|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Main Entry:** | epic hero |
| **Part of Speech:** | *n* |
| **Definition:** | a main character in an epic whose legendary or heroic actions are central to his/her culture, race, or nation |

Every **epic hero** possesses certain heroic characteristics. **Beowulf**, like other **epic heroes**, possesses the following heroic qualities: **epic heroes** are superhuman types of beings. They have a noble birth and show great bravery.

An **epic hero** is an important figure from a [history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History) or [legend](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legend), usually favored by or even partially descended from [deities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deity), but aligned more closely with mortal figures in popular portrayals. The hero participates in a cyclical journey or quest, faces adversaries that try to defeat him in his journey, gathers allies along his journey, and returns home significantly transformed by his journey. The epic hero illustrates traits, performs deeds, and exemplifies certain morals that are valued by the society from which the epic originates. They usually embody cultural and religious beliefs of the people. Many epic heroes are [recurring characters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recurring_character) in the legends of their native culture. Epic heroes have no superpowers, but are smart, brave, and have fears but overcome them to protect their friends, families, and countries. An epic hero can also be a warrior of some sort who performs extraordinary tasks that most find difficult. This hero is loyal, smart, and brave. The epic hero is also typically joined by sidekicks, who will initially be rejected from the group for their own safety, thus embodying selflessness, a commonly valued trait in society, into the epic hero. The sidekick will be permitted into the group eventually, the epic hero remaining with an unscathed heroic reputation for being reluctant to let the sidekick join in the suffering.

**Examples of Epic Heroes**

* [Beowulf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beowulf)
* [Gilgamesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilgamesh)
* [Arjuna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arjuna)
* [Rama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rama)
* [Cúchulainn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C%C3%BAchulainn)
* [Jason](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jason)
* [Perseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perseus)
* [Rostam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rostam)
* [Odysseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odysseus) ([Iliad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iliad) & [Odyssey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odyssey))
* [Prince Marko](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_Marko)
* [King Arthur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Arthur)
* [Son Wukong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Son_Wukong)
* [Achilles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achilles)
* [Roland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roland)
* [Luke Skywalker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luke_Skywalker)