

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Do this worksheet silently during the class period. You may listen to music after roll has been called as long as your substitute approves. Read through and follow all directions.

kennings: The Name-Makers

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 would help the audience focus on the words of the scop or poet telling the story.

There are three types of kennings:

- Compound word (or union of two separate words to combine ideas). If you tell your friends that your parents are the “car loaners” then you have created a kenning. If you say he has “road rage” you’re saying he’s an angry driver.
- Possessive phrase (uses an apostrophe) – The folks at Coca-Cola might agree that a cold Coke is “humanity’s beverage.” Some might call school a “scholar’s home” or a “teenager’s prison.”
- Prepositional phrase – If you say “into the briny,” you’re sailing. If you say “on the wagon,” that means someone has quit drinking.

A kenning also allows the scop some variety, so words don’t become overused. Finally, Anglo-Saxon poetry depended 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)

When we translate these kennings from Anglo-Saxon, they lose some of their poetic quality because the sound changes. For example, the alliteration may disappear.

Part I: Listed below are some modern kennings. Can you find examples of striking imagery, alliteration, consonance, rhyme, and assonance among them? Identify and write this next to the word. Can you identify the concept each kenning represents? Write this down next to the word as well.

1. gas guzzler
2. headhunter
3. muffin top
4. rug rat
5. land line
6. eye candy
7. cancer stick
8. boob tube
9. couch potato
10. tramp stamp

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This will be due at the beginning of class on Monday August 23. If I get a bad report on any student or class you will be required to write a 5 page paper on Beowulf instead of watching the movie.

Part II: Consider carefully how you could creatively rename each of the following through the use of the kenning technique. You only have to apply one type of kenning to each word below; however, you need to demonstrate the use of all three types throughout. Do not incorporate the original word.

1. Teacher
2. Bus Driver
3. Firefighter
4. Television
5. Meatloaf
6. Police Officer
7. Pop Tarts
8. iPod
9. Love
10. Computer

Part III: Answer **two** of following questions in complete sentences on your own sheet of paper. Each response needs to contain **quotes** from your book and be **at least five sentences** in length.

1. How does "darkness" affect the atmosphere of *Beowulf* and from a historical viewpoint, how is the dark associate with the monsters and their evilness?
2. After reading *Beowulf* and looking at the characters and their relationships with each other, look at the values of the entire story. Look at these three values and how they relate to the characters and their relationships: Loyalty, Bravery, and Leadership. Discuss the importance of these values in *Beowulf* and how they benefit him in his success through the story.
3. Females in *Beowulf*: the queen and Grendel's mother are all described in the poem. What roles are the women "expected" to fulfill and why is Grendel's mother an exception to the rule?

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