**What are Beowulf’s flaws? How do those flaws make him more heroic?**

**Directions:** What makes the second paragraph stronger than the first?

Although Beowulf has flaws, he is actually more heroic because he doesn’t allow his flaws to stop him. At one point the book says, “A setback like that did not daunt him. He did not even blame the bees. Beowulf was the rare kind of person who makes strength of his own weaknesses. His eyes being poor, he determined to see not just as well as others but better than most. He did this by cultivating habits of quickness and concentration that enabled him to be truly seeing where others where only looking” (19-20). Many people would be so angry and bitter about losing much of their eyesight that they would give up. Not only does Beowulf not give up, he actually decides to turn his flaw into a strength by learning to think quickly and concentrate so that he will be more observant and perceptive. Only heroes have that kind of determination and strength of will. Furthermore, Beowulf also uses his short legs to his advantage. “But Beowulf wound his own legs round a pillar. He took the full force of the monster’s pull—and still held on” (42). Beowulf’s legs are supposed to be a weakness because they are short, yet those legs enable him to hang on with enough strength that he pulls Grendel’s arm out of the socket! Beowulf’s legs may not be long, but that doesn’t mean they still can’t help him defeat a monster. In fact, Beowulf’s defeat of Grendel is *more* impressive because of his flaws. The task would be difficult enough for someone who has no weaknesses, but Beowulf has enough strength and determination to succeed no matter what. Thus he demonstrates that a flaw is *not* necessarily a weakness.

Although Beowulf has bad eyes and short legs, he is actually more heroic because he doesn’t allow his flaws to stop him. When Beowulf is a child bees sting his eyes and cheeks so severely that afterwards everything looks blurry to him. However, when the book describes his response to the accident, it says,

A setback like that did not daunt him. He did not even blame the bees. Beowulf was the rare kind of person who makes strength of his own weaknesses. His eyes being poor, he determined to see not just as well as others but better than most. He did this by cultivating habits of quickness and concentration that enabled him to be truly seeing where others where only looking (19-20).

Many people would be so angry and bitter about losing much of their eyesight that they would give up. Not only does Beowulf not give up, he actually decides to turn his flaw into a strength by learning to think quickly and concentrate so that he will be more observant and perceptive. Only heroes have that kind of determination and strength of will. Furthermore, Beowulf also uses his short legs to his advantage. When Grendel attacks Hall Heorot, Beowulf grabs his arm and refuses to let go. Grendel tries to jerk free, “But Beowulf wound his own legs round a pillar. He took the full force of the monster’s pull—and still held on” (42). Beowulf’s legs are supposed to be a weakness because they are short, yet those legs enable him to hang on with enough strength that he pulls Grendel’s arm out of the socket! Beowulf’s legs may not be long, but that doesn’t mean they still can’t help him defeat a monster. In fact, Beowulf’s defeat of Grendel is *more* impressive because of his flaws. The task would be difficult enough for someone who has no weaknesses, but Beowulf has enough strength and determination to succeed no matter what. Thus he demonstrates that a flaw is *not* necessarily a weakness.