GOALS:

COMPETENCY GOAL 1
The learner will express reflections to print and non-print text as well as to personal experience.
1.02 Respond to texts so that the audience will:
   1.02C reflect on how cultural or historical perspectives may have influenced these responses.

COMPETENCY GOAL 5
The learner will deepen understanding of British literature through exploration and extended engagement.
5.01 Explore British literature by:
   5.01B relating the cultural and historical contexts to the literature and identifying perceived ambiguities, prejudices, and complexities.
   5.01D understanding how literary movements influence writers.
5.02 Extend engagement with selected works of British literature by:
   5.02A Observing how the imaginative experience of literature broadens and enriches real life.
   5.02B relating style, meaning, and genre (including fiction, non-fiction, drama, and poetry).
   5.02C applying literary, grammatical, and rhetorical terms of literature.
   5.02D demonstrating in various print and non-print media the significance of works.
   5.02E discerning the effect of interpreting literature from various critical perspectives.

OBJECTIVES:
• To understand the historical events during the Anglo-Saxon period
• To understand the religious events during the Anglo-Saxon period
• To understand the literary events during the Anglo-Saxon period

Introduction (Silver or Purple Book pages 2-3)
1. England is part of a small island that also includes ____________ and ____________.
2. But our American ____________ of ____________, our ____________ and ____________, our whole ____________ retain profound links to ____________.
3. It is, of course, possible to disapprove of English ____________ and English ____________ both ____________ and ____________, but to ignore ____________, and its ____________ and ____________, would be to ignore our own ____________.

The Celts and Their Religion (Silver or Purple Book page 3)
1. When Greek travelers visited Great Britain in the fourth century B.C., they found an island settled by people closely related to who?
2. Among these island Celts was a group called ____________ or ____________, who left their permanent stamp in one of the names eventually adopted by the land they settled.
3. What was the name of the Celts’ religion?
4. The Celts saw __________ everywhere - in rivers, trees, stones, ponds, fire, and thunder. These __________ or _________ controlled all aspects of __________ and they had to be constantly placated.

5. It was the ____________ who acted as ________________ intermediaries between the _____________ and _____________.

6. It is thought by some that ____________ - that enormous pile of megalithic ________________ on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire - was used by the ____________ for ____________ rites having to do with the _________ and _________ cycles.

7. Of great importance to the old Celtic religion was the ________________ ____________, a ______________ figure.

The Romans: The Great Administrators (Silver or Purple Book pages 3-4)
1. Beginning with a campaign led by ____________ ______ in _________ B.C. and culminating in one organized by the Emperor Claudius in the first century A.D., the Britons were conquered by the legions of _________________.

2. What religion was adopted during the Roman rule?

3. When Roman legions withdrew, they left Britain with roads, walls, villas, and great public baths but with no ________________.

4. Britain without Roman control was a country of ________________ who were now free to pursue their own interests without regard for the general welfare. The result was _______________ and a series of successful invasions by non-Christian peoples.

The Anglo-Saxons: From King Arthur to King Alfred (Silver or Purple Book pg. 4)
1. What two groups drove the old Britons from the greater part of Britain
   a) ________________
   b) ________________

2. Which of these two groups’ language became dominant?

3. The Celts retreated into ________________ in the far West of the country.

4. One of the most heroic Celtic leaders was a man called ________________, who developed in legend as the “___________ _______________ ________________.”

5. At first, Anglo-Saxon England was no more politically unified than Celtic Britain had been. But it was not until King _______________ of _________________, also known as ____________, led the Anglo-Saxons against the invading Danes that England became in any true sense a _____________.

6. Wessex kings reigned until the Anglo Saxons were overwhelmed by the last conqueror of England: ________________, _______________ of _________________.

The Reemergence of Christianity (Silver or Purple Book page 5)
1. The gradual reemergence of Christianity was due to the work of ____________ and ____________, the most important of who was probably ____________ ____________, who converted King Ethelbert of Kent in 597, founded the ____________ at ____________, and became the first ____________ of ____________, or leader of the ____________ in ____________.

