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grammar, style, and proofreading exercises

**The Grammar Dog Guide to
Kidnapped
by Robert Louis Stevenson**

**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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KIDNAPPED by Robert Louis Stevenson – Grammar and Style
All exercises use sentences from the novel.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Exercise 1	--	Parts of Speech <i>25 multiple choice questions</i> 3
Exercise 2	--	Proofreading: Spelling, Capitalization, Punctuation <i>12 multiple choice questions</i> 5
Exercise 3	--	Proofreading: Spelling, Capitalization, Punctuation <i>12 multiple choice questions</i> 6
Exercise 4	--	Simple, Compound, Complex Sentences <i>25 multiple choice questions</i> 7
Exercise 5	--	Complements <i>25 multiple choice questions on direct objects, predicate nominatives, predicate adjectives, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions</i> 9
Exercise 6	--	Phrases <i>25 multiple choice questions on prepositional, appositive, gerund, infinitive, and participial phrases</i> 11
Exercise 7	--	Verbals: Gerunds, Infinitives, and Participles <i>25 multiple choice questions</i> 13
Exercise 8	--	Clauses <i>25 multiple choice questions</i> 15

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Exercise 9 --	Style: Figurative Language <i>25 multiple choice questions on metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, and onomatopoeia</i> 17
Exercise 10 --	Style: Poetic Devices <i>25 multiple choice questions on assonance, consonance, alliteration, repetition, and rhyme</i> 19
Exercise 11 --	Style: Sensory Imagery <i>25 multiple choice questions</i>21
Exercise 12 --	Style: Allusions and Symbols <i>20 multiple choice questions on allusions and symbols pertaining to history, literature, religion, and folklore/superstition</i> 23
Exercise 13 --	Style: Literary Analysis – Selected Passage 1 <i>6 multiple choice questions</i> 25
Exercise 14 --	Style: Literary Analysis – Selected Passage 2 <i>6 multiple choice questions</i> 27
Exercise 15 --	Style: Literary Analysis – Selected Passage 3 <i>6 multiple choice questions</i> 29
Exercise 16 --	Style: Literary Analysis – Selected Passage 4 <i>6 multiple choice questions</i> 31
Answer Key -	Answers to Exercises 1-16 33
Glossary --	Definitions of Terms Used in Literary Analysis 35

SAMPLE EXERCISES - KIDNAPPED by Robert Louis Stevenson

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

- ___ 1. “The house of Shaws!” I cried. “What had my poor father to do with the house of Shaws?”

- ___ 2. The country was pleasant round about, running in low hills, pleasantly watered and wooded, and the crops, to my eyes, wonderfully good.

- ___ 3. I found a great number of books, both Latin and English, in which I took great pleasure all the afternoon.

EXERCISE 6 PHRASES

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

par = participial *ger* = gerund *inf* = infinitive *appos* = appositive *prep* = prepositional

- ___ 1. On the forenoon of the second day, coming to the top of a hill, I saw all the country fall away before me down to the sea.

- ___ 2. And while the person of the house set himself to replacing the defences of the door, I groped my way forward and entered the kitchen.

- ___ 3. Meanwhile, my uncle, stooping over the fire, turned the letter over and over in his hands.

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

- ___ 1. The room was as cold as a well, and the bed, when I had found my way to it, as damp as a peat-hag.

- ___ 2. “I was brought up to have a good conceit of myself; and if you were all the uncle, and all the family, I had in the world, ten times over, I wouldn’t buy your liking at such prices.”

- ___ 3. And nothing but the sight of my uncle, and his eyes playing hide and seek with mine, revived the force of my distrust.

SAMPLE EXERCISES - KIDNAPPED by Robert Louis Stevenson

EXERCISE 12 STYLE: ALLUSIONS AND SYMBOLS

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

a. history b. literature c. religion d. folklore/superstition

- ___1. In those days folk still believed in witches and trembled at the curse.
- ___2. And if I did not fall, it was more by Heaven's mercy than my own strength.
- ___3. Now whether my uncle thought the crash to be the sound of my fall, or whether he heard in it God's voice denouncing murder, I will leave you to guess.

