

The following chart lists the question words and their sentence patterns:

INVERTED SUBJECTS AND VERBS WITH QUESTION WORDS					
<i>who</i>	<i>what</i>	<i>when</i>	<i>where</i>	<i>why</i>	<i>how</i>
When the question word introduces a question, the subject and verb <i>are</i> inverted.					
		(question word)		V S ?	
		What		are they?	
When the question word connects two clauses, the subject and verb that follow <i>are not</i> inverted.					
	S V		(question word)		S V.
	I know		what		they are.

EXERCISE 15: Each of the following sentences contains a question word. Circle the question words. Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- I 1. The phone company is not certain (when) will the new directories be ready.
- C 2. The professor does not understand (why) so many students did poorly on the exam.
- ___ 3. How new students can get information about parking?
- ___ 4. Where is it cheapest to get typeset copies printed?
- ___ 5. Only the pilot can tell you how far can the plane go on one tank of fuel.
- ___ 6. What type of security does he prefer for his investments?
- ___ 7. Not even the bank president knows when the vault will be opened.
- ___ 8. How long it has been since you arrived in the United States?
- ___ 9. The jury doubts what the witness said under cross-examination.
- ___ 10. Do you know why he wants to take an extended leave of absence?

SKILL 16: INVERT THE SUBJECT AND VERB WITH PLACE EXPRESSIONS

After ideas expressing place, the subject and the verb sometimes invert in English. This can happen with single words expressing place, such as *here*, *there*, or *nowhere*.

Here is the book that you lent me.

There are the keys that I thought I lost.

Nowhere have I seen such beautiful weather.

In the first example the place word *here* causes the subject *book* to come after the verb *is*. In the second example the place word *there* causes the subject *keys* to come after the verb *are*. In the last example the place word *nowhere* causes the subject *I* to come after the verb *have*.

The subject and verb can also be inverted after prepositional phrases expressing place.

In the closet are the clothes that you want.

Around the corner is Sam's house.

Beyond the mountains lies the town where you will live.

In the first example the prepositional phrase of place *in the closet* causes the subject *clothes* to come after the verb *are*. In the second example the prepositional phrase of place *around the corner* causes the subject *house* to come after the verb *is*. In the last example the prepositional phrase of place *beyond the mountains* causes the subject *town* to come after the verb *lies*.

It is important (and a bit difficult) to understand that the subject and verb will invert after place expressions at the beginning of a sentence only when the place expression is *necessary* to complete the sentence. Study the following examples:

In the forest are many exotic birds.

In the forest I walked for many hours.

In the first example the subject *birds* and verb *are* are inverted because the place expression *in the forest* is needed to complete the idea *many exotic birds are....* In the second example the subject *I* and the verb *walked* are not inverted because the idea *I walked for many hours* is complete without the place expression *in the forest*; the place expression is therefore not needed to complete the sentence.

The following example shows how this sentence pattern could be tested in structure questions on the TOEFL test.

Example from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests



On the second level of the parking lot _____.

- (A) is empty
- (B) are empty
- (C) some empty stalls are
- (D) are some empty stalls

This example begins with the place expression *on the second level of the parking lot*, which consists of two prepositional phrases, *on the second level* and *of the parking lot*. This sentence needs a subject and a verb to be complete, and the two answers that contain both a subject, *stalls*, and verb, *are*, are answers (C) and (D). The subject and verb should be inverted because the place expression is necessary to complete the idea *some empty stalls are....* The best answer is therefore answer (D).

The following chart lists the sentence patterns used with place expressions:

INVERTED SUBJECTS AND VERBS WITH PLACE EXPRESSIONS		
When a place expression at the front of the sentence is <i>necessary</i> to complete the sentence, the subject and verb that follow <i>are</i> inverted.		
PLACE (necessary)	V	S
<i>In the classroom</i>	<i>were some old desks.</i>	
When a place expression at the front of the sentence contains <i>extra</i> information that is <i>not</i> needed to complete the sentence, the subject and verb that follow <i>are not</i> inverted.		
PLACE (extra)	S	V
<i>In the classroom,</i>	<i>I studied very hard.</i>	

EXERCISE 16: Each of the following sentences contains an expression of place at the beginning of the sentence. Circle the expressions of place. Look at the clauses that immediately follow the place expressions and underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- C 1. (In front of the house) were some giant trees.
- I 2. (There) a big house is on the corner.
3. In the cave was a vast treasure of gems and jewels.
4. To the north the stream is that the settlers will have to cross.
5. Around the corner are the offices that you are trying to find.
6. At the Italian restaurant was the food too spicy for my taste.
7. Nowhere in the world farmers can grow such delicious food.
8. In the backyard the two trees are that need to be pruned.
9. Around the recreation hall and down the path are the tents where we will be staying this week.
10. In the apartment next to mine a man and a woman were having a heated discussion.

SKILL 17: INVERT THE SUBJECT AND VERB WITH NEGATIVES

The subject and verb can also be inverted after certain negatives and related expressions. When negative expressions, such as *no*, *not*, or *never*, come at the beginning of a sentence, the subject and verb are inverted.