

Senior Summer Reading 2018

Read *Beowulf*.

Beowulf is one of the oldest stories in the English language. It is the first epic poem in our language. For those reasons alone, every English-speaking student needs to have some experience with the poem. Since the original was written in Old (Anglo-Saxon) English, we will read a translation. Which one will depend on which class the student intends to take in senior English.

Students taking college prep, dual-enrollment English and ENG102, or AP English are encouraged to read the **Seamus Heaney** translation (ISBN: 978-0393320978). The translation follows the original Anglo-Saxon style but in modern words. Since *Beowulf* will be the first work we study in those classes, having some experience with the style of the poem will be a big help. It is very readable. Don't be put off by the book's length (a little over 200 pages). Every left-hand page is in Old English and the right (the only ones you need to read) are in modern English, so the text itself is a little over 100 pages. New books will run \$16.00 to \$20.00 or so, but many used copies are available online for very low prices.

Students not enrolled in the above classes might prefer **Robert Nye's *Beowulf: A New Telling*** (ISBN: 978-0440905608). This version covers the story in easy-to-read (6th to 10th grade level) prose, but without losing the pace and excitement of the original. It will not be much help in understanding most elements of Anglo-Saxon poetry when class study comes, but it does tell the story well. It retails for \$5.99 and is available from Amazon for \$5.39.

Be prepared for a reading test at the beginning of the school year *regardless of which semester your English class is scheduled*. The test will be the same for all seniors and will be taken at the same time.