

Inversion and conditionals

IELTS prep course

Negative adverbs

- *never, seldom, rarely, scarcely, hardly*
- ***Never*** [AUX]***have*** [S]***we*** *witnessed such cruel behaviour by one child to another. (or We have never witnessed ...)*
- ***Seldom*** ***does one*** *hear a politician say 'sorry'. (or One seldom hears ...)*

Expressions beginning with *not*

- We also invert the subject and verb after *not* + a prepositional phrase or a clause in initial position:
- ***Not for a moment did I think I would be offered the job, so I was amazed when I got it.***
- ***Not till I got home did I realise my wallet was missing.***

Here and there

- Inversion can happen after *here*, and after *there* when it is as an adverb of place. After *here* and *there*, we can use a main verb without an auxiliary verb or modal verb:
- ***Here comes the bus!***
- ***Here's your coffee.***
- *I opened the door and **there stood Michael**, all covered in mud.*
- *She looked out and **there was Pamela**, walking along arm in arm with Goldie.*

No sooner

- When it is used in front position, we invert the order of the auxiliary verb and subject. This is common in more formal and literary styles:
- [event 1]***No sooner*** *had they started their walk* ***than*** [event 2]*it started to rain.*

not only

- To add emphasis, we can use *not only* at the beginning of a clause. When we do this, we invert the subject and the verb:
- ***Not only*** *was it raining all day at the wedding* ***but also*** *the band was late.*
- ***Not only*** *will they paint the outside of the house* ***but also*** *the inside.*
- When there is no auxiliary verb or main verb *be*, we use *do, does, did*:
- ***Not only*** *did she forget my birthday,* ***but she also*** *didn't even apologise for forgetting it.*

Should you (Should with inversion)

- In formal situations, we can use *should* + subject (s) + verb (v) instead of *if*:
- ***Should you wish to cancel your order, please contact our customer service department on 02317 6658932. (or If you should wish to cancel your order ...)***
- ***Should your child become anxious or nervous about any activity, it is a good idea to inform the team-leader. (or If your child should become ...)***

Had you (Had with inversion)

- In formal situations, we can use *had + subject + verb* instead of *if* in third conditional sentences:
- ***Had I known you were waiting outside, I would have invited you to come in.*** (If I had known you were waiting outside ...)
- ***Had Margaret realised she would be travelling alone, she would never have agreed to go.***

Or and otherwise

- We often use *or* and *otherwise* with conditional meanings:
- *You've got to start studying, **or** you'll fail all those exams.* (If you don't start studying, you will fail the exams.)
- [talking about sending a package by mail]
- *We'd better send it express, **otherwise** it'll take days.* (If we do not send it express, it will take days.)

Supposing

- *Supposing* may be used with a conditional meaning. It can be used in first, second or third conditional sentences. The speaker invites the listener to imagine a situation:
- ***Supposing*** *I don't arrive till after midnight, will the guest-house still be open?* (Imagine if I don't arrive till after midnight ...)
- ***Supposing*** *you lost your passport, you'd have to go to the embassy, wouldn't you?*
- ***Supposing*** *he hadn't recognised us – he might never have spoken to us.*