

# Boast like Beowulf!

Beowulf had no shame about boasting. In fact, the Anglo-Saxon warriors saw nothing wrong with letting the world know who they were, who their noble parents were, what great feats they had accomplished, and what they planned to do next. This boasting was perfectly polite, even expected. So get ready to do some chest thumping, Anglo-Saxon style!

## Excerpt from *Beowulf*:

“Hail! King Hrothgar! I am Hygelac’s thane,  
Hygelac’s kinsman. Many a deed  
Of honor and daring I’ve done in my youth...  
The best of my people, prudent and brave,  
Urged me, King Hrothgar, to seek you out;  
They had in remembrance my courage and might.  
Many had seen me come safe from the conflict,  
Bloody from battle; five foes I bound  
Of the giant kindred, and crushed their clan...  
And now with Grendel, the fearful fiend,  
Single-handed I’ll settle the strife.



## **Assignment**

Your assignment is to write a formal boast about yourself in 12-15 lines. Tell us your deeds, who your daddy/mama are, what you plan to do, and how you’re not gonna’ take nothing from nobody. Your accomplishments may be academic, athletic, musical, social, artistic, etc. Lay aside your humility! Remember, you’ll soon be applying for college or a job and may need to do a bit of boasting.

Be creative! Include your genealogy, your acts of courage, your victories over enemies, and any other achievements and awards. Punctuate your poem. To end your boast, state your next great act.

Type your boast: double-spaced, 1” margins, 12 point Times New Roman (or similar font), black text, and title. You will write your name ON THE BACK only—create a kenning to rename you in your first line.

*Sources: Compiled from different online iterations of the same assignment, the original concept credited only at <http://www.gradinggirl.com/archives/tag/anglo-saxon-boasts> to Jeffrey Leatham. Original Trump boast (below) comes from an undocumented online Google doc.*

## Requirements:

Your boast must show your understanding of Anglo-Saxon poetry by imitating its structure and style:

- No end rhyme
- Caesuras
- **Heavy** (3 or more words per example) alliteration throughout poem: include at least five (5) alliterative phrases (repeated initial consonant sound): “Until a flood swept us apart; / The frozen sea surged around me . . . ” (278-79)
- Epic diction and style: use elevated word choices—no slang; tell your story in a grand manner
- Original kennings: Include at least three (3) identifiable kennings (compound expressions with metaphorical meaning: oar-steed = ship; whale-road = ocean; death-dealer = sword; brain-basher=club, etc.

**Structure:** Use the following order of information in your boast:

1. Self-identification (I am \_\_\_\_\_, daughter/son of \_\_\_\_\_)
2. Your parent/s and something about your lineage (ancestry—go back a little farther)
3. Your bravery (not gonna take nothin’ from nobody)
4. Your beliefs (honor, glory, loyalty, honesty, decency, etc.)
5. Boasts of at least 3 past achievements (academic, athletic, musical, social, artistic, complete lies, etc.)
6. Boast of achievements to come (you can make these as outlandish as you like)

### *Example:*

I, Donald of Trump, from the land of the green-god

High on the Hudson, son of a robber

Slumlord, generous to all his thanes,

Rewarding them lavishly with subway tokens

Have come here to wipe out the weak

And establish high halls of gold.

I have conquered condos and toppled towers,

Erected edifices by shining seas.

Now I will conquer the City of Wind

I will smite descendants of Capone,

And start a new world order

With apprentices anew who grovel before

My cobra words: “Fie on you!

You’re fired!”

**Analysis:** Using the following highlighter key, identify the Anglo-Saxon elements in this original poem.

**Green** = kennings

**Yellow** = heavy alliteration

**Blue** = caesuras

**Challenge:** Write three or four more lines about his running for President of the United States. And don’t forget about the hair!

# Epic Boast

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Pd. \_\_\_\_\_

## GRADING RUBRIC:

Follows the given structure/format, including length \_\_\_\_\_/30

Contains at least three well-written original kennings \_\_\_\_\_/15

Contains at least five examples of heavy alliteration \_\_\_\_\_/20

Includes a caesura in almost every line \_\_\_\_\_/15

Written in Anglo Saxon epic style \_\_\_\_\_/10

Typed and properly formatted \_\_\_\_\_/10

**Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_/ 100**

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**Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_/ 100**