



grammar dog.com

grammar, style, and proofreading exercises

The Grammar Dog Guide to Sherlock Holmes Stories

by Arthur Conan Doyle

The Red-headed League

The Adventure of the Speckled Band

The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb

The Crooked Man

The Final Problem

**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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SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES by Arthur Conan Doyle – Grammar and Style
All exercises use sentences from the stories.

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SAMPLE EXERCISES - SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES by Arthur Conan Doyle

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 RED-HEADED LEAGUE

- ___ 1. Mr. Jabez Wilson started up in his chair, with his forefinger upon the paper, but his eyes upon my companion.
- ___ 2. "I have a small pawnbroker's business at Coburg Square, near the City.
- ___ 3. He took a step backward, cocked his head on one side, and gazed at my hair until I felt quite bashful.

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 RED-HEADED LEAGUE

- ___ 1. "When, in addition, I see a Chinese coin hanging from your watch-chain, the matter becomes even more simple."
- ___ 2. "From north, south, east, and west every man who had a shade of red in his hair tramped into the city to answer the advertisement."
- ___ 3. "And no later than this morning, I went to my work as usual at ten o'clock, but the door was shut and locked, with a little square of card-board hammered on to the middle of the panel with a tack."

EXERCISE 9 STYLE: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

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

s = simile

m = metaphor

o = onomatopoeia

h = hyperbole

THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE

- ___ 1. "Snapping away with a camera when he ought to be improving his mind, and then diving down into the cellar like a rabbit into its hole to develop pictures."
- ___ 2. He curled himself up in his chair, with his thin knees drawn up to his hawk-like nose, and there he sat with his eyes closed and his black clay pipe thrusting out like the bill of some strange bird.
- ___ 3. The roadway was blocked with the immense stream of commerce flowing in a double tide inward and outward . . .

SAMPLE EXERCISES - SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES by Arthur Conan Doyle

EXERCISE 12 STYLE: ALLUSIONS AND SYMBOLS

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

a. history b. religion c. literature/books d. law enforcement/crime e. Far East

THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE

- ___1. “The fish that you have tattooed immediately above your right wrist could only have been done in China.”
- ___2. “It seemed altogether past belief that anyone . . . would pay such a sum for doing anything so simple as copying out the Encyclopedia Britannica.”
- ___3. “When you drove home after the concert I called upon Scotland Yard and upon the chairman of the bank directors, with the result you have seen.”

EXERCISE 13 STYLE: LITERARY ANALYSIS – SELECTED PASSAGE 1

Read the following passage the first time through for meaning.

How shall I ever forget that dreadful vigil? I could not hear a sound, not even the drawing of a breath, and yet I knew that my companion sat open-eyed, within a few feet of me, in the same state of nervous tension in which I was myself. The shutters cut off the least ray of light, and we waited in absolute darkness. From outside came the occasional cry of a night-bird, and once at our very window a long drawn catlike whine, which told us that the cheetah was indeed at liberty. Far away we could hear the deep tones of the parish clock, which boomed out every quarter of an hour. How long they seemed, those quarters! Twelve struck; and one and two and three, and still we sat waiting silently for whatever might befall.

Suddenly there was the momentary gleam of a light up in the direction of the ventilator, which vanished immediately, but was succeeded by a strong smell of burning oil and heated metal. Someone in the next room had lit a dark-lantern. I heard a gentle sound of movement, and then all was silent once more, though the smell grew stronger. For half an hour I sat with straining ears. Then suddenly another sound became audible – a very gentle, soothing sound, like that of a small jet of steam escaping continually from a kettle. The instant that we heard it, Holmes sprang from the bed, struck a match, and lashed furiously at the bell pull. (From *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*)

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 How shall I ever forget that dreadful vigil? I could not hear a sound, not even the drawing of a breath,
- 2 and yet I knew that my companion sat open-eyed, within a few feet of me, in the same state of nervous
- 3 tension in which I was myself. The shutters cut off the least ray of light, and we waited in absolute
- 4 darkness. From outside came the occasional cry of a night-bird, and once at our very window a long
- 5 drawn catlike whine, which told us that the cheetah was indeed at liberty. Far away we could hear
- 6 the deep tones of the parish clock, which boomed out every quarter of an hour. How long they seemed,

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7 those quarters! Twelve struck; and one and two and three, and still we sat waiting silently for whatever
8 might befall.

9 Suddenly there was the momentary gleam of a light up in the direction of the ventilator, which vanished
10 immediately, but was succeeded by a strong smell of burning oil and heated metal. Someone in the next
11 room had lit a dark-lantern. I heard a gentle sound of movement, and then all was silent once more,
12 though the smell grew stronger. For half an hour I sat with straining ears. Then suddenly another sound
13 became audible – a very gentle, soothing sound, like that of a small jet of steam escaping continually from
14 a kettle. The instant that we heard it, Holmes sprang from the bed, struck a match, and lashed furiously
15 at the bell pull.

- ___ 1. ALL of the following sensory imagery is used in the passage EXCEPT . . .
a. sight b. sound c. touch d. taste e. smell
- ___ 2. The PREDOMINANT sensory imagery in the passage is . . .
a. sight b. sound c. touch d. taste e. smell
- ___ 3. ALL of the following descriptions are parallel in meaning EXCEPT . . .
a. *the shutters cut off the least ray of light* (Line 3)
b. *the cheetah was indeed at liberty* (Line 5)
c. *the momentary gleam of light* (Line 9)
d. *Holmes sprang from the bed, struck a match* (Line 14)