

- **“CLAUSES” Exercise:**

“Three weeks before the end of the term, I had not started my paper, nor had I even chosen a topic”.

This example shows the characteristic called “inversion”. We use inversion in several different situations in English. Inversion just means putting the verb before the subject, as we usually do in question forms.

When do we use inversion?

Apart from questions, we also use inversion in other cases:

1) When we use a negative adverb or adverb phrase at the beginning of the sentence.

Usually, we put the expression at the beginning of the sentence to emphasize what we’re saying. It makes our sentence sound surprising or striking or unusual. It also sounds quite formal. If you don’t want to give this impression, you can put the negative expression later in the sentence in the normal way:

- **Seldom** have I seen such beautiful work.
(‘Seldom’ is at the beginning, so we use inversion. This sentence emphasizes what beautiful work it is).
- I have **seldom** seen such beautiful work.
(‘Seldom’ is in the normal place. This is a normal sentence with no special emphasis).



We only use inversion when the adverb modifies the whole sentence and not when it modifies the noun.

Hardly anyone passed the exam (No inversion).

These are some adverbs and adverb phrases that we often use in inversion:

Hardly	Hardly had I got into bed when the telephone rang.
Never	Never had she seen such a beautiful sight before.
Seldom	Seldom do we see such an amazing display of dance.
Rarely	Rarely will you hear such beautiful music.
Only then	Only then did I understand why the tragedy had happened.
Not only but	Not only does she love chocolates and sweets but she also smokes.
No sooner	No sooner had he arrived home then the police rang the doorbell.
Scarcely	Scarcely had I got off the bus when it crashed into the back of a car.
Only later	Only later did you really think about the situation.
Nowhere	Nowhere have I ever had such bad service.
Little	Little did he know!
Only in this way	Only in this way could John earn enough money to survive.
In no way	In no way do I agree with what you're saying.
On no account	On no account should you do anything without asking me first.

In the following examples, the inversion comes in the second part of the sentence:

Not until	Not until I saw John with my own eyes did I really believe he was safe.
Not since	Not since Lucy left college had she had such a wonderful time.
Only after	Only after I'd seen her flat did I understand why she wanted to live there.
Only when	Only when with all arrived home did I feel calm.
Only by	Only by working extremely hard could we afford to eat.

2) We can use inversions instead of 'if' in conditionals with 'had' 'were' and 'should'. This is quite formal.

Normal Conditional: If I had been there, this problem wouldn't have happened.

Inversion: **Had I been there**, this problem wouldn't have happened.

3) We can use inversion if we put an adverbial expression of place at the beginning of the sentence. This is also quite formal or literary.

Normal Sentence: All the money we had lost was on the table.

Inversion: On the table **was all the money** we had lost.

4) We can use inversion after 'so + adjective....that':

Normal Sentence: The food was so delicious that we ate every last bite.

Inversion: So delicious **was the food** that we ate every last bite.

Exercise: Change the sentences so that they use inversions.

1. John had never been to such a fantastic restaurant.
2. I in no way want to be associated with this project.
3. They had no sooner eaten dinner than the ceiling crashed onto the dining table.
4. I had scarcely finished writing my essay when the examiner announced the end of the exam.
5. I seldom leave my house so early.
6. People real rarely appreciate this musician's talent.
7. We would understand what had happened that night only later.
8. They have met such rude people nowhere before.
9. He understood little about the situation.
10. The children should on no account go on their own.