

Welcome to the Mead Hall

Introductory Material on Beowulf

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Grade Level	12th Grade	**Time Frame**	130-140 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	3-4 periods
Course	A.P. Literature and Composition, World Literature		

Essential Question

How does culture and religion affect literature and the way it is understood?

Summary

Students will activate and build their background knowledge so that they are better able to comprehend Beowulf and draw connections to crucial parts of the story. This lesson is intended to be taught just before students read Beowulf.

Snapshot

Engage

Students participate in a modified ABC graffiti and list what they know about Vikings and the Norse people.

Explore

Students try to identify myths as they work through Always, Sometimes, or Never True statements.

Explain

In groups, students do research on topics related to Beowulf.

Extend

Student groups create anchor charts with research information.

Evaluate

Students revisit Always, Sometimes, or Never True statements and justify answers with research.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 12)

12.3.R.1: Analyze the extent to which historical, cultural, and/or global perspectives affect authors' stylistic choices in grade-level literary and informational texts.
12.6.R.1: Find and comprehend information about a topic, using their own viable research questions.
12.6.W.4: Present research in longer formats (e.g., sustained research projects, process essays) and shorter, informal formats (e.g., single-day research projects, informal discussion) to a variety of audiences.

Attachments

- ABC Graffiti—Welcome to the Mead Hall - Spanish.docx
- ABC Graffiti—Welcome to the Mead Hall - Spanish.pdf
- ABC Graffiti—Welcome to the Mead Hall.docx
- ABC Graffiti—Welcome to the Mead Hall.pdf
- Always, Sometimes, or Never True—Welcome to the Mead Hall - Spanish.docx
- Always, Sometimes, or Never True—Welcome to the Mead Hall - Spanish.pdf
- Always, Sometimes, or Never True—Welcome to the Mead Hall.docx
- Always, Sometimes, or Never True—Welcome to the Mead Hall.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Welcome to the Mead Hall.pptx

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- ABC Graffiti handout (attached; one per group of 2-3)
- Always, Sometimes, or Never True handout (attached; one per student)
- Chart paper (one sheet per group)
- Markers, Crayons, Colored Pencils
- Pencil/Pen

15 minutes

Engage

Introduce the lesson by displaying the title **slide 2** from the attached **Lesson Slides**.

Share the lesson's essential question and learning objectives on **slides 3-4** to the extent you feel necessary.

Display **slide 5** and preview the ABC Graffiti activity. Explain to students that they will complete the following three rounds:

- **Round 1:** Students work together to generate a list of words and/or phrases related to the topic for each letter of the alphabet.
- **Round 2:** Students pass their handout to the next group. Read through their list and write words and/or phrases for any letters that were left blank.
- **Round 3:** Repeat the steps from Round 2, but this time students can add phrases and/or words to letters that were already used.

Organize students into small groups, and give each group a copy of the attached **ABC Graffiti** handout. Display **slide 6** and present the following question to stude*nts: What do you know about Norse people and the Vikings?* Prompt students to share everything they can think of related to Norse culture and the Vikings.

Direct groups to write down words/phrases for as many letters on their handouts as they can in the time provided using their prior knowledge of Norse people and Vikings. Give students 2-3 minutes to write as many words/phrases for as many letters as they can. If you like, you can use the provided 3-minute K20 timer.

When time is up, show **slide 7** and have students pass their handout to the next group. They should use their same marker so their contributions can be traced back to their corresponding marker color. Have each group pick up where the last group left off, again adding words and phrases for each blank letter. If time allows, students also can add words and phrases to letters that were previously used.

When time is up, show **slide 8** and have student groups rotate papers once more. After the third round, ask students to return the paper to the original group.

Engage the whole class in a discussion about what they wrote or saw on the handout and what they identified about Norse people.

10 minutes

Explore

Move to **slide 9** and pass out the attached **Always, Sometimes, or Never True** handout to each student. Introduce students to the Always, Sometimes, or Never True strategy. Have students independently read through each of the statements on the handout, and then indicate if each statement is "always true," "sometimes true," or "never true" by circling their decision in the center column of their handout. Remind students to leave the justification column blank for now. They will revisit this column during the Evaluate portion of the lesson.

As a whole class (as time allows), ask the students to share out the statements that they think are “always true.”