2. The most important archeological sites in England were the burial mounds of ________________. (This discovery was made in the summer of 1939. The discovery consisted of the impression in the sands of a wooden ship ninety feet long that apparently had been the burial ship of Raedwald, King of East Anglia. In the center of the ship, close to where the king’s body would have lain, were found a helmet, a richly ornate sword and shield, and other items that supposedly designated kingship.)

Life in Anglo-Saxon England: Loyal Dependency (Silver or Purple Book page 6)
1. While the Anglo-Saxons were not barbarians, their life was also not luxurious and it was not dominated by scholarship and the arts. ________________ was the order of the day.
2. Law and order was the responsibility of the ____________ in any given group, whether ____________, ____________, ____________ or ____________.

3. ____________ and ____________, even ____________ were achieved through ____________ to such a ____________, especially during war and success was measured in ____________ from the leader.

4. This pattern of loyal dependency that was basic to Anglo-Saxon life. It grew out of a need to ____________ the ____________ from the terrors of an enemy-infested virgin wilderness.

5. In most of England, the Anglo-Saxons tended to live close to their ____________ in ____________ homesteads, ____________ buildings that surrounded a communal court or chieftains’ hall. This cluster of buildings was protected by a wooden stockade ____________.

**The Anglo-Saxon Religion (Silver or Purple Book pages 6-7)**

1. The religion of the early Anglo-Saxons had come with them from where?

2. The Anglo-Saxon deity named Thunor was essentially the same as Thor, the ____________ of ____________, and particularly of ____________, ____________.

3. As the god of ____________, ____________, and ____________, Odin could help humans communicate with ____________.

4. What was another significant figure in Anglo-Saxon mythology?

5. On the whole, the religion of the Anglo-Saxons seems to have been more concerned with ____________, ____________, ____________, and ____________ - than with the mystical aspects of ____________.

**Bards and Poets in Anglo-Saxon England (Silver or Purple Book pages 8-9)**

1. The Anglo-Saxon communal hall, besides ____________ and a place for holding ____________, also provided space and opportunity for ____________.

2. Who provided entertainment in these communal halls?

3. What were the bards called?

4. To the Anglo-Saxons, creating poetry was as “manly” as ____________, ____________, ____________, or ____________.

5. The poets sang to the accompaniment of a what?

6. As sources for their improvisational poetry, the story tellers had a rich supply of traditional ____________, ____________, that reflected the ____________ of a people constantly under the threat of annihilation by ____________, ____________, or ____________.

7. Anglo-Saxon literature contains many words in this same ____________, or mournful strain.

8. For the non-Christian Anglo-Saxon, only ____________ and its reverberation in ____________ could provide an enduring ____________ against ____________.

**Monasteries and Anglo-Saxon Literature (Silver or Purple Book page 9)**

1. In the death-shadowed world of the Anglo-Saxon, the poets or bards provided what one element of hope?

2. Another element of hope was supplied by what?

3. What were the strongholds of Christianity in this period?

4. In all likelihood, who probably wrote down and reworked the great works of popular literature like *Beowulf*?
5. The works from the oral tradition were composed in vernacular which means what?

6. Principal works of learning in the monasteries were written in what language?

7. Who was the greatest of the Latin writers in Anglo-Saxon England?

8. ___________ remained the language of “_________” study until the time of ___________ ___________, who was responsible for the ___________ ___________, a running history of England.

9. Partly because of his efforts ______________ began to gain respect as a ___________ of ___________, and works such as the ones in this unit came to be recognized as the great works of literature that they are.

Old English Poetics (Silver or Purple Book pages 10-11)
1. Anglo-Saxon or Old English poetry was ___________ or ___________ aloud.

2. What was the purpose of poetic recitation being accompanied by the harp?

3. What is the term for the repetition of consonant and vowel sounds at the beginning of words?

4. What is a pause or break within a line of poetry, usually dictated by the natural rhythm of language?

5. What are descriptive compound words that evoke vivid images?

6. List four “ready-made formulas” used to describe particular activities found in epics like Beowulf, the Iliad, or the Odyssey.
   a) ___________
   b) ___________
   c) ___________
   d) ___________

II. Beowulf

GOALS:

COMPETENCY GOAL 1

The learner will express reflections to print and non-print text as well as to personal experience.

