

Putting on Beowulf

From the very first class and our reading of “Deor” (*this too shall pass*), I have tried to emphasize the fact that much of what *was* true and relevant for humanity in the past *is* also true and relevant for us. Why do we still read works like *Beowulf* or Shakespeare for that matter? It seems to me that it must have something to do with their universality or appeal to us across time and across cultures. Think of modern movie versions of Shakespeare plays such as *Romeo & Juliet* with Leonardo DiCaprio. They keep the original text (why?) but modernize the setting.

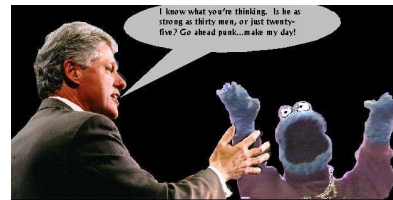
For this assignment you are to take the scene where Beowulf is abandoned by his men (pgs 42-45, lines 666-828) and act it out for the rest of the class. In doing so, you may choose whatever modern (or not so modern) setting and costume you wish. One example would be to portray the scene as a gangster being abandoned by the rest of his mob -- since, I mentioned this it is of course off limits. Be specific in your choice -- for instance, don't just say “Gangsters” -- make it *The Godfather* or *Scarface*...



When you are choosing your **setting** be careful to choose one that is appropriate -- in other words think about the characters (heroes, kings, cowards, a dragon) and the setting (a desolate treasure trove) that make up your story. What setting would help the audience see how relevant this story (though still told in the same -- though translated words) is to our lives. Some settings and characters (Bill Clinton as the hero Beowulf, Cookie Monster as Grendel) make sense, while other settings don't. You may NOT choose Anglo-Saxon England, Sweden, or Denmark as your setting.

You can (and should) use whatever props, costumes, and background music (if you need to use my computer or speakers let me know in advance -- plan your music out well in advance) that you feel fits into your conception of the scene. You **must** also use a different translation than the one given in the book, and you **must stick to the words of the translation**. You must also use at least two (memorized by 1 or more characters) of Old English (see the website *Old English*). If you use the Seamus Heaney translation -- he has the words on the opposite page as its modern translation.

You may have a narrator or you may wish to have different out all of the different lines. You are NOT required to memorize any course this could only help your group's appearance (and your grade). In the past groups have used “subtitles” (on posterboards) up above characters, either for laughs or for understanding (these can say whatever you want).



lines
for *Beowulf* in
Old English

characters act
lines, but of
subsequently

Your final presentation must be timed to be no more than 8 Minutes long (you can cut lines -- just not add them) and you should be prepared to put on your scene with 2 minutes for setup. Groups may contain 6-8 people, and I will assist with the group selection. If you do not have a group see me. EXCHANGE PHONE numbers first! Some important notes:

- You must use a translation other than Charles Kennedy or Burton Rafael (your book & handouts) -- Seamus Heaney is great because it has both Modern and Old English -- (that makes finding the two Old English lines easier). YOU must use a published translation -- but since so many people will be using Heaney -- it is refreshing to see another translator (J.R.R. Tolkien -- of Lord of the Rings fame, did a translation). **DO NOT WRITE your own translation.**
- Get started right away -- because you have over 2 weeks -- it is expected that you will use that time (groups that show little effort, thought, or practice, will receive little credit).



- Join a group that can get together after or before school live close to each other). Maybe you all have Instructional together.
- Every member of your group will receive the same member went out of her way on costumes, props, etc.
- If you are going to be sick the day of presenting, **be**

group members as soon as you know. They will have to present without you, prepared.

- Make sure that we (the audience) can see that you understand what is taking place in the story with your actions -- all of your movements should be well planned and rehearsed.
- You are allowed to have an introduction, setting the scene, introducing your characters -- and it doesn't have to be from the book -- **but it MUST BE sung and danced.** In the past, these have been great and have gotten a lot of points for their group. Use the music from your theme (TV show, movie, cartoon, etc.) and write the words.
- Above all, **BE CREATIVE (and have some fun).** These presentations are due **Monday, September 30, 2019.** The assignment is worth **600 points**, and as this will be graded as a two (and a half) week project -- start immediately. Because you will have more than two weeks, I'm expecting a lot here.



