

THE INVERSION CONSTRUCTION

Look at these pairs of sentences:

1. (a) I have never seen such a sight before.
(b) Never have I seen such a sight before.
2. (a) I had no sooner arrived than the telephone rang.
(b) No sooner had I arrived than the telephone rang.
3. (a) The workmen did their work so well that they were given a bonus.
(b) So well did the workmen do their work that they were given a bonus

Sentence (a) in each of the above pairs is unemphatic; it is normal in speech. Sentence (b) is emphatic; it is usually preferred in literary style. As you may have noted, there is inversion of subject and verb in sentences (b): they begin with the negative adverbs "Never" and "No sooner", as well as with "So", followed by the adverb "Well".

Here is a list of negative adverbs, or adverbs with a negative sense, which, when used at the beginning of the structure, require inversion of subject and verb:

by no means	never	hardly
in no circumstances	never before	hardly ever
under no circumstances	no sooner	rarely
on no account	not only	scarcely
in no way	seldom	little
	in vain	few

When the following elements occur at the beginning of the structure, they also require inversion of the subject and verb:

- to such an extent
- only (by); only then; only in this way
- so + adverb/adjective

Exercise 45

Rewrite each of the following sentences, beginning with the underlined words:

1. He had no sooner put down the receiver with a great sigh of relief than the telephone rang again.
2. A good result can be achieved only in this way.
3. He will in no circumstances be allowed to leave the country.
4. They were sleeping so deeply that they did not hear the burglar enter the room.
5. The employees accomplished their task so quickly that they were given a day off.
6. Professor X delivers his lectures so clearly and so forcefully that none of his students would fail to understand him.
7. You will be able to pass the examination only by hard work.
8. He not only treated the poor workmen badly, he also refused to pay them their due wages promptly.
9. The doctor told his patients that they should on no account used any medicine that is not prescribed for them.
(Begin with "The doctor told his patients that on no accounts....")
10. They tried in vain to persuade him to make a new attempt and turn over a new leaf.
11. The pilot agreed to land the plane only when the hijackers threatened to shoot some of the passengers.
12. A lasting peace will be established in the area only if both sides accept the agreement.

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***A*PPENDICES**