



# *Clover English*

## PODCAST PDF GUIDE THE IRISH LANGUAGE PART 1

COLLOCATIONS & IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

CAUSATIVE STRUCTURES WITH GET

# TRANSCRIPT



Were you a little bit lost there? Don't worry, it's not a reflection on your English language abilities that was in fact Irish for: Hello, I'm Kerry and welcome to the Clover English Podcast.

That should give you a pretty big clue as to what I'll be covering on today's episode. Yes, you guessed it, the Irish language.

So, I decided to do this podcast on the Irish language because I've recently started learning Irish. I've wanted to learn for a long time and I finally said to **hell with it** I'm just going to start. Now, why am I learning Irish? Isn't it quite useless? Doesn't everyone in Ireland speak English?

I'll **get round to answering** those questions don't worry.

I'm going to cover this topic in two episodes. Languages and language change is a real passion of mine and I want to **do this topic justice** without **overloading** you all with information in one go. This week has also been really **hectic** because I've moved countries and I feel that if I try to cover everything at once, I'm going to **rush** the episode and I don't want to do that.

Notes:

**To hell with it:** why not?! Let's just do it!

Get round to + gerund: eventually do something

Do something justice: treat/describe something with the care it deserves

Overload: to load to excess/overburden

Rush something: do something quickly

This week I'll start by looking at the Irish language in general for example what type of language is it? What are some of its key features? Then I'll look at archaic Irish, which is the oldest form of Irish and we'll see how it developed alongside English up until the 19th Century. In next week's episode I'll look at how the language has been revived in various cultural movements and its role in Irish society today.

So, remember to download the PDF guide for this episode direct from my website [www.cloverenglish.org](http://www.cloverenglish.org) (I've linked it in the episode description). I've changed how these guides look by the way I've made them much lighter so they now download in seconds. I realize that before the files were way too big so now you should notice that they are way easier to download. Okay, let's get started!

So, Irish belongs to the Celtic group of languages which also includes Welsh, Scottish and Breton which is spoken in Brittany in northern France. Within that group Irish is classed as a Gaelic language along with Scottish Gaelic or Gallic as it's known. Many people refer to Irish as Gaelic, but as this refers to a group of languages, it isn't a very accurate description. We just call it Irish.

There are three main dialects of Irish: the Ulster dialect (which is what I'm trying to focus on, since I'm from the Ulster region), the Connacht dialect from the West of the country, and the Munster dialect which is the south-west. The differences in dialects don't cause too much confusion between speakers but some phrases can change completely depending on where the Irish is spoken. For example, in Ulster we use the phrase: *cad é mara atá tú?* To say "how are you?" But someone from Munster would say *Conas 'tá tú?*. And there are other differences with pronunciation and so on.

As you can see Irish is very different from English and the two languages are in no way mutually intelligible. Irish is also very grammatically and phonologically different from English. For example, most written consonants have two different pronunciations which are known as broad and slender, whether or not a consonant is broad or slender depends on the vowels next to the consonants.

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So, Irish pronunciation has been quite difficult for me to **pick up**, not so much in making the sounds but knowing how to relate the written language with its correct pronunciation (I know many of you struggle with this in English also!)

It's why it's so important to properly study the pronunciation of a language first, not just to train your ears to the new sounds but also to make future studying much easier because you won't have to look up words constantly to see how they're pronounced. If you do ever have a doubt over a word's pronunciation check out either forvo (I think it's [forvo.com](https://forvo.com)) which has various recordings of words by native speakers or word reference which allows you to hear the word in a variety of different accents which is nice.

Irish is also grammatically very different to English. One striking difference is that Irish word order is usually verb + subject + object instead of S+V+O like in English. It also uses cases like in German and Latin. I'm actually quite nervous about studying this language as I've only ever learnt Latin based Romance languages before and, grammatically speaking, they aren't so difficult, but I do like a challenge! And as Irish is considered an endangered language I do feel that it's well worth the effort to learn it and help keep it alive. So let's look at how Irish developed throughout the years.

We can say that there are four periods of the Irish language: archaic Irish, Old Irish, Middle Irish and Modern Irish. What really fascinates me about primitive or archaic Irish is the writing system. An alphabet called Ogham was used to write inscriptions in Irish, it was an alphabet that used lines to differentiate letters. It's thought that the Latin alphabet just didn't represent the sounds of archaic Irish adequately enough which led to the development of Ogham as a means to record the language. Unlike in the Latin alphabet, Ogham letters each had a special name. And these names **hint at** the intimate relationship that the ancient Irish people had with nature as many of the Ogham letters were given the names of trees.