1.02 Respond to texts so that the audience will:
   1.02A emphasize with the voice of the text
   1.02B make connections between the learner’s life and the text.
   1.02C reflect on how cultural or historical perspectives may have influenced these responses.
   1.02D examine the learner’s own response in light of peers’ responses.
   1.02E recognize features of the author’s use of language and how the learner relates these features to his/her own writing.

COMPETENCY GOAL 2

The learner will inform an audience by exploring general principles at work in life and literature.

2.01 Locate, process, and comprehend texts that explain principles, issues, and concepts at work in the world in order to:
   2.01A discern significant differences and similarities among texts that propose different ideas related to similar concepts.
   2.02A discovering and defining principles at work in personal experience and in literature.

COMPETENCY GOAL 4
The learner will analyze and critique texts from various perspectives and approaches.

4.01 Develop critiques that enable an audience to judge claims and arguments by:
4.01B substantiating assessments with reasons and evidence.

COMPETENCY GOAL 5
The learner will deepen understanding of British literature through exploration and extended engagement.

5.01 Explore British literature by:
5.01A recognizing common themes that run through works, using evidence from the texts to substantiate ideas.
5.01B relating the cultural and historical contexts to the literature and identifying perceived ambiguities, prejudices, and complexities.
5.01C making associations between historical and current viewpoints.
5.01D understanding how literary movements influence writers.

5.02 Extend engagement with selected works of British literature by:
5.02A observing how the imaginative experience of literature broadens and enriches real life.
5.02B relating style, meaning, and genre (including fiction, non-fiction, drama, and poetry).
5.02C applying literary, grammatical, and rhetorical terms of literature.
5.02D demonstrating in various print and non-print media the significance of works.
5.02E discerning the effect of interpreting literature from various critical perspectives.

COMPETENCY GOAL 6
The learner will apply conventions of grammar and language usage.

6.01 Apply knowledge of literary terms, grammar, and rhetoric in order to write clearly, succinctly, and accurately by:
6.01A understanding how to use and apply grammatical, metaphorical, or rhetorical devices.
6.01D contrasting use of language conventions of authors in different time periods of British literature.

OBJECTIVES:
• To read and analyze an epic poem from the Anglo-Saxon Period
• To recognize and discuss the following literary terms from the Anglo-Saxon Period: alliteration, allusion, antagonist, caesura, character, characterization, climax, conflict, epic, external conflict, foil, foreshadowing, hero, hyperbole, irony, kenning, motivation, oral tradition, personification, plot, protagonist, setting, simile

Beowulf Introduction
* English literature begins with Beowulf. It is considered the national epic of England.
* It was composed in Old English between the years 700-750.
* The epic was originally handed down orally. The only manuscript from Beowulf dates back to the year 1000. It was burned and stained from Henry VIII’s destruction of monasteries 200 years before. In addition to this, it survived the Great Fire of London in 1731, when the Cotton Library was in the path of the fire. It is now in the British Museum in London.
* For an epic, this one is short. While Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey are approximately 15,000 lines, Beowulf only has approximately 3,200 lines.

Characteristics of Anglo-Saxon Poetry
1. The poems were recited by scops -wandering poets who chanted their poems in the mead-halls of kings and nobles.
2. The poems do not usually rhyme but they have very strong rhythms. The rhythm of a line depends on the number of beats. Each line has a strong pause, or caesura, after the second beat.

3. A great deal of alliteration - the repetition of consonant sounds in words that are close to each other - is used.

4. Kennings are also used. A kenning is a metaphorical phrase or compound word used instead of the name of a person or thing. For example, Grendel is called the “shepherd of evil.”

Beowulf Terms

1. Epic - A long narrative poem that relates the great deeds of a larger-than-life hero who embodies the values of a particular society. How is Beowulf like an epic?
   a) It is written in an exalted, dignified style. b) It has a complex theme.
   c) It is a narrative which tells of a larger-than-life hero who is the epitome of a nation/culture.
   d) It links the deeds of the hero with the whole history and traditions of a people.

