● Inversions / possessives

Inversions with negative adverbial words and phrases

When we put some negative adverbial words and phrases at the beginning of a sentence for emphasis, the subject and the verb 'invert'. This means we use the question form of the verb, even though the sentence is not a question. Inversions are quite formal and are not usually used in conversation.

Form negative adverbial word/phrase + question form
No sooner had I accepted *the job than they told me I had to work weekends.*

Negative adverbial	Example
Never	***Never have I worked*** *so hard in all my life.*
Rarely	***Rarely have I worked*** *so hard in all my life.*
Seldom	***Seldom have I worked*** *so hard in all my life.*
No sooner (... than)	***No sooner had Matt started*** *work* ***than*** *he resigned.*
Hardly (... when)	***Hardly had Matt started*** *work* ***when*** *he resigned.*
Not only (... but also/too)	***Not only were you*** *late for work,* ***but*** *you had* ***also*** *forgotten the report.*
Under no circumstances	***Under no circumstances are employees allowed*** *to leave the building without permission.*
At no time/point	***At no time/point was I told*** *what the job involved.*
Little	***Little did I realise*** *that I would become managing director just two years later.*
Not until	***Not until the next day did I hear*** *that I had got the job.*
Only	***Only at the end of the interview did I think*** *I had a chance of getting the job.*

Watch out!

- *Little* is used with verbs of thought (*realise, know, suspect,* etc) and means *'I did not realise/etc at all ...'.*
  - ✓ ***Little did I know*** *how things were going to turn out.*
    (= I did not know at all how things were going to turn out.)
- With *not until* and *only*, you have to be careful about which verb to invert.
  - ✓ ***Not until I had finished*** *my homework* ***was I allowed*** *to go out.*
  - ✗ ~~***Not until had I finished*** *my homework* ***I was allowed*** *to go out.~~*
  - ✓ ***Only when I had finished*** *my homework* ***was I allowed*** *to go out.*
  - ✗ ~~***Only when had I finished*** *my homework* ***I was allowed*** *to go out.~~*

Other inversions

Use	Example
In short answers and other similar structures using *so, neither* and *nor*	*'I'm a plumber.'* *'Really?* ***So am I!****'* *My sister doesn't like getting ready for work, and* ***neither do I / nor do I.***
After *as, so* and *such*	*The manager was nervous about the director's visit,* ***as were the rest of the staff.*** ***So late was it*** *that there was no one in the office.* ***Such a hot day was it*** *that no one wanted to work.*
In conditional sentences	***Were our staff*** *better trained, we might make a larger profit.* (= If our staff were better trained ...) ***Had I known*** *about the vacancy, I would have applied.* (= If I had known ...)

Watch out!

- Remember that *'So am/do/have I'* is used to agree with a positive statement and *'Neither/Nor am/do/have I'* is used to agree with a negative statement.
  - ✓ *'I really like my job.'* ***'So do I.'***
  - ✓ *'I really don't like my job.'* ***'Neither do I / Nor do I.'***

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Possessive 's and s'

We can show possession by using *'s* and *s'*.

Use	Example
We use *'s* with singular nouns, including names, and with irregular plurals which do not end in *-s*.	*That's the manager**'s** car, over there.* *We are still waiting for Sarah**'s** decision about who to take on.* *I think that women**'s** rights should be protected by law.*
We just add an apostrophe to regular plural nouns ending in *-s*.	*The worker**s'** pay was increased by ten percent.*
We use *'s* or *s'* in some time expressions.	*After an hour**'s** wait, I finally got to see the manager.* *I'll be at the factory in about ten minute**s'** time.*
We usually use *'s* or *s'* with people (or groups composed of people) and animals. For other things, we normally use *of the/my/*etc.	*Is this John**'s** briefcase?* *We held a meeting to discuss the company**'s** finances.* *The vet had a close look at the cat**'s** paw.* *The technician had a close look at the back **of my** computer.* *(not ...at my computer's back)*

Watch out!

