

# What is a kenning?

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

Read these phrases out loud. What could they be describing?



lip-licking

sauce-swirling

chin-dripping

cone-filling

flake-holding

tongue-freezing

# What is a kenning?

How about these?



tail-wagger

face-licker

ball-catcher

house-guardian

furry-friend

cat-chaser

# What is a kenning?

What did you notice about the poems?

tail-wagger

face-licker

ball-catcher

house-guardian

furry-friend

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.

house-guardian

furry-friend

Here the phrases are made up of a noun + a 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).



# 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**.

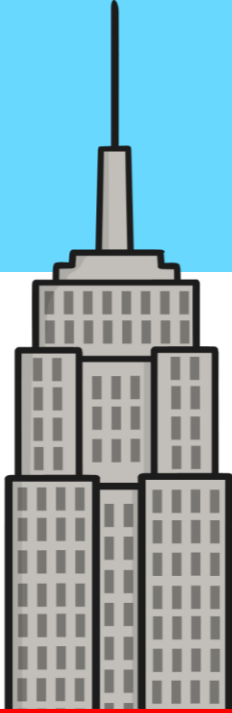
The word 'kenning' derives from the Old Norse word 'kenna eitt við', which means 'to express a thing in terms of another'.



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

# We even use them in everyday language!

How do we describe a very tall building?



Oh look – here's some alliteration! Other poetic devices can also be found in kennings.

sky-scraper

A really sad film or story is often called a...



tear-jerker

# Let's have a go!

How can we write a kenning?

First, we need to choose a theme. (It doesn't have to be gory, like the Vikings!)



**eat**

Then, we brainstorm lots of words or phrases associated with that theme...

**mice** drinks milk nuzzle scratch

stalk **sleeps a lot** fur **night**

**hunter** hates **rub** ankles purr  
dogs

# Let's have a go!

How can we write a kenning?

To start creating your kenning, try and make a noun + noun phrase or a noun + verb phrase using your words.

Finally, put them together in your two-word phrases.

Don't forget the hyphens!

mouse-hunter

milk-drinker

night-stalker

fur-licker

ankle-rubber

dog-hater

nose-nuzzler

ear-scratcher

loud-purrer





The End