In lines 1-5, how was Caedmon serving as an inspiration to others?
Caedmon was an inspiration in that he moved many people to reject worldliness and seek godliness.

CRQ A: What do you learn from this paragraph about the importance of poetry in Caedmon’s time?
The readers learn that poetry was sung at feasts to the accompaniment of a harp.

In what way does Caedmon discover his poetic talent?
A man comes to Caedmon in a dream and demands him to sing. When Caedmon does, he discovers his ability to create poetry.
Who is the man in Caedmon's dream?
He is an angel.

What was Caedmon's gift?
Caedmon's gift was that he could compose beautiful religious poetry in English.

How did Caedmon receive his gift?
Caedmon received his gift in a dream, presumably sent by God.

Based on the events in Bede's account, is this an entirely historical account?
Bede fuses his historical account with events, such as the dream, that may be less reliable.

CRQ B: Reread lines 14-32. In this anecdote, to what does Bede attribute Caedmon's ability to compose poetry?
Bede attributes Caedmon's ability to God, who gives Caedmon a dream in which Caedmon is able to compose when he is told to sing about God. Caedmon's poem praises God for creating the heavens and earth for human beings.

Reread lines 33-46. According to this passage, what role did dreams play in real life during Caedmon's time?
Dreams were taken seriously as communications from God that can, in turn, dictate the course of real-life events.

What does Bede want readers to learn in lines 52-56 about how Caedmon's life changed?
Bede wants Caedmon to inspire readers to lead a life devoted to God and good, rather than to evil.
How did Caedmon’s life change because of his gift?
Caedmon’s life changed in that he left his secular work and joined a monastery, where he was instructed in scripture and urged to write poems on many religious subjects.

What would be the reason for including Caedmon’s story in a history of the English church?
Bede may have wanted to include him because Caedmon was a major poet, with a life story that Christians would find inspiring.

What is the moral message that can be taken from Caedmon’s story?
Does presenting Caedmon’s story as a narrative of personal transformation help or hinder Bede’s purpose?
Caedmon is admirable because he is humble, devout, gifted, and able to inspire goodness in others. One moral message from his story is that being devout can give a person a satisfying, productive life.

What do you learn from Bede about life in seventh-century England?
Discuss facts about each of the following: religious life, language and literacy.
A good Christian life is of utmost concern; transformations via religious visions are taken seriously; monasteries are centers of intellectual as well as spiritual culture.

Discuss ways in which Bede’s purpose and worldview shape the way he presents information. How might a modern historian present information differently?
Bede is religious and motivated to present Caedmon as a model to imitate, so he tells only good things about Caedmon and attributes his talent to God. A modern historian might be more objective and more skeptical of the idea that Caedmon’s talent appeared suddenly, full-blown, as the result of a dream.
A dream inspires Caedmon to change the way he lives. What other factors might inspire a dramatic shift in the way someone lives? A difficult situation, a desire to accomplish something are two examples of factors that might inspire a dramatic shift in the way someone lives.