

KENNINGS

DAY I

DAY 1: WHAT IS A KENNING?

Story reader
Problem solver
Board writer
Homework setter
Playground whistler
Register taker.

Lip licking
Chin dripping
Sauce swirling
Cone filling
Flake holding
Tongue freezing

Tail wagger
Face licker
Ball catcher
House guardian
Furry friend
Cat chaser

Here are 3 different kennings. Read them aloud.
What do you notice? What do you think each poem is about?
How do you know? Do you notice any patterns?

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Did you guess what each kenning poem was written about?
What helped you?

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).



A kenning is a way of describing something using clues, rather than just saying what it is.

Each line is two words long:

Heat giver
Light maker



(They are a bit like riddles!)

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?



sky-scraper

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

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



DAY 1 ACTIVITY:

Read the kennings on the next slide and see if you can guess what each poem is about.

Think about what words give you the biggest clues. Where do these clues come in the poem?

The answers are on the following slide if you're stuck!

Paw licker
Day dreamer
Milk drinker
Ball chaser
Dog hater
Mouse chaser
Stroke lover

Ball chaser
Crowd pleaser
Fast runner
Sneaky diver
Corner taker
Goal scorer
Teammate hugger

Chimney climber
Present giver
Pipe smoker
Elf employer
Sleigh rider
Reindeer owner

Great jumper
Water drinker
Straw eater
Strong walker
Race runner

Worm eater
Nest maker
Wing flapper
Song warbler
Seed muncher
Cat escaper

A word holder
A story teller
A best seller
A page turner
A cliff hanger
A fantasy gateway

If you were struggling, here are pictures clues.
Can you match them to the correct kenning?



KENNINGS

DAY 2

DAY 2: WRITING A KENNING

1. Most kennings describe what a subject does. So once you have chosen what your kenning is going to be about, you have to think about what it does

Say we chose a 'wolf' as our subject

Some ideas could include:

- Hunts prey
- Howls at the moon
- Comes out at night
- Lives in packs
- Prowls in woods



DAY 2: WRITING A KENNING

2. Use each idea using the format 'noun-verb'

Look at the verbs in your ideas and flip them so they come after the noun, so...

- **Hunts** prey
- **Howls** at the moon
- **Prowls** around at night
- **Travels** around in packs
- **Lives** in woods

Becomes:

Prey hunter

Moon howler

Night prowler

Pack traveler

Wood liver



DAY 2: WRITING A KENNING

3. Next, its time to up-level (make your kenning more interesting to read)

First, check your word choices. Use a thesaurus or dictionary to see if you can find any better descriptions.

Prey hunter

Moon howler

Night *Nocturnal* *prowler*

Pack traveler

Wood liver *dweller*



DAY 2: WRITING A KENNING

4. Lastly, its time to up-level further (make your kenning more interesting to read)

Then, choose the best order for the lines of your poem. Like a riddle, its best to place your biggest clues at the end!

Prey hunter
Moon howler
Nocturnal prowler
Pack traveler
Wood dweller

Prey hunter
Wood dweller
Nocturnal prowler
Pack traveler
Moon howler



(notice in the red version, I have moved the most obvious clues about howling and packs to the end – because I think these words immediately make people think of wolves!)



DAY 2 ACTIVITY:

Read the information about cats on the next slide.

Can you switch the nouns and verbs around to write a kenning about a cat?

Remember to follow these steps to success:

1. Create Noun-Verb phrases for each line
2. Uplevel your word choices using a dictionary or thesaurus
(you could use <https://www.thesaurus.com/>)
3. Order your lines so that your biggest clues are at the end

DAY 2 ACTIVITY:

- Lick their paws
- Move silently
- Leap onto fences
- Catch mice
- Run from dogs
- Sleep on car rooves



KENNINGS

DAY 3

DAY 3: WRITING AN ORIGINAL KENNING

I. Pick a **theme** for your poem

kennings can be written about anything at all, so best to pick a person or thing that interests you!

Some ideas could include -

- your favourite animal
- Your pet
- Relatives: mums, dads, grandparents
- People who help us: doctors, dentists, firefighters
- Sports players

DAY 3: WRITING AN ORIGINAL KENNING

2. Next follow the instructions on yesterday's slides:

- Write down a list of things your subject **does**.
- Create Noun-Verb phrases for each line
- Uplevel your word choices using a dictionary or thesaurus
- Order your lines so that your biggest clues are at the end

DAY 3: WRITING AN ORIGINAL KENNING

3. Finally, choose how to present your kenning. You could:

- Draw an outline of your subject and write your kenning in the middle
- Draw a picture of your subject on the back of your kenning
- Recite your kenning to your family and see if they can guess what your subject is!

KENNINGS

DAY 4

DAY 4: A KENNING ABOUT YOU!

See the planning sheet in your learning pack. Now you know how to write kennings, you're going to write on about your FAVOURITE subject....YOU!

You can choose Spicy or Hot planning sheets depending on how confident you feel.

... I can't wait to read your kennings. I wonder if I will be able to guess who they're about!?