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grammar, style, and proofreading exercises

**The Grammar Dog Guide to
Heart of Darkness
by Joseph Conrad**

**All exercises use sentences from the novel.
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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HEART OF DARKNESS by Joseph Conrad – Grammar and Style
All exercises use sentences from the novel

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SAMPLE EXERCISES - HEART OF DARKNESS by Joseph Conrad

EXERCISE 5 COMPLEMENTS

Identify the complements in each of 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 a preposition

- ___ 1. The sea-reach of the Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway.
- ___ 2. The Accountant had brought out already a box of dominoes, and was toying architecturally with the bones.
- ___ 3. He had sunken cheeks, a yellow complexion, a straight back, an ascetic aspect, and with his arms dropped, the palms of hands outwards, resembled an idol.

EXERCISE 6 PHRASES

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

participle = par

gerund = ger

infinitive = inf

appositive = appos

preposition = prep

- ___ 1. The *Nellie*, a crucising yawl, swung to her anchor without a flutter of the sails, and was at rest.
- ___ 2. A haze rested on the low shores that ran out to sea in vanishing flatness.
- ___ 3. Marlow sat cross-legged right aft, leaning against the mizzen-mast.

EXERCISE 9 STYLE: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

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

personification = p

simile = s

metaphor = m

onomatopoeia = o

hyperbole = h

- ___ 1. The voice of the surf heard now and then was a positive pleasure, like the speech of a brother.
- ___ 2. Pop, would go one of the six-inch guns; a small flame would dart and vanish, a little white smoke would disappear, a tiny projectile would give a feeble screech – and nothing happened.
- ___ 3. A horn tooted to the right, and I saw the black people run.

SAMPLE EXERCISES - HEART OF DARKNESS by Joseph Conrad

EXERCISE 12 STYLE: ALLUSIONS

Identify the allusions in the following sentences. Label the underlined words as allusions that are:

- a. historical b. mythological c. religious d. geographical e. literary

- _____ 1. The sea-reach of the Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway.
- _____ 2. It had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud, from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin, knights all, titled and untitled – the great knights-errant of the sea.
- _____ 3. It had borne all the ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time, from the Golden Hind returning with her round flanks full of treasure . . .

EXERCISE 13 STYLE: LITERARY ANALYSIS – SELECTED PASSAGE 1

Read the following passage the first time through for meaning. (From Chapter I).

“A slight clinking behind me made me turn my head. Six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their footsteps. Black rags were wound round their loins, and the short ends behind wagged to and fro like tails. I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking. Another report from the cliff made me think suddenly of that ship of war I had seen firing into a continent. It was the same kind of ominous voice; but these men could by no stretch of imagination be called enemies. They were called criminals, and the outraged law, like the bursting shells, had come to them, an insoluble mystery from the sea. All their meager breasts panted together, the violently dilated nostrils quivered, the eyes stared stonily uphill. They passed me within six inches, without a glance, with that complete deathlike indifference of unhappy savages. Behind this raw matter one of the reclaimed, the product of the new forces at work, strolled despondently, carrying a rifle by its middle. He had a uniform jacket with one button off, and seeing a white man on the path, hoisted his weapon to his shoulder with alacrity. This was simple prudence, white men being so much alike at a distance that he could not tell who I might be. He was speedily reassured, and with a large, white, rascally grin, and a glance at his charge, seemed to take me into partnership in his exalted trust. After all, I also was a part of the great cause of these high and just proceedings.”

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 “A slight clinking behind me made me turn my head. Six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path.
- 2 They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time
- 3 with their footsteps. Black rags were wound round their loins, and the short ends behind wagged to and
- 4 fro like tails. I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron
- 5 collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them,

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6 rhythmically clinking. Another report from the cliff made me think suddenly of that ship of war I had
7 seen firing into a continent. It was the same kind of ominous voice; but these men could by no stretch of
8 imagination be called enemies. They were called criminals, and the outraged law, like the bursting shells,
9 had come to them, an insoluble mystery from the sea. All their meager breasts panted together, the
10 violently dilated nostrils quivered, the eyes stared stonily uphill. They passed me within six inches,
11 without a glance, with that complete deathlike indifference of unhappy savages. Behind this raw matter
12 one of the reclaimed, the product of the new forces at work, strolled despondently, carrying a rifle by its
13 middle. He had a uniform jacket with one button off, and seeing a white man on the path, hoisted his
14 weapon to his shoulder with alacrity. This was simple prudence, white men being so much alike at a
15 distance that he could not tell who I might be. He was speedily reassured, and with a large, white,
16 rascally grin, and a glance at his charge, seemed to take me into partnership in his exalted trust. After
17 all, I also was a part of the great cause of these high and just proceedings.”

- ___ 1. The underlined words in Line 3 are examples of . . .
a. assonance b. consonance c. alliteration
- ___ 2. Line 4 contains an example of . . .
a. metaphor b. simile c. personification
- ___ 3. Lines 8 and 9 contain examples of . . .
a. metaphor and simile
b. analogy and metaphor
c. simile and analogy