



# Clover English

PODCAST PDF GUIDE

TAKE ME TO CHURCH: THE  
STORY BEHIND THE SONG

TRANSCRIPT

EXTRA ARTICLE; WHO ARE THE

QUAKERS?

ADVERBIALS

# TRANSCRIPT



Hi everyone and welcome to this week's episode of the Clover English podcast! I'm your host, Kerry and today I'll be talking about one of Ireland's new music sensations, Hozier. In particular, I'll be giving you the story behind his **hit**, multi-platinum single "Take me to Church" which took the world by storm when it was released back in 2013. I'll **start off** by giving you a quick overview of who Hozier is and his rise to fame, next I'll look at the meaning behind the song and its lyrics, then I'll go into detail about what the music video for this song represents and the context behind it.

As always don't forget to download the PDF guide that comes with the episode. This includes the transcript, vocabulary explanation, an extra article and a grammar explanation. This week's grammar explanation will be looking at adverbials and how to use them correctly in a sentence. Many students struggle to know where to place adverbials in a sentence so I'll be covering that, don't worry. The link will be in the show notes. I also want to take this opportunity to remind you all that you can sign up to my newsletter to get access to exclusive material, updates on all my latest posts and some discounts when my products go live! I'll leave the link in the show notes also.

So, let's get started.

Andrew John Hozier-Byrne, who is known simply as Hozier, was born in 1990 in Bray, County Wicklow in Ireland. His **debut** single "Take me to Church" was an international hit and **shot** him to fame. However, the song wasn't an overnight success like many of us believe. He says he didn't believe that the song would work on Irish radio and the success of the song took him completely by surprise. Not only that, Hozier was actually a struggling musician at the time and he actually recorded the original track in the attic of his parents' house in Bray. **It just goes to show** that success can come when we least expect it.

Notes:

**Hit:** a hit is a very popular song

**Start off:** a phrasal verb which is the exact same as saying "start"

**Debut:** French loanword which means "the first" of something

**Shoot:** nothing to do with guns in this context! In this context it means propelled

**It just goes to show:** If you say "it just goes to show" you mean that what you have just said or experienced demonstrates that it is the case.

I'm going to share a quick clip with you from an interview that Hozier did (I'll leave the full interview in the show notes by the way) about how the song's rise to fame really happened and then I'll discuss some of the language he uses when describing the track's success.

**Interviewer:** This is not the type of stuff that's supposed to be on Top 40 radio.

**Hozier:** Yeah I thought so too I have to say ... like this time two years ago we'd laugh at the studio if we thought this would work on the radio, I didn't think it would work on Irish radio because it was never designed to be...you know... I'm amazed. Very encouraged.

**Interviewer:** Do you have any idea how this became a hit?

**Hozier:** Emm, it was a slow-grower it wasn't an overnight hit. So it was a.. That was a... I suppose it was...it's still hanging in there. I think a lot of it had to do with the video being shared online and...the immediacy of... I suppose... the internet and how fast information can get around the world. I was finding early on that people were listening to the music in different places in the world much quicker than they would have....Streaming services like Spotify had a big thing to do with it, where people just democratically listen to whatever they want to listen to and share whatever they wanna share. And emm.. That had a part to play in it I think.

When he describes how the song became popular he says that it wasn't an overnight success and he's amazed that the song is still "hanging in there". This is a great expression. To "hang in there" means to persevere and remain determined even in difficult circumstances. For example, if your friend is having a bad time because they're ill you could tell them to "hang in there". In Spanish it would be the equivalent of saying "ánimo". He then says the song's popularity had a lot to do with people sharing it online. This is another great expression that I don't want you to miss: have to do with. This is a way of saying "be responsible for". So, Hozier says that the song's popularity had a lot to do with people sharing it online. This is the same as saying "the song's popularity was made possible by people sharing it online".

It's true that these days information is shared so quickly now that we have the internet and new services which we can use to diffuse that information. Take this podcast for example, you can listen to it in most parts of the world if you have a stable internet connection and your country doesn't limit your internet access. You can share it instantly with your friends and family through social media, then their friends can listen and share. When this happens a lot and some piece of content, such as a video or a song, gets super popular we say that it's gone viral. Let's see if we can make the Clover English Podcast go viral, guys! Let's get sharing!

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Really though, the internet amazes me because of this and it helps artists like Hozier reach a wider audience and can be a real **game-changer** for their work.