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Support Time

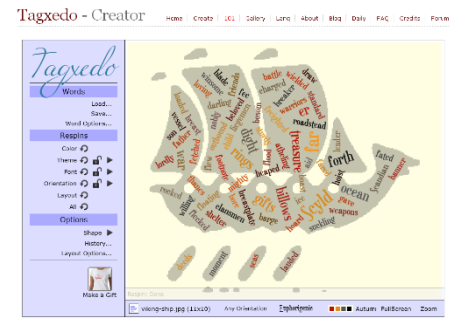
grade, unless one

sure to call your
and will need to be

Extra Credit – A Tagxedo of *Beowulf*, *Grendel*, *Deor*, or any other text we study in class.

Help leave your permanent mark on Room 207, while learning something about the text that you are studying.

In this extra credit assignment you will create a picture of something that we have been studying made out of the words of the text that you are illustrating. For instance, you could create a picture of Grendel made up of the words from the Grendel text. One of the major lessons that I'm trying to teach my students is that the text is the most important thing that we can study – not what others think about that text, but the actual text itself. This activity illustrates that idea while giving us all a better idea of the word choice that authors (and translators) use to bring their ideas to life.



- You can create a Tagxedo on anything that we've studied (or soon will) "John and Barbara's Story," *Beowulf*, *Grendel*, Anglo-Saxon poems or anything else that we do later in the semester.
- First, find the text online (there are lots of copies of *Beowulf* and the Anglo-Saxon poems – copyrighted material like *Grendel* or *Mary Poppins* are harder to find). Find the exact text that you want – for instance if you are going to create a Tagxedo of the fight between Grendel and Beowulf – find that part of the text.
- Next go to www.tagxedo.com. Take a look at some of the examples that are there on the website. Next, you will want to find a piece of text that you want to use – for this example, I chose the opening of *Beowulf* – about King Scyld. Then I went to Google Images – and found an image of a Viking Ship. Keep in mind – certain pictures and/or shapes are going to work better than others.
- Silhouettes are the best because they can easily be filled by the words that you will add.
- DO NOT use any shapes that are already up on the wall. If you do a Google Search (of images) – don't go for the first one – dig a little deeper or put a more specific word into your search
- Finally, I added the Shape and the Words to my "Tagxedo" (see above). The final product will not have the gray outline – so you have play with the settings (Word Options, Layout Options, Font, etc.). Again, use the examples and forums on the website – till you get exactly the picture you want.
- Students in the past have created some VERY impressive Tagxedos by creating more than one Tagxedo and combining the two using an image processing program like Photoshop (or Gimp or Pain). An example of this might be creating one Tagxedo showing the outline of *Beowulf* and another showing a spear (perhaps each of these coming from a different part of the text) and then combining the two into *Beowulf* holding a spear.
- Don't forget to play with the words – the more a word is used the more it should appear – if you want to emphasise a certain word (eg "Honor") just keep cutting and pasting that word into your word selection.
- Save your product – then open up what you saved and make sure that you can still easily see the shape and your happy with how it turned out. Save your picture at the maximum resolution – and save a copy on a USB key (thumb drive).
- **VERY IMPORTANT** – use a graphics program like Photoshop, Gimp, or Paint to remove the Tagxedo Logo (I'm not against giving them credit, but it confuses the design). Make sure you fill in the space with the same background color so we don't even know it was there.
- **VERY IMPORTANT - NO WHITE BORDER** – have the place you are having this printed trim the picture (getting rid of any white border) BEFORE you laminate the picture. IT CANNOT BE TRIMMED of white space after laminating.
- Go to an Office Max (or if you can find a cheaper place), Staples, or Office Depot and print out and laminate an 11 x 17 version of your Tagxedo. If your design is narrower than 11 inches that is fine too – just try to make the longest edge 17 inches. This should not cost more than 5 dollars. Call the store first to make sure. This is extra credit – and there will be plenty of chance to do extra credit (like the *Kite/Beowulf* poem).
- Bring in your picture to be hung on the wall – up to 50 points extra credit Points will be determined by Originality/Creativity/Choice of Outline [image]/correct size/Logo Removal

We will be doing some Anglo-Saxon poems – these make great Tagxedoes. These are due two weeks before the quarter ends but can be turned in any time.