



**grammar dog.com**

grammar, style, and proofreading exercises

**The Grammar Dog Guide to  
The Comedy of  
Errors  
by William Shakespeare**

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

## About Gramwardog

Gramwardog 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 Gramwardog.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.

Gramwardog'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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*THE COMEDY OF ERRORS* by William Shakespeare – Grammar and Style

<b>Exercise 2</b>	--	<b>Proofreading: Spelling, Capitalization, Punctuation</b> <i>12 multiple choice questions</i>	<b>.... 5</b>
<b>Exercise 3</b>	--	<b>Proofreading: Spelling, Capitalization, Punctuation</b> <i>12 multiple choice questions</i>	<b>.... 6</b>
<b>Exercise 4</b>	--	<b>Simple, Compound, Complex Sentences</b> <i>20 multiple choice questions</i>	<b>.... 7</b>
<b>Exercise 5</b>	--	<b>Complements</b> <i>20 multiple choice questions on direct objects, predicate nominatives, predicate adjectives, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions</i>	<b>.... 9</b>
<b>Exercise 6</b>	--	<b>Phrases</b> <i>20 multiple choice questions on prepositional, appositive, gerund, infinitive, and participial phrases</i>	<b>... 11</b>
<b>Exercise 7</b>	--	<b>Verbals: Gerunds, Infinitives, and Participles</b> <i>20 multiple choice questions</i>	<b>... 13</b>
<b>Exercise 8</b>	--	<b>Clauses</b> <i>20 multiple choice questions</i>	<b>... 15</b>
<b>Exercise 9</b>	--	<b>Style: Figurative Language</b> <i>20 multiple choice questions on metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole</i>	<b>... 17</b>

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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

**SAMPLE EXERCISES - THE COMEDY OF ERRORS** by William Shakespeare

**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*

**ACT I**

- \_\_\_1.        My wife, not meanly proud of two such boys, made daily motions for our home return.
  
- \_\_\_2.        My wife, more careful for the latter-born, had fast'ned him unto a small spare mast, such as seafaring men provide for storms.
  
- \_\_\_3.        For with long travel I am stiff and weary.

**EXERCISE 6            PHRASES**

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

*par = participial*

*ger = gerund*

*inf = infinitive*

*appos = appositive*

*prep = prepositional*

**ACT I**

- \_\_\_1.        Thy substance, valued at the highest rate, cannot amount unto a hundred marks.
  
- \_\_\_2.        Yet this my comfort: when your words are done, my woes end likewise with the evening sun.
  
- \_\_\_3.        Thus have you heard me severed from my bliss, that by misfortunes was my life prolonged to tell sad stories of my own mishaps.

**EXERCISE 9            STYLE: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**

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

*p = personification*

*s = simile*

*m = metaphor*

*h = hyperbole*

**ACT I**

- \_\_\_1.        At length the sun, gazing upon the earth, dispersed those vapors that offended us, and, by the benefit of his wished light, the seas waxed calm, and we discovered two ships from far, making amain to us.
  
- \_\_\_2.        I to the world am like a drop of water that in the ocean seeks another drop, who falling there to find his fellow forth, unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself.
  
- \_\_\_3.        Methinks your maw, like mine, should be your clock, and strike you home without a messenger.

**SAMPLE EXERCISES - THE COMEDY OF ERRORS** by William Shakespeare

**EXERCISE 12      STYLE: ALLUSIONS AND SYMBOLS**

Identify anachronisms and types of allusions in the following sentences. Label the underlined words:

a. *mythology*      b. *religion*      c. *madness/foolishness*      d. *folklore/superstition*

ACT I

- \_\_\_1.      Hapless Egeon, whom the fates have marked to bear the extremity of dire mishap!
- \_\_\_2.      As nimble jugglers that deceive the eye, dark-working sorcerers that change the mind, soul-killing witches that deform the body, disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks, and many suchlike liberties of sin.

