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kennings in beowulf worksheet 2nd grade

BEOWULF VOCABULARY WORKSHEET

WORD	DEFINITION	PICTURE
scop		
mead		
moors		
whale-paths		
heathens		

Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

Beowulf Kennings Worksheet

kenning - a figurative, often compound, and descriptive expression or metaphor used instead of a more common noun, a pronoun, or a common verb. Kennings are frequently found in Old English and Old Norse poetry. An old English example is a kenning for mead, for example. In the medieval text of Beowulf, the Old English poet uses many kenning. However, often translators translate the kennings as hyphenated words or compound phrases, but not all kennings are rendered this way; some are simply nouns or adjectives.

All kennings are far more descriptive than the word they often replace, and, beyond abbreviating the repetition of a character's name, they serve the purpose of making the language of a poem much more vivid and interesting for a reader (or reader).

In Beowulf, an early example of a hyphenated (compound) kenning, on page 1, is "whale-road" - the sea. An example of a kenning that more clearly resembles a metaphor is also found on page 1, "land of Old" - Old.

Instructions for this assignment: 1. Using the list of Beowulf, locate five examples of kennings and write them next to the numbers below. 2. In a short phrase or sentence, tell me what each kenning is supposed to describe. Take note of the explanation above to help you identify the numerous examples of kennings.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

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Beowulf Kenning Activity

A kenning is a type of metaphor that the place of a common noun, usually in Anglo-Saxon and Norse poetry. It is usually a new word that is a hybrid of two familiar words. The result is "Beowulf the mead-drinking" or "Hrothgar the mead-drinking". For the activity, you will be creating your own kennings for a variety of people, places, and things (see list below). You will choose 12 common nouns from the list, then write an original kenning for each. Record your kennings in the chart below and be ready to share with the class.

Choose 12 from the following

owl	sheep	hail
sea	beast	hedgehog
lion	trout	mermaid
gold	snake	crow
unicorn	bullet	city
bearded/dove	bat	owl
bearded/dove	chicken	crow
unicorn	deer	goat
owl	sheep	lion
unicorn	goat	lion
lion	sheep	lion
lion	goat	lion
lion	sheep	lion

Original Nouns	Kennings
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	
26	
27	
28	
29	
30	

Kenning Lesson for Beowulf Unit

Kenning: A noun phrase which describes a well-known, familiar noun in a new and more descriptive way. These are typically two word phrases which give specific information about the qualities and characteristics of the noun the phrase replaces. Kennings are very common in Old English and Old Norse poetry. "A metaphorical circumlocution" (I love that phrase!) Many kennings end with "er" although this is not a requirement. A kenning can be almost like a puzzle or riddle, because its purpose is to show the item in an unusual way.

Examples:

Kenning	Primary Meaning	Allusion	Source
Feeder of Ravens	Warrior	Ravens eat dead animals - result of battle	Norse
Sea Steeds	Ships		Norse
Slaughter dew	Blood		Norse
Whale road	Sea		Anglo-Saxon
Breaker of rings	King/Chieftan	the chieftan or king would break a golden ring on his arm and give it to a follower as a reward	Anglo-Saxon
Heaven's Candle	sun		Anglo-Saxon
Guardian of crime	Grondel		Anglo-Saxon
Almighty's enemy	Grondel		Anglo-Saxon
Battle's only survivor	Beowulf		Anglo-Saxon
Higlac's follower	Beowulf		Anglo-Saxon
Tree breaker	Wind		Norse
shelterer of warriors	Hothgar		Anglo-Saxon

Other examples of Kennings:

lock teaser comb
gas guzzler truck
word spinner pen

A kenning is NOT a stock epithet

Stock Epithet: Adjectives that describe special traits of particular persons or things. Typically stock epithets are compound adjectives and are even somewhat familiar:

Examples:
swift-footed Achilles Homer
immortal bard Shakespeare
the lion hearted King Richard of England (who left England for the Crusades)

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