

INVERSIONS

What is an inversion?

It implies changing the normal order of subject and verb tense. It is often at the beginning of a sentence after a negative adverbial expression. In some cases (Not until..., Only when..) the inversion is in the second clause (the second verb phrase).

What is it for?

It is mainly used in written formal English to make the sentence more emphatic or dramatic. Do not overuse inversions as they make English sound quite unnatural.

How is the verbal tense changed ?

It is necessary to use the auxiliary verb corresponding to each tense. For example:

- to be:

Not only is he rich, but he is also handsome.

- Present simple:

Not only does he study two degrees, but he also works at night.

- Present continuous:

Not only is she playing well, but she is also doing her best.

- Present perfect simple / continuous:

Rarely have I experienced this feeling.

Rarely has he been feeling so bad.

- Past simple:

Not until I got there **did I see** the result of my action.

- Past continuous:

Hardly was I sitting at my desk when the phone rang.

- Past Perfect simple / continuous:

No sooner had he started his exam **than** he went blank.

- Modals (also will):

Not until you get there **will you enjoy** the amazing views from the top.

When to use inversions...

AFTER THE ADVERBIAL EXPRESSION:

1. not only + inversion, (but also) clause.

Not only did he finish the marathon in time, **but** he **also** got a medal.

2. Never + inversion.....

Never have I seen such a handsome man.

3. No sooner + inversion than + clause

No sooner did we arrive there **than** it started to rain.

4. Only then + inversion / Only later + inversion

The lights went off after the lightning struck. **Only then** did I realise it was raining heavily.

5. Hardly /scarcely + inversion.....before / when + clause

Hardly had I finished my dinner when Peter arrived.

6. Rarely + inversion

Rarely have I seen such overwhelming views.

INVERSIONS IN THE SECOND CLAUSE:

1. not until / not before + clause + second clause with inversion

Not until he discovers his abilities will he be able to get the most of him.

2. Only when / while / after/once / as + clause + second clause with inversion

Only when I heard her did I notice her British accent.