**Beowulf Key Words**

**Epic:** a long, narrative poem centered on a heroic figure on whose actions depend the **fate** of a tribe, nation, or the human race (a quest story)

**Epic Hero:** a figure of great importance, usually the ideal man of his culture, embodies the ideals of an epic hero

**Alliteration:** repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of consecutive words (ex: sally sells seashells)

**Kenning:** compound words or phrases used to describe (ex: light-of-battle = sword, battle-sweat = blood)

**Comitatus Bond:** a band of warriors pledged to a Lord who was known for his bravery and generosity

* Sworn to defend their leader to the death and if the leader dies, his death must be avenged
* Warriors known for their courage, bravery, recklessness, and **LOYALTY (loyal dependency)**
* Loyalty to one’s Lord sometimes created conflict with loyalty to one’s kin
* In return, the lord gave them protection and shared his weapons and wealth with them

**Thane:** a warrior who followed a Lord (bodyguard)

**Wergild:** the “price” of a man based on his position in society. If a man was killed, the guilty party could offer the family money to stop the bloodshed.

**Mead Hall:** a large hall where the Lord’s thanes ate and slept. It’s a place for gift-giving, entertainment, and royal festivals

**Mead:** a drink similar to beer or ale

**Scop:** a singer, or bard, for the Mead Hall (entertainment)

**Wyrd:** FATE! Both Gods and men were subject to Wyrd. The idea behind this is that a man has a choice to act or not to act a certain way. (Fate v. free will)