

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# kennings

A **kenning** is a literary device in which a poetic phrase substitutes for a noun. In the best kennings, one element of the phrase will create a striking, unexpected comparison. Often used in Anglo-Saxon poetry and especially in *Beowulf*, a kenning provides powerful imagery that help the audience focus on the words of the *scop* or poet telling the story. A kenning also allows the *scop* some variety, so words don't become overused. Finally, Anglo-Saxon poetry depends heavily on alliteration, and some kennings provided additional alliteration. Here are examples:

*sky-candle* (the sun)  
*swan-road* (the sea)  
*stout-hearted* (brave)  
*battle sweat* (blood)  
*light-of-battle* (sword)

*helmet bearers* (warriors)  
*giver of gold* (king)  
*earth-hall* (burial mound, barrow)  
*dwelling place* (home)  
*storm of swords* (battle)

Create 10 kennings of your own. You cannot use existing, well-known expressions:

1. (sun)
2. (sea)
3. (bird)
4. (tree)
5. (mountain)
6. (king)
7. (warrior)
8. (sword or spear)
9. (brave)
10. (home)