

Anglo-Saxon Heroic Poetry: "The Battle of Maldon"
Questions for Consideration

1. In the opening lines of the poem, a young warrior prepares for battle. What does he do in preparation?
2. What kind of battle advice does Byrthnoth give his men?
3. What initial request does the Viking spokesman ask of Byrthnoth?
4. Why does Byrthnoth refuse this offer?
5. Initially, Byrthnoth's men have the advantage in the battle. Why?
6. Why does Byrthnoth allow the Vikings to cross the ford? Is this *ofermod*? Explain.
7. Animals were commonly associated with warfare. Find several references to animals.
8. Uncle/nephew relationships were extremely important to *comitatus*. Find an example of such a relationship.
9. Describe the battle techniques of the warriors.
10. After Byrthnoth dies, one of his retainers, Godric, does something extremely dishonorable. What does he do?
11. What kinds of boasts do the remaining warriors make?