Sample Argument

Throughout history no one has agreed on who the ideal hero is. People argue whether the true hero is the one who kills the most monsters, or the one who solves their problems without violence. For example in the story, *Beowulf* by Robert Nye, Beowulf was a man who heard about a monster named Grendel that was terrorizing a golden hall built by a greedy king named Hrothgar. He did not take into consideration why that monster might have been in that situation, yet he still goes and kills it. However, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. didn’t use violence to solve problems with civil rights in the US. He used his words, and he still got his message across better than Beowulf. Thus Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a more ideal hero than Beowulf.

King made a difference for millions of people across the U.S while Beowulf only saved a building from a king’s stupidity. For example, looking back on the March on Washington organized by King, History.com says, “Held on August 28 and attended by some 200,000 to 300,000 participants, the event is widely regarded as a watershed moment in the history of the American civil rights movement and a factor in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.” ([History.com](http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/martin-luther-king-jr)) The March on Washington was a turning point in Civil Rights; King was truly heroic by influencing so many people with his words and actions. On the contrary, Beowulf did nothing of this magnitude. He may have helped the few stupid people who would still go to the golden hall at night time, but those people didn’t deserve saving; they were flirting with disaster by going back into the Hall. Also later in the book, Beowulf kills The Firedrake because he was defending his things. The Firedrake caused some terror, but after that he went back into his cave to mind his own business. There was no need for Beowulf to kill him.

Although some people think Beowulf is a more ideal hero because he literally killed his monsters, King is more so because he dealt with his monsters without violence. In 1957 King co-founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. (SCLC) It was based on the motto “Not one hair on one head of one person should be harmed” ; throughout his life King thoroughly lived with this motto ([History.com](http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/martin-luther-king-jr)). When his house was fire bombed by white supremacists, he still knew violence was not the answer. He also showed that thought process in the non-violent March on Washington . That is what being a hero is all about. A hero shouldn’t have to hurt people to get what they want; they should be able to solve problems without violence. On the other hand after Beowulf returns to his homeland, Beowulf appoints his nephew, a small boy named Hardred as king of his homeland. Soon Hardred is killed by an enemy by the name of King Onela. Although Beowulf wanted peace, he still wanted revenge: , “He regretted Hardred’s killing. His conscience would not let him rest until he had avenged that.” (*Nye 88)* Although he then killed King Onela and made the kingdom peaceful again, he also implied that two wrongs make a right. They don’t; if Beowulf had just let King Onela be, everything would be peaceful in the kingdom, but he didn’t and now the people who loved that person as much as he loved Hardred will retaliate and there will be no more peace.

Lastly, King’s conscience helped him stay peaceful while Beowulf’s seemed to not exist. When Hrothgar built the hall, Grendel felt threatened; he knew that people were getting closer, and closer to where he lived and he needed to do something. He was just a creature who was defending his habitat! Beowulf didn’t have the conscience to feel bad for Grendel, and he didn’t care why he may be terrorizing the hall; he just ripped his arm out and killed him. Additionally, when Grendel’s mother came to the hall to retrieve her son’s arm, Beowulf followed her down to her lair and killed her. If she was a real threat to the people, she would have stormed into the hall and killed everybody. Beowulf still killed her in cold blood. She didn’t deserve killing; she was just a mother retrieving her son’s arm. In contrast, King’s conscience helped him be a better hero. When he came under fire by Malcolm X for being too peaceful, he said,"I will never change in my basic idea that nonviolence is the most potent weapon available to the Negro in his struggle for freedom and justice.” ([PBS](http://www.pbs.org/godinamerica/people/martin-luther-king-jr.html.)) His conscience would not let him succumb to hurting people to get what he wanted. It is not just having a conscience that helps King, it is his ability to never let his conscience lead to violence such as when his house was fire bombed he proclaimed, “We still have the attitude of love." ([PBS)](http://www.pbs.org/godinamerica/people/martin-luther-king-jr.html.) He would never hurt anyone no matter how much they hurt him. This is not the case for Beowulf.

Overall, it is not how many monsters that someone kills that decides if they are a hero. It is their ability to avoid the killing and take the peaceful route. Everybody should be able to do this and be a hero, but Beowulf could not; he couldn’t take the time to reason his problems out; he just killed and got the problem over with. Therefore Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is a more ideal hero than Beowulf.