

Beowulf, Agon Three Answer Guide

1. **Reread ll. 2247-2270. How does this passage reflect the Anglo-Saxon literary tradition of *ubi sunt*? Use direct evidence from the poem to support your answer.**

Sample answer: This passage is representative of *ubi sunt* because it features a warrior, who is the last of his race, mourning for his friends and family as he buries all of their treasure. As he is leaving his treasure behind, the warrior says, “My own people have been ruined in war... I am left with nobody to bear a sword or burnish plated goblets...” (ll. 2249-2253). The warrior laments on the loss of the friends who once used that treasure with him.

2. **How does Beowulf become King of the Geats?**

Answer Hint: Look back at ll. 2356-2365

3. **Look back at ll. 2345-2355. How might Beowulf’s pride affect his battle with the dragon?**

Answer Tip: Look back at Hrothgar’s “wintered into wisdom” speech from Agon Two for help answering this question.

4. **Why do you think that Beowulf doesn’t fear death at the hands of the dragon?**

Answer Tip: Think back to the characteristics of an Anglo-Saxon hero. What is the most important thing to a warrior like Beowulf? What does he want to leave behind when he dies?

5. **Why does Wiglaf disobey Beowulf’s orders and help him slay the dragon?**

Sample Answer: Wiglaf helps Beowulf slay the dragon because Beowulf was such a great King who treated him well. Wiglaf “remembered the bountiful gifts bestowed upon him...how well he lived... the freehold he inherited from his father before him,” all of which was provided through Beowulf’s leadership, and “could not hold back” from helping Beowulf (ll. 2606-2609).

6. **What is Beowulf’s final wish? How does this wish reflect his values?**

Answer Hint: Look back at ll.2795-2805

7. Remember that *Beowulf* started as an oral tale— are there any places in Agon Three where the poem seems to be written as if it would be read aloud? Make sure to include the line number of your evidence.

Answer Tip: Look back for instances where the narrator seems to mention something that was told to him or something that he heard.

8. What negative consequences could arise from Beowulf's death?

Answer Hint: Look back at ll. 2999-3004 and 3150-3155.

- a. Do you think it was selfish, then, for Beowulf to march into such a difficult battle by himself when his death would start such a catastrophe? Why or why not?

Answer Tip: Your answer for this question will depend on your own interpretation of the text and analysis of Beowulf's character. Just make sure to support your answer with direct evidence from the text.