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grammar, style, and proofreading exercises

The Grammar Dog Guide to A Tale of Two Cities

by Charles Dickens

**All exercises use sentences from the novel.
Includes over 250 multiple choice questions.**

About GrammarDog

GrammarDog was founded in 2001 by Mary Jane McKinney, a high school English teacher and dedicated grammarian. She and other experienced English teachers in both high school and college regard grammar and style as the key to unlocking the essence of an author.

Their philosophy, that grammar and literature are best understood when learned together, led to the formation of GrammarDog.com, a means of sharing knowledge about the structure and patterns of language unique to specific authors. These patterns are what make a great book *a great book*. The arduous task of analyzing works for grammar and style has yielded a unique product, guaranteed to enlighten the reader of literary classics.

GrammarDog's strategy is to put the author's words under the microscope. The result yields an increased appreciation of the art of writing and awareness of the importance and power of language.



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A TALE OF TWO CITIES by Charles Dickens – Grammar and Style
All exercises use sentences from the novel.

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SAMPLE EXERCISES - A TALE OF TWO CITIES by Charles Dickens

EXERCISE 5 COMPLEMENTS

Identify the complements in each of the following sentences. Label the underlined words:

d.o. = direct object i.o. = indirect object p.n. = predicate nominative p.a. = predicate adjective
o.p. = object of preposition

- _____ 1. It was the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five.
- _____ 2. The last burst carried the mail to the summit of the hill.
- _____ 3. Miss Manette had taken some refreshment on the road, and required none then, and was extremely anxious to see the gentleman from Tellson's immediately, if it suited his pleasure and convenience.

EXERCISE 6 PHRASES

Identify the phrases in each of the following sentences. Label the underlined words:

par = participle ger = gerund infin = infinitive appos = appositive prep = preposition

- _____ 1. The Dover road lay, as to him, beyond the Dover mail, as it lumbered up Shooter's Hill.
- _____ 2. If any one of the three had had the hardihood to propose to another to walk on a little ahead into the mist and darkness, he would have put himself in a fair way of getting shot instantly as a highwayman.
- _____ 3. The stillness consequent on the cessation of the rumbling and labouring of the coach, added to the stillness of the night, made it very quiet indeed.

EXERCISE 9 STYLE: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Identify the figurative language in the following sentences. Label the underlined words or phrases:

p = personification s = simile m = metaphor o = onomatopoeia h = hyperbole

- _____ 1. The little narrow, crooked town of Dover hid itself away from the beach, and ran its head into the chalk cliffs, like a marine ostrich.
- _____ 2. The beach was a desert of heaps of sea and stones tumbling wildly about, and the sea did what it liked, and what it liked was destruction.
- _____ 3. "I have passed from one to another, in the course of my business life, just as I pass from one of our customers to another in the course of my business day; in short, I have no feelings; I am a mere machine.

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EXERCISE 12 STYLE: ALLUSIONS

Identify the type of allusion used in the following sentences. Label the underlined words:

a. historical b. mythological c. religious d. geographical e. literary

- _____ 1. In both countries it was clearer than crystal to the lords of the State preserves of loaves and fishes, that things in general were settled for ever.

- _____ 2. Mr. Cruncher reposed under a patchwork counterpane, like a Harlequin at home.

- _____ 3. For, people then paid to see the play at the Old Bailey, just as they paid to see the play in Bedlam . .

EXERCISE 13 STYLE: LITERARY ANALYSIS – SELECTED PASSAGE 1

Read the following passage the first time through for meaning. (From Book the First, Chapter 3 *The Night Shadows*).

A wonderful fact to reflect upon, that every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other. A solemn consideration, when I enter a great city by night, that every one of those darkly clustered houses encloses its own secret; that every room in every one of them encloses its own secret; that every breathing heart in the hundreds of thousands of breasts there, is, in some of its imaginings, a secret to the heart nearest it! Something of the awfulness, even of Death itself is referable to this. No more can I turn the leaves of this dear book that I loved, and vainly hope in time to read it all. No more can I look into the depths of this unfathomable water, wherein, as momentary lights glanced into it, I have had glimpses of buried treasure and other things submerged. It was appointed that the book should shut with a spring, for ever and for ever, when I had read but a page. It was appointed that the water should be locked in an eternal frost, when the light was playing on its surface, and I stood in ignorance on the shore. My friend is dead, my neighbour is dead, my love, the darling of my soul, is dead; it is the inexorable consolidation and perpetuation of the secret that was always in that individuality, and which I shall carry in mind to my life's end. In any of the burial-places of this city through which I pass, is there a sleeper more inscrutable than its busy inhabitants are, in their innermost personality, to me, or than I am to them?

Read the passage a second time, marking figurative language, sensory imagery, poetic devices, and any other patterns of diction and rhetoric, then answer the questions below.

- 1 A wonderful fact to reflect upon, that every human creature is constituted to be that
- 2 profound secret and mystery to every other. A solemn consideration, when I enter a
- 3 great city by night, that every one of those darkly clustered houses encloses its own
- 4 secret; that every room in every one of them encloses its own secret; that every

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5 breathing heart in the hundreds of thousands of breasts there, is, in some of its
6 imaginings, a secret to the heart nearest it! Something of the awfulness, even of Death
7 itself is referable to this. No more can I turn the leaves of this dear book that I loved,
8 and vainly hope in time to read it all. No more can I look into the depths of this
9 unfathomable water wherein, as momentary lights glanced into it, I have had glimpses
10 of buried treasure and other things submerged. It was appointed that the book should
11 shut with a spring, for ever and for ever, when I had read but a page. It was appointed
12 that the water should be locked in an eternal frost, when the light was playing on its
13 surface, and I stood in ignorance on the shore. My friend is dead, my neighbour is
14 dead, my love, the darling of my soul, is dead; it is the inexorable consolidation and
15 perpetuation of the secret that was always in that individuality, and which I shall
16 carry in mind to my life's end. In any of the burial-places of this city through which I
17 pass, is there a sleeper more inscrutable than its busy inhabitants are, in their innermost
18 personality, to me, or than I am to them?

- ___1. In this passage, Dickens compares people to ALL of the following EXCEPT . . .
a. houses b. pages c. buried treasure d. cemeteries
- ___2. In its entirety, the passage is an example of . . .
a. a conceit b. an extended metaphor c. a paradigm d. a paradox
- ___3. In Line 9, the image of the book springing shut parallels ALL of the following images EXCEPT . . .
a. *every room in every one of them encloses its own secret* (Line 4)
b. *the water should be locked in an eternal frost* (Line 12)
c. *My friend is dead, my neighbour is dead, my love, the darling of my soul, is dead* (Lines 13 and 14)