Notes:

Pick up: learn. For example: "John picked up some Spanish on his holiday to Mexico" it usually implies a more passive form of learning than studying with a lot of effort.

Hint at: suggest

The earliest of these Ogham inscriptions dates back to the 4th Century. And it was used for very short texts, such as inscriptions of the names of people or various tribes. The surviving ogham stones show that genealogy was very important to the Irish, as the names of people and tribes were the things they thought important enough to record.

I have a little request for you all! In the episode description and PDF guide I've included a [link to a website](#) which will transcribe any word into the Ogham alphabet. I'm encouraging you all to enter your names and take a screenshot of it in Ogham. And as I'd love to see them, please upload your Ogham name to Instagram or Twitter and tag me in the post! If your name has a K, V, Y, or P it won't work, and X also, as these letters didn't exist in Irish then (and they still don't except for P). You can more or less substitute a K for a C, a Y for an I and V for BH. Also if your language has a different script, a different alphabet, to the Latin one please join in the conversation on my blog post for this episode or on Instagram. I'd love to hear more interesting facts about other alphabet systems. So please get in touch. I've linked the blog post in the description.

So that's archaic Irish, the earliest form of the language that we know of. Later came Old Irish and Middle Irish and it was around the Middle Irish period (which dates from 10th-13th Century) that we start to see some differences in dialect.

Irish was introduced to other languages due to foreign invasions. The most important of these was the Norman invasion of 1169 when Anglo-Normans conquered the island. (In the PDF guide I've included a little description about the Anglo-Normans which you can check out).

This introduced English and Norman French into the island of Ireland, however the use of Norman French declined very rapidly as the former invaders became increasingly Gaelicised, which is to say, more like the local Gaelic population. We can tell that English rulers in the 12th Century were worried about the dominance of the Irish language as they tried to restrict it in many ways, for example they tried to **impose fines** on people found speaking Irish. However, Irish continued to be the dominant language in Ireland. Even by the 16th Century the majority of people were monoglot Irish speakers.

Notes:

Impose a fine: in more formal English the collocation with "fine" is usually "impose"

# TRANSCRIPT



I find this interesting because I think we all have the idea that the process of Anglicization (which is the process of becoming more English or Anglicized) happened very quickly and Irish was like in immediate danger from the very beginning, but it **turns out** that actually wasn't the case. However, the 17th Century was to mark a very important change in the relationship between Irish and English in Ireland.

This was because during this period there was a **huge drive** to take control of Ireland and a brutal period of colonization took place. The north in particular was heavily colonized in what was known as the Ulster Plantation. A huge number of Scottish and English settlers moved into the north of the country, bringing their language with them. In the 1650s an important and devastating period of colonization known as the Cromwellian settlements took place which effectively **wiped out** the native Irish leaders.

English landowners now moved to Ireland, occupying the land that was formerly owned by native Irish leaders. The **tenants** and servants of these lands, who were the local Irish population, now needed English to communicate with their new landlords. However, even this didn't **kill off** Irish quickly. Irish continued to be spoken throughout the 17th and 18th Century and according to one scholar<sup>1</sup> many descendants of these new English landlords were monoglot Irish speakers. So I think the resilience of the native population and the Irish language was quite tremendous.

Notes:

It turns out: a phrasal verb that offers an explanation of something. "It turns out Hannah isn't American, she's actually Canadian!"

A drive to do something: a big effort to do something. For example; "there was a huge drive to enact social change"

Wipe out: decimate/destroy/make extinct. For example: "A meteorite wiped out the dinosaurs"

Tenants: people who rent land or houses from a landlord

Kill off: similar to wipe out

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1 Hindley, R. (1990). "The Death of the Irish Language," London: Routledge

The country did, however, enter a period of bilingualism which spread throughout the 18th Century. English and Irish were used side-by-side, but Irish was still the preferred language of the local population and English was considered a secondary language. We see a change in this relationship in the 19th Century.

I **touch upon** the Great Famine in the last episode entitled: [Why did Americans Hate the Irish?](#) And it **comes up** again in relation to the Irish language. As I said last week, the Great Famine had a devastating effect upon the country and the Irish language. This was because the famine disproportionately affected the poorer, Irish speaking population, both in terms of the death toll and in terms of those who emigrated from the island. Around one million people died and one million emigrated in the aftermath of the famine and many of them were native Irish speakers.

The national school system established in 1830 also had a negative impact on the Irish language as it was excluded from the school curriculum by means of various penalties. So they really tried to completely ban Irish in schools. Apart from this, English became the new language of politics, and ironically, of catholic emancipation as top political figures such as Daniel O'Connell chose to use English instead of Irish to **enact social change**. English was also the language used in parliament, in commerce and law so it began to gain prestige. English became associated with opportunity, success and modernity whilst Irish was increasingly associated with poverty and illiteracy. In order for people to have a chance of **moving up the social ladder** they needed English and from now on, Irish would continue to decline in favour of English.