2. Wyrd - This word was used by the Anglo-Saxons to represent one’s lot or one’s fate in life. Since the early Anglo-Saxons did not believe strongly in an afterlife, it was mostly through personal fame, attained through heroic action, that one lived on and thus resisted wyrd.

Additional Terms

1. imagery - language that appeals to the senses
2. allusion - a reference to a statement, person, place, or thing that is known from literature, history, religion, mythology, politics, sports, science, or popular culture
3. archetype - a descriptive detail, plot pattern, character type, or theme that recurs in many different cultures
4. motif - in literature, a word, character, object, image, metaphor, or idea that recurs in a work or in several works
5. foil - one character who enhances another character through contrast
6. personification - when a non-human thing is given human characteristics
7. conflicts - a struggle between two or more opposing forces
8. elegy - a poem that mourns the death of a person or laments something lost
9. theme - the central idea or insight of a work of literature
10. hero - a character whose actions are inspiring or noble; often they struggle to overcome foes or to escape from difficulties

Background

*Prior to the epic, Hrothgar achieved glory and fame in war. It was his ambition to command a great mead-hall (a symbol or emblem of prowess in war and the obligation of a lord to his thanes). He achieved his goal. His mead-hall was the “greate st.” He pledged happiness and security to his subjects and the kingdom settled down to peace and the enjoyment of listening to the scops’ tales. This peace, as described in the story, is not permanent.

*When reading Beowulf, it is very important to understand the following three concepts:

1) The Pagan Warrior System - In this system, the relationship between the lord and his men, known as the thanes, is very important. It was one of mutual trust and respect. A warrior vowed his loyalty to his lord and became his companion. This agreement of loyalty and protection that the thanes had with their lords was called comitatus. It was the responsibility of the thanes to defend their king and their land and also to fight his wars whenever possible. In turn, the king/lord was responsible for repaying these men for their favors and for providing for their households. This included shelter, helmets, gold rings, bracelets, swords, beer, mead, and a home.

2) Retribution - In the warrior society there were two forms of retribution. First there was a quiet vengeance. Second, there was a concept called the “wergild” or the “man price.” If one’s kin was killed, it was the remaining relatives’ duty to make the killer pay for the death, either with his own life or the price of a “man price.” This means the killer - whether he did it on purpose or accidentally - if he wanted to avoid the other relatives’ vengeance - had to pay a sum of money or the sum of another human being.

3) Ideas of Fate and Courage - Warriors believed that fate controlled their lives and their beings.
BEOWULF STUDY GUIDE
Grendel Attacks the Danes
1. Hrothgar’s men lived happily in his hall until what stirred?

2. What Bible character was Grendel’s ancestor?

3. What is the name of Hrothgar’s mead-hall?

4. The first night Grendel attacked, how many men did he kill?

5. Who were the only people to survive Grendel’s attacks?

6. For how many years did Herot stand empty?

7. What one thing did Grendel never dare touch?

8. What would Hrothgar’s council discuss in secret sessions?

The Coming of Beowulf
9. Who decided to have a boat built and to go help Hrothgar?

10. How many of his men did he take with him?

11. At the end of their voyage, once they are on shore, what do they do “for their easy crossing”?

12. According to the Danish watcher, patrolling the cliffs, what makes Beowulf and his men different from others who have landed on this shore?

13. According to this watcher, what makes Beowulf different from all men on earth that he has ever seen?

14. In answer to the watcher’s questions, how does Beowulf answer the following?
   a) Who are you?
   b) From where are you?
   c) Why are you here?

15. After hearing Beowulf’s answer, what is the watcher’s response?

16. Which of Hrothgar’s thanes did he send to greet Beowulf?

17. Beowulf and his men were allowed in to see Hrothgar but what did they have to leave outside?

18. According to Beowulf, why did his people say he was to go to the Danes?

19. List Beowulf’s boasts.

20. What one favor does Beowulf want Hrothgar to grant him?

21. List two reasons he decides not to use weapons.

22. According to Beowulf, who must decide who will be “given to death’s cold grip”?
23. According to Beowulf, if he dies, why will there be nothing to mourn over?

