

## D10. Electrician at work

### Inversions



Once an electrician called Mike Jenkins was called to do some rewiring for an old lady called Mrs Butler. He went into the house and Mrs Butler showed him into the sitting room where he was going to be working. **Hardly had he set foot** in the room, than he heard first a loud squawk and then a low growl behind him. He turned round to find a parrot in a cage and an Alsatian dog. **Never before had he seen** such an enormous and ferocious-looking dog.

'I'm afraid I have to go out for a couple of hours, Mr Jenkins, so I'll just leave you here to get on with it, if that's all right with you', said Mrs Butler. Mike was not a great animal-lover, and the idea of working in the same room as the dog was worrying him, so he turned to Mrs Johnston and asked her,

'Is your dog going to be OK with a stranger in the house? I must admit, I'm a little bit nervous about dogs that size.'

'Oh, no!', she reassured him. 'Brutus won't make a nuisance of himself, Mr Jenkins. He just does exactly what he's told, so you don't need to worry about him. But please be careful of the parrot. **Under no circumstances should you say** anything to the parrot.'

So Mike started work on the rewiring. **No sooner had he** begun, than the parrot started making rude remarks about his work.

'That's rubbish!' said the parrot. 'You've done it all wrong!'

Mike ignored the parrot and carried on working.

'You're making a terrible mistake!', said the parrot, 'You're rubbish!'

Mike kept on working, whistling a tune to try to cover up the noise of the irritating parrot.

'**Not only are you** a rubbish electrician, **but** you can't even whistle!', said the parrot.

By this stage, Mike had had enough of these insults so he turned to the parrot and said,

'Just shut up while I'm working, will you?'

The parrot opened its beak and said to the dog, 'Get him, Brutus!'

### Grammar: Inversions

In written English you can place some adverbs and adverbial expressions at the beginning of the sentence for greater emphasis and a more dramatic effect.

Here are some of the adverbs which can be used in this way: **seldom, rarely, hardly ever, never, no sooner, not only, never.**

The typical word order for this structure is **adverb + auxiliary + subject pronoun + verb**. This dramatic inversion is not frequently used in spoken English.

Compare the word order of these sentences.

*I've seldom seen such a beautiful landscape.*

**Seldom have I seen** such a beautiful landscape.

*The settings on this computer must not be changed under any circumstances.*

**Under no circumstances should** the settings on this computer **be changed**.

**Rewrite these sentences, using the words given, so that the meaning stays the same.**

1. I have seldom eaten at such a terrible restaurant.  
*Seldom...*
2. Harry had never seen so many people in one room.  
*Never before...*
3. I had no sooner fallen asleep than the phone rang.

*No sooner...*

4. This science book is not only boring, but it's inaccurate, too.  
*Not only...*
5. You shouldn't press this button under any circumstances.  
*Under no circumstances...*
6. The manager of the hotel didn't apologise to us even once.  
*Not once...*
7. I only understood the teacher's explanation after I'd read the grammar notes.  
*Only after...*
8. You can only find such an exceptionally talented artist very rarely.  
*Very rarely...*

### Vocabulary exercises

**Make or do? Choose the correct verb to complete these sentences.**

1. Don't argue with me! Just **make / do** what you're told and don't ask questions.
2. I hope that the children haven't been **making / doing** a nuisance of themselves.
3. Don't talk while I'm working or I'll **make / do** a mistake.
4. That's hopeless! You're **making / doing** it all wrong!
5. You shouldn't **make / do** rude remarks about people. It's not good manners.
6. We had to call an electrician in to **make / do** the rewiring.

**Choose the correct verb to complete these sentences. Change the form of the verb**

**cover**

**have**

**find**

**set**

**carry**

**admit**

**where necessary.**

7. I've \_\_\_\_\_ enough of your insults and rudeness.
8. I'm not much of an animal-lover, I must \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The builders next door are noisy so I'll turn on the radio to \_\_\_\_\_ up the noise.
10. The phone rang, but I didn't take any notice of it and I \_\_\_\_\_ on working.
11. As soon as I had \_\_\_\_\_ foot in the apartment, I knew that I wanted to live there.
12. Ian heard a noise and turned to \_\_\_\_\_ an enormous Alsatian dog growling at him.