

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.

I would help you *if I were* in a position to help.

I would help you were I in a position to help.

*If you should arrive* before 6:00, just give me a call.

Should you arrive before 6:00, just give me a call.

In each of these examples you can see that when *if* is included, the subject and verb are in the regular order (*if he had taken, if I were, if you should arrive*). It is also possible to omit *if*; in this case, the subject and verb are inverted (*had he taken, were I, should you arrive*).

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**



The report would have been accepted \_\_\_\_\_ in checking its accuracy.

- (A) if more care
- (B) more care had been taken
- (C) had taken more care
- (D) had more care been taken

In this example a connector *if* and a subject and verb are needed, but *if* could be omitted and the subject and verb inverted. Answer (A) is incorrect because it contains the connector *if* and the subject *care* but no verb. Answer (B) is incorrect because it contains the subject *care* and the verb *had been taken* but does not have a connector. In answers (C) and (D), *if* has been omitted. Because it is correct to invert the subject *more care* and the helping verb *had*, answer (D) is correct.

The following chart lists the conditional verbs that may invert and the sentence patterns used with them:

INVERTED SUBJECTS AND VERBS WITH CONDITIONALS			
	<i>had</i>	<i>should</i>	<i>were</i>
When the verb in the conditional clause is <i>had, should, or were</i> , it is possible to omit <i>if</i> and invert the subject and verb.			
(omitted <i>if</i> )	V	S	
	<b>Were he</b>	<b>here,</b>	<b>he would help.</b>
It is also possible to keep <i>if</i> . Then the subject and verb are <i>not</i> inverted.			
	<i>if</i>	S	V
	<b>If</b>	<b>he were</b>	<b>here, he would help.</b>

**EXERCISE 18:** Each of the following sentences contains a conditional with a stated or an implied *if*. Circle the conditionals, or put an asterisk (\*) where *if* has been omitted. 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).

- C 1. \*Were our neighbors a bit more friendly, it would be somewhat easier to get to know them.
- I 2. There are plenty of blankets in the closet if should you get cold during the night.
- \_\_\_ 3. Has he enough vacation days left this year, he will take two full weeks off in December.
- \_\_\_ 4. Had we been informed of the decision, we might have had something to say about it.
- \_\_\_ 5. I would like to know could you help me pack these boxes.
- \_\_\_ 6. He would have been in big trouble had not he remembered the assignment at the last minute.
- \_\_\_ 7. If your friends come to visit, will they stay in a hotel or at your house?
- \_\_\_ 8. He might be a little more successful today were he a little more willing to do some hard work.
- \_\_\_ 9. Should you ever visit this town again, I would be delighted to show you around.
- \_\_\_ 10. Do you think that she would give the speech were she asked to do so?

### SKILL 19: INVERT THE SUBJECT AND VERB WITH COMPARISONS

An inverted subject and verb may also occur after a comparison. The inversion of a subject and verb after a comparison is optional, rather than required, and it is a rather formal structure. There have been a number of inverted comparisons on recent TOEFL tests, so you should be familiar with this structure.

My sister spends *more* hours in the office *than* John.

My sister spends *more* hours in the office *than* John does.

My sister spends *more* hours in the office *than* does John.

All three of these examples contain the comparison *more...than*, and all three are correct in English. It is possible to have the noun *John* alone, as in the first example; it is possible that the comparison is followed by the subject and verb *John does*, as in the second example; it is also possible that the comparison is followed by the inverted subject and verb *does John*, as in the third example.

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