performing without spontaneity or individuality; lacking spirit; habitual or routine; controlled or affected by physical forces; subordinating the spiritual to the material. The use of this term and its derivatives solidifies the thought that the world simply exists and does what it always does...there is no reasoning, just existing. Grendel emerges from his cave as all monsters do when they are hungry. The stars do what they always do in the heavens. The bull fights with his head low as he always does. By using this unifying term, Gardner causes the reader to compare humans to monsters, stars, and bulls and leads them to the same conclusion as Grendel. Humankind is no dull mechanical bull—humans have reason, individuality, and spirit.

8. What insight does Grendel receive when he realizes he is "not that which observes!" What philosophical idea does this paragraph introduce?

Grendel realizes that he is one of the mechanical happenings. He is simply part of the universal clutter. This paragraph introduces the philosophy of existentialism, a philosophy embracing the idea that humans exist with individuality, with some distance between them and the uncaring universe, while all else, including monsters, exists without the freedom of choice, part of a mechanical, hopeless universe.

9. Compare the opening paragraph with the closing two paragraphs.

Chapter two begins and ends with poetic flair: "talking, talking, spinning a spell..." and "talking, talking, spinning a skin..." Perhaps the two indicate a change in the monster; he goes from spinning a spell, which is associated with evil, to spinning a skin, which is associated with something more human.

Chapter 3

1. At what stage of life is Grendel?

Chapter three jumps forward to a time when Hrothgar is old and Grendel is full-grown.

2. What effect does Gardner create with his use of polysyndeton and asyndeton?

Both of these rhetorical devices are used for similar purposes. Not only are they used to make a given list seem endless, but they are also used for emphasis.

3. What role do women play in this society?

The women work the ground, and milk and feed the animals. When the men come home from hunting, the women prepare the food. The women eat after the men have been served. Women service the sexual needs of the men. Occasionally, a female “who was asking for it” will get hurt.

4. What is Grendel implying when he makes the observation that “no wolf was so vicious to other wolves”?

Grendel is saying that animals are not nearly as vicious as humans; at least they do not devour their own kind. Grendel is revolted by the plans of men against their own kind.

5. Gemini is the astrological sign of this chapter. Identify how Gardner weaves the symbol into this chapter.

The wobbly twins symbolize Gemini. The twins represent the dual nature of those born under this sign. Duality is also represented in the way Grendel’s understanding of the world changes after the Shaper sings. Grendel knows that the history of the Scyldings is different from the way the Shaper has represented it, but the song is so powerful that Grendel is forced to recognize the song as “true” as well. He is unable to reconcile these opposing viewpoints.

6. What signs of social or cultural progress does Grendel observe?

Grendel observes that Hrothgar no longer fights those closest to him, but instead requires some payment from them. The grouping of different clans is the rudimentary beginnings of a city. Roads are built to unite the bands of men under one king. The idea of the city-state is being born.

7. How does the Shaper's song affect Grendel? How does it affect others in the kingdom?

The Shaper's song creates confusion for Grendel but draws him toward the new belief system. Most of the others in the kingdom are encouraged and hopeful, convinced the world has been changed.

8. What is Grendel's response to the song?

Grendel finds himself being drawn into the transmuted truth that the Shaper sings about, even though he knows the Shaper's truth is not accurate. Conflicted, he runs off, mentally reviewing what he knows to be true.

9. How does Gardner express his political views on the environment?

Hrothgar's people, and, by extension, humankind, are portrayed as destructive of the environment. Gardner writes that the humans "hacked down trees...blistered the land with peasant huts...till the forest looked like an old dog dying of mange. They thinned out the game, killed birds for sport, set accidental fires...their sheep killed hedges...and their pigs nosed up the very roots of what might have grown."

10. How does Gardner depict the Shaper in a religious light? What religious statement may Gardner be making?

The Shaper appears religious because he arrives with his harp, a possible allusion to the biblical King David, and sings his songs to a hushed audience, transforming them from a lordless group of marauders to a king-led army that can seize the oceans and farthest stars in Hrothgar's name. The Shaper, inspired by the winds, a possible allusion to New Testament depictions of the Holy Spirit, seems like a timeless being brought "down blindman's alleys of time and space to Hrothgar's famous hall." Grendel responds to the poetry with tears and tenderness, but he also realizes that the message delivered by the Shaper is made up of lies, designed to deceive the listeners. Gardner might be suggesting that institutional religion—human accounts of higher truths—are possibly intentional fictions.

Chapter 4

1. What is the effect of the alliteration and consonance with which Gardner opens this chapter? Why would Gardner employ these devices at the beginning of this chapter?

The alliteration and consonance both enhance the rhythm and musicality of the passage. These sound devices set the stage for a chapter focused on a character who uses his harp to convey stories.

2. Interpret the following sentence, paying close attention to Gardner's use of the colon and the use of parentheses:

"He built this hall by the power of his songs: created with casual words its grave mor(t)ality."

