**Notes on Beowulf**

**Basic information on the poem:**

* 3,000 line poem.
* Composed in Europe
* First was an oral poem, composed around 700-800 AD. (*The Odyssey* and *The Iliad* were composed around 700 BC for comparison.)
* Author unknown
* Earliest written version is about 1000 AD.
* Written when many were converting to Christianity, so although most characters are Christian, there are references to Norse mythology.
* Written in old English, which is very different from the English we speak today.

**The setting:**

* Story takes place around 500-600 AD.
* Main character Beowulf is from Geatland, which is Sweden.
* Beowulf goes to a place called Heorot which is in Denmark.

**The warrior culture of *Beowulf*:**

* Groups of people gathered around strong kings who would protect them from danger.
* Warriors would serve the king and help him protect people. In return the king would reward them with treasure won in war.
* Mead Halls were where the kings lived. The warriors would gather there to drink, feast, tell stories and receive present from king. Since all the warriors were there, it was also a place to go for safety most of the time.
* The mead hall in this story is called Heorot. The king there is Hrothgar.