

# Eton College King's Scholarship Examination 2020

## ENGLISH

(One and a half hours)

**Remember to write your candidate number on every sheet of answer paper used.**

*You must answer all questions.*

*You are advised to spend about ten minutes reading the extract before answering the questions.*

**Do not turn over until told to do so.**

Read the extract slowly and carefully and then answer **ALL** the questions that follow.

*Beowulf is an epic poem written at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> Century in Anglo-Saxon England. The story is set in Scandinavia. Beowulf, a hero of the Geats, comes to the aid of Hrothgar, the king of the Danes, whose mead hall Heorot has been under attack by a monster known as Grendel. After Beowulf slays him, Grendel's mother attacks the hall and is then also defeated.*

So. The Spear-Danes in days gone by  
And the kings who ruled them had courage and greatness.  
We have heard of those kings' heroic campaigns.

There was Shield Sheafson, scourge of many tribes,  
A wrecker of mead-benches, rampaging among foes. 5

This terror of the hall- troops had come far.  
A foundling to start with, he would flourish later on  
As his powers waxed and his worth was proved.  
In the end each clan on the outlying coasts  
Beyond the whale-road had to yield to him 10  
And begin to pay tribute. That was one good king.

Afterwards a boy-child was born to Shield,  
A cub in the yard, a comfort sent  
By God to that nation. He knew what they had suffered,  
The long times and troubles they had come through 15  
Without a leader. So the Lord of Life,  
The glorious Almighty, made this man renowned.

Shield had fathered a famous son:  
Beow's name was known through the north. 20  
And a young prince must be prudent like that,  
Giving freely whilst his father lives  
So that afterwards in age when fighting starts  
Steadfast companions will stand by him  
And hold the line. Behaviour that's admired  
Is the path to power amongst people everywhere. 25

Shield was still thriving when his time came  
And he crossed over into the Lord's keeping.  
His warrior band did what he bade them  
When he laid down the law among the Danes:  
They shouldered him out to the sea's flood, 30  
The chief they revered who had long ruled them.

A reign-whirled prow rode in the harbour,  
Ice-clad, outbound, a craft for a prince.  
They stretched their beloved lord in his boat,  
Laid out by the mast, amidships, 35  
The great ring-giver. Far fetched treasures  
Were piled upon him, and precious gear.  
I never heard before of a ship so well furbished

With battle tackle, bladed weapons  
And coats of mail. The massed treasure 40  
Was loaded on top of him: it would travel far  
On out into the ocean's sway.  
They decked his body no less bountifully

With offerings than those first ones did  
Who cast him away when he was a child 45  
And launched him alone out over the waves.  
And they set a gold standard up  
High above his head and let him drift  
To wind and tide, bewailing him  
And mourning their loss. No man can tell, 50  
No wise man in hall or weathered veteran  
Knows for certain who salvaged that load.

### PART ONE

1. What do you infer from the passage about the narrator's story-telling techniques?  
Make sure you quote and use evidence from the text to support your ideas. [15 marks]
2. What in your view is the importance of the setting of the passage?  
Make sure you quote and use evidence from the text to support your ideas. [10 marks]
3. Explain what kind of society the passage reflects. [10 marks]

### PART TWO

After thinking about what in your view are the most important ideas in the passage, rewrite it in the following form:

A short dramatic monologue in which Beowulf explains to his people what heroism means. [15 marks]

### PART THREE

'A true thought, badly expressed, is a lie.' Discuss this statement. [40 marks]

In this task ten extra marks are available for spelling, punctuation, quality of grammar, originality, elegance and flair of expression.

**END OF PAPER**