The colon is, of course, a linguistic equal sign: what comes before is essentially the same in importance and meaning as what comes after. The first clause recounts that the great meadhall was first the Shaper's idea, the subject of his songs. It was only by the songs' inspiration that Hrothgar built it. By the same token, the religion/morality of society are created by the Shaper, as will be the society's ultimate end. The power of the Shaper's words to plant ideas in others' minds is emphasized in both clauses. The (t) suggests the ironic closeness of religion and death— notions of which are both shaped by the Shaper.

3. How does Gardner represent the astrological sign of Cancer in Chapter 4?

The symbol of Cancer is the crab, which is mentioned a couple of times in this chapter. Cancer has two distinct characteristics that Gardner weaves throughout the chapter. The first characteristic is creativity: the Shaper's songs inspire Hrothgar to build his great meadhall. The second characteristic of Cancer is that of a nourisher: the Shaper's songs fuel the growth of religion, which nourishes the world he has created.

4. Who or what inspires the Shaper's songs? What does this say about the beliefs Gardner is expressing?

Gardner does not explicitly tell the reader who or what inspires the Shaper's songs; he writes that the Shaper is "inspired by winds (or whatever you please)." The "winds" may be an allusion to the Christian notions of the Holy Spirit or Judeo-Christian notions of the "breath of God." Gardner is quick, however, to qualify the assumption the idea that the Shaper might be divinely inspired by adding "or whatever you please." There is no certain inspiration for the Shaper's songs.

5. What are some likely reasons for Gardner's frequent allusions to Judeo-Christian scripture and tradition?

There are several possible reasons. It may be that, as Gardner explores a variety of philosophical systems, he wants to include the two that were the predominant Western religions at the time he wrote the book. He may also simply be acknowledging that the Beowulf-poet wrote from a Judeo-Christian perspective and also alluded to this tradition. As Gardner was brought up a Christian, and his father was a lay minister, Gardner could be simply drawing upon his own heritage. He may be suggesting, however, given Grendel's awareness of the Shaper's lies, that the Judeo-Christian view of the universe is a falsehood.

6. Why is the Shaper an apt name for this character?

The Shaper uses art to shape the beliefs of the village. His songs can inspire great things.

7. Why might Grendel be considered a modern monster?

Grendel may be considered a modern monster because he addresses his audience, the reader, directly. He is shown to have feelings, even, at times a repentant heart. His language, in some ways modern although not understandable by the humans, incorporates up-to-date derogatory curses. Instead of being acted on by society, he seems to think he has an elevated place and is acting upon society.

Chapter 5

1. Sum up the metaphysical view the dragon presents.

The dragon's ideas are based more on situational ethics than moral obligations; they exalt the individual and the present moment over caring for others or the eternal reign of the laws of nature. The dragon implies that reflective thinking—inward thinking—provides a better foundation for religious thought.

2. How does Gardner's description influence the reader's opinion of the dragon?

Gardner's choice of vocabulary causes the reader to equate the dragon with evil. The student should mention some of the following: "eyes not firey but cold as the memory of family deaths," cave alive with bats, air blowing over the dragon's vast internal furnace, "razorsharp tusks," the corners of his mouth snaking upward, horrible and obscene laughing, an evil eye that left one feeling as though he were dropping endlessly down through a soundless void toward a black sun and spiders, serpent to the core...

3. Why does Grendel have trouble understanding what the dragon is saying?

The dragon uses logic in his presentation to challenge the religious views that Grendel has embraced, but Grendel, not being much of a thinker, does not understand the dragon's views as well as he did the songs of the Shaper. Another reason may be that the Shaper presents a very simplified theology while the dragon's is more complex.

4. How are nature, time, and space personified?

When the dragon speaks of nature, time, and space, they are written as proper nouns. The capital letter conveys to the reader the idea that each of these are like people, having a certain personality and a mind of their own to direct them; they are not controlled by mere chance.

5. Why does Grendel seek out the dragon?

Grendel wants to know about the Shaper.

6. What is the dragon's view of free will? How does the dragon's view compare with the Shaper's view?

In a word, the dragon's view of free will is "Pah!" He believes the script has already been written and no one can change it. The Shaper, however, sings songs about a god who lovingly made the world and offers better things to those who believe. Belief is a choice, so the Shaper's theology necessarily includes free will.

7. How does the astrological sign of Leo influence the meaning of this chapter?

One of the traits of one born under the sign of Leo is the capacity for dramatic action. Throughout Chapter 5, the dragon acts in dramatic fashion, exhibiting sudden, unpredictable shifts in demeanor that heighten the tension of the scene.

8. Summarize the dragon's sermon, which begins with "Things come and go," and ends with the closing of the chapter.

The dragon believes there is no creative, loving God as the Shaper claims; random chance is responsible for the creation—and eventual destruction—of everything in the universe.

9. The speech of the dragon includes quotations, almost verbatim, from the works of Alfred North Whitehead. It can be difficult to extract useful information from these quotations. Why do you think Gardner has the dragon speak in this way? Is the technique effective?

