



**The Grammardog Guide to  
The Scarlet Letter  
by Nathaniel Hawthorne**

**All quizzes 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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**EXERCISE 5            COMPLEMENTS**

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

*direct object = d.o.*

*indirect object = i.o.*

*predicate nominative = p.n.*

*predicate adjective = p.a.*

*object of a preposition = o.p.*

- \_\_\_1.        Mr. Dimmesdale gently repelled their entreaties.
- \_\_\_2.        “I am a stranger, and have been a wanderer, sorely against my will.”
- \_\_\_3.        Meagre, indeed, and cold, was the sympathy that a transgressor might look for, from such by-standers, at the scaffold.

**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.        “People say,” said another, “that the Reverend Master Dimmesdale, her godly pastor, takes it very grievously to heart that such a scandal should have come upon his congregation.”
- \_\_\_2.        On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread, appeared the letter A.
- \_\_\_3.        By an accurate measurement, each limb proved to be precisely three inches and a quarter in length.

**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*

- \_\_\_1.        Before this ugly edifice, and between it and the wheel-track of the street, was a grass-plot, much overgrown with burdock, pig-weed, apple-peru, and such unsightly vegetation, which evidently found something congenial in the soil that had so early borne the black flower of civilized society, a prison.
- \_\_\_2.        “But it will calm the swell and heaving of thy passion, like oil thrown on the waves of a tempestuous sea.”
- \_\_\_3.        Her sin, her ignominy, were the roots which she had struck into the soil.

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**EXERCISE 12      STYLE: ALLUSIONS AND SYMBOLS**

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

*a. historical      b. mythological      c. religious      d. literary      e. folklore/superstition*

- \_\_\_1.      From the loftiest point of its roof . . . floats or droops . . . the banner of the republic; but with the thirteen stripes turned vertically . . . thus indicating that a civil, not a military post of Uncle Sam's government, is here established.
  
- \_\_\_2.      . . . every remedy contained a multitude of far-fetched and heterogeneous ingredients . . . as if the proposed result had been the Elixir of Life.
  
- \_\_\_3.      These old gentlemen –seated, like Matthew . . . but not very liable to be summoned thence, like him, for apostolic errands – were Custom-House officers.

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

Read the following passage the first time through for meaning. (From Chapter V *Hester at Her Needle*)

It might be, too, -- doubtless it was so, although she hid the secret from herself, and grew pale whenever it struggled out of her heart, like a serpent from its hole, -- it might be that another feeling kept her within the scene and pathway that had been so fatal. There dwelt, there trode the feet of one with whom she deemed herself connected in a union, that, unrecognized on earth, would bring them together before the bar of final judgment, and make that their marriage-altar, for a joint futurity of endless retribution. Over and over again, the tempter of souls had thrust this idea upon Hester's contemplation, and laughed at the passionate and desperate joy with which she seized, and then strove to cast it from her. She barely looked the idea in the face, and hastened to bar it in its dungeon. What she compelled herself to believe, -- what, finally, she reasoned upon, as her motive for continuing a resident of New England, -- was half a truth, and half a self-delusion. Here, she said to herself, had been the scene of her guilt, and here should be the scene of her earthly punishment; and so, perchance, the torture of her daily shame would at length purge her soul, and work out another purity than that which she had lost; more saint-like, because the result of martyrdom.

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 It might be, too, -- doubtless it was so, although she hid the secret from herself, and grew pale whenever
- 2 it struggled out of her heart, like a serpent from its hole, -- it might be that another feeling kept her within
- 3 the scene and pathway that had been so fatal. There dwelt, there trode the feet of one with whom she
- 4 deemed herself connected in a union, that, unrecognized on earth, would bring them together before

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5 the bar of final judgment, and make that their marriage-altar, for a joint futurity of endless retribution.  
6 Over and over again, the tempter of souls had thrust this idea upon Hester's contemplation, and  
7 laughed at the passionate and desperate joy with which she seized, and then strove to cast it from her.  
8 She barely looked the idea in the face, and hastened to bar it in its dungeon. What she compelled  
9 herself to believe, -- what, finally, she reasoned upon, as her motive for continuing a resident of  
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11 scene of her guilt, and here should be the scene of her earthly punishment; and so, perchance,  
12 the torture of her daily shame would at length purge her soul, and work out another purity than  
13 that which she had lost; more saint-like, because the result of martyrdom.

- \_\_\_ 1.        The underlined words in Line 2 are an example of . . .  
              a. metaphor                b. simile                        c. personification
- \_\_\_ 2.        The underlined words in Line 3 are an example of . . .  
              a. anaphora                    b. parataxis                    c. polysyndeton
- \_\_\_ 3.        Line 6 contains an example of . . .  
              a. euphemism                b. inference                    c. allusion

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