Take me to Church became so popular that it went multi-platinum in multiple countries and what I love about that is that it isn't your typical pop song that usually goes to number one: it's a blues-infused, soulful, rock song and not some basic pop song. So, now that we've heard a little about the song's success let's look at the meaning behind the song.

Hozier said that the song isn't about anyone in particular but rather it's a song about sexuality and how this forms an essential part of human experience and nature.

**Moreover**, he said in an interview with Rolling Stone magazine that the song references the Catholic Church, which until relatively recently, was a hugely important institution in Ireland. He says; "Growing up, I always say the hypocrisy of the Catholic Church...The history speaks for itself and I grew up incredibly frustrated and angry. I essentially put that into my words."

Now, Hozier himself wasn't actually raised a catholic and was instead raised in the Protestant Quaker faith. However, it's hard to grow up in Ireland and not be affected by the influence of the Catholic church even if you do belong to another faith. If you aren't too sure what the Quaker faith is, I've included an article about it in the PDF guide. Again, I'd like to play an audio clip of Hozier speaking about the connection between his song, the catholic church and questions of sexuality.

**Hozier:** And I suppose that the song is very much about sexuality, the song is about sex, but the song more deals with a religious organization that would undermine a very natural kind of part of the human experience. [It] would undermine sexuality and I suppose how valid it is as part of the human experience and pontificate over it...preach about...and teach about... you know... who to love and how to love. So you know, the song more references the catholic church but I suppose at the core there's an ideology that would undermine a very natural and wonderful part of being a person.

Notes:

**Moreover:** [adverb] which means "in addition to what has been said"

In that clip he's referring to the Catholic church and how they have tried to, what he says, "**undermine**" sexuality which is a normal part of human experience. The music video also deals with sexuality. In the video we see two men who are in a secret relationship, but they can't tell anyone about it because of **stigma** in their society.

However, a gang member from a far right group **finds out** about their relationship and brutally attacks them because of it. Hozier said that the video was inspired by the introduction of what's been called the gay popaganda law in Russia in 2013. The law is "aimed at protecting children from information promoting the denial of traditional family values;" and **bans** the "promotion of nontraditional sexual relations to minors;" a reference universally understood to mean a ban on providing children with access to information about LGBT people's lives. The ban includes, but is not limited to, information provided via the press, television, radio, and the Internet. The law was passed in 2013 and led to an intensification of stigma and violence against the Russian LGBT community.

It has been condemned by the European Court of Human Rights, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, among others.

So, here's what Hozier has to say about the law and how it influenced the music video of "Take me to Church":

**Hozier:** The music video references emm.. Something that was going on in Russia, which I believe is ongoing. So, subsequent to these anti-gay propaganda laws that were passed in parliament [which] prohibited the LGBT community from advocating for their own rights in public places under the kind of guise of protecting children from non-traditional sexuality/sexual orientations such as pedophilia and bestiality... Homosexuality was ...in a smear campaign put in with these and it led to a series of attacks by far-right gangs essentially neo-nazi gangs..who...that's what the video references.

Notes:

**Undermine:** to attack someone or something in an indirect way

**Stigma:** in this context it has a similar meaning to discrimination. If there is a stigma against a certain group in society then people treat that group unfairly or have some type of prejudice against them.

**Find out:** discover (a VERY common phrasal verb)

**Ban:** another way to say prohibit

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Let's take a quick look at some of that language. Hozier says that LGBT relationships were part of a governmental smear campaign. A smear campaign is a campaign designed to destroy the reputation of an individual or a group. This happens a lot during elections as rival political parties attempt to destroy the reputation of their opponents. He also says that the LGBT community was prohibited from advocating for their own rights under the guise of protecting children. This expression "under the guise of" means that something pretends to be something else. So, by saying this he is showing that he doesn't agree that politicians really care about protecting children and what they actually care about is undermining and discriminating against the LGBT community. But they use this "guise" this false pretext of protecting children as a way to justify their actions.

So, that's the story behind Hozier's "Take me to Church". I think his music is absolutely **top-notch** and he's actually one of my favourite artists at the minute. I highly recommend you check out his latest album also which is called Wasteland Baby! And was released in 2018. I hope you enjoyed this episode and if you did please consider sharing it on your social media and giving it a good rating on your podcast streaming service. I'd like to thank everyone who has supported the show and my work so far it really means the world to me and I have big plans for the future so stay tuned!

