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ENGL 5236: Irish Literature after 1850

6 February 2025

Oxford English Dictionary Assignment

“He went down to see would there be another boat sailing in the week, and I’m thinking it won’t be long till he’s here now, for the tide’s turning at the green head, and the hooker’s tacking from the east.” *Riders to the Sea*, Synge.

hooker

1. One who or that which hooks.

1.1. A thief who snatched away articles with a hook; a pilferer, thief; (in modern use) slang a watch-stealer.

1.2. One who fastens his or her clothes with hooks.

1.3. hooker-on *Coal Mining*, a ‘hanger on’ or hitcher. Also simply *hooker*; and in many other technical usages.

1.4. *slang* (originally and chiefly U.S.). A prostitute; *esp.* one who solicits clients on the street.

1.5. A cow or ox that ‘hooks’.

1.6.a. *Rugby*. A player in the centre of the front row of the scrummage on either side who endeavours to obtain the ball by hooking it.

1.6.b. *Cricket*. A batter who uses the hook stroke.

1.7. *Golf*. A ball which has been hooked.

2.1. A two-masted Dutch coasting or fishing vessel.

2.2. A one-masted fishing smack on the Irish coast and south-west of England, similar to a hoy in build. Also *attributive*.

2.3. Applied depreciatively or fondly to a ship.

3. Hooker's green. A bright green colour used in water-colour painting.

4. *dialect and North American colloquial*. A glass of whisky, a dram; usually with qualifying word (e.g. *stiff*), a drink (of brandy, etc.).

5. *Obsolete*. (See *quots.*) Quotations:

1594: Great stone pottes..such as the Golde finers call their Hookers.

?1600: An earthen pot hauing a narrow mouth, and being wel leaded within, (the Refiners of gold and siluer, call these pots hookers).

6. variant of hookah. A pipe for smoking, of Eastern origin, having a long flexible tube, the smoke being drawn through water contained in a vase, to which the tube and the bowl are attached; the narghile of India.

Within the context of the Aran Islands, and given the fact that the hooker is tacking, the definition at 2.2 looks to be correct. Since I didn't know what a fishing smack was, I also looked that up. The OED says a *smack* is “a single-masted sailing-vessel, fore-and-aft rigged like a sloop or cutter, and usually of light burden, chiefly employed as a coaster or for fishing, and formerly as a tender to a ship of war.” The context here makes it pretty clear that *coaster* in this case isn't something you put under a drink, but “a vessel employed in sailing along the coast, or in trading from port to port of the same country. (The usual modern sense).”

I also learned that the action the hooker is doing, *tacking*, takes its name from the gear involved in switching the sails from side to side. The action means “To shift the tacks and brace

the yards, and turn the ship's head to the wind, so that it shall sail at the same angle to the wind on the other side; to go about in this way; also tack about. Hence, to make a run or course obliquely against the wind; to proceed by a series of such courses; to beat to windward: often said of the ship itself.” And the gear, the *tack*, is “A rope, wire, or chain and hook, used to secure to the ship's side the windward clews or corners of the courses (lower square sails) of a sailing ship when sailing close hauled on a wind; also the rope, wire, or lashing used to secure amidships the windward lower end of a fore-and-aft sail.”

NOTES:

1. All of the above may look way too complicated, especially when you have to do a minimum of 10 of these. But look at that again: I've written exactly 99 words; the rest are taken from the *OED*.

2. I've used MLA 9 formatting here, and so should you. Here are the basics:

• 1" margins all around	• The internal header has four lines: your name / my name / class info / date
• Your name and page number in the header, .5" from the top of the page.	• No extra lines between the header and the title of the paper
• 12-point font, with a focus on legibility (TNR, Garamond, Arial, Verdana, Helvetica, etc.)	• The title is centered
• Double-spaced throughout	• No extra lines between the title and your text
• No spaces before or after ¶s (this means you need to check the Word defaults and change them)	• The first line of each text ¶ has a .5" indent
• Italicize words when they're discussed as words (See <i>tacking</i> and <i>tack</i> above)	

Block Quotations

• Extended quotations of four lines or more are blocked: The entire quotation is indented .5" from the left margin, and double-spaced. The first line is not indented further.	• You count the four lines from the point in the line where the quotation begins. So the first quotation about <i>tacking</i> above comes very close to being blocked; another half a line and it would need to be set apart.
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OTHER MLA 9 REQUIREMENTS

Your quotations in this assignment are all coming either from a class text or the OED, so you don't need in-text citations or a Works Cited page. But when you do . . .

- In-text citations point your reader to the full citation found on your Works Cited page. Generally that's done through the use of a signal phrase (e.g., "Miller notes that . . ." or "Samson argues . . ."). When you use a signal phrase, you usually need only put the page number(s) of the source in the parentheses. But if you don't use a signal phrase to introduce the material, or if you're using more than one source by the same author, more detail is necessary in your citation.
- Periods follow in-text parenthetical citations:
Carson goes old school, noting that "this is how we do it" (15).
One critic channels Montell Jordan, noting that "this is how we do it" (Carson 15).

I have a more extensive Cheat Sheet on MLA 9 formatting that you can download at <https://jpellegrino.com/cheatsheets/TheEnglishMajorsMLA9FormattingCheatSheet-6x9.pdf>. It's part of a series of *English Major's Cheat Sheet* booklets, concise references for the fundamentals of literary study. Just shorten the URL above to get to them all.

3. Follow the example above when you're copying and pasting the definitions from the *OED*.

Make sure you catch all the italicized words; they act as markers, specifying the usage (e.g., *slang*) or the context (e.g., *Cricket*) for a definition.

Each *OED* entry should have a hanging indent of .5" (like a Works Cited entry).

4. You can either keep the Britishisms in the formatting and spelling, or you can change them to American English usage.

The choice is yours, but you must be consistent. When the *OED* was quoting something (as in 1.3 or 1.5) I kept them British/single. But when I was quoting the *OED* in the last two paragraphs, I used the more familiar American/double marks.

The spelling differences are obvious; the British spellings still show their roots in Anglo-Norman French, while Daniel Webster weeded them out when he standardized their spelling in American English.

US / UK differences in formatting		
The usage of single and double quotation marks is reversed.	US	“In ‘Easter 1916’ Yeats refers to Heraclitus.”
	UK	‘In “Easter 1916” Yeats refers to Heraclitus’.
The placement of ending punctuation relative to a quotation mark is reversed.	US	Periods and commas go inside quotation marks (see above example)
	UK	Periods and commas go outside quotation marks (see above example)
Titles	US	Take periods: Dr. Ms. Mr. Ph.D.
	UK	Don’t take periods: Dr Ms Mr PhD
Time	US	Takes colons: 10:30 am
	UK	Takes periods: 10.30 am
Dates	US	month/date/year: 12/28/2025
	UK	date/month/year: 28/12/2025

Warning: There’s an eccentricity in MLA formatting regarding that final difference: the MLA uses British dates (in order to avoid an extraneous comma): 6 February 2025 / February 6, 2025.