24. What two requests does he want done if he does die?

25. What relative of Beowulf’s had sworn peace with Hrothgar years ago?

26. Why was Unferth angry with Beowulf?

27. Unferth brings up an old swimming match between Beowulf and who?

28. How long did this swimming match last?

29. Who won this contest?

30. According to Unferth, Beowulf’s battles have been won through what?

31. According to Beowulf, what separated him from Brecca after five long nights?

32. What attacked Beowulf?

33. How many monsters did Beowulf kill by the next morning?

34. In addition to Beowulf telling Unferth he had never heard any tales about him, what crime does Beowulf remind Unferth he had committed?

35. What does Beowulf say Unferth’s punishment will be?

36. Who is Welthow?

37. According to Beowulf, what is his purpose?

38. What is Beowulf promised if he purges Herot of Grendel?

The Battle with Grendel

39. Why did Beowulf watch Grendel kill one man?

40. Why wouldn’t Beowulf’s men’s weapons harm Grendel?

41. What part of Grendel’s body did Beowulf break off?

42. What did Beowulf do with the part of Grendel that he tore off of his body?

43. Where did Grendel go to die?

44. That night who attacks Herot?

45. Who does this monster carry off?

46. What else does the monster carry off with her?

47. What does Hrothgar beg Beowulf to do?

48. What will be Beowulf’s reward if he succeeds?

49. What sword does Beowulf carry to the underwater lair?
50. Who gives him this sword?

**The Battle with Grendel’s Mother**

51. How long had Grendel’s mother ruled the waters?

52. Not only did Grendel’s mother attack him, but also what else attacked?

53. What did he discover when he swung his sword at Grendel’s mother?

54. What was the only thing Beowulf longed for?

55. According to this epic, fame comes to what men?

56. When Grendel’s mother stabbed Beowulf, what thing protected him?

57. What was Beowulf able to kill Grendel’s mother with?

58. During Beowulf’s battle with Grendel’s mother, the Danes and Geats stand by the lake watching. Once the sun goes down, which group leaves and why?

59. Which group stays, yet what do they believe?

60. What happened to the sword?

61. Although the monsters’ hall was full of rich treasures, what were the only things Beowulf took?

62. When Beowulf swims to the top, how is the lake now?

63. What do the Geats thank God for?

64. Grendel’s skull is so heavy, how many men does it take to carry it?

65. What of Grendel’s did Beowulf cut off?

66. Who does Beowulf give this part of Grendel’s body to?

67. When Beowulf returns to the land of the Geats, he succeeds to the what?

68. How many years did he rule?

69. What is Beowulf’s final task?

70. Why is the dragon angry?

**The Final Battle**

71. Why must Beowulf use a sword to kill the dragon?

72. What begins to happen to Beowulf’s shield as the dragon breathes fire on him?

73. What happened to his sword when he stabbed the dragon?

74. Once it looks like Beowulf is going to be defeated, what do his men do?
75. Who is the only man who remained with Beowulf?

76. According to Wiglaf, he would rather do what than see flames swirling around his lord?

77. What does Wiglaf swear?

78. Together what do Beowulf and Wiglaf do?

79. Thinking of his people, what does Beowulf ask to see?

80. What does Wiglaf find when he enters the dragon’s cave?

81. Who does Beowulf thank for the treasure?

82. What four requests does Beowulf ask of Wiglaf?

83. What four things does Beowulf give to Wiglaf?

84. Who does Wiglaf berate?

85. What do they do with Beowulf’s ashes and the dragon’s treasure and why?

86. As twelve of the bravest Geats rode their horses around the tower, what did they do?

87. This was their last what to Beowulf?

Beowulf Reading Notes

“Grendel Attacks the Danes”
*In this part there is a Biblical allusion to the Creation story and the story of Cain and Abel.
*Herot means “hart” or “stag.” A stag is an animal that was a symbol of kingship to the Anglo-Saxons.
*Grendel is seen as a “super-human monster.” He kills 30 people at a time.
*Grendel symbolizes evil. Herot and its occupants symbolize goodness. Therefore an immediate archetypal conflict of good vs. evil is established.
*In this epic a mixture of pagan and Christian practices are seen. Why fuse both of these in this poem? Because it is a reflection of the time in which it was written. “As a good Christian, the poet had to treat this original pagan material in a manner acceptable to a Christian audience.”

