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grammar, style, and proofreading exercises

**The Grammar Dog Guide to
David Copperfield
by Charles Dickens**

**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.



Grammartdog.com L.L.C.
P.O. Box 299
Christoval, Texas 76935
Phone: 325-896-2479
Fax: 325-896-2676
fifi@grammartdog.com

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DAVID COPPERFIELD by Charles Dickens – Grammar and Style
All exercises use sentences from the novel

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SAMPLE EXERCISES - DAVID COPPERFIELD by Charles Dickens

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 p.a. = predicate adjective
o.p. = object of preposition

- ___1. The despairing way in which my mother and I look at each other, as I blunder on, is truly melancholy.
- ___2. He beat me then as if he would have beaten me to death.
- ___3. Salem House was a square brick building with wings, of a bare and unfurnished appearance.

EXERCISE 6 PHRASES

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

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

- ___1. I could hardly find the door, through the tears that stood in my eyes.
- ___2. Going down next morning rather earlier than usual, I paused outside the parlor-door, on hearing my mother's voice.
- ___3. Releasing one of her arms, she put it down in her pocket to the elbow, and brought out some paper bags of cakes which she crammed into my pockets, and a purse which she put into my hand, but not one word did she say.

EXERCISE 9 STYLE: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

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

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

- ___1. As the elms bent to one another, like giants who were whispering secrets, and after a few seconds of such repose, fell into a violent flurry, tossing their wild arms about . . .
- ___2. He was but a poor man himself, said Peggotty, but as good as gold and as true as steel.
- ___3. The case is so hopeless, and I feel that I am wallowing in such a bog of nonsense, that I give up all idea of getting out, and abandon myself to my fate.

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EXERCISE 12

STYLE: ALLUSIONS

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

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

- ___1. He walked his head as softly as the Ghost in Hamlet, and more slowly.
- ___2. She vanished like a discontented fairy.
- ___3. One Sunday night my mother reads to Peggotty and me in there, how Lazarus was raised up from the dead.

EXERCISE 13

STYLE: LITERARY ANALYSIS – SELECTED PASSAGE 1

Read the following passage the first time through for meaning.

The gloomy taint that was in the Murdstone blood, darkened the Murdstone religion, which was austere and wrathful. I have thought, since, that its assuming that character was a necessary consequence of Mr. Murdstone's firmness, which wouldn't allow him to let anybody off from the utmost weight of the severest penalties he could find any excuse for. Be this as it may, I well remember the tremendous visages with which we used to go to church, and the changed air of the place. Again the dreaded Sunday comes round, and I file into the old pew first, like a guarded captive brought to a condemned service. Again, Miss Murdstone, in a black velvet gown, that looks as if it had been made out of a pall, follows close upon me; then my mother; then her husband. There is no Peggotty now, as in the old time. Again, I listen to Miss Murdstone mumbling the responses, and emphasizing all the dread words with a cruel relish. Again, I see her dark eyes roll round the church when she says "miserable sinners," as if she were calling all the congregation names. Again, I catch rare glimpses of my mother moving her lips timidly between the two, with one of them muttering at each other like low thunder. Again I wonder with a sudden fear whether it is likely that our good old clergyman can be wrong, and Mr. and Miss Murdstone right, and that all the angels in Heaven can be destroying angels. Again, if I move a finger or relax a muscle of my face, Miss Murdstone pokes me with her prayer-book, and makes my side ache. (Chapter 4)

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 The gloomy taint that was in the Murdstone blood, darkened the Murdstone religion, which was
- 2 austere and wrathful. I have thought, since, that its assuming that character was a necessary
- 3 consequence of Mr. Murdstone's firmness, which wouldn't allow him to let anybody off from the
- 4 utmost weight of the severest penalties he could find any excuse for. Be this as it may, I well
- 5 remember the tremendous visages with which we used to go to church, and the changed air of
- 6 the place. Again the dreaded Sunday comes round, and I file into the old pew first, like a guarded
- 7 captive brought to a condemned service. Again, Miss Murdstone, in a black velvet gown, that

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8 looks as if it had been made out of a pall, follows close upon me; then my mother; then her husband.

9 There is no Peggotty now, as in the old time. Again, I listen to Miss Murdstone mumbling the

10 responses, and emphasizing all the dread words with a cruel relish. Again, I see her dark eyes roll

11 round the church when she says “miserable sinners,” as if she were calling all the congregation

12 names. Again, I catch rare glimpses of my mother moving her lips timidly between the two, with

13 one of them muttering at each other like low thunder. Again I wonder with a sudden fear whether

14 it is likely that our good old clergyman can be wrong, and Mr. and Miss Murdstone right, and that

15 all the angels in Heaven can be destroying angels. Again, if I move a finger or relax a muscle of

16 my face, Miss Murdstone pokes me with her prayer-book, and makes my side ache.

- ___1. ALL of the following descriptions contribute to the tone EXCEPT . . .
- a. *The gloomy taint that was in the Murdstone blood* (Line 1)
 - b. *like a guarded captive brought to a condemned service* (Line 6-7)
 - c. *glimpses of my mother, moving her lips* (Line 12)
 - d. *muttering at each other like low thunder* (Line 13)
- ___2. The word *Again* in Lines 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 15 is an example of . . .
- a. anaphora
 - b. antimetabole
 - c. antiphrasis
 - d. asyndeton
- ___3. ALL of the following descriptions are parallel in meaning EXCEPT . . .
- a. *religion, which was austere and wrathful* (Line 1)
 - b. *the changed air of the place* (Line 5-6)
 - c. *destroying angels* (Line 15)
 - d. *pokes me with her prayer-book, and makes my side ache* (Line 16)