

2<sup>ND</sup> EXAMINATION



### Memories of the Black Stairs

#### I. SENTENCES

*Find the complete subject and underline it once; that is, underline the subject plus associated modifiers. Find the complete predicate and underline it twice; that is, underline the main verb plus auxiliary verbs plus objects or complements plus associated modifiers. If you are uncertain whether an introductory phrase or clause modifies the remainder of the sentence or just the predicate alone, underline the phrase or clause twice. Every part of the sentence should be underlined one way or another (unless there is an interjection). All sentences are worth 2 points except where noted.*

1. Once formed, the warrior clans of Ireland, the fianna, were said never to part but in death.

2. Romanticizing these heroes, storytellers perpetuated this manifest untruth.

3. In the winter season following Samhain, our Halloween, with hunting forbidden, the brave fenians broke into small bands, more easily fed by the people.

*The fianna of ancient Ireland, comprised mainly of younger sons who would not inherit land, were fighting companies that maintained shaky allegiance to regional or provincial kings. An individual member was known as a fenian. Cailte, described here, was a member of the most storied fianna band, that captained by Fionn mac Cumhaill (or Finn McCool). The Black Stairs is a mountain range overlooking Leinster province.*

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## II. ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

Identify the voice of the verb in the following sentences; then rewrite the paragraph reversing the voice in each sentence. While you do not have to use each word in your revised sentences, the general sense of the original must remain. Just change the voice.

At this time, some fenians were solitary figures, walking alone across Eire. During one such dark season, Cailte traversed the Black Stairs without companions, striding from peak to peak, visiting cairns built atop those heights, chanting poetry. On the eve of Imbolc, the start of spring, the valleys of south Leinster, home to victorious cattle lords, were gazed upon by this hero. After this, his descent was begun.

4. Voice of 1<sup>st</sup> NO VOICE

5. Voice of 2<sup>nd</sup> ACTIVE VOICE

6. Voice of 3<sup>rd</sup> PASSIVE VOICE

7. Voice of 4<sup>th</sup> PASSIVE VOICE

8. NO VOICE

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9. During one such dark season, the Black Stairs were traversed  
by Cailte without companions, striding . . . .
10. On the eve of Imbolc, the start of spring, this hero gazed  
upon the valleys of south Leinster, home to victorious cattle lords.
11. After this Cailte began his descent.

## III. PREPOSITIONS AND PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

*Place parentheses around all the prepositional phrases in the following sentences.*

(In a hollow), high (on the mountain), Cailte came (upon a beautiful woman) [who carried a new-born lamb, followed (by the mother sheep)]. The woman appeared to be a young maid, with golden hair (in a twisted braid) (far down her back). Her eyes were hazel green; her skin was smooth and white (as new-made cream). She wore a cloak (of light blue.)

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Place parentheses around all prepositional phrases in the following sentences and draw an arrow to the word(s) that each phrase modifies.

"Over" is an adverb in this sentence  
DO

16. "I am Cailte, son of Ronan," spoke the fenian. I have crossed over the mountains, and I have been fasting."

17. Looking intently at the big man, the woman replied: "The time of hunger nears its end."

For one extra point, describe the grammatical function of "The time of hunger nears its end" in sentence no. 17; for a second point explain the grammatical function of "nears."

The clause functions as DO to "the woman replied."  
"Nears" is the main verb of its ~~is~~ clause; it is an action verb.

IV. VERB OBJECTS & COMPLEMENTS

Identify the verb object(s) and complement(s) in the following sentences by underlining and writing DO, IO or OC or PA or PN above the appropriate word. If there are verbals or verbal phrases functioning as verb objects or complements, identify them as noted above. If there is more than one clause in a sentence, identify the verb objects and complements in each clause. If dependent clauses function as verb objects or complements, identify them appropriately. Note that subordinate conjunctions if present have been placed in small caps; for this test it is safe to ignore them.

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18. Cailte gave the woman a smile and, noting the new-born lamb, described his great thirst.

*S AV IO DO AV DO*

19. She gently caressed the animal, the firstborn, and requested Cailte hold it for a time.

*S AV DO OC AV to Inf phrase as DO*

20. [AS he cradled the young sheep], she chanted a powerful magic; her words were verses of remembrance.

*S AV DO S AV DO S LV PN Tricky*

21. "On the Black Stairs (at the close) of day, Cailte receives a gift (for a gift) three drinks (for life) bestow three draughts (of memory)."

*S AV DO S AV DO S*

22. [AFTER the verse, thrice chanted, faded to silence], she squatted (by the ewe) and began to milk.

*S AV S AV AV DO to milk. Inf phrase as DO*

23. [AS she undertook this task], her arms were the arms (of an old, old woman.)

*S AV DO S LV PN*

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24. Yet [WHEN <sup>S</sup> she <sup>AV</sup> stood and <sup>AV</sup> offered <sup>IO</sup> Cailte the cup], <sup>DO</sup> she <sup>S</sup> was <sup>LV</sup> once again a young maid. <sup>PN</sup>

25. <sup>DO</sup> "First a drink, then a memory."  
<sup>DO</sup>

For two extra points, explain in grammatical terms your analysis of sentence no. 25.

You can usefully ~~ans~~ analyze this example in several ways. I have seen it as an elliptical clause, missing its ~~verbs~~ verbs, though their meaning is obvious.

26. Putting the cup to his lips, <sup>S</sup> Cailte <sup>AV</sup> drank the sweet, life-giving sustenance. <sup>DO</sup>

27. <sup>S</sup> Images of a time gone by came to his mind and, <sup>S</sup> holding the empty drinking cup, he <sup>AV</sup> voiced these words. <sup>DO</sup>

28. "I am <sup>S</sup> (with my people) a boy, and we <sup>PN</sup> are bringing the cattle <sup>S</sup> (to high pasture) [BECAUSE <sup>DO</sup> the time is summer and <sup>S</sup> grass <sup>LV</sup> grows thick closest to the sun]. <sup>PA</sup>

Tricky - 2 extra points if correct.

