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grammar, style, and proofreading exercises

**The Grammar Dog Guide to  
Bartleby the  
Scrivener  
by Herman Melville**

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

## About Grammartdog

Grammartdog 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 Grammartdog.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.

Grammartdog'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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**BARTLEBY THE SCRIVENER** by Herman Melville – Grammar and Style  
*All exercises use sentences from the novel*

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## SAMPLE EXERCISES – BARTLEBY THE SCRIVENER by Herman Melville

### EXERCISE 5 COMPLEMENTS

Identify the complements in the following sentences. Label the underlined words as:

d.o. = direct object

i.o. = indirect object

p.n. = predicate nominative

o.p. = object of preposition

p.a. = predicate adjective

- \_\_\_ 1. I am a rather elderly man.
- \_\_\_ 2. In that direction my windows commanded an unobstructed view of a lofty brick wall, black by age and everlasting shade; which wall required no spy-glass to bring out its lurking beauties, but for the benefit of all near-sighted spectators, was pushed up to within ten feet of my window panes.
- \_\_\_ 3. Turkey was a short, pousy Englishman of about my own age, that is, somewhere not far from sixty.

### EXERCISE 6 PHRASES

Identify the phrases in the following sentences. Label the underlined words as either:

par = participial

ger = gerund

inf = infinitive

appos = appositive

prep = prepositional

- \_\_\_ 1. *Imprimis*: I am a man who, from his youth upward, has been filled with a profound conviction that the easiest way of life is the best.
- \_\_\_ 2. At the period just preceding the advent of Bartleby, I had two persons as copyists in my employment, and a promising lad as an office-boy.
- \_\_\_ 3. So I made up my mind to let him stay, resolving, nevertheless, to see to it, that during the afternoon he had to do with my less important papers.

### EXERCISE 9 STYLE: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

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

p = personification

s = simile

m = metaphor

o = onomatopoeia

h = hyperbole

- \_\_\_ 1. In the morning, one might say, his face was of a fine florid hue, but after twelve o'clock, meridian – his dinner hour – it blazed like a grate full of Christmas coals . . .
- \_\_\_ 2. I saw no more of the proprietor of the face, which, gaining its meridian with the sun, seemed to set with it, to rise, culminate, and decline the following day, with the like regularity and undiminished glory.
- \_\_\_ 3. If, for the sake of easing his back, he brought the table lid at a sharp angle well up toward his chin, and wrote there like a man using the steep roof of a Dutch house for his desk . . .

**SAMPLE EXERCISES – BARTLEBY THE SCRIVENER** by Herman Melville

**EXERCISE 12      STYLE: ALLUSIONS**

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

- a. historical      b. religious      c. literary      d. geographical

- \_\_\_\_ 1.      I will freely add, that I was not insensible to the late John Jacob Astor's good opinion.
- \_\_\_\_ 2.      My chambers were upstairs at No. \_\_\_\_ Wall Street.
- \_\_\_\_ 3.      For example, I cannot credit that the mettlesome poet Byron would have contentedly sat down with Bartleby to examine a law document of, say five hundred pages, closely written in a crimpy hand.

**EXERCISE 13      STYLE: LITERARY ANALYSIS – SELECTED PASSAGE 1**

Read the following passage the first time through for meaning.

Turkey was a short, pousy Englishman of about my own age, that is, somewhere not far from sixty. In the morning, one might say, his face was of a fine florid hue, but after twelve o'clock, meridian – his dinner hour – it blazed like a grate full of Christmas coals; and continued blazing – but, as it were, with a gradual wane – till 6 o'clock p.m. or thereabouts, after which I saw no more of the proprietor of the face, which, gaining its meridian with the sun, seemed to set with it, to rise, culminate, and decline the following day, with the like regularity and undiminished glory. There are many singular coincidences I have known in the course of my life, not the least among which was the fact, that exactly when Turkey displayed his fullest beams from his red and radiant countenance, just then, too, at that critical moment, began the daily period when I considered his business capacities as seriously disturbed for the remainder of the twenty-four hours. Not that he was absolutely idle, or averse to business then; far from it. The difficulty was, he was apt to be altogether too energetic. There was a strange, inflamed, flurried, flighty recklessness of activity about him. He would be incautious in dipping his pen into his inkstand. All his blots upon my documents, were dropped there after twelve o'clock, meridian. Indeed, not only would he be reckless and sadly given to making blots in the afternoon, but some days he went further, and was rather noisy. At such times, too, his face flamed with augmented blazonry, as if cannel coal had been heaped on anthracite. He made an unpleasant racket with his chair; spilled his sand-box; in mending his pens, impatiently split them all to pieces, and threw them on the floor in a sudden passion; stood up and leaned over his table, boxing his papers about in a most indecorous manner, very sad to behold in an elderly man like him. Nevertheless, as he was in many ways a most valuable person to me, and all the time before twelve o'clock, meridian, was the quickest, steadiest creature, too, accomplishing a great deal of work in a style not easy to be matched – for these reasons, I was willing to overlook his eccentricities, though indeed, occasionally, I remonstrated with him.

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 Turkey was a short, pousy Englishman of about my own age, that is, somewhere not far from sixty. In the
- 2 morning, one might say, his face was of a fine florid hue, but after twelve o'clock, meridian – his dinner
- 3 hour – it blazed like a grate full of Christmas coals; and continued blazing – but, as it were, with a
- 4 gradual wane – till 6 o'clock p.m. or thereabouts, after which I saw no more of the proprietor of the

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6 following day, with the like regularity and undiminished glory. There are many singular coincidences  
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8 displayed his fullest beams from his red and radiant countenance, just then, too, at that critical  
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12 flurried, flighty recklessness of activity about him. He would be incautious in dipping his pen into his  
13 inkstand. All his blots upon my documents, were dropped there after twelve o'clock meridian.  
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15 he further, and was rather noisy. At such times, too, his face flamed with augmented blazonry, as if  
16 cannel coal had been heaped on anthracite. He made an unpleasant racket with his chair; spilled his  
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20 valuable person to me, and all the time before twelve o'clock meridian, was the quickest, steadiest  
21 creature, too, accomplishing a great deal of work in a style not easy to be matched – for these reasons,  
22 I was willing to overlook his eccentricities, though indeed, occasionally, I remonstrated with him.

- \_\_\_\_ 1. A shift occurs in which of the following lines?  
a. Line 14      b. Line 16      c. Line 19
- \_\_\_\_ 2. The imagery in Lines 1 through 10 is an example of . . .  
a. metaphor      b. simile      c. personification
- \_\_\_\_ 3. The underlined words in Lines 11 are an example of . . .  
a. assonance      b. consonance      c. alliteration