

Literary & Poetic Devices of Anglo-Saxon Poetry

Directions: Write the correct literary term or poetic device on the blank line by the appropriate definition:

Consonance	Caesura	Assonance	Kenning	Flashback
Archetype	Epic Hero	Epithet	Scop	Narrative poem
Epic	Elegy	Tone	Alliteration	
Foreshadowing	Symbol	Theme	Enjambment	

1.	A poet who recited heroic tales to the accompaniment of a harp or lyre
2.	A clear break or timely pause near the middle of a line of verse to add stress, or a pause for breath
3.	Characteristic formula words or phrases used in place of the name of the person, place, or thing; typical of epics
4.	A central idea of a work of literature
5.	A long narrative poem dealing with great heroes and adventures, having a national, worldwide or cosmic setting, involving superhuman strengths, and written in an elevated style
6.	A lyric poem that mourns the death of someone or laments something lost
7.	The attitude(s) of the author toward the subject &/or audience implied in the literary work
8.	The repetition of initial consonant sounds in accented syllables
9.	A scene that interrupts the present action of the plot to tell what happened at an earlier time
10.	Something that is itself, but also stands for something else
11.	Condensed descriptive metaphors which name things by their function; typical of Anglo-Saxon poetry
12.	A run-on line of poetry—a poetic structure in which both the grammatical structure and sense continue past the end of the line of poetry
13.	A pattern (of character, object, image, or setting) that appears in literature across cultures and is repeated through the ages
14.	A hint of what is to come
15.	The repetition of final consonant sounds in stressed syllables containing dissimilar vowel sounds
16.	The central character (protagonist) of imposing stature, of national importance, and of great historical or legendary significance and who exhibits such qualities as courage, idealism, and honesty
17.	The repetition of vowel sounds in stressed syllables containing dissimilar consonant sounds
18.	A poem that tells a story in verse, such as ballads, epics, and metrical romances

Kennings

One of the literary devices popular in the Anglo-Saxon poetry tradition is the **KENNING**. Read the definition and examples below and ready yourself to take a stab at this delightfully metaphorical way of speaking, writing, and thinking.

A **kenning** is a literary device in which a noun is renamed in a creative way using a compound word or union of two separate words to combine ideas. Types of **Kennings** include:

Open Compound	Hyphenated Compound	Possessive Compound	Prepositional Compound
<i>wakeful sleeper</i>	<i>mead-hall</i>	<i>mankind's enemy</i>	<i>shepherd of evil</i>
<i>powerful monster</i>	<i>whale-road</i>	<i>God's beacon</i>	<i>guardian of crime</i>

Now it's your turn to try your hand at composing **kennings**. Use a variety of **kenning types**. **DO NOT USE** the **WORD ITSELF** in your **KENNINGS**. (ie: for "sun" – "sun light" is **INCORRECT** but "heaven's light" and "candle of heaven" are both **CORRECT**.)

1. star _____
2. ship _____
3. sword _____
4. river _____
5. poem _____
6. music _____
7. television _____
8. love _____
9. teacher _____
10. computer _____
11. coach _____
12. meatloaf _____
13. internet _____
14. Facebook _____
15. CHS _____

Compile a list of **modern kennings** used today to rename & describe something. Two **examples** are given for you below.

1. *headhunter* for *a personnel recruiter*
2. *top dog* for *a champion of a competition OR a boss*
3. _____ for _____
4. _____ for _____
5. _____ for _____

Anglo-Saxon Legacy: Words and Word Parts

Words from *Anglo-Saxon*.

English has borrowed words from most of the world's languages, but many words in our basic vocabulary come to us from *Anglo-Saxon*, or *Old English*. Simple, everyday words, such as the names of numbers (*an* for "one," *twa* for "two," *threo* for "three"), words designating family relationships (*fæder* for "father," *modor* for "mother," *sunu* for "son," *dohtor* for "daughter"), names for parts of the body (*heorte* for "heart," *fof* for "foot"), and common, everyday things and activities (*æppel* for "apple," *hund* for "hound," *wefan* for "weave") are survivors of *Old English* words.