EXERCISE 13 STYLE: LITERARY ANALYSIS – SELECTED PASSAGE 1

Read the following passage the first time through for meaning.

Out I went into the night. The wind was still moaning in the distance, though never a breath of it came near the house of Shaws. It had fallen blacker than ever; and I was glad to feel along the wall, till I came the length of the stair-tower door at the far end of the unfinished wing. I had got the key into the keyhole and had just turned it, when all upon a sudden, without sound of wind or thunder, the whole sky lighted up with wildfire and went black again. I had to put my hand over my eyes to get back to the colour of the darkness; and indeed I was already half blinded when I stepped into the tower.

It was so dark inside, it seemed a body could scarce breathe; but I pushed out with foot and hand, and presently struck the wall with the one, and the lowermost round of the stair with the other. The wall, by the touch was of fine hewn stone; the steps, too, though somewhat steep and narrow, were of polished mason-work, and regular and solid underfoot. Minding my uncle's word about the banisters, I kept close to the tower side, and felt my way in the pitch darkness with a beating heart.

The house of Shaws stood some five full stories high, not counting lofts. Well, as I advanced, it seemed to me the stairs were airier and a thought more lightsome; and I was wondering what might be the cause of this change, when a second blink of the summer lightning came and went. If I did not cry out, it was because fear had me by the throat; and if I did not fall, it was more by Heaven's mercy than my own strength. It was not only that the flash shone in on every side through breaches in the wall, so that I seemed to be clambering aloft upon an open scaffold, but the passing brightness showed me the steps were of unequal length, and that one of my feet rested that moment within two inches of the well.

(From Chapter 4 *I Run a Great Danger in the House of Shaws*)

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 Out I went into the night. The wind was still moaning in the distance, though never a breath of it came
- 2 near the house of Shaws. It had fallen blacker than ever; and I was glad to feel along the wall, till I came
- 3 the length of the stair-tower door at the far end of the unfinished wing. I had got the key into the keyhole
- 4 and had just turned it, when all upon a sudden, without sound of wind or thunder, the whole sky lighted
- 5 up with wildfire and went black again. I had to put my hand over my eyes to get back to the colour of the

6 darkness; and indeed I was already half blinded when I stepped into the tower.

7 It was so dark inside, it seemed a body could scarce breathe; but I pushed out with foot and hand, and

8 presently struck the wall with the one, and the lowermost round of the stair with the other. The wall,

9 by the touch was of fine hewn stone; the steps, too, though somewhat steep and narrow, were of polished

10 mason-work, and regular and solid underfoot. Minding my uncle's word about the banisters, I kept

11 close to the tower side, and felt my way in the pitch darkness with a beating heart.

12 The house of Shaws stood some five full stories high, not counting lofts. Well, as I advanced, it seemed

13 to me the stairs were airier and a thought more lightsome; and I was wondering what might be the cause

14 of this change, when a second blink of the summer lightning came and went. If I did not cry out, it was

15 because fear had me by the throat; and if I did not fall, it was more by Heaven's mercy than my own

16 strength. It was not only that the flash shone in on every side through breaches in the wall, so that I

17 seemed to be clambering aloft upon an open scaffold, but the passing brightness showed me the steps

18 were of unequal length, and that one of my feet rested that moment within two inches of the well.

- ___ 1. ALL of the following descriptions are used to create suspense EXCEPT . . .
- a. *The wind was still moaning in the distance* (Line 1)
 - b. *I had got the key into the keyhole* (Line 3)
 - c. *It was so dark inside, it seemed a body could scarce breathe* (Line 7)

- ___ 2. ALL of the following descriptions are parallel in function EXCEPT . . .
- a. *I pushed out with foot and hand, and presently struck the wall* (Lines 7-8)
 - b. *a second blink of summer lightning came and went* (Line 14)
 - c. *the flash shone in on every side through breaches in the wall* (Line 16)

- ___ 3. The underlined words in Line 1 are examples of . . .
- a. assonance
 - b. consonance
 - c. alliteration