

THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions with 3-4 sentences each. Remember to use examples from the story to back up your claims.

1. **Theme:** In the first part of his story what did Gilgamesh learn about being a good ruler?
2. **Character Analysis:** Epics are long poems that feature a larger-than-life hero as their main character. Epic heroes are usually the embodiment of traits their culture highly prizes. Gilgamesh is one of the oldest heroes of literature. What are three heroic qualities that he exhibits? Explain.
3. **Connect:** Who was your favorite character in the story? Explain.
4. **Analyze:** Heroes from myths often contend with enemies and monsters that represent the forces of nature. The human hero must overcome them to prove his dominance. How did Humbaba the demon-giant and the Bull of Heaven follow this pattern? Explain.
5. **Theme:** Savagery versus civilization is a theme in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. How does Enkidu demonstrate this theme?
6. **Character Analysis:** How does the friendship of Enkidu make Gilgamesh a better person?
7. **Theme:** One of Gilgamesh's goals is to live forever. Does he achieve his goal? Explain.
8. **Analysis:** What part do the gods play in Gilgamesh's story? Are they important or unimportant? Explain.
9. **Connect:** *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is over 4,000 years old, yet we can still identify with Gilgamesh in many ways. Gilgamesh struggles with problems we still face today. What are some of these problems?
10. **Feminist Analysis:** Female characters are sometimes given small parts in ancient stories. Were there any strong female characters in the story of Gilgamesh? Were they presented in a positive or negative light? Explain.
11. **Connect:** Early in his career, Gilgamesh learns that unlimited power corrupts those who wield it. Think of another example from fiction or the real world of a tyrant who held too much power. How does this tyrant compare and contrast with Gilgamesh?
12. **Analyze:** Was Gilgamesh's life a failure or a success? Explain.
13. **Theme:** After all of his adventures, Gilgamesh returns to Uruk and carves the lessons he learned onto stone tablets. He affixes these to the city walls, so his people can learn the wisdom he has gained. What can we learn from this?