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grammar, style, and proofreading exercises

**The Grammar Dog Guide to
Middlemarch
by George Eliot**

**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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MIDDLEMARCH by George Eliot – Grammar and Style
All exercises use sentences from the novel

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SAMPLE EXERCISES - MIDDLEMARCH by George Eliot

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. Even a prospective brother-in-law may be an oppression if he will always be presupposing too good an understanding with you, and agreeing with you even when you contradict him.

- ___2. Dorothea closed her pamphlet, as soon as she was aware of her uncle's presence, and rose as if to go.

- ___3. But her feeling towards the vulgar rich was a sort of religious hatred.

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. Dorothea, with all her eagerness to know the truths of life, retained very childlike ideas about marriage.

- ___2. "How can one ever do anything nobly Christian, living among people with such petty thoughts?"

- ___3. "The fact is, I never loved any one well enough to put myself into a noose for them."

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

- ___1. Notions and scruples were like spilt needles, making one afraid of treading, or sitting down, or even eating.

- ___2. Has any one ever pinched into its pilulous smallness the cobweb of pre-matrimonial acquaintanceship?

- ___3. And in looking at her, his face was often lit up by a smile like pale wintry sunshine.

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EXERCISE 12

STYLE: ALLUSIONS AND SYMBOLS

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

a. mythology b. religion c. literature d. folklore/superstition e. fatalism/chance

- ___1. Her hand and wrist were so finely formed that she could wear sleeves not less bare of style than those in which the Blessed Virgin appeared to Italian painters.
- ___2. “My mind is something like the ghost of an ancient, wandering about the world and trying mentally to construct it as it used to be, in spite of ruin and confusing changes.”
- ___3. “Could I not learn to read Latin and Greek aloud to you, as Milton’s daughters did to their father, without understanding what they read?”

EXERCISE 13

STYLE: LITERARY ANALYSIS – SELECTED PASSAGE 1

Read the following passage the first time through for meaning.

... but whatever else remained the same, the light had changed, and you cannot find the pearly dawn at noonday. The fact is unalterable, that a fellow mortal with whose nature you are acquainted solely through the brief entrances and exits of a few imaginative weeks called courtship, may, when seen in the continuity of married companionship, be disclosed as something better or worse than what you have preconceived, but will certainly not appear altogether the same. And it would be astonishing to find how soon the change is felt if we had no kindred changes to compare with it. To share lodgings with a brilliant dinner companion, or to see your favourite politician in the Ministry, may bring about changes quite as rapid: in these cases too we begin by knowing little and believing much, and we sometimes by inverting the quantities.

Still, such comparisons might mislead, for no man was more incapable of flashy make-believe than Mr. Casaubon: he was as genuine a character as any ruminant animal, and he had not actively assisted in creating any illusions about himself. How was it that in the weeks since her marriage, Dorothea had not distinctly observed but felt with a stifling depression, that the large vistas and wide fresh air which she had dreamed of finding in her husband’s mind were replaced by anterooms and winding passages which seemed to lead nowhither? I suppose it was that in courtship everything is regarded as provisional and preliminary, and the smallest sample of virtue or accomplishment is taken to guarantee delightful stores which the broad leisure of marriage will reveal. But the doorsill of marriage once crossed, expectation is concentrated on the present. Having once embarked on your marital voyage, it is impossible not to be aware that you make no way and that the sea is not within sight – that, in fact, you are exploring an enclosed basin. (From Chapter 20)

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 ... but whatever else remained the same, the light had changed, and you cannot find the pearly
- 2 dawn at noonday. The fact is unalterable, that a fellow mortal with whose nature you are

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3 acquainted solely through the brief entrances and exits of a few imaginative weeks called courtship,
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6 it would be astonishing to find how soon the change is felt if we had no kindred changes to compare
7 with it. To share lodgings with a brilliant dinner companion, or to see your favourite politician
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18 marriage will reveal. But the doorsill of marriage once crossed, expectation is concentrated
19 on the present. Having once embarked on your marital voyage, it is impossible not to be aware
20 that you make no way and that the sea is not within sight – that, in fact, you are exploring an
21 enclosed basin.

- ___1. The underlined words in Line 1 are examples of . . .
a. assonance b. consonance c. alliteration d. rhyme
- ___2. Lines 13 through 15 contain an example of . . .
a. metaphor b. simile c. personification d. hyperbole
- ___3. ALL of the following observations are revealed in the passage EXCEPT . . .
a. Dorothea has changed her impression of her husband.
b. Mr. Casaubon pretended to be someone he wasn't during courtship.
c. Mr. Casaubon's mind is uninteresting to Dorothea.
d. Dorothea feels disillusioned.