By including these difficult quotations and the concepts they communicate, Gardner may be trying to induce in the reader the same confusion that Grendel feels.

These quotations, removed from their context, have little meaning; Gardner does not mention that Whitehead ascribes different and very specific meanings to words like "importance" and "expression." Without the knowledge of these definitions, the dragon's speech seems incoherent; this is appropriate for a character who believes that existence is meaningless.

10. How does the dragon embody nihilism?

The dragon believes that existence is meaningless. No matter what people (or creatures) do, the end result will be the same: all life in the universe will die, and there will be only silence.

Chapter 6

1. Existential thought states that existence precedes essence. Examine how Grendel evolves from existence to essence. Cite an example from the text demonstrating Grendel's revelation of his new existence.

To this point, Grendel exists as the image in which others cast him, but in this chapter, Grendel moves from existing as others see him to having an essence defined not by the Shaper or the dragon, but by himself. He is reborn, so to speak. He no longer views himself as a part of life but as the center of life. Grendel, after attacking the meadhalls, thinks he is the "Ruiner of Meadhalls, Wrecker of Kings!" He recognizes his new place in the scheme of things.

2. At the beginning of this chapter, Grendel states, "Nothing was changed, everything was changed, by my having seen the dragon." Explain this seemingly paradoxical statement.

Grendel's physical surroundings have not changed. What has changed is his perception, both of the world around him and his position in it.

3. What response might the reader expect from Grendel when he discerns that no weapon can cut him? How does Grendel respond?

Given Grendel's past, one suspects that his invincibility will cause him to confront those in the meadhall and be more visible. The opposite is true. He becomes "as solitary as one live tree in a vast landscape of coal."

4. To what purpose does Gardner use the astrological sign of Virgo in this chapter?

Virgo is first represented by the Shaper's song ending with "virgins were virgins." Second, Grendel describes Unferth as "only a boy ... a poor miserable virgin." Finally, the "harvest virgin" is mentioned twice.

5. What triggers the first feud? Why?

The taste of the guard's blood and the ensuing pleasure triggers the first raid on the sleepers in the meadhall.

6. Describe Grendel's two encounters with Unferth.

The first encounter occurs in the meadhall. Unferth, a young Scylding hero, steps out to challenge Grendel. Grendel finds his youthful heroism quite funny and taunts Unferth by chucking a bowlful of apples at him. The second encounter occurs after Unferth tracks Grendel back to the cave. Unferth enters the cave through the firesnake lake and, while lying on the floor, too weak to even pick up his sword, challenges Grendel.

7. Why does Grendel spare Unferth's life time and again?

Sparing Unferth gives Grendel power. Grendel thinks it funny that this hero is embarrassed time and again. He also feels he has devised a path that is neither a vision of the old poet nor of the dragon.

8. To what might the apples allude? What might this allusion suggest about Grendel?

The apples might be an allusion to the "forbidden fruit," the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that Adam and Eve are forbidden to eat. Culturally, this unknown fruit is referred to as an apple. When Grendel picks up the apples, it is as though he is choosing to embrace what the dragon, the evil one, has told him; the apples may signify his change of heart.

Chapter 7

1. Interpret the significance of the boat.

The boat seems to identify Grendel's direction; he is heading toward hell and doesn't mind who he takes with him.

2. How long has Grendel's war been going on? When does Chapter 7 take place on the timeline of the war?

The war has been going on for 11½ years. This chapter takes place during year two.

3. How does Gardner convey to the reader the changes taking place in Grendel?

Gardner changes the style of his writing, adding some verse and rhyme. He writes, both in verse and in the narrative, that Grendel is crazy.

4. What one object captivates Grendel and holds him in check?

Wealtheow—the queen acquired by Hrothgar—captivates Grendel.

5. Trace the progression of the setting.

The story begins in a simple town, a small conglomeration of huts and a castle; as Hrothgar becomes stronger, he builds a meadhall around which the town grows. Eventually he conquers surrounding castles and becomes a stronger network, somewhat like a collection of small cities. An army forms as the collection of small cities begins to operate more like a nation.

6. Under what circumstances does Wealtheow come to Hrothgar's Castle?

Hrothgar and men from many cities that served him march against Hygmod, lord of the Helmings, another great leader with a great army. Hygmod offers his sister, Wealtheow, as an offering to bring peace.

7. How does Gardner weave the astrological sign of Libra into this chapter?

The symbol of Libra, the scale, indicates balance. The chapter begins with "[b]alance is everything." Gardner uses the characters of Grendel and Wealtheow, foils for each other, to balance the scales of good and evil. While Grendel is big and ugly and threatening, Wealtheow is small and beautiful and innocent. Grendel is the picture of self-centered evil; Wealtheow is the picture of absolute surrender for the good of all. Grendel strikes fear in everyone's heart; Wealtheow brings peace and healing.

