



## Only when you use **INVERSIONS** will your professor pause and think to herself, “now **THAT** was a great sentence!”

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 vs I have seldom seen such beautiful work.

(‘Seldom’ is at the beginning, so we use inversion. This sentence emphasizes what beautiful work it is.)

(‘Seldom’ is in the normal place, so we don’t use inversion. This is a normal sentence with no special emphasis.)

Here are some negative adverbs and adverb phrases that we often use with inversion:

Hardly	Hardly <b>had I got</b> into bed when the telephone rang.
Never	Never <b>had she seen</b> such a beautiful sight before.
Seldom	Seldom <b>do we see</b> such an amazing display of dance.
Rarely	Rarely <b>will you hear</b> such beautiful music.
Only then	Only then <b>did I understand</b> why the tragedy had happened.
Not only ... but	Not only <b>does he love</b> chocolate and sweets but he also smokes.

No sooner	No sooner <b>had we arrived</b> home than the police rang the doorbell.
Scarcely	Scarcely <b>had I got off</b> the bus when it crashed into the back of a car.
Only later	Only later <b>did she really think</b> about the situation.
Nowhere	Nowhere <b>have I ever had</b> such bad service.
Little	Little did he know!
Only in this way	Only in this way <b>could John earn</b> enough money to survive.
In no way	In no way <b>do I agree</b> with what you're saying.
On no account	On no account <b>should you do</b> anything without asking me first.

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

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

2: We can use inversion 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.
- Conditional with inversion: **Had I been** there, this problem wouldn't have happened.
- Normal conditional: If we had arrived sooner, we could have prevented this tragedy!
- Conditional with inversion: **Had we arrived** sooner, we could have prevented this tragedy!

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

- So beautiful **was the girl** that nobody could talk of anything else. (Normal sentence: the girl was so beautiful that nobody could talk of anything else.)
- So delicious **was the food** that we ate every last bite. (Normal sentence: the food was so delicious that we ate every last bite.)