ACT II

- \_\_\_3.      I mean not cuckold-mad, but sure he is stark mad.

**EXERCISE 13      STYLE: LITERARY ANALYSIS – SELECTED PASSAGE 1**

Read the following passage the first time through for meaning.

*Adriana.* Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown;  
Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects.  
I am not Adriana, nor thy wife.  
The time was once when thou unurged wouldst vow  
That never words were music to thine ear,  
That never object pleasing in thine eye,  
That never touch well welcome to thy hand,  
That never meat sweet-savored in thy taste,  
Unless I spake or looked or touched or carved to thee.  
How comes it now, my husband, O how comes it,  
That thou art then estranged from thyself?  
Thyself I call it, being strange to me,  
That, undividable, incorporate,  
Am better than thy dear self's better part.  
Ah, do not tear away thyself from me;  
For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall  
A drop of water in the breaking gulf,  
And take unmingled thence that drop again

Without addition or diminishing  
As take from me thyself, and not me too.  
How dearly would it touch thee to the quick,  
Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious,  
And that this body, consecrate to thee,  
By ruffian lust should be contaminate!  
Wouldst thou not spit at me, and spurn at me,  
And hurl the name of husband in my face,  
And tear the stained skin off my harlot brow,  
And from my false hand cut the wedding ring,  
And break it with a deep-divorcing vow?  
I know thou canst, and therefore see thou do it.  
I am possessed with an adulterate blot.  
My blood is mingled with the crime of lust;  
For, if we two be one, and thou play false,  
I do digest the poison of thy flesh,  
Being strumpeted by thy catagion.  
Keep then fair league and truce with thy true bed,  
I live distained, thou undishonored. (II, ii, 111-146)

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 <i>Adriana.</i> Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown; | 19 Without addition or diminishing              |
| 2 Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects.                 | 20 As take from me thyself, and not me too.     |
| 3 I am not Adriana, nor thy wife.                             | 21 How dearly would it touch thee to the quick, |

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4 The time was once when thou unurged wouldst vow  
5 That never words were music to thine ear,  
6 That never object pleasing in thine eye,  
7 That never touch well welcome to thy hand,  
8 That never meat sweet-savored in thy taste,  
9 Unless I spake or looked or touched or carved to thee.  
10 How comes it now, my husband, O how comes it,  
11 That thou art then estranged from thyself?  
12 Thyself I call it, being strange to me,  
13 That, undividable, incorporate,  
14 Am better than thy dear self's better part.  
15 Ah, do not tear away thyself from me;  
16 For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall  
17 A drop of water in the breaking gulf,  
18 And take unmingled thence that drop again  
22 Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious  
23 And that this body, consecrate to thee,  
24 By ruffian lust should be contaminate!  
25 Wouldst thou not spit at me, and spurn at me,  
26 And hurl the name of husband in my face,  
27 And tear the stained skin off my harlot brow,  
28 And from my false hand cut the wedding ring,  
29 And break it with a deep-divorcing vow?  
30 I know thou canst, and therefore see thou do it.  
31 I am possessed with an adulterate blot.  
32 My blood is mingled with the crime of lust;  
33 For, if we two be one, and thou play false,  
34 I do digest the poison of thy flesh,  
35 Being strumpeted by thy catagion.  
36 Keep then fair league and truce with thy true bed,  
37 I live distained, thou undishonored.

- \_\_\_1. The use of the words *That never* in Lines 3-8 is an example of . . .  
a. anaphora b. anecdote c. allegory d. alliteration
- \_\_\_2. Line 25 contains examples of ALL of the following devices EXCEPT . . .  
a. assonance b. consonance c. alliteration d. repetition
- \_\_\_3. ALL of the following descriptions are parallel in meaning EXCEPT . . .  
a. *I were licentious* (Line 22)  
b. *my harlot brow* (Line 27)  
c. *an adulterate blot* (Line 31)  
d. *if we two be one* (Line 33)