

Name _____

The Epic of Gilgamesh: An Ancient Tale of Heroism

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. The friendship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu is central to the epic's narrative. Initially, Gilgamesh is arrogant and oppressive, while Enkidu is a wild man. However, their friendship transforms both characters. Enkidu becomes more civilized, and Gilgamesh learns the value of compassion and humility.
2. The gods and goddesses in the epic exert their influence by shaping events, such as sending the Bull of Heaven or granting immortality to Utnapishtim. They serve as powerful forces that impact the lives of mortals, often in unpredictable ways.
3. Gilgamesh's quest for immortality leads him on a physical and spiritual journey. Along the way, he learns that true immortality is not achieved through physical means but through the legacy one leaves behind. He evolves from a proud and restless king to a wise and accepting leader.
4. The themes of mortality and the quest for immortality explored in the Epic of Gilgamesh can be compared to similar themes in other literature, such as the search for the Fountain of Youth in Ponce de León's expedition or the pursuit of eternal life in contemporary science fiction. These themes continue to resonate with human aspirations and fears.

