

RIDERS TO THE SEA

COPY MASTER

Reading Skill**UNDERSTAND CULTURAL CONTEXT**

The **cultural context** of a literary work includes the social or national traditions that influenced its creation. “Riders to the Sea” reflects Synge’s deep understanding of the lives and values of the people who lives in the remote Aran islands at the turn of the century. To appreciate the cultural context of this play, study the background information on page 1214, as well as the footnotes throughout the play. Apply your understanding of this time and place as you read.

Directions: Complete this chart. Explain how the cultural context of the play helps you clarify or interpret each statement or reference. An example has been done for you.

Statement or Reference	Explanation
“[Bartley] won’t go this day with the wind rising from the south and west.” (lines 63–65)	The conditions of the sea were very important to the people of the Aran Islands. They couldn’t travel to the mainland in bad weather.
“There’s a great roaring in the west, and it’s worse it’ll be getting when the tide’s turned to the wind.” (lines 39–41)	
“Isn’t it turf enough you have for this day and evening?” (line 56–57)	
“Why wouldn’t you give him your blessing and he looking round in the door?” (line 150–151)	
“I’ve had a husband, and a husband’s father, and six sons in this house . . .” (lines 333–334)	
“Michael has a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of the Almighty God.” (lines 468–469)	