Also, remember to download the PDF guide available from my website [www.cloverenglish.org](http://www.cloverenglish.org) I've linked it in the description also. Follow me also on [instagram @cloverenglishpodcast](https://www.instagram.com/cloverenglishpodcast) if you aren't already, I post a lot on there related to the English language and also on my [Twitter @clover\\_english](https://twitter.com/clover_english).

Finally, our idiom of the week (have you noticed I'm obsessed with idioms by the way?!) is to be a dark horse. A dark horse is someone with a secret talent or skill that suddenly reveals this skill. Okay, so they have like a secret power or a secret skill that nobody knew about. For example, if your friend and you go to a karaoke bar and your friend starts singing and they have an amazing voice and you didn't know you could say "Woa, you're a bit of a dark horse. I had no idea you could sing like that!"

So that's the expression to be a dark horse.

Okay, that's all! Have a good one guys!

Notes:

**Top-notch:** an expression which means "great/amazing!"

# WHO ARE THE QUAKERS?



In this episode I mentioned that Hozier was raised in the Quaker faith, but who exactly are the Quakers?

Quakerism dates back to the 1650s in England. As a core belief, Quakers believe that the light of God is within every single person and as a result they value all people equally.

Unlike many other branches of formalized religion, Quakers believe that formal religious ceremonies and using religious officials, such as priests, gets in the way of <sup>1</sup> the believer and God. As a result, the ordinary worshippers are the ones who can lead and participate actively in Quaker services. These services involve a lot of silent meditation and participants may contribute when they feel moved spiritually.

Quakers are particularly concerned with making the world a better place by giving a strong emphasis to;

- Social justice
- Human rights
- Freedom of conscience
- Peace
- Environmental issues (one of the ways they do this is by living as simple a life as possible without many material goods)
- Community life

Interestingly, the Quakers don't use an official holy text like the bible or torah in their services or in their daily religious practice. They recognize and appreciate the holy bible as a source of inspiration and guidance, but they don't see it as the only book that contains the word of God. As a result, they tend to read a wealth of books as a means to guide them spiritually.

While many classify Quakerism as a type of Christianity not all Quakers would give themselves this label. This is because Quakers are willing to learn from all different religions and they see themselves as part of a universal religion, rather than as a branch of one specific religion.

# GRAMMAR: ADVERBIALS



Adverbials can be tricky (difficult) because different types of adverbials go in different positions in a sentence but there aren't always reliable rules which control this. In this grammar explanation I'm going to give you an overview of the most common patterns.

## INTRODUCTION

### ***Types of adverbials***

Before we go into more detail about the position of adverbials I want to look at what different type of adverbials there are. There are many more than this list, but I believe these are the most important ones and will help us determine their correct position in a sentence.

**Connecting Adverbials:** these join a clause to what came before (then, next, however etc...)

**Comment Adverbials:** show a speaker's opinion (surprisingly, in my opinion etc...)

**Frequency Adverbials:** these show how often something happens (*usually, never, always...*)

**Certainty Adverbials:** these show how sure a speaker is of something (probably, certainly, definitely)

**Adverbials of Manner:** these describe how/where/when something is done (slowly, upstairs, carefully...)

**Emphasising Adverbials:** these emphasise what a speaker is saying (really, terribly, incredibly...)







There isn't always a golden rule for the position of an adverbial but let's look at the usual positions of the different types of adverbials that we outlined in the introduction.

**Connecting Adverbials** usually go in the front position of a sentence as they are connecting the sentence to something that was said before.

"**However**, the war continued."

**Comment Adverbials** also usually go in this front position.

"**Thankfully**, nobody was seriously hurt in the accident."

**Frequency & certainty** adverbials normally go in the mid-position with the verb.

"I **definitely** want to go to Prague next year."  
"I **sometimes** think about moving to Canada."

However, adverbials of frequency can be more flexible, for example it's normal to also see these at the beginning and end of sentences.

"**Sometimes** I think about moving to Canada."  
"I think about moving to Canada **sometimes**."

Adverbials of manner most often go in the end-position of a sentence.

"She phoned me **this morning**."  
"I'm going **downstairs**."  
"I explained it to him **slowly**."

However, you can also see adverbials of manner relating to *time* at the front position in a sentence.

"**Next week** I'm going to Colombia."

