

The Epic of Gilgamesh Reader's Guide

Part 1: Gilgamesh King in Uruk, The Coming of Enkidu

1. We are told that Gilgamesh “was the man to whom all things were _____; this was the king who knew the _____ of the _____. He was _____, he saw _____ and knew _____, he brought us a tale of before the _____. He went on a long _____, was _____, worn out with _____, returning he _____, he _____ on a _____ the whole _____.”
2. **Think:** What characteristic usually associated with heroes is **not even mentioned** here?
3. What point is the poet making by not mentioning this?
4. The goddess gave Gilgamesh a perfect _____, full of _____ and _____.
5. What fraction of Gilgamesh was god? _____ What fraction was man? _____
6. What did Gilgamesh build in Uruk that the narrator says is still there? _____
7. Gilgamesh went all over the world, but never found **what** until he came to Uruk? _____
8. Name two things Gilgamesh did that angered “the men of Uruk”:

b.

c.
9. The people say “the king should be a _____ to his people.” What does that mean?
10. The gods heard these complaints, so they cried to the god of _____, who told the goddess of _____: “You made _____; now create his _____ ... his second _____, stormy _____ for stormy _____. Let them _____ together and leave _____ in _____.”
11. Put that plan into your own words:

12. This goddess “pinched off _____, and noble _____ was created.”
13. What Biblical character was created in a similar way? _____
14. Look at the description of Enkidu’s appearance, and look back at the description of Gilgamesh’s appearance (question #4). What is different?
15. Where did Enkidu live, what did he act like, and how is that different from Gilgamesh?
16. One day a _____ saw Enkidu, and told his father that Enkidu was causing what problem?
17. The father told the son to tell Gilgamesh to send a _____ to defeat Enkidu by doing what?
18. After this, how did beasts react to Enkidu, and what happened when Enkidu tried to run?
19. “Enkidu was grown _____, for _____ was in him, and the thoughts of a _____ were in his _____.”
20. The harlot says that Enkidu is _____ and “become like a _____,” so she will take him to _____.
21. What does the harlot tell Enkidu about Gilgamesh – and what does Enkidu promise to do?
22. When Enkidu walks into Uruk, what do the people do and say?
23. What happens when Gilgamesh and Enkidu meet?
24. What happens when the fight is over?

Part 2: The Forest Journey

1. Enkidu tells Gilgamesh that the “father of the gods has given you _____, such is your destiny; _____ is not your destiny.”
2. What does the word “destiny” mean? _____
3. Enkidu says that Gilgamesh has been given the power “to be the _____ and the _____ of mankind.” Then he says, “But do not _____ this power.”

4. Enkidu then weeps because he is “oppressed by _____.” What does this mean?
5. To solve this problem, Gilgamesh says “I will go to the country where the _____ is felled” to kill a giant named “_____, whose name is _____.”

ANALYZE AND WRITE: So – why are they killing the giant?

6. Enkidu says that _____ has “appointed” this giant to guard _____, and says of this giant, “When he roars it is like _____, his breath is like _____, and his jaws are _____ itself.”
7. Gilgamesh asks, “Where is the man who can _____ to _____?” **What does he mean?**
8. He says that, when he looks over the city’s wall, he sees *what* and realizes *what*?
9. He asks for Shamash’s help in his quest, and Shamash “accepted the sacrifice of his _____” and sent what to help Gilgamesh?
10. Gilgamesh has his craftsmen make axes that weigh “_____ score pounds.” A “score” is twenty; so how much do the axes weigh? _____
11. He has the craftsmen make swords that weigh _____ score pounds. Again, a “score” is twenty; so how much do the swords weigh? _____
12. The biggest axe is given what name?
13. Gilgamesh tells the people of Uruk that he will “show” Humbaba “the strength of” whom?
14. What warning do “the counselors of Uruk” give him?
15. How does Gilgamesh respond to this warning?
16. A “league” is about three miles, so Enkidu and Gilgamesh walk _____ miles the first day?
17. In three days they’ve walked as far as most men walk in how long?

18. What does Gilgamesh do to get Humbaba to come out of the forest and fight?
19. Why does Humbaba say that Gilgamesh ought to feel pity for him?
20. At first, "The _____ of Gilgamesh was moved with _____."
21. What does Enkidu advise?
22. So what do Gilgamesh and Enkidu do?
23. What sacrifice to Gilgamesh and Enkidu give to the god Enlil?
24. How does this god respond to the gift?

Part 3: Ishtar, Gilgamesh and the Death of Enkidu

1. Who kills Enkidu, and why, and how?
2. Gilgamesh cries, "the dream was _____ but the terror was _____; we must treasure the _____ whatever the _____, for the dream has shown us that _____ comes at last to the healthy man, the end of life is _____."
3. Enkidu cries, "I feared to fall, but happy is the man who _____, for I must die in _____."
4. After Enkidu dies, Gilgamesh weeps, then admits that he is most afraid of what?
5. Who is Utnapishtim, and why does Gilgamesh go to seek him?
6. Gilgamesh tells the Man-Scorpion, "I thought my friend would come back because of" what?
7. Shamash tells Gilgamesh, "You will never find _____."
8. Siduri, the maker of wine, tells Gilgamesh, "You will never find _____."
9. Siduri tells Gilgamesh, "fill your _____ with _____; day and night, night and day, _____ and be _____, _____ and _____." Let your _____ be fresh, _____ yourself in _____.

_____, cherish the _____, and make your
_____; for this too is _____."

10. **FREEWRITE 10 words:** In your own words, summarize Siduri's advice:

11. What is Utnapishtim doing when he sees Gilgamesh?

12. **THINK AND ANSWER:** Would Gilgamesh be happy doing this? Explain your answer.

13. Gilgamesh says to Utnapishtim, "Because of my brother I am afraid of _____."

14. Gilgamesh then asks how Utnapishtim came to "possess _____."

15. Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh, "I will reveal to you a _____, I will tell you a _____."

Part 4: The Story of the Flood and the Return to Uruk

1. According to Utnapishtim, why did Enlil persuade the gods to destroy mankind?

2. Who warned Utnapishtim that this was coming? _____

3. Once the flooding started, how did the gods react to the destruction of the world?

4. How long did the storm last? _____

5. Utnapishtim sent out three birds. Which did not return, signaling that land is near? _____

6. Why was Utnapishtim saved? _____

7. **THINK:** Use the above to find 3 differences between Utnapishtim's flood story and Noah's:

a.

b.

c.

8. Utnapishtim asked Gilgamesh, "Who will _____ for your sake, so that you
may find _____?" **What answer is implied?**

9. What test did Utnapishtim devise for Gilgamesh to prove his worth for eternal life?
10. What happened in Gilgamesh's attempt to complete this test?
11. After this, Utnapishtim devised another test. What must Gilgamesh find, and where?
12. What happened after Gilgamesh found it?
13. When they returned home, Gilgamesh asked Urshanabi to do what?
14. Compare the chapter's final paragraph to the story's first paragraph (in the Prologue). What do you notice?
15. Was Gilgamesh successful in attaining the destiny "decreed" for him? In what way?
16. What is Nigizzida called on the final page?
17. What was your favorite part of this ancient poem? What about that part is interesting to you?