- With singular names ending in *-s*, some people use *'s* and some people just add an apostrophe. They are both correct, although using *'s* is more common.
  - ✓ *The report is on Charles**'s** computer in the office.*
  - ✓ *The report is on Charles' computer in the office.*
- With plural names ending in *-s*, we just add an apostrophe, as with other plurals.
  - ✓ *The Smiths' business eventually closed down.*
- With phrases, the possessive *'s* and *s'* must go at the end of the whole phrase.
  - ✓ *Tom, Dick and Harry**'s** office is around here somewhere.*
  - ✗ ~~*Tom**'s**, Dick**'s** and Harry**'s** office is around here somewhere.*~~
  - ✓ *The President of France**'s** visit to England will be good for business.*
  - ✗ ~~*The President**'s** of France visit to England will be good for business.*~~

Possessive determiners and pronouns

Structure	Example
Possessive determiners *(my, your, his, her, its, our, their)* come before a noun and show possession	*I'm really excited about **my** new job.* *Are you looking forward to meeting **your** new boss?*
Possessive pronouns *(mine, yours, his, hers, ours, yours, theirs)* are used instead of a noun	*My new job is great. How about **yours**?* (= ...your job) *Our business is doing quite well, but I hear Simon and Julie are having problems with **theirs**.* (= ...their business)
Possessive pronouns can also be used after *of* to show possession	*She's a colleague of **mine**.* (= ...one of my colleagues) *Are they customers of **yours**?*

Watch out!

- A common mistake to be avoided is using a possessive pronoun instead of a possessive determiner or using a determiner instead of a pronoun.
  - ✓ *I don't really get on so well with **my** boss.*
  - ✗ ~~*I don't really get on so well with **mine** boss.*~~
  - ✓ *I know your job is dangerous, but did Frank and Jenny tell you about **theirs**?*
  - ✗ ~~*I know your job is dangerous, but did Frank and Jenny tell you about **their**?*~~
- Remember that there are no apostrophes in possessive pronouns.
  - ✗ ~~*I know your job is dangerous, but did Frank and Jenny tell you about **their's**?*~~
- Don't get confused between *its* (possessive determiner, without an apostrophe) and *it's* (contraction for *it is* or *it has*, with an apostrophe).
  - ✓ *Our company is hoping to increase **its** share of the market.*
  - ✗ ~~*Our company is hoping to increase **it's** share of the market.*~~

LIVEWORKSHEETS

A Write *when* or *than* in each gap.

1 Hardly had we started ..... the fire alarm went.
2 No sooner had we set off ..... my brother needed the toilet.
3 No sooner were the animals caught ..... they escaped again.
4 Hardly had I closed my eyes ..... I dropped off to sleep.
5 No sooner do I do the washing ..... there's another pile to be done.
6 Hardly were we in position ..... the bomb went off.

B Choose the correct answer.

1 No sooner ..... down than the phone rang.
A I had sat B do I sit
C had I sat D was I sitting

2 Never ..... a greater day in the history of mankind.
A did there be B was there
C there was D there has been

3 At no time ..... that he was the killer.
A I didn't suspect B was I suspect
C I had suspected D did I suspect

4 Little ..... that I knew his secret.
A did John know B John did know
C was John know D John knew

5 Not until ..... her did I realise how beautiful she was.
A I saw B did I see
C was I saw D saw I

6 Not only ..... my keys, I've lost my wallet, too.
A I have lost B are I lost
C I did lose D have I lost

7 Rarely ..... about the environment enough to give up their car.
A do people care B people care
C are people care D care people

8 Only when ..... may vehicles cross the train tracks.
A is the green light on
B the green light is on
C did the green light be on
D on is the green light

9 Seldom ..... such a rude person!
A have I met B I have met
C did I met D am I meeting

10 Only after doing his chores ..... to go to meet his friends.
A Jason was allowed
B did Jason allow
C was allowed Jason
D was Jason allowed

C If a word or phrase in bold is correct, put a tick (✓). If it is incorrect, rewrite it correctly.

1 Hardly **Tom had opened** the door when the dog ran out into the street.
.....

2 Only when **I read** the book did I realise why it was so special. .....

3 Not only **you passed** the exam, but you also got an A! .....

4 Not until **do I see** Greg next week will I know whether he got the job.
.....

5 No sooner **had we found** our seats than the film began. .....

6 At no point while the race is taking place **members of the public are not allowed** onto the track. .....

7 Under no circumstances **do the equipment to be used** without supervision.
.....

LIVEWORKSHEETS

8 Little **I thought** that one day my best friend would become prime minister.
.....

9 Never **did I be** so pleased to see someone else succeed. .....

10 Hardly **I had put** the baby to bed when she started crying. .....

D Complete using the correct form of the words in brackets.

Hacker!

No sooner (**1**) ..... (**I / start**) working at Taylforth Nielsen, the computer company, than I realised it was the perfect opportunity for my hobby: hacking! Don't get me wrong. At no point (**2**) ..... (**I / have**) ever stolen anything. I do it for the challenge. Not only (**3**) ..... (**I / like**) proving I can do it, but sometimes (**4**) ..... (**it / help**) a company to build a better security system. Rarely (**5**) ..... (**they / see**) it like that, of course. I decided I would see if I could break into the Grand Bank system. Little (**6**) ..... (**I / realise**) what was waiting for me.

