**CHARACTER ACTIVITY SHEET 2**

**CREATING A HERO: *BEOWULF***

The film *Beowulf* is based on a long ‘epic’ poem, composed around the 8th Century AD in England. The action of the poem is set in the 5th or 6th Century AD in Scandinavia.

* Read this official synopsis of the film, looking closely at the language choices used here. What kind of film would you expect based on just this short description?

*In the age of heroes comes the mightiest warrior of them all, Beowulf. After destroying the overpowering demon Grendal, he incurs the wrath of the beast's mother, who will use any means possible to ensure revenge. The ensuing battle resonates throughout the ages, immortalising the name of Beowulf.*

The film was shot using ‘performance capture’ technology: this is where the actors wear special sensors on their faces and clothes which record their actions, gestures and expressions. Computer generated images are then overlaid on top of the ‘performance’ that was captured; the finished film is a computer generated animation.

**VIEWING ACTIVITIES**

Watch the *Beowulf* clip **Arrival by sea**.

1. What do we see, and hear, first? Think about the setting and the characters in the first section of the clip.
2. What impression do you get of these characters and the story they are part of?
3. What visual clues (including costume, physical characteristics and interactions with others), and clues in the sound and dialogue, are used to establish Beowulf as the hero in this sequence?
4. How is the 'age of heroes', and the warrior culture of the 6th Century, suggested through the mise en scéne (everything we see in the shot)?

Watch the clip a second time.

1. This time, look carefully at how this sequence is put together: the way each shot follows the next; the camera angles used; what you can see and hear in the sequence. How does this ‘film language’ establish Beowulf as ‘heroic’?
2. Why do you think the filmmakers chose the performance capture technique for this film? What options does this offer them? And how do you respond to this kind of film, compared to live action?