

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.

*Not once did I miss a question.*

*Never has Mr. Jones taken a vacation.*

*At no time can the woman talk on the telephone.*

In the first example the negative expression *not once* causes the subject *I* to come after the helping verb *did*. In the second example the negative word *never* causes the subject *Mr. Jones* to come after the helping verb *has*. In the last example the negative expression *at no time* causes the subject *woman* to come after the helping verb *can*.

Certain words in English, such as *hardly*, *barely*, *scarcely*, and *only*, act like negatives. If one of these words comes at the beginning of a sentence, the subject and verb are also inverted.

*Hardly ever does he take time off.*

(This means that he *almost never* takes time off.)

*Only once did the manager issue overtime paychecks.*

(This means that the manager *almost never* issued overtime paychecks.)

In the first example the “almost negative” expression *hardly ever* causes the subject *he* to come after the helping verb *does*. In the second example the “almost negative” expression *only once* causes the subject *manager* to come after the helping verb *did*.

When a negative expression appears in front of a subject and verb in the middle of a sentence, the subject and verb are also inverted. This happens often with the negative words *neither* and *nor*.

I do not want to go, and *neither* does Tom.

The secretary is not attending the meeting, *nor* is her boss.

In the first example the negative *neither* causes the subject *Tom* to come after the helping verb *does*. In the second example the negative *nor* causes the subject *boss* to come after the verb *is*.

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**  

Only in extremely dangerous situations \_\_\_\_\_ stopped.

- (A) will be the printing presses
- (B) the printing presses will be
- (C) that the printing presses will be
- (D) will the printing presses be

In this example you should notice that the sentence begins with the negative *only*, so an inverted subject and verb are needed. Answer (D) contains a correctly inverted subject and verb, with the helping verb *will*, the subject *printing presses*, and the main verb *be*, so answer (D) is the best answer.

The following chart lists the negative expressions and the sentence pattern used with them:

| INVERTED SUBJECTS AND VERBS WITH NEGATIVES   |               |              |                            |                 |               |
|--|---------------|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <i>no</i>  | <i>not</i>    | <i>never</i> | <i>neither</i>             | <i>nor</i>      |               |
| <i>barely</i>  | <i>hardly</i> | <i>only</i>  | <i>rarely</i>              | <i>scarcely</i> | <i>seldom</i> |
| When a negative expression appears <i>in front of</i> a subject and verb (at the beginning of a sentence or in the middle of a sentence) the subject and verb <i>are</i> inverted. |               |              |                            |                 |               |
| negative expression  |               |              | V                          | S               |               |
| <i>Rarely</i>  |               |              | <i>were they so happy.</i> |                 |               |

**EXERCISE 17:** Each of the following sentences contains a negative or “almost negative” expression. Circle the negative expressions. Look at the clauses that follow and underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- I 1. (Never) the boy wrote to his sisters.
- C 2. (On no occasion) did they say that to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Steve did not win the prize, nor did he expect to do so.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Only once in my life gone I have to New York City.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Did he go out of the house at no time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Seldom their secretary has made such mistakes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. No sooner had she hung up the phone than it rang again.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Sheila did not arrive late for work, nor she left early.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Barely had he finished the exam when the graduate assistant collected the papers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The police did not arrive in time to save the girl, and neither did the paramedics.

### SKILL 18: INVERT THE SUBJECT AND VERB WITH CONDITIONALS

In certain conditional structures, the subject and verb may also be inverted. This can occur when the helping verb in the conditional clause is *had*, *should*, or *were*, and the conditional connector *if* is omitted.

If he had taken more time, the results would have been better.

Had he taken more time, the results would have been better.