

## **What is an Epic?**

A long story in poem form.

An epic has a hero.

The epic is the story of the hero's travels and his fights with monsters, gods, and bad guys

An epic is in the 3rd person.

Epics were originally sung, often to a harp.

Epics contain information about the culture that created them: religion, dress & ornaments, homes, weapons and war, roles of men and women, values, moral standards.

Epics often contain clues to what the people who created them feared or did not understand: natural disasters, natural features (like boiling springs and water red with rust), death, the heavens, storms.

## **Traits of an Epic Hero**

Has "larger than life" qualities.

Is a natural leader of others.

Is not emotionally connected to his/her followers, even though they die for him/her and he/she fights for them.

Is appealing to the opposite sex but rarely has an extended relationship.

Defeats monsters and/or fights gods (or very bad guys).

Has "good" on his/her side.

Is associated with "light" and strength and values.

Often stands alone in battle. Is a skilled fighter.

Is smarter than everyone else, generally; is a problem-solver.

Has a weakness that often destroys him/her or leads to death (is this true of Beowulf?) or almost to death.

Is on the move - travels to find adventure.