

## Skills 15 - 19: Sentences with Inverted Subjects and Verbs

### Notes

Inverted subjects and verbs mean that the verb goes before the subject of the sentence.

**He** can go to the movies.

Can **he** go to the movies?

**He** goes to the movies.

Does **he** go to the movies?

### This happens in a variety of ways in English:

1. With question words: what when, where, why and how
2. After some place expressions
3. After negative expressions
4. In some conditionals
5. After some comparisons

### Skill 15: Invert the subject and verb with question words

The most typical way to have inverted S/V is when asking a **question** using wh words:  
*who, where, why, when, what, how*

#### WH questions invert the S/V:

What is the **homework**?

When can **I** leave work?

Where are **you** going?

#### These are the same words we used when connecting clauses:

I do not know *what* the **homework** is.

*What is* the **homework**?

*When* **I** can leave, I will take the first train.

Do you know *where* **you** are going?

\*\*\*When using these words as connectors you can NEVER invert the S/V.

### TOEFL Example

The lawyer asked the client why **he** did it.

- a. did he do
- b. did he
- c. he did
- d. did

**Exercise 15 - Determine if the following sentences are correct or incorrect. Identify the subjects and verbs and then make corrections if necessary.**

1. The phone company is not certain when will the new directories be ready.  
a. When the new directories will be ready
2. The professor does not understand why so many students did poorly on the exam.  
a. C
3. How new students can get information about parking?  
a. How can new...
4. Where is **it** cheapest to get copies printed?  
a. C
5. How long it has been since you arrived in the United States?  
a. How long has it been since....
6. What type of security does he prefer for his investments?
7. **Not even the bank president knows** when the vault will be opened.  
a. When will the vault be opened?
8. How long it has been since you arrived in the United States?  
a. How long has it been ....
9. The jury doubts what the witness said under cross-examination.  
a. C
10. **So** you know why he wants an extended leave of absence.  
a. I Did ...? OR omit so

**Skill 16: Invert the subject and verb with place expressions**

**here, there, nowhere**

*Nowhere have I seen such beautiful weather.*

*I have never seen beautiful weather anywhere.*

*Here is the **book** that you lent me.*

*The book that you lent me is here.*

*There are the **keys** that I thought I lost.*

*The **keys** that I thought I lost are there.*

**Some prepositional phrases are expressions of place.**

*In the closet are the **clothes** you want.*

*In the closet are the **clothes** you want.*

*Are the **clothes** you want *in the closet*?*

*The **clothes** you want are. - incorrect*

*Around the corner is **Sam's** house.*

*Beyond the mountains lies the **town** where you will live.*

*In the forest* I walked for many hours.

I walked for many hours *in the forest*.

I walked for many hours.

\*\*\*It is important to understand 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.

Examples:

*In the forest* are many exotic **birds**.

The Prep phrase 'in the forest' is necessary to complete the idea 'Birds are...'

*In the forest* I walked for many hours.

The prep phrase 'in the forest' is **NOT necessary** for the complete idea 'I walked...'

### TOEFL Example:

On the second level of the parking lot are some empty stalls.

- A. is empty
- B. are empty
- C. some empty stalls are
- D. are some empty stalls

### Exercise 16 - Identify the subjects and verbs in the following sentences. Determine whether they are correct or incorrect, make corrections if necessary.

1. In front of the house were some giant **trees**.
  - a. I - Some giant **trees** were in front of the house.
2. There a big house is on the corner.
  - a. There is a big...
3. In the cave was a vast treasure of gems and jewels.
  - a. V
  - b. Vast - a lot of
4. To the north the stream is that the settlers will have to cross.
  - a. I To the north is the stream that settlers....
  - b. Stream - arroyo
  - c. Settlers - original people establish
5. Around the corner are the offices you are trying to find.
  - a. The offices you are trying to find are around the corner.
6. At the Italian restaurant was the food too spicy for my taste.
  - a. I the food at the Italian restaurant was too spicy for my taste.
  - b. The food was too spicy ....
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 staging this week.
10. In the apartment next to mine, a family was that had a lot of pets.

## Skill 17: Invert the subject and verb with negatives

Note the negative words in italics. Since these negative words come at the beginning of the sentence, it forces the subject and verb to be inverted.

*Not once* did I miss a question.

I didn't miss a question once.

*Never* has Mr. Jones taken a vacation.

Mr. Jones has never taken a vacation.

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

The woman can never talk on the phone.

### Some words in English are 'almost negative':

*hardly, barely, scarcely, only*

*Hardly ever* does Susan take time off.

(Means he almost never takes time off.)

*Only once* did the manager issue overtime paychecks.

(Means that the manager almost never issued overtime pay.)

*Barely* do I understand what my little cousins are talking about.

(Means I *almost never* understand.)

### Inverted subjects and verbs with *neither* and *nor*

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

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

### TOEFL Example

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

no	not	never	neither	nor	barely
hardly	only	rarely	scarcely	seldom	

These negative words are used in the following pattern:

Negative expression

*Rarely*

V      S

were **they** so happy.

**Exercise 17 - Identify the subjects and verbs in the following sentences. Determine whether they are correct or incorrect, make corrections if necessary.**

1. Never the boy wrote to his sisters.
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.

Here are some negative adverbs and adverb phrases that we often use with inversion:

Hardly	Hardly had I got into bed when the telephone rang.
Never	Never had she seen such a beautiful sight before.
Seldom	Seldom do we see such an amazing display of dance.
Rarely	Rarely will you hear such beautiful music.
Only then	Only then did I understand why the tragedy had happened.
Not only ... but	Not only does he love chocolate and sweets but he also smokes.
No sooner	No sooner had we arrived home than the police rang the doorbell.
Scarcely	Scarcely had I got off the bus when it crashed into the back of a car.
Only later	Only later did she really think about the situation.
Nowhere	Nowhere have I ever had such bad service.
Little	Little did he know!
Only in this way	Only in this way could John earn enough money to survive.
In no way	In no way do I agree with what you're saying.
On no account	On no account should you do anything without asking me first.

