

GUIDED DISCOVERY HANDOUT: NEGATIVE ADVERBIALS & INVERSION

STAGE 1: NOTICING THE LANGUAGE IN CONTEXT

Compare the two pairs of sentences below:

- **Pair A:**
 1. *Standard:* I've **rarely** received such poor service.
 2. *Emphatic:* **Rarely have I received** such poor service.
- **Pair B:**
 1. *Standard:* We only realized how sick she was **later**.
 2. *Emphatic:* **Only later did we realize** how sick she was.

STAGE 2: ANALYZING MEANING & USE

1. Is there a difference in meaning between sentence 1 and sentence 2 in each pair?
 - Yes
 - No
2. Why does the speaker put the negative/restrictive word at the **beginning** of the sentence?
 - To ask a question
 - For emphasis or dramatic effect
3. In what type of context is inversion normally used?
 - Very informal casual conversation
 - Slightly more formal speech or writing

Note: Some expressions like "No way..." are common in informal speech (e.g., "No way will you beat me at tennis this time!").

STAGE 3: FORM & WORD ORDER RULES

Rule 1: Subject-Auxiliary Swap

Look at **Pair A2** (*Rarely have I received...*). What happens to the word order when a negative adverbial is placed at the front?

- Standard Order: [Subject] + [Auxiliary] + [Verb]
- Inverted Order: [Negative Adverbial] + _____ + [Subject] + _____

Rule 2: What if there is no auxiliary verb?

Look at **Pair B2** (*Only later did we realize...*).

In sentence B1 (*We realized...*), there is no auxiliary verb (it is in the Past Simple).

- **Rule:** If there is no auxiliary verb in the original sentence, we must add a form of _____ (*do/does/did*) before the subject!

Rule 3: Avoiding Double Negatives

Look at the following sentence:

✓ *Under no circumstances **can I be** late for the interview.*

✗ *Under no circumstances **can't I be** late for the interview.*

- **Rule:** After most negative adverbial phrases, do we need to put *not* or a negative verb in the main clause?
 - Yes
 - No, because the adverbial phrase is already negative/restrictive.

Rule 4: Dependent Clauses

Look at this special structure:

✗ *Only when **did I read** your letter...*

✓ *Only when **I read** your letter **did I understand**.*

- **Rule:** We **DO / DO NOT** invert the subject and auxiliary inside the adverbial phrase itself (*Only when... / Only after...*). Inversion only happens in the **main clause**!

STAGE 4: CATEGORIZING NEGATIVE ADVERBIALS

Complete the categories of negative adverbials using the expressions from the box:

barely | no sooner (than) | rarely | under no circumstances | only when | hardly ever | never | scarcely

1. **Frequency ('not often'):** *seldom*, _____, _____,

2. **'Almost not' / 'Not much':** _____, _____, *hardly, little*
3. **Phrases with 'Only':** *only later, only if*, _____, *only by, not only*
4. **Phrases with 'No' and 'Not':** _____, _____, *in no way, at no time, nowhere else*

1.