8. Explain how the presence of the dragon in Grendel's life has evolved since Grendel's visit to the dragon's cave to the present.

After leaving the cave, Grendel could feel the presence of the dragon stirring in the air or influencing his thoughts. Now, after the passage of some years, the dragon's influence surrounds Grendel like sulfurous smoke, bringing on a panic that makes breathing difficult.

9. Interpret medieval society's view of women as depicted in this novel.

The references to women throughout the book indicate that society views them as objects for sex and service.

10. Describe the scene in which Grendel torments Wealtheow and discuss what the conflicting feelings represent.

The scene begins with Grendel considering whether to crush her or burn her alive. He decides that it does not matter whether he kills her or lets her live, and leaves the hall. Pondering his feelings, he realizes that he is a creature of two minds: one side of him despises her, but the other considers her beautiful. He then decides to kill himself, but changes his mind again. The conflicting feelings reflect again the idea of the sign of Libra, balance; the feelings represent the struggles between good and evil.

Chapter 8

1. Trace the evolution of Grendel's character.

Grendel evolves from a solipsistic child to an angry monster.

2. In the scene titled "The Arrival of Hrothulf at Hart," what does the description of Hrothulf suggest about what he may do in the future?

After introductions, Hrothulf responds with a mumble and a trace of a smile, which seems more like a sneer. The old king frowns and thinks Hrothulf a "half-tamed wolf," a "God-damned pretender." Grendel considers Hrothulf to be a "sweet scorpion" and notes that he sits, sharpening his knife, between the two youngsters meant to inherit the throne. This introduction of Hrothulf may intimate that Hrothulf intends to usurp the kingship from its rightful heirs.

3. Cite evidence of Machiavelli's political philosophy.

In a Machiavellian view, violence by the state is sanctioned because it is an effective means of control. Hrothulf says much the same thing when he remarks that "[m]en's violence is chained to good (i.e., to the king): legitimate force that chops the bread-thief's neck and wipes its ax." Hrothulf disagrees with this philosophy, however.

Red Horse, the peasant with whom Hrothulf converses, subscribes to Machiavellian philosophy as an appropriate theory of governance. Red Horse believes that if Hrothulf fails in his revolution, it will be because he and those he leads will have "become alarmed at [their] own brutality." He also says that Hrothulf must "protect the power of the people in power and keep the others down." Ultimately, the continued existence of the state is paramount, and the use of force to maintain the state's power is justified.

(Further examples include: "The state is an organization of violence, a monopoly in what it is pleased to call legitimate violence," "...satisfy the greed of the majority, and the rest will do you no harm," and "Public force is the life and soul of every state...", among others.)

4. What astrological sign is indicated in this chapter? How is it developed?

The sign indicated in this chapter is Scorpio. Grendel describes Hrothulf, the cousin to Hrothgar's children, as a "sweet scorpion." The scorpion is a predatory arthropod; this description may foreshadow Hrothulf being predatory in his pursuit of the throne.

5. Explain the symbolism of the nut tree.

The nut tree symbolically represents Hrothgar. The tree gives nutrition and is a home to birds and squirrels, but it does not allow nourishing sunlight to reach the smaller plants below. Hrothgar is like the tree because he gives treasure and favor to a select few while stifling the peasants several social levels beneath him.

6. Interpret Wealtheow's speech over the sleeping Hrothulf.

Wealtheow ponders that one day he may not be so kind to her children when he realizes that they will rule him. It also seems that Wealtheow suspects trouble, as she finishes the speech with "And now I do not sleep."

Chapter 9

1. How does the author use nature to portray the winter?

Not only does the author start the chapter with "December," which is in and of itself an indicator of winter in the northern hemisphere, but he also gives several more indicators: the nights are long and dark, the creeks are frozen, the deer show their ribs, the children play in the snow, and the wolves and trees are dead.

2. The image of the bowman pursuing a hart resonates with Grendel. He says that he senses "some riddle in it." Give a possible interpretation of the riddle.

Accept any answer that is well supported. For example: the bowman may represent the men who are in pursuit of Grendel, and the hart represents Grendel. Soon, the king's men who pursue Grendel may take him down.

3. What is ironically humorous about Ork's "vision" of the Destroyer?

Earlier, the chief of the priests prays to the Destroyer, asking the god to kill Grendel. When Ork has his vision of the Destroyer, it is actually Grendel in the flesh, but Ork does not recognize him as the monster whom they have asked the Destroyer to kill.

4. With what is the third priest concerned? What is he not concerned with?

The third priest is concerned with his image and the image of the priesthood, not with truth.

5. Sum up Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy and cite evidence of its presence in the novel.

Whitehead's process philosophy defends theism but differs from the God of Abrahamic religions. Where the God of Abrahamic religion is above change, Whitehead's philosophy views God as a growing and changing deity affected by temporal happenings. As the priests walk about the garden searching the eyes of the gods, always spelled with a small 'g', there is indication that these statutes are nothing more than kindling. When asked about the King of the Gods, spelled with a capital "G," the old man says, "The King of the Gods is not concrete, but He is the ground for concrete actuality. No reason can be given for the nature of God, because that nature is the ground of rationality." Later he says, "The King of the Gods is the actual entity in virtue of which the entire multiplicity of eternal objects obtains its graded relevance to each stage of concrescence. Apart from Him, there can be no relevant novelty."