## Skill 18: Invert the subject and verb with conditionals

When the helping verb in some conditional clauses have **had, were, should** the 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.

The results would have been better had **he taken** more time.

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.

### TOEFL Example

The report would have been accepted had more **care** been taken 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

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

### Exercise 18 - Identify the subjects and verbs in the following sentences. Determine whether they are correct or incorrect, make corrections if necessary.

1. Were our neighbors a bit more friendly, it would be somewhat easier to get to know them.
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 be 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

When using comparisons. It is optional and considered more formal to use inverted structures here. This directly relates with the previous relative Clause topic we learned.

**All of these sentences are correct. It depends on the formality you want to use.**

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

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

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

We were more prepared than the other performers were.

We were more prepared than were the other performers.

## TOEFL Example

The results of the current experiment appear to be more consistent than \_\_\_\_ the results of any previous tests.

- A. them
- B. were
- C. they were
- D. were they

INVERTED SUBJECTS AND VERBS WITH COMPARISONS					
The subject and verb <i>may</i> invert after a comparison. The following structures are both possible.					
S	V	(comparison)	S	V	
<b>We</b>	<b>were</b>	<b>more prepared than</b>	<b>the other performers</b>	<b>were.</b>	
S	V	(comparison)	V	S	
<b>We</b>	<b>were</b>	<b>more prepared than</b>	<b>were</b>	<b>the other performers.</b>	



**Skill 19 - Identify the subjects and verbs in the following sentences. Determine whether they are correct or incorrect, make corrections if necessary.**

1. This candidate **had received** more votes than **has** any other candidate in previous years. C
  - a. This candidate **had received** more votes than **has** any other candidate in previous years.
  - b. This candidate **had received** more votes than any other candidate in previous years **has**.
  - c. This candidate **had received** more votes than any other candidate in previous years.
2. Obviously we **were** much more impressed with the performance than did the other members of the audience. I
  - a. Obviously we **were** much more impressed with the performance than **were** the other members of the audience.
  - b. Obviously we were much more impressed with the performance than the other members of the audience.
  - c. Obviously we were much more impressed with the performance than the other members of the audience were.
3. The film that we saw last night at the festival **was** far better than any of the other films. C
  - a. The film that we saw last night at the festival **was** far better than any of the other films.
  - b. The film that we saw last night at the festival was far better than were any of the other films.
  - c. The film that we saw last night at the festival was far better than any of the other films were.
4. The vegetale at the market this morning **were** far fresher than **were** those at the market yesterday. C
  - a. The vegetale at the market this morning **were** far fresher than **were** those at the market yesterday.
  - b. The vegetale at the market this morning were far fresher than those at the market yesterday.
  - c. The vegetale at the market this morning were far fresher than those at the market were yesterday.
5. I am afraid that is the condition of these tires as **bad** as the condition of the others. I
  - a. I am afraid that the condition of these tires is as bad as the condition of the others.
  - b. I am afraid that the condition of these tires is as bad as the condition of the others is.
  - c. I am afraid that the condition of these tires is as bad as is the condition of the others.



6. We firmly **believe** that our team could achieve a much faster time than any of the others. C
- a. We firmly believe that our team could achieve a much faster time than any of the others.
  - b. We firmly believe that our team could achieve a much faster time than could any of the others.
  - c. We firmly believe that our team could achieve a much faster time than any of the others could.
7. This apple pie **is not as good** as the last one that you made. C
8. On the fishing trip, Bobby **caught** twice as many fish as anyone else did. C
- a. On the fishing trip, Bobby **caught** twice as many fish as anyone else did.
  - b. On the fishing trip, Bobby **caught** twice as many fish as did anyone else.
  - c. On the fishing trip, Bobby **caught** twice as many fish as anyone else.
9. The final speaker **gave** us more details than **had** any of the previous speakers. C
- a. The final speaker **gave** us more details than **had** any of the previous speakers.
  - b. The final speaker **gave** us more details than any of the previous speakers.
  - c. The final speaker **gave** us more details than any of the previous speakers **had**.
10. Do you know why does he need to sleep do many more hours than do the others? I
- a. Do you know why he **needs** to sleep many more hours than **do** the others?
  - b. Do you know why he needs to sleep many more hours than the others do?
  - c. Do you know why he needs to sleep many more hours than the others?

### EXERCISE 15

1. I (should be *the new directories will*)
2. C
3. I (should be *can new students*)
4. C
5. I (should be *the plane can*)
6. C
7. C
8. I (should be *has it*)
9. C
10. C

### EXERCISE 16

1. C
2. I (should be *is a big house*)
3. C
4. I (should be *is the stream*)
5. C
6. I (should be *the food was*)
7. I (should be *can farmers*)
8. I (should be *are the two trees*)
9. C
10. I (should be *was a family*)

### EXERCISE 17

1. I (should be *did the boy write*)
2. C
3. C
4. I (should be *have I gone*)
5. I (should be *He went*)
6. I (should be *has their secretary*)
7. C
8. I (should be *did she leave*)
9. C
10. C

### EXERCISE 18

1. C
2. I (could be *you should*)
3. I (should be *If he has*)
4. C
5. I (should be *if you could*)
6. I (should be *had he not*)
7. C
8. I (should be *were he*)
9. C
10. C

### EXERCISE 19

1. C
2. I (should be *were the other members*)
3. C
4. C
5. I (should be *that the condition of these tires is*)
6. C
7. C
8. C
9. C
10. I (does he need should be *he needs*)