

Inversion with Negative Adverbs and Adverbial Phrases

Practice Worksheet | Level: B2-C1 | British English

Name	Date	Class	Score

Quick Grammar Reminder

When a negative or restrictive adverbial phrase comes at the beginning of a sentence, the auxiliary verb usually comes before the subject.

Normal word order	Inversion
I have never seen such a mess.	Never have I seen such a mess.
She rarely loses her temper.	Rarely does she lose her temper.
I only understood later.	Only later did I understand.

Exercise 1: Choose the Correct Option

Circle or underline the correct answer.

- Never ___ such a powerful speech. a) I have heard b) have I heard c) heard I have
- Rarely ___ so much confidence in a nervous candidate. a) we see b) do we see c) see we do
- No sooner had the interview started ___ the fire alarm went off. a) when b) than c) before
- Under no circumstances ___ your password with anyone. a) should you share b) you should share c) share you should
- Not until I read the report ___ the seriousness of the problem. a) I understood b) did I understand c) understood I
- Only by practising regularly ___ more fluent. a) you will become b) become you will c) will you become
- Little ___ how much the decision would affect everyone. a) they realised b) did they realise c) realised they did
- Hardly had we sat down ___ the waiter brought the menu. a) when b) than c) while

Exercise 2: Rewrite the Sentences Using Inversion

Begin each sentence with the word or phrase in brackets. Keep the meaning the same.

- I have never seen such a beautiful view. (Never)

- He rarely speaks so openly about his feelings. (Rarely)

- She had hardly arrived when the meeting began. (Hardly)

- They had no sooner left than it started to rain. (No sooner)

- You should not sign this document under any circumstances. (Under no circumstances)

- I did not realise my mistake until I got home. (Not until)

Exercise 3: Correct the Mistakes

Each sentence contains one mistake. Rewrite the sentence correctly.

1. Never I have been so embarrassed.

2. Seldom she complains about her workload.

3. No sooner had I sent the message when I noticed a spelling mistake.

4. On no account you must open this door.

5. Not until did we check the invoice we saw the error.

6. Only when he apologised she agreed to speak to him again.

Exercise 4: Complete the Sentences

Complete each sentence with your own ideas. Use correct inversion.

1. Never have I _____.

2. Rarely do people _____.

3. Little did I know that _____.

4. Only when I _____ did I realise the truth.

5. Under no circumstances should students _____.

6. Not only did she _____.

Exercise 5: Cambridge-Style Key Word Transformations

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Use between two and six words, including the word given. Do not change the word given.

1. I had never heard such an unusual explanation before.

NEVER

_____ such an unusual explanation before.

2. The manager did not apologise at any time during the meeting.

NO

At _____ apologise during the meeting.

3. We only understood the problem after we read the instructions.

ONLY

_____ the instructions did we understand the problem.

4. You must not leave your bags unattended under any circumstances.

CIRCUMSTANCES

Under _____ your bags unattended.

5. As soon as the film started, everyone stopped talking.

SOONER

No _____ everyone stopped talking.

6. She rarely makes such careless mistakes.

RARELY

_____ such careless mistakes.

Exercise 6: Mini Writing Task

Write a short dramatic paragraph of 80-100 words about a surprising day. Use at least four examples of inversion from the lesson.

Answer Key

Exercise 1

1. b 2. b 3. b 4. a 5. b 6. c 7. b 8. a

Exercise 2

1. Never have I seen such a beautiful view.
2. Rarely does he speak so openly about his feelings.
3. Hardly had she arrived when the meeting began.
4. No sooner had they left than it started to rain.
5. Under no circumstances should you sign this document.
6. Not until I got home did I realise my mistake.

Exercise 3

1. Never have I been so embarrassed.
2. Seldom does she complain about her workload.
3. No sooner had I sent the message than I noticed a spelling mistake.
4. On no account must you open this door.
5. Not until we checked the invoice did we see the error.
6. Only when he apologised did she agree to speak to him again.

Exercise 4

Suggested answers. Other grammatically correct answers are possible.

1. Never have I felt so relieved.
2. Rarely do people admit their mistakes immediately.
3. Little did I know that the whole class had prepared a surprise for me.
4. Only when I checked the date did I realise the truth.
5. Under no circumstances should students copy work from the internet.
6. Not only did she pass the exam, but she also got one of the highest marks.

Exercise 5

1. Never had I heard
2. no time did the manager
3. Only after we read
4. no circumstances must you leave
5. sooner had the film started than
6. Rarely does she make

Exercise 6

Students' own answers. Check that they use at least four examples of correct inversion, for example: Never had I..., Hardly had I..., Little did I know..., Only when..., Not until..., Under no circumstances...