6. What does the sign of Sagittarius contribute to this chapter?

The symbol of Sagittarius is the archer. The Bowman in Pursuit of the Hart is enthusiastic and impassioned; these are attributes of Sagittarians. They are also known to be devoutly religious; the old, zealous priest symbolizes this. Finally, Gardner begins the chapter with "December," the month of the Sagittarius sign.

Chapter 10

1. Why does the author use short sentences in the opening of this chapter?

The short sentences interrupt the flow and convey the agitation of Grendel both by their structure and by their pessimistic vocabulary.

2. The horned goat represents what astrological sign? How are the personality aspects of those born under this sign shown in this chapter?

The horned goat represents the sign of Capricorn. Capricorns tend to be very determined; they see the goal and pursue it. When Grendel sees the goat approaching his mere, he decides that the goat should not be allowed to advance and begins to throw stones, one after another, determined to prevent the goat's advancement. Not only does Grendel display determination, but the goat also shows determination as he regains his step and tries, mechanically, to continue his trek toward the mere. Those born under this sign also tend to be pessimistic. Grendel's opening and closing thoughts of the chapter are filled with words and phrases with negative connotations, such as pain, dull, mindlessly, staleness, and [n]ihil ex nihilo. Finally, the care of the elderly or sick is demonstrated by the town's caring for the Shaper.

3. Who surrounds the bed as the Shaper dies? What does their importance say about the religion he represents?

The King and Queen are there, as well as the attendant who had served him for many years. Their attendance may validate, to some degree, the reality and acceptance of religion within the kingdom.

4. For whom does the Shaper ask?

He asks for a certain woman who doesn't come.

5. How does the reader learn the identity of the woman for whom the Shaper waits?

In the first paragraph about the Shaper, he raises his head to listen. Five paragraphs later, Gardner writes, "In another house, at a large, carved table, a middle-aged woman ... sits by lamplight listening, as he did, for footsteps."

6. What relationship does the Shaper have with the middle-aged woman?

While the relationship is not clearly defined, the reader should realize that the two care for one another on some level. Both spend the night of his death awaiting footsteps; he waits for her footsteps, while she waits for the footsteps of one bearing news of his death. After hearing of his death, she "is as still as the dead man," obviously moved by his passing. Grendel describes her as the "[s]oul of fidelity," so it is unlikely that their relationship was sexual in nature.

7. What theme has Gardner developed through the Shaper and his use of song? How does the Shaper's passing affect Grendel's perception of the future?

The Shaper has been a character who effects change through the power of his songs. Therefore, the reader can conclude that the theme has to do with the power of art to inspire or cause change.

The Shaper's passing seems to leave Grendel with little hope for the future. He feels "abandoned" and smells the "scent of the dragon." The dragon represents nihilistic tendencies; these tendencies may be replacing the Shaper's optimism.

8. Twice in this chapter, *tedium* is referenced. The opening sentence references *tedium* in above-ground happenings, and later in the chapter, *tedium* applies to happenings in Grendel's cave. What is *tedium*, and what may it foreshadow?

*Tedium means monotony or boredom. At the beginning of the chapter, Grendel describes *tedium* as "the worst pain." In Grendel's interpretation, nothing is worse than a never-ending recurrence of the same events. In establishing the point of monotony, it seems that the author may be foreshadowing the opposite of monotony—some drastic change or excitement.*

9. Identify the rhetorical devices in the following sentence and state what they add to the reading: "The Shaper's assistant, cradling the old man's polished harp, sings of Hoc and Hildeburh and Hnaef and Hengest, how Finn's thanes fought with his wife's dear kinsmen and killed king Hnaef, and a terrible thing ensued."

This sentence contains several examples of alliteration (the list of names beginning with H and the Ks in kinsmen killed king), some consonance, and a polysyndeton (the list including 'and' between each of the names). Each of these rhetorical devices adds musical effects, which enhances the song the young man sings.

10. Trace Grendel's philosophical development.

Grendel evolved from a solipsist to an existentialist in the middle chapters, and now, toward the close of this chapter, seems to express nihilistic views.

Chapter 11

1. What is the astrological sign that follows Capricorn? What symbol represents it? How does Gardner weave aspects of the eleventh sign into this chapter?

The astrological sign that follows Capricorn is Aquarius. A water bearer represents this sign. The opening paragraphs discuss many aspects of water such as frozen creeks, rattling water, and parting icebergs, but the most obvious reference is the boat that bears the strangers across the sea.

2. Who arrives in the boat? Why do they come?

The hearth companions of King Hygilac, the Geats, arrive to meet with King Hrothgar regarding what enemy stalks the meadhall at night.

