

Grammar and Style

USE REALISTIC DIALOGUE

Synge created realistic characters who speak in dialect. Their vocabulary and grammar reflect the way that people actually spoke in the remote Aran Islands of Ireland. Synge's use of a specific dialect makes his dialogue richly believable.

Nora. We're to find out if it's Michael's they are, some time herself will be down looking by the sea.

Cathleen. How would they be Michael's, Nora? How would he go the length of that way to the far north? (lines 19–22)

One feature of Irish dialect is inverted word order. Notice how Nora says “We’re to find out if it’s Michael’s they are” instead of “We’re to find out if they are Michael’s.”

Directions: Review the way in which Synge constructs dialogue in *Riders to the Sea*, noting distinctive vocabulary, contractions, grammatical constructions, and word order that characterize the Aran dialect. Then write six lines of dialogue that might have take place between Nora and Cathleen after the end of the play. A example has been done for you.

Example:

Nora. Six weeks it's been since we lost our Bartley. Herself has said barely a word.

Cathleen. Sure she's waiting to die, and leaving us alone she'll be soon.

Nora. Have a look in and see if she would be wanting a bit of bread.
