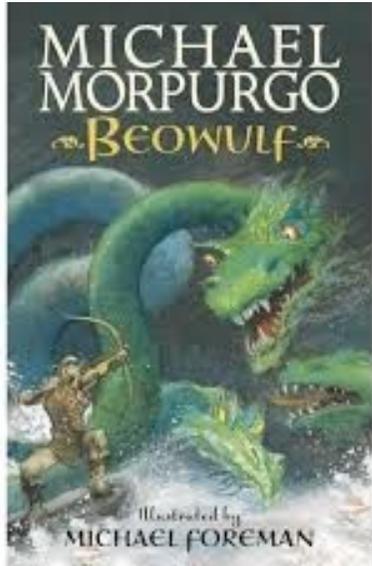


# Beowulf Knowledge Organiser (Michael Morpurgo)



## Blurb:

Hear and listen well, and I will tell you a tale that has been told for a thousand years and more. It may be an old story, yet it troubles and terrifies us now as much as it ever did, for we still fear the evil that stalks out there in the darkness and beyond.

## Key Information:

**Plot:** In fifth-century Denmark, a murderous monster stalks the night, and only the great prince of the Geats has the strength and courage to defeat him. Beowulf's terrifying quest to destroy Grendel, the foul fiend, a hideous sea-hag and a monstrous fire-dragon is the oldest surviving epic in British literature.

**Setting:** Fifth-century Denmark

**Themes:** Legends, war, heroes, fulfilling a destiny, love, loyalty and right from wrong

## Key Characters:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Beowulf          | The hero—Prince of the Geats                            |
| Grendel          | the beast who wanders among the great Thanes of Denmark |
| Sea-Hag          | Grendel's mum (the sea-witch)                           |
| King Hrothgar    | King of the Danes                                       |
| The Death-Dragon | The third battle is against this dragon                 |

## Author Voice:

"I spend months, sometimes years, doing what I call dreamtime, weaving it together inside my head. But when I actually feel that the egg of my story is ready to hatch, then I can write it in three months. Then I know the landscape and the people well and from the inside, but I don't necessarily know where the story is going to take us."

Sir Michael Andrew Morpurgo, OBE, FRSL is the author of many books for children, five of which have been made into films.

## Key Vocabulary:

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| adorned    | make more beautiful or attractive   |
| ancestors  | a person, typically one more remote than a grandparent, from whom one is descended        |
| condemn    | sentence (someone) to a particular punishment, especially death                           |
| enthralled | capture the fascinated attention of   |
| hideous    | Extremely ugly or unpleasant  |
| lamented   | conventional way of describing someone who has died or something that has ceased to exist |
| grapple    | engage in a close fight or struggle without weapons; wrestle                              |
| prospered  | flourish physically; grow strong and healthy  |
| teeming    | be full of or swarming with   |

## Key Quotes:

- "kind, to gaze in triumph at his gory head. So, remembering all this, let us all rejoice and feast together tonight. And in the morning I shall give you all your promised treasure."
- "You and yours will be condemned to wander the world as beasts, homeless and friendless for ever."

## Discussion Points:

- What motivated Beowulf?
- Should we call Beowulf a king or hero?
- Why has this poem become part of our heritage?