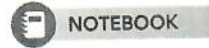




INTERACTIVITY



NOTEBOOK

Literary / Text Elements

Poetic Form and Dramatic Structure An **epic** is a long narrative poem that celebrates heroic deeds and legendary events. It centers on the exploits of an epic hero who possesses great strength, cleverness, and leadership abilities. The use of poetic form and dramatic structures serves to intensify the drama:

- **Episodic Structure:** unfolds in sections, or *episodes*, providing audiences with a series of tales
- **Extreme Conflicts:** centers on conflicts that threaten the very survival of a people or nation, heightening the suspense the audience experiences
- **Archetypal Plot Patterns:** features patterns of events that recur in literature from all cultures and times, and reflect universal human concerns; in *Beowulf*, one such archetype is the quest.
- **Dramatic Diction:** features serious, elevated language; long speeches often suggest an impressive formality as do catalogs (lists) of battles, weapons, and treasure.
- **Poetic Form:** intensifies setting and mood through the use of rhythm, repetition, sensory language, and figurative language

KEY CONCEPT

The **epic hero** is a larger-than-life figure who is stronger, faster, and braver than all others. The hero may be flawed, but his or her character is an expression of a culture's deepest values, the qualities the people who first told the tale most admire.

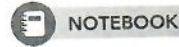
■ PRACTICE Answer these items.

1. **(a) Analyze** List two characteristics that make *Beowulf* an epic hero. **(b) Distinguish** Identify a passage that shows the hero's more human side. Explain your choice.
2. **(a) Analyze** Identify conflicts that drive the epic narrative: one that is personal to *Beowulf* and one that is critical for the Danes as a people. **(b) Connect** In what ways are these conflicts also archetypal, or universal to all people and cultures?
3. **Interpret** Consider the poem's episodic structure. Explain how each creature *Beowulf* battles adds a new dimension to the story's overall conflicts. Complete a chart like the one shown to gather your ideas.

EPIISODE	CONFLICT	NEW DIMENSION
The Coming of <i>Beowulf</i>		
The Battle With Grendel		

4. **Draw Conclusions** In what ways does the dramatic, episodic structure of the epic contribute to its power? Explain.
5. **(a) Analyze** What purposes are served by *Beowulf's* long speech in lines 237–282? For example, consider how the speech develops the hero's character or establishes the story's conflicts. **(b) Interpret** In what ways does the speech exemplify the epic convention of dramatic diction? Explain, citing specific textual details.
6. **Evaluate** Would *Beowulf* be as effective if it were written in plain prose rather than in poetic form? Why, or why not?

Author's Craft



Poet's Syntax The **syntax** of a sentence is its structure, or the arrangement of and relationships among its words. Poets may use various syntactic devices to build up and extend accounts of action and descriptions of characters. Two of those devices are apposition and diazeugma.

Apposition is the placement of two elements, typically nouns or noun phrases, side by side so that the second identifies, clarifies, or elaborates on the first. **Diazeugma** is the linkage of a single subject with two or more verbs, either to add dimension to the first verb or to establish a clear sequence of actions or events.

The chart shows examples from *Beowulf* of apposition and diazeugma.

SYNTACTIC DEVICE	EXAMPLE	EFFECT
apposition	... Hrothgar , <i>their lord</i> , sat joyless / In Herot. . . . (lines 44–45)	identifies or clarifies
apposition	... so Herot Stood empty, and stayed deserted for years , <i>Twelve winters of grief for Hrothgar</i> (lines 60–62)	elaborates
diazeugma	That shadow of death <i>hunted</i> in the darkness, <i>Stalked</i> Hrothgar's warriors. . . . (lines 74–76)	adds dimension
diazeugma	He <i>slipped</i> through the door and there in the silence <i>Snatched up</i> thirty men, <i>smashed</i> them <i>Unknowing</i> in their beds and <i>ran</i> out with their bodies. . . . (lines 36–38)	establishes a clear sequence

■ **PRACTICE** Answer the questions.

- (a) Analyze** Reread lines 208–212 of *Beowulf*. Identify the syntactic device used. **(b) Interpret** What qualities does the syntax add to the text? For example, consider whether it builds drama, adds clarity, or contributes another effect. **(c) Evaluate** Do you think this syntax is effective? Explain.
- (a) Analyze** Locate at least one more example each of apposition and diazeugma in *Beowulf*. **(b) Evaluate** Explain how each example you chose adds to the effectiveness of the text.
- Beowulf* came out of the oral tradition and was retold by generations of storytellers before it was written down. **(a) Connect** In what ways do you think the syntactic devices of apposition and diazeugma reflect that history? **(b) Evaluate** How might these syntactic devices have added to the power and clarity of a story told orally? Explain.