

Clover English

PODCAST PDF GUIDE GAME OF THRONES & NORTHERN IRELAND

VOCAB FOR MOVIES/TV
ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY
IDIOMS
CONDITIONALS

TRANSCRIPT



Hi Everyone and welcome to this week's Clover English podcast! This week I'll be looking at Game of Thrones, the hit HBO fantasy series, and its connection to Ireland, particularly Northern Ireland - actually exclusively Northern Ireland. The show has had a huge influence on tourism in Northern Ireland and has **boosted** our audiovisual sector, however has the success **come at a price**? We'll also be looking at vocabulary used to speak about films and TV shows, including idioms related to the entertainment industry, as well as conditionals, and not just the 0-3rd conditional, we'll be looking at some advanced usages. Okay, so they'll be available on the PDF guide which can be downloaded for free from my website; www.cloverenglish.org just look on the menu for the "podcast" tab and you'll find it there.

This comes with the transcript, vocabulary explanation, extra vocabulary and the grammar explanations (you really don't want to miss that grammar explanation by the way I think you'll find it really useful). Apart from all that I'll be giving my opinion about the series finale which...well, let's just say I have some opinions about it! And just in case, I should mention that this will contain SPOILERS so stop listening if you haven't finished watching the show. Okay, let's dive right in. So first, let's take a look at some vocabulary associated with today's show;

Series/ TV show: these are two ways to say the same thing it's like film and movie. So, Game of Thrones is a series or a TV show

Plot: the plot of any type of narrative is the story, what happens in it, it's the journey all the characters go on. It's also called a storyline

A twist: a twist in a plot is something unexpected that happens. For example in detective stories when the killer is revealed and it turns out to be someone that we never would have expected. That would be a twist.

Notes:

Boost: to advance or aid

Come at a price: have associated disadvantages

Season: the season of a show is a measurement unit into which episodes are organized, so Game of Thrones has eight seasons

Episode: I mention this one because many students get confused and think that the episodes in a show are called “chapters” - chapters are only used for books. Okay, so if we’re talking about a TV show or series we use “episodes”

Character Arc: each character in any type of story has their own character arc. This refers to that character’s development as they move through the plot of the story. For example I think Daenerys’ character arc was under-developed and rushed - but we’ll get to that later!

Scene: a unit of action or a segment in a story or play. So there’s actually an idiom associated with this word which is “Don’t make a scene”. So don’t make a scene or to make a scene is.. If you make a scene you draw attention to yourself maybe you’re shouting, you’re just drawing a lot of attention to yourself in a kind of embarrassing sort of way. Imagine you were having a fight with your friend in the middle of a bar and you’re screaming at each other and everyone is looking at you someone would say: “oh my God they are making such a scene”. Okay, so that’s a little idiom associated with that word.

So, now that we’ve seen some of the vocabulary we’ll need, let’s **cut to the chase** and talk about the show and its Irish connection. Game of Thrones first **hit** our TV screens on 17 April 2011 and would later **take on a life of its own** and become a cultural phenomenon. George RR Martin managed to create a fantasy series that felt more like historical fiction and converted many people over to the fantasy genre and the series shot all eight seasons in Titanic Studios in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

So, don’t panic, “shot” here doesn’t mean shoot in the traditional sense of the word. In this context “shoot” means “film/record” and has nothing to do with guns! So, we can say; “Game of Thrones was filmed in Belfast” or “recorded in Belfast” we can say “Game of Thrones was shot in Belfast”. Notice also the passive structure here; “Game of Thrones **WAS** shot in Belfast”. Of course there were other locations used in the filming process but the actual studios, where the majority of the filming was done, are in Belfast.

Notes:

Cut to the Chase: get to the point/address the thing we’ve decide to talk about

Hit: in this context hit means appear

Take on a life of its own: something that becomes hard to control due to its success

TRANSCRIPT



And why are these studios called Titanic studios? That might be **ringing a bell** for a few people. Well, because they are located in the old **shipyard** of Belfast which is where the famous cruise liner the Titanic was built. The studios have also been home to other major productions and big names like Tom Hanks and Bill Murray have shot films there. I should point out that I'm from Belfast myself and I can say that the show has had a big impact on the image of both Belfast and Northern Ireland. There's been a boom in what is called "Screen Tourism" which is tourism associated with the audiovisual sector.

HBO worked in connection with Visit Northern Ireland (the tourist board) to create tourist attractions "on a scale and scope bigger than anything the public has ever seen," okay that's a direct quote. I've linked an [article](#) about this in the PDF guide which also comes with a video so check that out. [NOTE: the video has disappeared from the article :C]

It's actually quite incredible, I feel like Northern Ireland has really exploited the Game of Thrones connection to the absolute extreme, like it's everywhere in Belfast. They even erected like glass artwork depicting various famous scenes from the series in different parts of the city and it seems that every business associated with tourism offers some type of Game of Thrones experience. Now, this Game of Thrones tourism certainly brings in a lot of cash, a lot of money; [tourists] who came to the country primarily because of Game of Thrones spent 58 million euros in the country in 2018, but all this mass tourism comes at a price...