Teacher's Note: Guiding the Activity

Technically, none of the statements are "always true," so if your students recognize this, pivot to asking which statements they think are "never true." Since students will return to this handout later in the lesson, the goal here is to not correct thinking and support the safe classroom environment of sharing opinions.

Collect these papers and return to the students for the Evaluate section of the lesson.

45 minutes

Explain

Divide students into groups of 2-4 students and assign each group a topic (or allow groups to select one of the following topics):

- Holidays
- The Afterlife According to the Norse
- Cain (Grendel's Lineage)
- Viking Raids
- Current Events (600 AD–1100 AD)
- Odin and Other Norse Gods

Show **slide 10** and explain this map shows Scandinavia at the time of Beowulf. Highlight the map key in the top left and explain this shows the groups of inhabitants.

Next, transition to **slide 11** and explain that this map shows a broader picture of Europe during this time. Ask students to notice the dates of the different kingdoms or point them out to students for them to consider.

Display **slide 12**. Share with the students that they will be using Wakelet to view resources for their research.

Assign students into groups of 2-4 and ask them to take out a sheet of notebook paper. Direct groups 1-3 (the groups researching holidays, the afterlife, and Cain) to go to bit.ly/Beowulf-1 for a curated list of research resources. Direct groups 4-6 (the groups researching raids, current events, and gods) to go to bit.ly/Beowulf-4 for a curated list of research resources.

Teacher's Note: Differentiation

To meet the needs of your students, consider providing different or additional resources such as videos, resources in students' native language, etc.

45 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 13.** Give each group a piece of chart paper (or similar) and markers. Direct each group to create an Anchor Chart using pictures, shapes, words, etc. This chart should answer the who, what, where, when, and why of their assigned topic. Let students know that their finished anchor chart will be hung in the classroom to use for later reference.

Display **slide 14** and go over expectations with the students. Reinforce any classroom expectations you have.

Once students complete their anchor charts, have students hang them around the room.

Show **slide 15** and introduce the class to the Gallery Walk strategy. Give each student enough sticky notes so that they can leave one sticky note on each anchor chart. Explain that when they read a poster, they are to write a comment, question, and/or add a fact related to the poster on a sticky note and place the sticky note on the anchor chart. Have students repeat this for the remaining anchor charts.

Teacher's Note: Purpose of the Anchor Charts

Once students complete their anchor charts, leave the anchor charts up during the duration of your time teaching Beowulf. If time allows, consider having students use the feedback from the sticky notes to add to their anchor charts. These are intended to help students with background knowledge and context. Refer back to these to help students make connections from Norse culture and history to the text.

15 minutes

Evaluate

Now that students have a better understanding of the Norse culture and Viking traditions, have them revisit their Always, Sometimes, or Never True handout from the Explore portion of the lesson.

Show **slide 16** and have students independently reread the statements, revise as needed their conclusion of the statement being always, sometimes, or never true. And this time, have students justify their answer by explaining their thinking in the Justification column of their handout.

After giving students 10 minutes to complete this, transition through **slides 17-22** to ensure the whole class agrees if each statement is always, sometimes, or never true.

- **Slide 17:** The Norse **never** expected people to be quiet and humble. Especially in Beowulf, he does a lot of "bragging."
- **Slide 18:** Odin was **not** the only god the Norse worshiped. The Norse had a multitude of gods as well as pagan practices they followed.
- **Slide 19: Sometimes** Viking raiders were bloodthirsty berserkers. Some Vikings were categorized as "berserkers," but not all Vikings were.
- **Slide 20: Sometimes** the Norse set people on fire as part of their funeral practices. Not all Norse funerals involved a pyre, but many were celebrated in that way.
- **Slide 21:** Vikings **never** wore helmets with horns. This is a funny myth that has not been proven.
- **Slide 22: Sometimes** Norse people survived by raiding. "Only" is the word that makes this sentence tricky. While some Norse were Vikings, many others farmed, fished, and hunted. And raiding was often seasonal work.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). ABC Graffiti. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/96
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Always, Sometimes, or Never True. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/145
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Anchor Charts. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/58
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery Walk / Carousel. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Wakelet. Tech tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/2180
- K20 Center. (2021, September 21). K20 Center 3 minute timer. [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/iISP02KPau0?si=oew-VIocHqA5Tn8z