The second day of working there, hardly (**7**) ..... (**everyone else / leave**) when I started to try simple passwords. Seldom (**8**) ..... (**this / is**) enough, though. You usually have to work much harder than that. Not until midnight (**9**) ..... (**I / get**) access to the Grand Bank system. Hardly (**10**) ..... (**I / have**) time to look around the system when the door to my office flew open and three men rushed in. Only when (**11**) ..... (**they / show**) me their ID (**12**) ..... (**I / realise**) that it was the police. They had been expecting something like this and had traced my computer! Not only (**13**) ..... (**I / be fired**), but (**14**) ..... (**they / keep**) all my computer records, too. Maybe it's time to find another hobby.

E Complete the sentences so that the meaning remains the same.

1 Photographs are not permitted under any circumstances.
Under .....

2 We've never faced such a serious problem as this.
Never .....

3 I only realised it was Vanessa when she removed her hat.
Only .....

4 The audience didn't laugh at any point during the show.
At .....

5 As soon as Patrick had finished the e-mail, he sent it.
No .....

6 It wasn't clear who was going to win the match until the last few minutes.
Not .....

7 Dennis passed his driving test and had an accident almost immediately afterwards.
Hardly .....

LIVEWORKSHEETS

8 I didn't learn the result of the match until I read the evening paper.
Only .....

9 The president will not resign under any circumstances.
Under .....

10 The accused showed no emotion at any time during the trial.
At .....

F Complete the responses to these statements.

1 'I wish I had more money.'
'So .....'
2 'We never seem to spend much time together in my family.'
'Neither .....'
3 'I'm not going to Jacob's party next Sunday.'
'Nor .....'
4 'I didn't do my homework last night.'
'Nor .....'
5 'I'll be on holiday this time next week.'
'So .....'
6 'I had no idea Chris was getting married.'
'Neither .....'
7 'I should really get more exercise.'
'So .....'

G Write one word in each gap.

1 Such a long way ..... it that we decided to go by train.
2 So badly ..... I play chess that I almost never agree to have a game.
3 Pupils are expected to behave politely, as ..... members of staff.
4 So tired ..... I that I decided to lie down for a while.
5 Such a threat to society ..... you that I have no choice but to send you to prison.
6 So cold ..... it last winter that all our pipes froze.
7 Calculators are banned from the examining room, as ..... dictionaries and handheld computers.
8 I have been having very strange dreams lately, as ..... my twin sister.

H Form possessives from the nouns given.

1 (Billy): Billy's ..... opinion
2 (my mum): ..... cooking
3 (our next door neighbours): ..... cat
4 (George the Fifth): ..... daughter
5 (people): ..... prejudices
6 (the Greenes): ..... holiday home
7 (women): ..... magazines
8 (the boss): ..... car

LIVEWORKSHEETS

9 (Jack and Jill): ..... wedding
10 (students): ..... marks
11 (children): ..... shoes
12 (politicians): ..... promises

I Complete using the words in the box. Use each word only once.

her • hers • it's • its • mine • my • their • theirs

1 Tell Michelle that it's my problem, not ..... .
2 Are you sure this isn't ..... , because it looks just like the one I was given for Christmas?
3 Thanks for the offer, but I think I'll use ..... own money.
4 I saw a wallet on the floor next to a couple of tourists and asked them if it was ..... .
5 Remind your sister to bring ..... book to the lesson tomorrow.
6 I'm not sure, but I think ..... Mark's bag, isn't it?
7 Could you make sure that your children don't leave ..... toys in my garden again, please?
8 What secrets do you think the Moon might be hiding within ..... craters?

J If a line is correct, put a tick (✓) next to the number. If there is an extra word in a line, write it next to the number.

FIRST DAY AT WORK

1 ..... Well, Trisha, that's my own first day at my new job out of the way. I wasn't
2 ..... sure what to expect, but it turned out okay. My manager was really nice,
3 ..... much nicer than yours boss sounds from your letter. No sooner had I arrived
4 ..... at work than did he made me a cup of tea! It was a really pleasant surprise.
5 ..... Not only did he do that, but he was also kind enough to explain to me how
6 ..... everything worked. The office is really modern and its comfortable. The other
7 ..... people all have their own desks, but mine desk still hasn't been delivered, so
8 ..... I am sharing with someone else for now. Little did I not realise when I took
9 ..... the job that I was going to enjoy it so much. I have finally found a job that I
10 ..... am happy in, and so will you have, I'm sure. Hope tomorrow's as much fun!

LIVEWORKSHEETS