

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)