Anglo-Saxon affixes:

Many English language conventions can be traced back to *Anglo-Saxon* times. Both making nouns plural by adding *s* and creating the possessive of a noun by adding *'s* come to us from *Old English*. *Old English* has also given us the vowel changes in some irregular verbs like *sing, sang, sung* (*singan, sang, sungen*) and the regular endings for the past tense and past participles of regular verbs (as in *healed, has healed*). The word endings we use to create degrees of comparison with adjectives (as in *darker, darkest*) are also of *Anglo-Saxon* origin.

Anglo-Saxon has also contributed many important word parts—prefixes and suffixes—to the English language. Some of these affixes just change the tense, person, or number of a word, such as a verb. Others change the entire meaning of a word, and often its part of speech.

A/S Prefixes	Meanings	Examples	YOUR Example
a-	in; on; of; up; to	ashore; aside	
be-	around; treat as; about	behind; befriend	
for-	away; off; from	forsake; forgot	
mis-	badly; not; wrongly	misspell; misfire	
over-	above; excessive	oversee; overtake	
un-	reverse of; not	untrue; unknown	

A/S Suffixes	Meanings	Examples	YOUR Example
-en	made of; like	golden; molten	
-dom	state; rank; condition	wisdom; kingdom	
-ful	full of; marked by	useful; wonderful	
-hood	state; condition	neighborhood; brotherhood	
-ish	suggesting; like	selfish; childish	
-less	lacking; without	hopeless	
-like	like; similar	childlike	
-ly	Characteristic of	friendly	
-ness	quality; state	kindness	
-some	apt to;; showing	firesome	
-ward	in direction of	forward	
-y	suggesting; showing	wavy; salty	

Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Period Heroes

Before we read an excerpt from the epic poem *Beowulf*...

Please write your responses to the statements and questions below, in the space provided. If you need more space, you may use notebook paper and staple it to this paper.

1. What makes a true **HERO**?

From the fierce, doomed Anglo-Saxon warrior Beowulf to King Arthur and his noble Knights of the Round Table, bound by their code of chivalry, early British literature shows a deep fascination with the hero as the embodiment of society's highest ideals. As these ideals have shifted, the image of the hero has changed. Compare actual heroes with the larger-than-life protagonists of books and movies. *What type of hero --real or fictional-- has a greater impact on today's society? What do you believe are the qualities of a true hero?*

2. Who really shapes **SOCIETY**?

The medieval period in English history conjures up images of kings, queens, and knights in shining armor, but in reality, most of these people were simple peasants. The feudal system ensured that peasants, despite their large numbers, had very little political power, yet their struggles and contributions helped build a great nation. *What do you think truly shapes today's society? Is it the "powerful few" or the "many" who have been more influential?*

3. Does **FATE** control our lives?

The seafaring Anglo-Saxons led harsh, brutal lives, often cut short by violence, disease, or the unpredictable tempests of the icy North Sea. They admired strength and courage, but ultimately saw humans as helpless victims of a grim, implacable fate they called *wyrd*. People are sometimes referred to as being naturally lucky or unlucky--is there any sense to this? *Do you believe people can create their own luck and determine their own futures, or does chance or fate play a part?*

4. Can people live up to high **IDEALS**?

During the medieval period, elaborate rules of conduct developed to guide behavior in battle as well as in romance. This code of chivalry assumed knights were uniformly gallant and loyal, ladies fair and devout, manners impeccable, and jousting the way to prove bravery and win favor. Express your view concerning the desirability and value of codes of conduct. *Do high ideals serve as inspiration, or do they merely cause frustration for people who try to achieve them and cannot? Is it possible to live up to such high ideals? Is it worth trying?*