I visited one of the tourist attractions associated with Game of Thrones last year; the Dark Hedges they're called (which by the way are used in the cover photo of the PDF guide so you can see what they look like). The Dark Hedges is essentially a road which has trees on either side which join beautifully together at the top and a scene of Game of Thrones was filmed there with Arya and The Hound. This scene lasted **all but** 10 seconds and that was enough to turn it into a tourism cash-cow. A cash cow is a source of money or revenue which is very lucrative; it's a cash-cow. So you know, Game of Thrones tourism in Northern Ireland is a cash-cow.

Notes:

Ring a bell: remember or recognize something

Shipyard: a place where boats and big ships are built

All but...: another way to say "only"

In all the photos this road looks calm and empty, like a real peaceful place (again look at the photo on the cover of the PDF guide!), but the reality is quite different. It was inundated with tourists, cameras and selfie-sticks and I just couldn't enjoy the location because of the sheer volume of people. Many people want to visit the beautiful locations in Northern Ireland that appeared on the TV show, but it's having a negative impact on the lives of local residents. For example, a local resident who lives close to one of the Game of Thrones attractions said in an interview with the BBC that the "tourist buses never stop" arriving to her small village and the amount of tourists and traffic are very intrusive and unsustainable for such a small village. She says that at the weekends there are hundreds of people on the roads which makes **getting around** very difficult for local residents who just want to **get on** with their lives.

So, while the show has brought a lot of tourism to the country it has had some negative consequences. I'd like to hear your opinions about this type of mass tourism; are there any similar problems in your countries? Do you prefer travelling "off-grid" or do you prefer organized tours and travelling with groups? So, get in touch either on [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#) and let me know! You can find me by searching Clover English. Now, to end this episode I'd like to discuss the final season of Game of Thrones. To be honest..hmmm... I wasn't happy with it at all. I thought it was **grand** up until the final few episodes and then last episode just killed it for me completely...

Firstly, I thought the whole thing seemed rushed and that there should have been more episodes so that the plot could have developed at a slower pace. The nightking's death was such an anti-climax for me, we'd spent eight seasons **building up** to this battle, and the battle itself was actually well done, but then Arya just appears out of nowhere, stabs him and that's it? I felt like it made his strange relationship with Bran just totally **pointless**. Like what was that? Why were they so connected? It all just came to nothing. Then Daenerys' descent into a mad dictator... I don't have a problem with this character arc per se but it was so rushed that it felt unnatural, the change was too dramatic and too extreme for the time it was given. **If they had dedicated more time to developing her character arc, her descent into dictatorship would have been** much more convincing. It's a pity because it had the potential to be a really amazing character arc but I just felt like the writers got super lazy with it...

Notes:

Get around: travel, move from one place to another

Get on with something: continue/ carry on with something

Grand: (Irishism ALERT!) in Ireland we say "grand" to mean fine/good. For more on Irish slang click on the link below.

Build Up: in this context it means create excitement about something that's going to happen

Pointless: without meaning/insignificant

If they had...: an example of the 3rd conditional see Grammar Notes

[Click here to check out my article on Irish slang!](#)

TRANSCRIPT



I also felt that Cersei deserved a better death. She was one of the most important and strong characters on the show and she just dies so quickly with Jaime when the roof collapses. Again, I felt like this was very anti-climatic. She should have **gone out in a blaze of glory**.

And then there's Bran.... Oh my God. I have never been so **underwhelmed** by a series finale as when I watched Bran be crowned King of the Seven Kingdoms. He was an absolute dud of a character (a dud just means he was uninteresting and quite useless). And what was that nonsense Tyrion said about him having the "best story"? Bran's story was literally one of the most boring in the entire show! The direwolves had a better story than Bran, he literally disappeared for almost an entire season because his story was so boring! I know there was a petition demanding that the writers redo the final season but I have to say **if they made another series I wouldn't watch it**. I still think it's a great show and **if it wasn't for the final season** it could have been perfect. Okay, I'll leave it there because if not I might be here all night **ranting and raving**...

Did you enjoy the season finale of Game of Thrones? Let me know by getting in touch with me on my social media channels! I'd really like to hear your opinions on this, I know people have.. [well] It seems like you can only have a strong opinion about this season finale. Very few people have a balanced opinion about it so it's always quite funny and interesting to hear people's thoughts on it.

Notes:

Go out in a blaze of glory: finish something in a spectacular/ legendary way

Underwhelmed: if something is underwhelming it's not that interesting and if we feel underwhelmed we're not impressed by something

If they made...: example of second conditional see Grammar Notes

If it wasn't for...: if it wasn't for... is like saying "without this thing..." but what's this?! A fourth conditional?! Nope..check the grammar notes and you'll see that conditionals are actually more flexible than you previously thought.

