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grammar, style, and proofreading exercises

# **The Grammar Dog Guide to Hard Times by Charles Dickens**

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

## About Grammartog

Grammartog 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 Grammartog.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.

Grammartog'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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*HARD TIMES* by Charles Dickens – Grammar and Style  
*All exercises use sentences from the novel*

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**SAMPLE EXERCISES - HARD TIMES** 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.            “Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts.”
- \_\_\_2.            “He is a veterinary surgeon, a farrier and horsebreaker.”
- \_\_\_3.            No little Gradgrind had ever seen a face in the moon.

**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.            “We hope to have, before long, a board of fact, composed of commissioners of fact, who will force the people to be a people of fact, and nothing but fact.
- \_\_\_2.            To his matter-of-fact home, which was called Stone Lodge, Mr. Gradgrind directed his steps.
- \_\_\_3.            In the formal drawing-room of Stone Lodge, standing on the hearthrug, warming himself before the fire, Mr. Bounderby delivered some observations to Mrs. Gradgrind on the circumstance of its being his birthday.

**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.            Indeed, Thomas did not look at him, but gave himself up to be taken home like a machine.
- \_\_\_2.            “. . . when I was four or five years younger than you, I had worse bruises upon me than ten oils, twenty oils, forty oils, would have rubbed off.”
- \_\_\_3.            “Already she’s getting as pale as wax, and as heavy as – I am.”

**SAMPLE EXERCISES - HARD TIMES** by Charles Dickens

**EXERCISE 12**

**STYLE: ALLUSIONS**

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

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

- \_\_\_1.      No little Gradgrind had ever learnt the silly jingle, Twinkle, twinkle, little star; how I wonder what you are!
- \_\_\_2.      No little Gradgrind had ever associated a cow in a field with that famous cow with the crumpled horn who tossed the dog who worried the cat who killed the rat who ate the malt . . .
- \_\_\_3.      The same Signor Jupe was to “enliven the varied performances at frequent intervals with his chaste Shakespearean quips and retorts.”

**EXERCISE 13**

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

Read the following passage the first time through for meaning.

“Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the mind’s of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, Sir!”

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom, and the speaker’s square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster’s sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker’s obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders, -- nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was, -- all helped the emphasis.

“In this life, we want nothing but Facts, Sir; nothing but Facts!”

The speaker, and the schoolmaster, and the third grown person present, all backed a little, and swept with their eyes the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim. (Chapter 1 The One Thing Needful)

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 “Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life.
- 2 Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the mind’s of reasoning animals upon
- 3 Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own
- 4 children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, Sir!”

**SAMPLE EXERCISES - *HARD TIMES* by Charles Dickens**

5 The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom, and the speaker's square forefinger  
6 emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve.  
7 The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base,  
8 while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis  
9 was helped by the speaker's mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the  
10 speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's  
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15 fact, as it was, -- all helped the emphasis.

16 "In this life, we want nothing but Facts, Sir; nothing but Facts!"

17 The speaker, and the schoolmaster, and the third grown person present, all backed a little, and swept with  
18 their eyes the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial  
19 gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim. (Chapter I The One Thing Needful)

- \_\_\_1. ALL of the following words are part of the pattern of repetition EXCEPT . . .  
a. facts      b. square      c. school      d. emphasis
- \_\_\_2. In Line 11 *plantation of firs* is an example of . . .  
a. metaphor    b. simile    c. personification    d. hyperbole
- \_\_\_3. In Line 12 *crust of a plum pie* is part of a . . .  
a. metaphor    b. simile    c. personification    d. hyperbole