**Cultural Characteristics of the Epic Hero**

Where does society look to find its heroes? What are the qualities expected of heroes? What virtues do heroes embody? What role do heroes have in bringing about change in a society’s fortune or fate? Is there any such thing as the reluctant hero? Are heroes given inordinate praise and worship, or do heroes receive honor that is commensurate with their deeds? Use these questions as a jumping-off point for your thoughts.

ESSAY Question

Using your text to support your claims, identify and analyze the characteristics that a hero was expected to possess in Beowulf’s pre-Medieval society.

Pull from the following list to help you in your analysis of an epic hero. Use the ideas generated in class and found in the list below as focus points for your body paragraphs.

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| * Being of noble birth or high position, and often of great historical or legendary importance |
| * Exhibiting character traits, or qualities, that reflect important ideals of society |
| * Performing courageous, sometimes superhuman, deeds that reflect the values of the era |
| * Performing actions that often determine the fate of a nation or group of people |
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| Honors Expectations: Students are to address all four focus points below in their essay. |
| Academic Expectations: Students are to address three of the four focus points below in their essay |
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