Rant and rave: complain, normally in an irrational, aggressive, crazed way

So remember to download the PDF guide which comes with lots of extra material including the transcript, vocab explanations, idioms related to the entertainment industry, and a grammar explanation of conditionals including advanced usages. I use quite a few examples of conditionals and some advanced usages in the transcript... in the podcast I should say! Which are explained in detail in the PDF guide. This can really help boost your learning so I encourage you to download that and also follow the podcast on Spotify, Stitcher or Google podcasts to stay updated. I'm currently waiting to be listed on apple's podcast, they have to do some verification and things like that it takes a while **so bear with me** while that happens. Then I'll be available everywhere after that. Thanks, see you next time.

Notes:

Bear with me: have patience [with me]

ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY IDIOMS



1) BE A DRAMA QUEEN = BE AN EXCESSIVELY DRAMATIC PERSON.

2) BREAK A LEG! = AN OLD THEATRE EXPRESSION WHICH MEANS GOOD LUCK.

3) THE SHOW MUST GO ON = YOU MUST CONTINUE AND EVEN IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES.

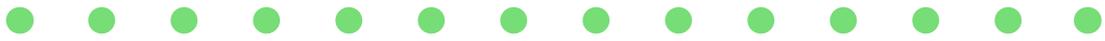
4) IT ISN'T OVER UNTIL THE FAT LADY SINGS = THIS IS AN OPERA RELATED IDIOM MEANING YOU CAN'T GIVE UP UNTIL YOU'VE TRY EVERYTHING TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL.

5) MAKE IT BIG: BECOME FAMOUS AND SUCCESSFUL



Photo by Ahmet Yalçinkaya on Unsplash

CONDITIONALS & IF CLAUSES



You're probably familiar with 0-3rd conditionals but let's go over them before moving on to the more advanced usages (and common misconceptions!)

ZERO CONDITIONAL:

if + present simple + present simple

It represents something that is true and isn't subject to change. For example:

"If you want to improve your English you have to make an effort."



FIRST CONDITIONAL: IF + PRESENT SIMPLE + WILL

The present simple clause creates a condition for the realization of the "will" clause. Basically the "will" clause is dependent on what happens with the "if" clause. Look at this example;

"If I get a promotion at work, I'll take us all on holiday" (us going on holiday depends on me getting a promotion at work, if I DON'T get a promotion we WON'T go on holiday)

It's generally used for something that is likely to happen in the future. In the sentence above the person might really believe that in the future they are going to get a promotion.



SECOND CONDITIONAL: IF + PAST SIMPLE + WOULD

We use this conditional to talk about unreal or improbable situations either now or in the future. These things probably won't happen. Take this example;

"If I knew her name I would tell you" (it's very unlikely that the speaker will remember the girl's name).

It's also a way to say that we would like to do something (tell you the girl's name) but we aren't able to (because the speaker doesn't know the girl's name)

CONDITIONALS & IF CLAUSES



THIRD CONDITIONAL: IF + PAST PERFECT + WOULD HAVE + PARTICIPLE

“If the final season of Game of Thrones hadn’t been so rushed, it would have been okay”

We use this to speak about an unreal or imaginary PAST situation, we use it to imagine an alternative reality. Let’s look at that sentence again:

“If the final season hadn’t been so rushed, it would have been okay.”

What happened in reality is that the final season WAS rushed and it WASN’T okay. Yes, I know I’m very resentful about this final season...

Note that we don’t have to always use “would”. We can use could/might/may also to indicate probability.

“If the final season hadn’t been so rushed, it could/might/may have been okay.”

Here we are saying that if the final season hadn’t been so rushed there’s a chance/possibility that it would have been okay.

IMPORTANT: it’s perfectly acceptable to say - “If the final season wasn’t so rushed it could have been okay.”



IF ONLY....

If only is used to say that we would like things to be different to how they actually are. It’s like “I wish” and it’s followed by the past simple;

“If only I had more money!” (=I wish I had more money!) Note that in both cases we use the past simple.



IF + IT WASN'T/WEREN'T FOR...

We saw this being used in the podcast: “if it wasn’t for the final season...” and it can be used to say that one thing has had a major effect on another thing.

Let’s look at another example;

“If it weren’t for his wife’s money, he wouldn’t have become a director.”

=

Without his wife’s money it would have been impossible for him to become a director.

Do you have a memory of a teacher explaining the English subjunctive to you saying;

“You have to say if I WERE you not if I WAS you...”

Until you wanted to bang your head against the table? Well, let me blow your mind; it is perfectly and grammatically acceptable to say “If I WAS you/her/him etc” as a way to give advice. Natives use this structure all the time.



USING IF- CLAUSES TO SOUND MORE POLITE

If + will + will

If we want to make a polite request to someone, especially with people like customers in our workplace, we can use this structure to sound more polite;

“If you’ll follow me I’ll show you to your room.”

We can also use the second conditional to sound more polite when making requests;

“Would it be okay if I borrowed your phone?”