

## Advanced English Grammar - Adverbs & Inversion

We can use an adverb (or adverbial phrase) at the beginning of a sentence for emphasis. When we do this, the structure of the sentence can change. We can “**invert**” (change the order of) the subject and the verb, like in a question. This is called “**inversion**” - the verb and subject are **inverted** or we use an **auxiliary** verb before the subject. For example:

Normal: "I am rarely late."

Question: "Am I rarely late?"

Inversion: "Rarely am I late."

Normal: "I seldom eat so well."

Question: "Do I eat so well?"

Inversion: "Seldom do I eat so well."

Normal: "He has been so rude."

Question: "Has he been so rude?"

Inversion: "Never has he been so rude."

Note that: **Inversion = Adverbial + Question**

This structure is used to give more **emotion** or **emphasis** to a phrase, and it is generally considered to be more **formal**.

Examples:

(adverb/adverbial phrase in **blue**, auxiliary verb in **red** and subject in **green**)

- **Rarely do I** eat so well.
- **Never has he** been so rude.
- **Seldom have I** heard such lies.
- **Rarely does he** lose his temper.
- **Under no circumstance should we** let the government pass this law.
- **At no time have we** seen such barbarity.
- **Not only did he** pass the exam, **but** he also got first place.
- **No sooner had he** arrived at home, **than** he noticed that something was wrong.
- **Scarcely had I** finished eating **when** the waiter took my plate.

More information:

[https://www.learn-english-today.com/lessons/lesson\\_contents/verbs/inversion.html](https://www.learn-english-today.com/lessons/lesson_contents/verbs/inversion.html)

Recommended video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivrER84mTOc> (21 mins)

**Exercise 1.** Use the website “youglish.com” to analyse the use of these phrases:

1. “rarely do I”
2. “not only did”
3. “no sooner had”

**Exercise 2.** Convert the following sentences to an inversion structure.

1. We seldom arrive on time.

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2. He rarely writes legibly.

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3. I have never seen such a mess.

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**Exercise 3.** Convert the following sentences using the given structures.

1. We shouldn't let AI progress unchecked. (*Under no circumstance .....*)

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2. We have never witnessed such atrocities. (*At no time .....*)

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3. I entered the car. Immediately I realized that it wasn't mine. (*No sooner .....* *than .....*)

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4. He loves junk food. He also eats it every day. (*Not only .....* *but .....*)

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