“The Coming of Beowulf”
*In this section Beowulf is seen as vigorous, somewhat vain, aggressive, noble, and good. These are typical characteristics of heroes.
*Beowulf seems to be boasting but it is more than that. 1) Boasting was a custom.
2) Boasting was typical in epics. 3) To boast was to make a vow.
*Hrothgar here is seen as older and weaker.
*Why does Unferth challenge Beowulf? He is envious of anyone who claims to have greater fame and glory than his own.
*Beowulf’s challenge in this section is a regular motif of heroic poetry. It allows the hero to show not only his self-assertiveness, but also his restraint and courtesy.
*Unferth’s name means “strife.”
*Theme is self vs. fate.
*Unferth is a foil to Beowulf.
*Night is personified.

**The Battle With Grendel**
* An example of kennings is “shepherd of evil, guardian of crime.”
* There are images of good vs. evil. Grendel will go to hell. Beowulf is compared to Almighty God.

**The Battle with Grendel’s Mother**
* There is a contrast between Herot and Grendel’s place. Herot is filled with singing, feasting, and drinking. Grendel’s lair is a cold, dark, lonely lake.
* Why does Grendel hate Herot? It represents goodness, even godliness. He is evil so therefore he hates it.
* The imagery in the description of Grendel’s lair associates Grendel with death and darkness.
* When Beowulf goes to Grendel’s mother’s place it symbolically represents his descent into Hell just like other literary figures (for example Aeneas in the *Aeneid*).
* This section, like most epics, shows how the hero is different from other men. He can do what they can’t.
* Light represents God’s favor.

**The Final Battle**
* In this section, Beowulf accepts his wyrd.
* In this section Beowulf’s men do not perform their duty to him. Instead they desert him.
* Here Beowulf makes his dying requests.
* This is the final eulogy for Beowulf.
* Why has Beowulf had to fight a dragon? Christians thought dragons were the symbol of sin. Often dragons were seen as crushed under the feet of saints and martyrs. This symbolizes the triumph of Christianity. Therefore this battle really was one of physical vs. spiritual. With Beowulf’s victory, symbolically the spiritual has defeated the physical.
* When Beowulf passes his necklace to Wiglaf, this symbolizes that Beowulf’s life is ending and he wants to pass on his legacy to his followers.
* Beowulf’s death signals the end of the Geatish people and the glory they won during Beowulf’s reign.

**Beowulf Follow Up Notes**
* This is a story of two kinds of humans in society. 1) One is symbolized by Herot which represents those who are filled with generosity, loyalty, and love. 2) A second is symbolized by the monsters. These represent those who prey on the ordered, light-filled world that man desires and clings to.
* Themes
  1) Loyalty and self-sacrifice are admirable traits.
  2) Good triumphs over evil.
  3) Different members of society have obligations toward one another.
  4) Fame can be achieved through good deeds.

* Beowulf is the hero. He is virtuous, loyal to his lord, honest with others, and faces dangers.
* What causes Beowulf to fight against evil? It is his code of honor.
* How is Wiglaf similar to Beowulf? He is courageous, strong, faithful to his master, and confronts things head on.
* How is Grendel similar to Cain? Like Cain drinking Abel’s blood, Grendel drinks that of his victims. Both are threats to the order of society. Both are outsiders.
* How are Beowulf and Hrothgar alike? Eventually Beowulf becomes old like Hrothgar and needs the help of a young hero. However, he, unlike Hrothgar, is willing to jump in and help. Beowulf never avoids going into battle. He doesn’t fear it. Hrothgar avoids it.