3. Describe the Geats, citing the similes Gardener uses. What is the significance of the types of similes Grendel uses to describe these strange creatures?

The strangers are like trees, and their leader is "as big as a mountain." His chest is as "wide as an oven." His arms are "like beams," and his shoulders are as "sleek as the belly of a shark and as rippled with power as the shoulders of a horse."

In all of these similes, the Geats are compared to things in nature that are large, strong, and long-lived. Grendel is probably attributing these traits to these new creatures, but he is also describing them in the only terms he knows. He has only ever seen the natural world, so that is where he must draw his similes.

4. Grendel metaphorically compares his thoughts with what?

Grendel compares the thoughts coursing through his “own strange hollows” with the rivers coursing under his cave.

5. Cite portions of the text that support Grendel’s transition to existential thought.

When he decides that he will go to the meadhall, he ponders his present state: “Then I alone exist, I said. It’s me or it ... For even my mama loves me not for myself, my holy specialness ... but for my son-ness, my possessedness, my displacement of air as visible proof of her power. I have set her aside—gently, picking her up by the armpits as I would a child—and so have proved that she has no power but the little I give her by momentary whim.”

In this passage, Grendel dismisses the idea that he is merely an extension of his mother. The implication is that he will create his own meaning for his existence from this point on.

6. What color does the author use in setting the grim mood of this chapter?

The color used to set the mood of the chapter is gray. “Lead-gray water sucked quietly, stubborn and deliberate, at icy gray boulders. Gray wind teased leafless tress. There was no sound but the ice-cold surge, the cry of a gannet, invisible in grayness above me.”

7. In the paragraph beginning “Who knows what all this means?” Gardner employs consonance and alliteration. Cite the text and explain how the rhetorical device enhances the paragraph.

“It was unreal—insubstantial as spiderweb-strands blowing lightly across a window that looks out on trees.” “All order...a harmless, sensible, smiling mask men slide between the two great, dark realities, the self and the world—two snake-pits. The watchful mind lies, cunning and swift, about the dark blood’s lust, lies and lies and lies until, weary of talk, the watchman sleeps.”

The use of consonance and alliteration enhances the idea that Grendel is neither awake nor asleep. He is deep in thought—a trancelike state.

8. What is the significance of the simile, “Darkness lay over the world like a coffin lid”?

Symbolically, darkness generally carries with it a negative association—evil, the time of criminal behavior, etc. Darkness is also used to describe psychological, emotional, and spiritual turmoil, as well as an overall lack of understanding. Here, however, the “coffin lid” simile specifies that the association is to be only with darkness as death.

9. What does the simile comparing theology to “the scum on a stagnant pool” suggest?

First, there is the obvious connotation of theology as worthless, unclean, undesirable—pond scum. There is also, however, the preceding explanation that theology—like pond scum—requires stillness, inactivity. Theology, then, is not vibrant, alive, and energetic; theology is lazy, still, and stagnant.

10. Why does Grendel decide he must kill the Geat?

Grendel decides he must kill the Geat for old times' sake, for the old priest's honor, and for the honor of Hrothgar's thanes.

11. Explain the irony in Unferth's pointing with his dagger while giving friendly advice.

The concept of “friendly” advice is inconsistent with a man pointing with his dagger while talking.

12. How does King Hrothgar respond to the verbal skirmish between the stranger and Unferth?

King Hrothgar responds by calling for the queen and trying to smooth things over by stating they are all friends. He is pleased because the stranger, though seemingly insane, will be useful in a monster fight.

13. “We wait” is an entire paragraph. Who does “we” refer to and what are they waiting for?

“We” refers to Grendel and the Geats. They are waiting for all others to retire so that the fight can begin.

Chapter 12

1. Summarize the melee in the meadhall.

Grendel bursts through the door, tearing it from the hinges, and finds the Geats apparently sleeping. He dons a tablecloth for a napkin, eats one sleeping man, and then reaches for Beowulf, who lies in wait for this moment. Beowulf grasps Grendel's great arm and pins it behind him. Grendel slips on some blood, giving the distinct advantage to Beowulf, who eventually rips off Grendel's arm. Grendel weakly runs out.

2. How is Pisces represented in Chapter 12?

Pisces is represented largely by Beowulf. Near the end of Chapter 10, Grendel hears something groaning at sea. His mother then warns him to “[b]eware the fish.” The groaning is the ship of the Geats approaching, while the fish could be both Beowulf and the period of the year represented by Pisces.

In Chapter 11, Beowulf’s shoulders are described as being “sleek as the belly of a shark.” When Beowulf tells the story of his swimming contest with Breca, he mentions that he is “stronger in the ocean than any other man alive.” Beowulf also mentions fish in his raving whisperings to Grendel. Finally, just as Pisces ends the astrological cycle, Beowulf ends Grendel’s life cycle.