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V. PHRASES

Identify the type of verbal(s) or verbal phrase(s) underlined, italicized, and/or placed in small caps in the following sentences. You don't have to explain their function - just identify them. Please take care to identify verbals as phrases where appropriate.

29. Watching over the cattle is the fated task of women and boys at this time (of producing.)

Gerund Phrase

participle

30. In the highlands we gather to milk the cows and make butter and cheese.

Infinitive phrase

infinitive phrase

31. Surrounded by family, as memorable as a feast day, I childishly pretend to guard the cattle against monsters and demons."

participial phrase

Infinitive phrase

Underline and then identify all verbals and verbal phrases. Then tell how each functions by labeling its function or drawing an arrow to the word(s) that it modifies.

32. Squatting by the ewe for a second time, the woman stretched out her arms (to the task.)

participial phrase

S

AV

DO

33. To look at them was to see the arms of an old, worn woman.

Inf phrase as subject

participle

Inf PHRASE AS PN OR PA

SC

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2 participial phrases



34. Yet having stood, offering the cup to Cailte, she appeared as a young maid.

Gerund phrase as subject

35. "Drinking a second drink, brave Cailte, will stir a second moving memory."

participle

Direct Address

participial phrase

36. Putting cup to his lips, the fenian drank deeply, speaking these words.

participial phrase

Inf phrase as subject

37. "To be singing softly seemed her defining trait."

participle

participial phrase

38. My beloved spoke (of her mother) (as a queen) turned into a deer, and I believed her.

Below, identify the type of phrases underlined or italicized (name them). Then tell how each functions by labeling its function or drawing an arrow to the word(s) that it modifies. There may be several examples in each sentence. Review each carefully.

prep phrase

participial phrase

39. Quick to her feet she was, rejoicing at my return at the close of day; her fingers were nimble at her weaving; her eyes held deep melancholy, even when smiling.

You might see this: [ as a queen <sup>S</sup> turned <sup>AV</sup> into a deer ]  
It is an interesting construction.



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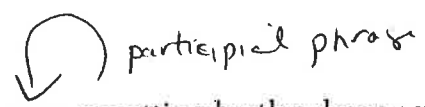


participial phrase

40. For a summer I tarried with love, knowing [THAT I should not have done so], [FOR to delay until near summer's end was dangerous] and soon Fionn sent a summons: 'We defend the shores, old friend.'

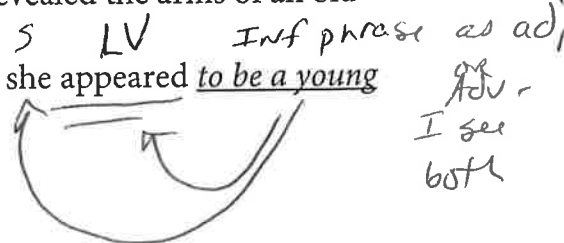
Inf phrase as subject

Note the two phrases to be identified in this sentence.



participial phrase

41. For a third time, the woman squatting by the sheep revealed the arms of an old woman; yet [when she stood and offered Cailte the cup], she appeared to be a young maid.



VI. Case

Choose the correct pronoun.

42. "[Who/whom drinks a final drink] will have a final memory."

43. Cailte, [who/whom no one knew to be slow to a request], put the cup to his lips and drank deeply.

43

For one extra point, explain in grammatical terms the function of your answer in sentence no. 44.

"Whom" is the pseudo-subject of the infinitive phrase.

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44. [When he passed the cup (between he/him and the woman), he spoke these words.

45. "Battle ravens feasting upon those [who/whom died in needless combat]. Fionn and Oscar dead. Shattering ruin; the harvest of a dead king. In the valley of Gabhra ..."

VII. SOMETHING IS WRONG

In terms of rule-based grammar explain the way(s) that the following sentences are incorrect.

46. Cailte spoken, "No memory of this have I; these things I have not seen; this place I have not been. Do I see what is to come?"

Wrong tense of the verb: it should be "spoke."

47. The maiden <sup>began</sup> to chant: "Unlooked for, a warrior on the Black Stairs chants sacred verse; following the land, recalling past with words. Past, present, future, connected they turn."

Missing verb: "The maiden began to chant..."

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48. As she spoke, Cailte looked to the horizon and wept tears at his remembrances.

Again, wrong verb form: The past tense and past participial form of the verb "to weep" is "wept."

49. His family was gone before him into the darkness; his beloved was not his to keep; and the fianna, oh, the fianna [who he loved] was fated to meet desperate destruction.

Should be "whom."

50. With that the woman embraced the lamb and continued up the mountain, sheep following close behind.

Nothing wrong here.

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**Extra Credit**

Some say [THAT Cailte mac Ronan was nephew to Fionn mac Cumhaill by way (of his mother, sister to Fionn)]. Others speak differently. Widely accepted is his ability to run great distances with striking speed. He knew the languages of animals. His great fame, beyond his prowess as a warrior, is as a poet. His ability to recite poetry was second only to Ireland's greatest warrior poet, Fionn's son, Oison.

Explain fully the grammatical function of "sister" in the first sentence above 2 pts.

"sister" renames the object "mother." It is a noun in apposition or a complement. There are different ways to describe it. It is similar to an object complement of a DO

Underline every verbal or verbal phrase in the third sentence above. Explain the grammatical function of each. 3 pts.

Infinitive

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Identify the phrase "to recite poetry" in the final sentence and explain its grammatical function. 2 pts.

Infinitive phrase acting adjectivally, modifying "ability."

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