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grammar, style, and proofreading exercises

**The Grammar Dog Guide to  
Walden  
by Henry David Thoreau**

**All exercises use sentences from the book.  
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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**WALDEN** by Henry David Thoreau – Grammar and Style  
*All exercises use sentences from the book.*

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**SAMPLE EXERCISES - WALDEN** by Henry David Thoreau

**EXERCISE 5            COMPLEMENTS**

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

*d.o. = direct object*

*p.n. = predicate nominative*

*o.p. = object of preposition*

*p.a. = predicate adjective*

- \_\_\_1.        At present I am a sojourner in civilized life again.
  
- \_\_\_2.        Near the end of March, 1845, I borrowed an axe and went down to the woods by Walden Pond, nearest to where I intended to build my house, and began to cut down some tall arrowy white pines, still in their youth, for timber.
  
- \_\_\_3.        The civilized man is a more experienced and wiser savage.
  
- \_\_\_4.        It was fit that I should live on rice, mainly, who loved so well the

**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.        It is never too late to give up our prejudices.
  
- \_\_\_2.        Nature is as well adapted to our weakness as to our strength.
  
- \_\_\_3.        So thoroughly and sincerely are we compelled to live, reverencing our life, and denying the possibility of change.

**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.        One generation abandons the enterprises of another like stranded vessels.
  
- \_\_\_2.        . . . it costs me nothing for curtains, for I have no gazers to shut out but the sun and moon, and I am willing that they should look in.
  
- \_\_\_3.        I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life in to a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms . . .

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**EXERCISE 12      STYLE: ALLUSIONS AND SYMBOLS**

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

*a. history   b. mythology   c. religion   d. folklore/superstition*

- \_\_\_ 1.      The twelve labors of Hercules were trifling in comparison with those which my neighbors have undertaken; for they were only twelve, and had an end; but I could never see that these men slew or captured any monster or finished any labor.
  
- \_\_\_ 2.      The summer, in some climates, makes possible to man a sort of Elysian life.
  
- \_\_\_ 3.      We are amused at beholding the costume of Henry VIII, or Queen Elizabeth, as much as if it was that of the King and Queen of the Cannibal Islands.

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

Read the following passage the first time through for meaning.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I want to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have somewhat hastily concluded that it is the chief end of man here to “glorify God and enjoy him forever.” (From *Where I Lived, and What I Lived For*)

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 went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and
- 2 see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.
- 3 I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless
- 4 it was quite necessary. I want to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and
- 5 Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life
- 6 into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the
- 7 whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime,

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8 to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most  
9 men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God,  
10 and have somewhat hastily concluded that it is the chief end of man here to “glorify God and enjoy  
11 him forever.”

- \_\_\_1.       **The underlined words in Line 1 are examples of . . .**  
          **a. assonance    b. consonance    c. alliteration    d. rhyme**
- \_\_\_2.       **Line 4 contains an example of . . .**  
          **a. metaphor    b. simile    c. personification    d. onomatopoeia**
- \_\_\_3.       **Line 5 contains an example of . . .**  
          **a. allegory    b. allusion    c. anecdote    d. anaphora**