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grammar, style, and proofreading exercises

# **The Grammar Dog Guide to Short Stories by Joseph Conrad**

**The Lagoon**

**Youth**

**Amy Foster**

**The Secret Sharer**

**An Outpost of Progress**

**All exercises use sentences from the stories.  
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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**SHORT STORIES** by Joseph Conrad – Grammar and Style  
*All exercises use sentences from the stories.*

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## SAMPLE EXERCISES - SHORT STORIES by Joseph Conrad

### EXERCISE 5 COMPLEMENTS

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

*d.o.* = direct object

*i.o.* = indirect object

*p.n.* = predicate nominative

*o.p.* = object of preposition

*p.a.* = predicate adjective

#### THE LAGOON

- \_\_\_ 1. The steersman dug his paddle into the stream, and held hard with stiffened arms, his body thrown forward.
- \_\_\_ 2. She was in a high fever, and evidently unconscious.
- \_\_\_ 3. Arsat came through the doorway with noiseless steps and squatted down by the fire.

### EXERCISE 6 PHRASES

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

*par* = participial

*ger* = gerund

*inf* = infinitive

*appos* = appositive

*prep* = prepositional

#### THE LAGOON

- \_\_\_ 1. The white man, turning his back upon the setting sun, looked along the empty and broad expanse of the sea-reach.
- \_\_\_ 2. To the warnings of the righteous they oppose an offensive pretense to disbelief.
- \_\_\_ 3. "At first she heard voices calling her from the water and struggled against me who held her."

### EXERCISE 9 STYLE: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

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

*p* = personification

*s* = simile

*m* = metaphor

*o* = onomatopoeia

*h* = hyperbole

#### THE LAGOON

- \_\_\_ 1. The land and the water slept invisible, unstimulating and mute.
- \_\_\_ 2. She came running along the shore, rapid and leaving no trace, like a leaf driven by the wind into the sea.
- \_\_\_ 3. "We are cast out and this boat is our country now – and the sea is our refuge."

## SAMPLE EXERCISES - SHORT STORIES by Joseph Conrad

### EXERCISE 12      STYLE: ALLUSIONS

Identify the allusions in the following sentences. Label the underlined words:

a. *history*      b. *mythology*      c. *religion*      d. *literature*      e. *folklore/superstition*

#### THE LAGOON

- \_\_\_1.      In the stillness of the air every tree, every leaf, every bough, every tendril of creeper and every petal of minute blossoms seemed to have been bewitched into an immobility perfect and final.
  
- \_\_\_2.      . . . he who repairs a ruined house, and dwells in it, proclaims that he is not afraid to live amongst the spirits that haunt the places abandoned by mankind.
  
- \_\_\_3.      . . . in a great rattling of poles thrown down, and the loud murmurs of “Allah be praised!” it came with a gentle knock against the crooked piles below the house.

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

Read the following passage the first time through for meaning.

They sat in silence before the fire. There was no sound within the house, there was no sound near them; but far away on the lagoon they could hear the voices of the boatmen ringing fitful and distinct on the calm water. The fire in the bows of the sampan shone faintly in the distance, with a hazy red glow. Then it died out. The voices ceased. The land and the water slept invisible, unstirring and mute. It was as though there had been nothing left in the world but the glitter of stars streaming, ceaseless and vain, through the black stillness of the night.

The white man gazed straight before him into the darkness with wide-open eyes. The fear and fascination, the inspiration and the wonder of death – of death near, unavoidable, and unseen – soothed the unrest of his race and stirred the most indistinct, the most intimate of his thoughts. The ever-ready suspicion of evil, the gnawing suspicion that lurks in our hearts, flowed out into the stillness round him – into the stillness profound and dumb – made it appear untrustworthy and infamous, like the placid and impenetrable mask of an unjustifiable violence. In that fleeting and powerful disturbance of his being the earth enfolded in the starlight peace became a shadowy country of inhuman strife, a battlefield of phantoms terrible and charming, august or ignoble, struggling ardently for the possession of our helpless hearts. An unquiet and mysterious country of inextinguishable desires and fears. (From *The Lagoon*)

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 They sat in silence before the fire. There was no sound within the house, there was no sound near them;
- 2 but far away on the lagoon they could hear the voices of the boatmen ringing fitful and distinct on the calm
- 3 water. The fire in the bows of the sampan shone faintly in the distance, with a hazy red glow. Then it died
- 4 out. The voices ceased. The land and the water slept invisible, unstirring and mute. It was as though there
- 5 had been nothing left in the world but the glitter of stars streaming, ceaseless and vain, through the black

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6 stillness of the night.

7 The white man gazed straight before him into the darkness with wide-open eyes. The fear and fascination,  
8 the inspiration and the wonder of death – of death near, unavoidable, and unseen – soothed the unrest of his  
9 race and stirred the most indistinct, the most intimate of his thoughts. The ever-ready suspicion of evil, the  
10 gnawing suspicion that lurks in our hearts, flowed out into the stillness round him – into the stillness  
11 profound and dumb – made it appear untrustworthy and infamous, like the placid and impenetrable  
12 mask of an unjustifiable violence. In that fleeting and powerful disturbance of his being the earth  
13 enfolded in the starlight peace became a shadowy country of inhuman strife, a battlefield of phantoms  
14 terrible and charming, august or ignoble, struggling ardently for the possession of our helpless hearts.  
15 An unquiet and mysterious country of inextinguishable desires and fears.

- \_\_\_ 1. Line 4 contains an example of . . .  
a. metaphor   b. simile   c. personification   d. hyperbole
- \_\_\_ 2. ALL of the following descriptions are parallel in meaning EXCEPT . . .  
a. *in silence before the fire* (Line 1)  
b. *with a hazy red glow* (Line 3)  
c. *The voices ceased.* (Line 4)  
d. *the glitter of stars* (Line 5)
- \_\_\_ 3. ALL of the following words are part of the pattern of repetition EXCEPT . . .  
a. silence  
b. sound  
c. stillness  
d. death