When he heard about Grendel, Hygelac's thane

was on home ground, over in Geatland.

There was no one else like him alive.

In his day, he was the mightiest man on earth,

high-born and powerful. He order a boat 5

that would ply the waves. He announced his plan:

to sail the swan's road and search out that king,

the famous prince who needed defenders.

Nobody tried to keep him from going,

no elder denied him, dear as he was to them. 10

Instead, they inspected omens and spurred

his ambition to go, whilst he moved about

like the leader he was, enlisting men,

the best he could find; with fourteen others

the warrior boarded the boat as captain, 15

a canny pilot along coast and currents.

Time went by, the boat was on water,

in close under the cliffs.

Men climbed eagerly up the gangplank,

sand churned in surf, warriors loaded 20

a cargo of weapons, shining war-gear

in the vessel's hold, then heaved out,

away with a will in their wood-weathered ship.

Over the waves, with the wind behind her

and foam at her neck, she flew like a bird 25

until her curved prow had covered the distance

and on the following day, at the due hour,

those seafarers sighted land,

sunlit cliffs, sheer crags

and looming headlands, the landfall they sought. 30

It was the end of their voyage and the Geats vaulted

Over the side, out on the sand,

And moored their ship. There was a clash of mail

And a thresh of gear. They thanked God

For that easy crossing on a clam sea. 35

The extract is taken from the epic poem Beowulf. It consist of a single section which deals about Beowulf’s voyage to help his neighbor Heorot. It is a narrative text organized into couplets and mainly focuses on the hero’s departure and communicates all the actions done and needed to go to see.
It goes without saying that it tells about Beowulf, the protagonist, providing his characterization as well as the idea of the setting, so that intelligent reader can make up a mental picture of what he is reading.
One cannot forget that the language of the extract is not the original version, but is rather a contemporary rendering of an epic poem written in Old English. Old English was a German dialect and could not be understood to they.
The text opens with immediate reference to Grendel, so that the reader understands who the monster is and who the protagonist Beowulf is going to fight. The danger represented by the monster is suggested by the verb “heard” which comes right at the beginning of the line in an alliterative use of the language. This is done on purpose to convey its terrible reputation. Immediately after the reader is provided with information, details about the setting, so that he can better understand where events take place. “Geatland” is the focus of the setting. Immediately the intelligent reader understands the narrative strategy of the composer. The narrator wants to highlight the unique qualities of the hero that may become such just because he is ready to risk his life for a good cause: showing generosity and solidarity with they who are in danger. Beowulf is created as sort of a single personality, not as an ordinary man. “No one else” and “like him” make that clear right from the start. In addiction expressions like “alive” and “on earth” underline his peculiar strength and courage, suggesting that people different from him could not remain alive. Besides reinforcing his highly-positive reputation, the narrator underlines his feasibility in doing any sort of duty. He was “the mightiest man”. Again the use of alliteration of the sound “m” anticipates other features of this character protagonist who is from a prestigious family (“high-born”) and who has got a power that nobody wants to put into discussion. He was a smart man, able to make the right choice at the right time. He managed to choose the most suitable boat for the voyage, one “that would ply the waves” because he wanted to have a quick voyage to help people in danger. There are a run-on-line to emphasize his skills.

Beowulf announced his plan; there is an alliteration of the sound “s” when he says “to sail the swan’s road to search the king”. The words “swan’s road” refer to the voyage to help the king who is in danger.

The word “defenders” in the end of the line stay for Beowulf because he is coming to geatleand to help the prince.

People believe in Beowulf and in his power so “nobody tried to keep him from going”. He left his population with fourteen warriors. There are many run-on-line to highlight the words “ambition”, “leader” and “warrior” which underline Beowulf’s nature.

Then there are a list of object useful for the voyage and for the fight. The narrator describes the way the boat ply the waves; he uses the simile “she flew like a bird”; the boat was quickly and light so it was similar to bird. Beowulf see the earth and arrived to Geatleand and they thanked their God for the good voyage.