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grammar, style, and proofreading exercises

The Grammar Dog Guide to Benito Cereno 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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BENITO CERENO by Herman Melville – Grammar and Style
All exercises use sentences from the novel.

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SAMPLE EXERCISES – BENITO CERENO by Herman Melville

EXERCISE 5 COMPLEMENTS

Identify the complements in each of the following sentences. In the blank on the left, label the underlined words as:

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

- ____ 1. The sky seemed a grey mantle.

- ____ 2. The wind, which had breezed up a little during the night, was now extremely light and baffling, which the more increased the apparent uncertainty of her movements.

- ____ 3. Off Cape Horn, they had narrowly escaped shipwreck; then, for days together, they had lain tranced without wind; their provisions were low; their water next to none; their lips that moment were baked.

EXERCISE 6 PHRASES

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

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

- ____ 1. In the year 1799, Captain Amasa Delano, of Duxbury, in Massachusetts, commanding a large sealer and general trader, lay at anchor, with a valuable cargo, in the harbour of St. Maria – a small, desert, uninhabited island towards the southern extremity of the long coast of Chili.

- ____ 2. From her continuing too near the sunken reef, deeming her in danger, calling to his men, he made all haste to apprise those on board of their situation.

- ____ 3. Climbing the side, the visitor was at once surrounded by a clamorous throng of whites and blacks . . .

EXERCISE 9 STYLE: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

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

p = personification s = simile m = metaphor

- ____ 1. They accompanied the task with a continuous, low, monotonous chant; droning and drooling away like so many grey-headed bag-pipers playing a funeral march.

- ____ 2. By his side stood a black of small stature, in whose rude face, as occasionally, like a shepherd's dog . . . sorrow and affection were equally blended.

- ____ 3. Shut up in these oaken walls, chained to one dull round of command . . . like some hypochondriac abbot he moved slowly about . . .

SAMPLE EXERCISES – BENITO CERENO by Herman Melville

EXERCISE 12 STYLE: ALLUSIONS

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

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

- ____ 1. But the principal relic of faded grandeur was the ample oval of the shield-like stern-piece, intricately carved with the arms of Castile and Leon . . .
- ____ 2. . . . uppermost and central of which was a dark satyr in a mask, holding his foot on the prostrate neck of a writhing figure, likewise masked.
- ____ 3. . . . two high-raised quarter galleries . . . were hermetically closed and caulked – these tenantless balconies hung over the sea as if it were the grand Venetian canal.

EXERCISE 13 STYLE: LITERARY ANALYSIS – SELECTED PASSGE 1

Read the following passage the first time through for meaning.

Always upon first boarding a large and populous ship at sea, especially a foreign one, with a nondescript crew such as Lascars or Manilla men, the impression varies in a peculiar way from that produced by first entering a strange house with strange inmates in a strange land. Both house and ship, the one by its walls and blinds, the other by its high bulwarks like ramparts, hoard from view their interiors till the last moment; but in the case of the ship there is this addition: that the living spectacle it contains, upon its sudden and complete disclosure, has, in contrast with the blank ocean which zones it, something of the effect of enchantment. The ship seems unreal; these strange costumes, gestures, and faces, but a shadowy tableau just emerged from the deep, which directly must receive back what it gave.

Perhaps it was some such influence as above is attempted to be described which, in Captain Delano's mind, heightened whatever, upon a staid scrutiny, might have seemed unusual; especially the conspicuous figures of four elderly grizzled Negroes, their heads like black, doddered willow tops, who, in venerable contrast to the tumult below them, were couched sphinx-like, one on the starboard cat-head, another on the larboard, and the remaining pair face to face on the opposite bulwarks above the main-chains. They each had bits of unstranded old junk in their hands, and, with a sort of stoical self-content, were picking the junk into oakum, a small heap of which lay by their sides. They accompanied the task with a continuous, low, monotonous chant; droning and drooling away like so many grey-headed bag-pipers playing a funeral march.

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 Always upon first boarding a large and populous ship at sea, especially a foreign one, with a
- 2 nondescript crew such as Lascars or Manilla men, the impression varies in a peculiar way from that
- 3 produced by first entering a strange house with strange inmates in a strange land. Both house and
- 4 ship, the one by its walls and blinds, the other by its high bulwarks like ramparts, hoard from view
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8 gestures, and faces, but a shadowy tableau just emerged from the deep, which directly must receive
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15 bulwarks above the main-chains. They each had bits of unstranded old junk in their hands, and, with
16 a sort of stoical self-content, were picking the junk into oakum, a small heap of which lay by their
17 sides. They accompanied the task with a continuous, low, monotonous chant; droning and drooling
18 away like so many grey-headed bag-pipers playing a funeral march.

- ___ 1. Line 3 contains an example of . . .
a. anaphora b. parataxis c. polysyndeton
- ___ 2. Lines 1 through 9 are an example of . . .
a. anecdote b. extended metaphor c. paradox
- ___ 3. The underlined words in Line 12 and 13 are an example of . . .
a. metaphor b. simile c. personification