Notes:

Touch upon [something]: talk about briefly

Come up: appear

Enact social change: create/provoke social change

Move up the Social Ladder: becomes economically and socially more prosperous

# TRANSCRIPT



Well, that's all for this week. We've seen what type of language Irish is, some of its key features, the amazing Ogham alphabet (don't forget to find out how your name is written in Ogham!) and how the Irish language declined. In part two next week I'll look at movements which helped revive the Irish language following its decline and the role of Irish in modern-day Ireland.

As always, please rate the podcast on [apple podcast](#) if you're listening over there, please share it with someone you think will enjoy it and don't forget to follow me on [instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) (I've left the link in the show description). Remember to download the PDF guide from my website [www.cloverenglish.org](http://www.cloverenglish.org) just go to the podcast tab on the menu. There you can find the transcript, vocabulary explanations, extra articles and this week's grammar explanation which is causative structures with get (these are SUPER common and will definitely make you sound like an English speaking pro so make sure to check that out).

And that's it. Thanks for listening and I'll see you next week.

# WHO WERE THE ANGLO-NORMANS?



Before discussing who the Anglo-Normans were, it's important to state who the Normans were. The Normans were originally Vikings from Scandinavia who invaded northern France (Normandy). The local people called these Viking invaders "Normans" because they came from the north. After arriving they adapted to life in medieval Europe, intermarrying with the local 'Frank' population, speaking in French and they eventually abandoned their pagan beliefs in favour of Christianity.

However, they still maintained their appetite for conquest. Under the ruling of William, the Duke of Normandy, they invaded England in the famous Battle of Hastings in 1066. Following the battle William was crowned King of England in Westminster Abbey. He started to reorganize English society and he built impressive castles and fortresses all over the country.

These Normans soon became the Anglo-Normans, mixing their Norman ways with those of the local Anglo-Saxon people. They became the ruling class in England and brought with them their customs and Norman French (which was to have an important impact on the development of the English language in the future). After having conquered England, it wasn't long before they set their sights on the neighbouring island of Ireland.

As was mentioned in the podcast, these Anglo-Norman invaders **may** have introduced their language and customs into Ireland, but it wasn't long before they themselves became 'more Irish than the Irish'. They adopted the Irish language and Gaelic ways of life and their Norman French went into rapid decline as a mode of communication in favour of the local Irish language.

## NOTES:

May: in this context, 'may' isn't being used to indicate probability. Here it's being used as a way to show concession or a contrast. Another way to phrase this sentence would be:

"Even though these Anglo-Norman invaders introduced their language and customs into Ireland, it wasn't long before they themselves became 'more Irish than the Irish'.

# GRAMMAR: CAUSITIVE STRUCTURES WITH GET



Get is an extremely useful verb in English. We can use it in many different ways and contexts. Today, I'd like to focus on how we use it in what we call causative structures.

## GET + OBJECT + GERUND

This is a very colloquial structure and will make you sound like an English speaking pro! It means "make someone/something start". Let's look at an example sentence:

"Don't get me started on how much I hate people being late!"

If you say "don't get me/him/her/them/us started on..." it's understood that the speaker means "start talking about something".

In our example sentence above, the person speaking obviously hates people being late and is suggesting to the listener that if they start talking about this topic they might not stop any time soon! Let's look at another example sentence:

"The radiator wasn't working, but my friend got it going again"

Here the speaker means that their friend was able to make the radiator start working. "To get something going" usually has this connotation. We can also use it in a more metaphorical sense like in this sentence:

"In order to get the discussion going, I'd like you to give your opinion about the article that you had to read for homework"

## GET + OBJECT + INFINITIVE

This structure means “make somebody/something do something”. For example:

“Get Anna to phone Michelle later”

The speaker wants the listener to remind Anna to phone Michelle. It can also have the connotation of ‘persuade someone to do something’

“Can’t you get Paul to look after the dog?”

## GET + OBJECT + PAST PARTICIPLE

When we use this we mean to say; “cause something to be done by somebody else”. This is a passive structure and can be used interchangeably with “have”. Look at the example sentence:

“I got my hair cut yesterday”

You use this structure because someone else (the hairdresser) cut your hair for you. If you say “I cut my hair yesterday” an English speaker might think you cut your own hair.

This structure can also be used to mean that the speaker has to do something rather than have someone else do it for them. For example;

“I have to get this paperwork done by five o’clock”

This is the same as saying: “I have to finish this paperwork by five o’clock”

