



Inversion — B2 exercises

Printable worksheet · 23 questions · answer key with explanations on the last page
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Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ / 23

A. Multiple choice

10 questions

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. Never ____ such a badly organised conference in twenty years.
A) have I attended B) I have attended C) did I attended D) I attended
2. Rarely ____ a deadline, which is why the lapse was so noticeable.
A) she misses B) she does miss C) does she miss D) misses she
3. Not only ____, but he also resigned the following morning.
A) did he apologise B) he apologised C) apologised he D) he did apologise
4. No sooner had the results been posted ____ the phones began to ring.
A) when B) than C) that D) then
5. Hardly had she sat down ____ the fire alarm went off.
A) than B) that C) then D) when
6. Under no circumstances ____ the packaging before the inspection.
A) you should open B) you open should C) do you should open D) should you open
7. Little ____ what was waiting for them at the other end.
A) they knew B) knew they C) did they know D) they did know
8. Only when she called ____ what had actually happened.
A) I understood B) did I understand C) I did understand D) understood I
9. At no time ____ of the risk to the public.
A) the residents were informed B) were the residents informed
C) the residents informed were D) did the residents were informed
10. Which sentence is INCORRECT?
A) Seldom he complains. B) Seldom does he complain.
C) Seldom have I seen it. D) Seldom is she late.

B. Fill in the blank

8 questions

Write the missing word or words in the gap.

1. Never _____ I heard such a feeble excuse for a missed deadline.
2. Rarely _____ she raise an objection in open session.

3. Not only _____ he arrive late, but he left before the vote.
4. No sooner had the doors opened _____ the queue surged forward.
5. Hardly had we started _____ the power went off across the whole floor.
6. Under no circumstances _____ you sign anything without reading it.
7. Little _____ we know how much the repairs would eventually cost.
8. Only when the results arrived _____ we realise how close it had been.

C. Sentence building

5 questions

Put the words in the correct order and write the sentence on the line.

1. seen / have / I / chaos. / such / Never

Front a negative adverb and invert the perfect auxiliary.

2. miss / Rarely / deadline. / does / she / a

Invert a present simple sentence using a supplied auxiliary.

3. only / resigned. / did / also / but / he / apologise, / he / Not

Build a two-part emphatic sentence.

4. down / sat / we / No / rang. / had / sooner / the / alarm / than

Narrate two events in very quick succession.

5. it / started / when / left / had / Hardly / she / raining.

Use the pattern that takes when rather than than.

Answer key

Every answer carries the reason behind it. Read the reason for the questions you got right as well — that is where you find out whether you were right for the right reason.

A. Multiple choice

1. **A) have I attended** — A fronted negative adverb forces question word order, so the auxiliary comes before the subject.
2. **C) does she miss** — With no auxiliary in the plain sentence, do is supplied and carries the third-person -s.
3. **A) did he apologise** — Not only at the front of a clause triggers inversion with the auxiliary do.
4. **B) than** — No sooner is always followed by than, never by when.
5. **D) when** — Hardly and scarcely take when, which is the opposite of the no sooner pattern.
6. **D) should you open** — Under no circumstances is a negative adverbial and inverts the modal with the subject.
7. **C) did they know** — Little in this fronted sense means not at all and takes the do auxiliary.
8. **B) did I understand** — Only when inverts the MAIN clause, not the time clause that follows only.
9. **B) were the residents informed** — At no time is negative, so the passive auxiliary moves in front of the subject.
10. **A) Seldom he complains.** — Once seldom is fronted, inversion is obligatory rather than optional.

B. Fill in the blank

1. **have** — The perfect auxiliary moves in front of the subject after a fronted negative adverb.
2. **does** — With no auxiliary available, do is supplied and carries the tense.
3. **did** — A fronted not only triggers inversion with the past auxiliary.
4. **than** — This structure is always completed with than rather than with when.
5. **when** — Hardly and scarcely take when, unlike the no sooner pattern.
6. **should** — The modal precedes the subject after a fronted negative adverbial.
7. **did** — Fronted little means not at all here and takes the do auxiliary.
8. **did** — Only plus a time clause inverts the main clause that follows it.

C. Sentence building

1. **Never have I seen such chaos.**
2. **Rarely does she miss a deadline.**
3. **Not only did he apologise, but he also resigned.**
4. **No sooner had we sat down than the alarm rang.**
5. **Hardly had she left when it started raining.**