3. Why is Pisces the appropriate astrological sign to represent Chapter 12?

Pisces is the end of the astrological cycle, just as Chapter 12 is the end of the book.

4. Define empiricism. How does empiricism replace Grendel’s existential views?

Empiricism is the idea that knowledge comes from sense experience. Beowulf beats Grendel savagely and causes him to speak of the reality of the hardness of the wall. Beowulf makes sure that Grendel, through his senses, understands that the universe does not revolve around him.

5. Does empiricism cycle back to solipsism as Pisces cycles back to Aries? If so, how?

As Pisces leads back to Aries, so does empiricism lead back to solipsism. Although the two schools of thought are quite different, they are also quite related. When empiricists begin questioning the existence of objects outside themselves, they begin thinking like solipsists, who deny objects outside of themselves real existence.

6. How does Grendel attempt to shut out Beowulf’s whispering? What does this response reflect about Grendel’s philosophical state?

Grendel attempts to shut out Beowulf’s whispering by continuing to whisper to himself. Grendel thinks, “As long as I whisper myself I need not hear.” Grendel is thinking like a solipsist again, trying to deny the existence of anything outside of himself.

7. Cite an allusion to the Bible. Why is it appropriate?

“The world is my bone-cave, I shall not want...” is an allusion to the twenty-third Psalm, which reads “the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” This scripture is often read at funerals. Beowulf speaks it to foreshadow the death of Grendel.

8. How does Beowulf, Grendel's second teacher, remind the reader of the dragon, Grendel's first teacher?

Gardner reminds the reader of the dragon through the imagery used in the description of Beowulf: his hand closes like a dragon's jaw, he has fiery wings, he laughs and lets out fire.

9. Who is the protagonist? Antagonist?

The protagonist of the story is Grendel, and the antagonist is Beowulf.

10. Aside from Grendel, what other characters have also gone through cycles?

King Hrothgar went through the cycle from humbleness to greatness and back again. The town itself may be considered a character, because it went through the same circular growth as Grendel did. It grew from a small meadhall to a great nation and back again.

Grendel

Chapter 1

1. In the first paragraph, what do Grendel's actions indicate about him?

2. From what point of view is the story told?

3. What astrological sign is implied in Chapter 1? What does the sign represent?

4. What role do cycles, represented by Aries and the cycle of the zodiac, play in the chapter?

5. “The sun spins mindlessly overhead, the shadows lengthen and shorten as if by plan” is an example of consonance. Why does the author use this consonance?

6. What marks the new season for Grendel?

7. What does Grendel find ironic and humorous when he raids the hall?

8. What are Hrothgar’s society’s views on God? What is Grendel’s response?

9. What about the religious act causes Grendel angst?

Chapter 2

1. Describe Grendel's childhood.

2. What is the purpose of Grendel's encounter with the bull in this chapter?

3. In what way is Grendel's leaving his cave similar to the experience of the men in Plato's allegory?

4. What evidence is there in this chapter that Grendel is a solipsist?

5. Why do you suspect Grendel's mother comes to his rescue the second time he calls for her and not the first time?

6. What is Grendel's first assessment of humans?

7. Define *mechanical*. What does Gardner mean when he describes processes and being as “mechanical”?

8. What insight does Grendel receive when he realizes he is “not that which observes!” What philosophical idea does this paragraph introduce?

9. Compare the opening paragraph with the closing two paragraphs.

Chapter 3

1. At what stage of life is Grendel?

2. What effect does Gardner create with his use of polysyndeton and asyndeton?

3. What role do women play in this society?

4. What is Grendel implying when he makes the observation that “no wolf was so vicious to other wolves”?

5. Gemini is the astrological sign of this chapter. Identify how Gardner weaves the symbol into this chapter.

6. What signs of social or cultural progress does Grendel observe?

7. How does the Shaper's song affect Grendel? How does it affect others in the kingdom?

8. What is Grendel's response to the song?

9. How does Gardner express his political views on the environment?

10. How does Gardner depict the Shaper in a religious light? What religious statement may Gardner be making?

Chapter 4

1. What is the effect of the alliteration and consonance with which Gardner opens this chapter? Why would Gardner employ these devices at the beginning of this chapter?

2. Interpret the following sentence, paying close attention to Gardner's use of the colon and the use of parentheses:

“He built this hall by the power of his songs: created with casual words its grave mor(t)ality.”

3. How does Gardner represent the astrological sign of Cancer in Chapter 4?

4. Who or what inspires the Shaper's songs? What does this say about the beliefs Gardner is expressing?

5. What are some likely reasons for Gardner's frequent allusions to Judeo-Christian scripture and tradition?

6. Why is the Shaper an apt name for this character?

7. Why might Grendel be considered a modern monster?

Chapter 5

1. Sum up the metaphysical view the dragon presents.

2. How does Gardner's description influence the reader's opinion of the dragon?

3. Why does Grendel have trouble understanding what the dragon is saying?

4. How are nature, time, and space personified?

5. Why does Grendel seek out the dragon?

6. What is the dragon's view of free will? How does the dragon's view compare with the Shaper's view?

7. How does the astrological sign of Leo influence the meaning of this chapter?

8. Summarize the dragon's sermon, which begins with "Things come and go," and ends with the closing of the chapter.

9. The speech of the dragon includes quotations, almost verbatim, from the works of Alfred North Whitehead. It can be difficult to extract useful information from these quotations. Why do you think Gardner has the dragon speak in this way? Is the technique effective?

