

Kennings!

What is a kenning?

Kennings are like riddles.
They describe something without ever saying what it is.



tail-wagger
face-licker
sofa-hogger
cat-chaser
ball-catcher
door-scratcher

Did you know?

The two-word format for a kenning relates to the Old Norse tradition of naming things like weapons, e.g. **Skull-Splitter** or **Blood-Taker**.

The word 'kenning' derives from the Old Norse word 'kenna eitt við', which means 'to express a thing in terms of another'.



Kennings came into our language via the Anglo-Saxon and Norse cultures. These people came from what is now Scandinavia and northern Germany.

What is a kenning?

What did you notice about the poems?

tail-wagger
face-licker
ball-catcher
sofa-hogger
door-scratcher
cat-chaser



lip-licking
chin-dripping
sauce-swirling
cone-filling
flake-holding
tongue-freezing



What is a kenning?

What did you notice about the phrases in each poem?

Each line of the poem is made of a two-word phrase.

tail-wagger
face-licker

Here the phrases are made up of a noun + a noun (by adding -er to the second noun).



The words are joined by a hyphen.

lip-licking
chin-dripping

Here the phrases are made up of a noun + a verb (the verb usually ends in -ing).



Kennings Rules



What is this poem all about?

We use kennings in our everyday language, such as 'sky-scraper' for a very tall building.

Sun-stealing
Night-stretcher
Cold-maker
Snow-faller
Face-freezer
Christmas-bringer

They work like a riddle – you have to guess what it's all about!

Each line is a simple phrase of either a noun + a noun OR a noun + a verb.

If you are creating a noun + a noun phrase, try adding -er to the second noun, e.g. cheese-eater.

Kennings describe what a person, idea or object is or does.

If you are creating a noun + a verb phrase, your verb may end in -ing, e.g. milkshake-drinking.

