

Defendants in Denmark: Beowulf on Trial

Diction/Ethos, Logos, and Pathos

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Grade Level	12th Grade
Subject	English/Language Arts
Course	A.P. Literature and Composition, British Literature, World Literature

Essential Question

How does diction and context affect the perception of an audience toward characters and situations, and how can we change what we say to gain an objective in real life?

Summary

Students will analyze the text of Beowulf in order to look objectively at the plot in order to create, in teams or individually, a case to defend a character who has been assigned crimes based on the text. Students will look at context as well as use diction and ethos, pathos, and logos to argue that the character should be free of all charges. Not only will students argue cases to be heard by a judge and jury, but they will also write a Claim-Evidence-Reasoning document (CER) concerning the effectiveness of their argument. Students will view an ICAP interview with a judge and listen to the daily routine as well as the educational expectations for judges. Learning how diction has a powerful impact on every idea spoken and heard is the goal of this lesson.

Snapshot

Engage

Students recall characteristics of each main character in Beowulf using the ABC Graffiti strategy.

Explore

Students research court processes and crime using the Wakelet tech tool.

Explain

Students create a defense using research and Crime Cards with a T-Chart, graphic novel, notes, and CER (Claim-Evidence-Reason) handouts.

Extend

Students present their defense and use T-Charts to notate the defenses of their peers.

Evaluate

Students evaluate the most convincing argument using the extended CER strategy.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 12)

12.3.R.3: Evaluate how literary elements impact theme, mood, and/or tone, using textual evidence:
- setting
- plot structure (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, *in media res*)
- conflict (i.e., internal, external)
- characters (e.g., protagonist, antagonist)
- characterization (i.e., direct, indirect)
- point of view (e.g., narrator reliability)
- archetypes

12.3.W.3: Compose argumentative essays, reviews, or op-eds that:
- introduce precise, informed claims
- include a defensible thesis
- acknowledge counterclaims or alternate perspectives
- organize claims, counterclaims, and evidence in a logical sequence
- provide the most relevant evidence to develop balanced arguments, using credible sources
- use sentence variety and word choice to create clarity and concision
- use style and tone that suits the audience and purpose

Attachments

- ABC Graffiti—Defendants in Denmark.pdf
- CER Evaluate—Defendants in Denmark.docx
- CER Evaluate—Defendants in Denmark.pdf
- Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER)—Defendants in Denmark.docx
- Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER)—Defendants in Denmark.pdf
- Court Card (Beowulf)—Defendants in Denmark.docx
- Court Card (Beowulf)—Defendants in Denmark.pdf
- Court Card (Geat Soldiers)—Defendants in Denmark.docx
- Court Card (Geat Soldiers)—Defendants in Denmark.pdf
- Court Card (Grendel)—Defendants in Denmark.docx
- Court Card (Grendel)—Defendants in Denmark.pdf
- Court Card (Hrothgar)—Defendants in Denmark.docx
- Court Card (Hrothgar)—Defendants in Denmark.pdf
- Defendant T-Chart—Defendants in Denmark.docx
- Defendant T-Chart—Defendants in Denmark.pdf
- Jury Ethos, Logos, and Pathos (Beowulf)—Defendants in Denmark.docx
- Jury Ethos, Logos, and Pathos (Beowulf)—Defendants in Denmark.pdf
- Jury Ethos, Logos, and Pathos (Geat Soldiers)—Defendants in Denmark.docx
- Jury Ethos, Logos, and Pathos (Geat Soldiers)—Defendants in Denmark.pdf
- Jury Ethos, Logos, and Pathos (Grendel)—Defendants in Denmark.docx
- Jury Ethos, Logos, and Pathos (Grendel)—Defendants in Denmark.pdf
- Jury Ethos, Logos, and Pathos (Hrothgar)—Defendants in Denmark.docx
- Jury Ethos, Logos, and Pathos (Hrothgar)—Defendants in Denmark.pdf
- Law School—Defendants in Denmark.docx
- Law School—Defendants in Denmark.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Defendants in Denmark.pptx

Materials

- Lesson Slides—Defendants in Denmark: Beowulf on Trial (attached)
- *Beowulf* graphic novel

- ABC Graffiti handout (attached; one per group)
- Court Cards handout - Grendel, Beowulf, Geat Soldiers, Hrothgar (attached; one character per group)
- Law School handout (attached; one per student)
- Defendant T-Chart handout (attached; one per student)
- Claim, Evidence, Reasoning (CER) handout (attached; one per student)
- Jury Pathos, Ethos, and Logos handout (attached; one per student)
- Judge Robes (optional)
- Gavel (optional)

20 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Beowulf

Students should have read *Beowulf* prior to beginning this lesson.

Begin the lesson by showing **slides 1-4** of the attached **Lesson Slides**, which introduce the title of the lesson, the essential questions, and the learning objectives. Emphasize that the essential questions will be addressed throughout the lesson.

Sort the class into 4 groups. Assign each group one of the following characters: Beowulf, Hrothgar, Grendel, Geat Soldiers. Transition to **slide 5** and introduce the ABC Graffiti strategy and let students know they will brainstorm words beginning with as many letters as possible next to the appropriate letter that describes their assigned character. Ask each group to use a graffiti poster with the letters A through Z listed in two columns or the included **ABC Graffiti** handout.