10. How does the dragon embody nihilism?

Chapter 6

1. Existential thought states that existence precedes essence. Examine how Grendel evolves from existence to essence. Cite an example from the text demonstrating Grendel's revelation of his new existence.

2. At the beginning of this chapter, Grendel states, "Nothing was changed, everything was changed, by my having seen the dragon." Explain this seemingly paradoxical statement.

3. What response might the reader expect from Grendel when he discerns that no weapon can cut him? How does Grendel respond?

4. To what purpose does Gardner use the astrological sign of Virgo in this chapter?

5. What triggers the first feud? Why?

6. Describe Grendel's two encounters with Unferth.

7. Why does Grendel spare Unferth's life time and again?

8. To what might the apples allude? What might this allusion suggest about Grendel?

Chapter 7

1. Interpret the significance of the boat.

2. How long has Grendel's war been going on? When does Chapter 7 take place on the timeline of the war?

3. How does Gardner convey to the reader the changes taking place in Grendel?

4. What one object captivates Grendel and holds him in check?

5. Trace the progression of the setting.

6. Under what circumstances does Wealtheow come to Hrothgar's Castle?

7. How does Gardner weave the astrological sign of Libra into this chapter?

8. Explain how the presence of the dragon in Grendel's life has evolved since Grendel's visit to the dragon's cave to the present.

9. Interpret medieval society's view of women as depicted in this novel.

10. Describe the scene in which Grendel torments Wealtheow and discuss what the conflicting feelings represent.

Chapter 8

1. Trace the evolution of Grendel's character.

2. In the scene titled "The Arrival of Hrothulf at Hart," what does the description of Hrothulf suggest about what he may do in the future?

3. Cite evidence of Machiavelli's political philosophy.

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1. Why does the author use short sentences in the opening of this chapter?

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3. Who surrounds the bed as the Shaper dies? What does their importance say about the religion he represents?

4. For whom does the Shaper ask?

5. How does the reader learn the identity of the woman for whom the Shaper waits?

6. What relationship does the Shaper have with the middle-aged woman?

7. What theme has Gardner developed through the Shaper and his use of song? How does the Shaper's passing affect Grendel's perception of the future?

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4. Grendel metaphorically compares his thoughts with what?

5. Cite portions of the text that support Grendel's transition to existential thought.

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Chapter 12

1. Summarize the melee in the meadhall.

2. How is Pisces represented in Chapter 12?

3. Why is Pisces the appropriate astrological sign to represent Chapter 12?

4. Define empiricism. How does empiricism replace Grendel's existential views?

5. Does empiricism cycle back to solipsism as Pisces cycles back to Aries? If so, how?

6. How does Grendel attempt to shut out Beowulf's whispering? What does this response reflect about Grendel's philosophical state?

7. Cite an allusion to the Bible. Why is it appropriate?

8. How does Beowulf, Grendel's second teacher, remind the reader of the dragon, Grendel's first teacher?

9. Who is the protagonist? Antagonist?

10. Aside from Grendel, what other characters have also gone through cycles?

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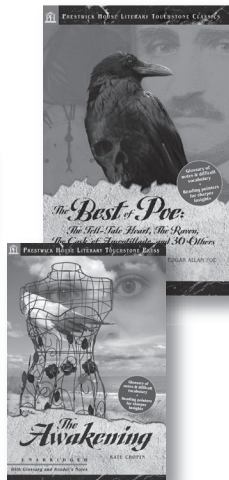
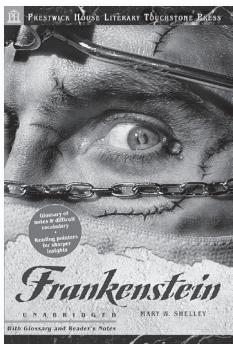
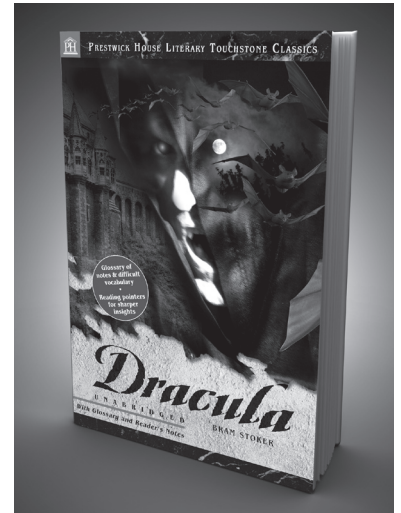
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