

EPIC POETRY- FEATURES

- Epics often focus on single heroic figures (in this case, Beowulf).
- Epics often deal with war or with one-on-one combat, as in the three battles featured in this poem.
- Epics often involve heroic quests, as in Beowulf's journey to Denmark.
- The hero of an epic poem often embodies the highest values of his culture.
- An epic poem is often "encyclopedic," in the sense that the poem reflects an enormous number of different aspects of the culture from which it springs.
- An epic poem often contains, within itself, other genres of poetry, such as the lyric.
- Epic is often closely related to history as a genre.
- Epics often arise out of oral traditions in poetry, as is certainly the case with *Beowulf*.
- Epics often involve interactions between heroes and gods. In *Beowulf*, the Christian God is not immediately present in the poem but is often mentioned and discussed.
- Epic poems are often lofty in their styles of language, as is certainly the case with *Beowulf*.
- Epic poems often use so-called "epic formulas" – that is, phrases that are repeated and that are used in a variety of contexts.
- Epic often features a certain amount of boasting, as when Beowulf is provoked, by Unferth, into boasting about his exploits as a youth.
- Epic poems often feature tragic deaths, as in the tragic death of Beowulf himself.