Give students 4–5 minutes to brainstorm (there is a timer on **slide 6**). Once time is up, ask groups to rotate clockwise to the next graffiti poster. After groups rotate to the next group's poster, give each group 1-2 minutes to add any additional characteristics they might know about the other groups' character. Then, rotate again. Repeat this process until all groups have rotated back to their own poster.

Ask students to return to their seats. Discuss the graffiti posters with the class by pointing out any words that might not be correct and words that might bring to mind a relevant part of the crime within the story.

Teacher's Note: Optional Modification for Virtual

For a virtual option, a Mentimeter word cloud, Padlet, or Google Slides deck could also serve as replacement tools for the ABC Graffiti.

35 minutes

Explore

Display **slide 7.** Divide students into groups of 2-4 students. Assign students a character from the story to defend and distribute the **Court Cards**. There are four Court Cards, one for Beowulf, Horthgar, the Geat Soldiers, and Grendel. You might need to give duplicate cards if you have more than 4 groups. Also, distribute the **Law School** handout to each group.

Give the students a few moments to read their cards and discuss what crimes their character has been charged with committing.

Display **slide 8**. Share with the students that they will be using Wakelet to view resources related to court procedures and specific crimes. As students view the Court Case Basics Wakelet, have them fill in the Law School handout. They should put their character(s) crimes in the left-hand column and any information they found that may be beneficial to their case.

Transition to **slide 9**. Students will now view the Beowulf Court Crimes Wakelet related specifically to the crimes the characters have been accused of. They should continue taking notes in the Law School handout using what they have learned to start to build a defense for their character. Let students know they should watch every video, not just those about their own character's crimes. This will enable them to serve as informed jurors for their peers.

Finally, move to **slide 10** and play the ICAP video from Judge Dee Graves who discusses their career as an attorney and judge.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=PrgUquy4wlE?si=vgZp6CqE6hwq_5DB

50 minutes

Explain

Leaving students in the same groups, hand out copies of the *Beowulf* graphic novel to each student. As a class, read the graphic novel.

Once participants have identified their characters, explain to them that the justice system has finally caught up with these reprehensible characters, and charges have been filed against them. They will be serving as their character's legal representative team in the upcoming trial.

Display **slide 11**. Distribute the **Defendant T-Chart** handout. Read the instructions for the T-Chart. Ask students to read the *Beowulf* graphic novel again as a group. While reading with their group, ask students to make note of any mention of their character and any actions taken by their character on the left side of the T-chart. Have them write down any emotions or important "adjectives" in the graphics of the graphic novel version of the story, on the right side of the T-Chart handout.

Teacher's Note: Analysis

Allow time to go deeper and do not rush through this. This should take multiple class periods since this is the first lengthy story in the year for British Literature. This type of analysis will go better if this is not rushed.

Move to **slide 12**. Invite students to complete a Claim, Evidence, Reasoning **(CER)** handout to guide their character's defense. Have each participant in the group complete their own CER, which they can share with the other members of their group. Then, advise groups to take elements from each CER and devise a group CER to use to present the group's case for their defendant.

Transition to **slide 13**. Organize the defense teams into roles and practice presenting arguments. All students must be prepared to contribute to the presentation. Choose a judge, bailiff, and head juror from each group to preside over one of the other cases.

50 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 14**. To begin the trial, distribute the **Jury Ethos, Pathos, and Logos** handouts to each student for each character except their own. As their peers present their arguments, the students as the jury will complete the character handout.

After students have finished their group CER, assigned roles, and practiced their presentation, go to **slide 15** and announce: *All rise. The Honorable Judge is in session.*

Allow groups to volunteer to present by asking, "*Which group would like to present its CER argument first?*"

Allow each group to argue the innocence of their client/character using the text as evidence to support their claim and reasoning. The groups present their case as a whole within their specific roles.

While each group is presenting, all other students will serve as the jury. The jury should take notes on their Jury Ethos, Pathos, and Logos handouts as they listen to the facts, context, and actual behavior of each character. In the Diction column, ask students to jot down certain words (diction) the defendants use that make them reflect on the argument more in-depth.

Then, ask the question, "*Does the text-based evidence support the innocence of the character?*"

Teacher's Note: Time

It may be beneficial to establish time constraints to limit the amount of time each group has to present their argument. In addition, you may want to record these arguments so that students can view them later and reflect.

Emphasize to participants that the subject of the lesson, the Beowulf story, was not significant or the point of the lesson. Instead, the goal was for participants to construct a logical and supported argument based on textual evidence.

After each argument is presented, allow jurors time to reflect individually. After a bit of time, have the jury come together and discuss their verdict. Have the lead juror write down the verdict and turn it into the bailiff for the judge to read, as in a real trial. Instruct the judge to ask the bailiff if the jury has a verdict and then read the verdict.

15 minutes

Evaluate

Transition to **slide 16.** Invite students to think about how they used *ethos*, *pathos*, or *logos* in their court proceedings. Ask students to turn to an Elbow Partner and complete one of the following sentence stems:

- My group used ethos when we said . . . .
- My group used pathos when we said . . . .
- My group used logos when we said . . . .

Next, using the **CER Evaluate** handout, assign students to write two CER's. Each CER should contain a claim with evidence and reasoning for each. The claim should state how they used *ethos*, *logos*, or *pathos* during their court argument to influence their position on the innocence of their assigned character. They can use evidence from context from their reading, notes, and/or the graphic novel, but it must have been used during their argument. The evidence must clearly be ethos, logos, or pathos, and the reasoning should be well-explained.

Resources

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