

Kenning – a literary (metaphorical) 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* (singing poet) telling the story. 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 some examples:

Compound Words	Prepositional Phrases	Possessives
sky-candle (sun)	light of battle (sword)	ocean's face (waves or shore)
swan-road (the sea)	shepard of evil (Grendel or devil)	arrow's storm (attack)
ring-giver (king)	storm of swords (battle)	water's chain (frost)
battle sweat (blood)	giver of gold (king)	battle's torch (sword)

Modern Day Kennings:

gas-guzzler – a vehicle that has poor gas mileage

stick of carcinogen – a cigarette

rug rat – a mischievous child

blower of whistle – Mr. Alves

leader of orange – Mr. Solomon