

Lesson Plan: Inversion for emphasis 2

Level	Advanced (C1–C2)
Time	60–90 minutes
Skills	Grammar, writing, speaking
Focus	Negative adverbials and fronting that trigger subject-auxiliary inversion

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify and produce inverted structures after negative adverbials
- Use inversion to add emphasis and a formal or dramatic tone
- Distinguish between structures that require inversion and those that don't
- Incorporate inverted structures naturally in advanced academic and creative writing

TARGET LANGUAGE (EXAMPLES)

Negative adverbials triggering inversion

- Never have I seen such dedication.
- Rarely does she lose her composure.
- Not only did he finish first, but he broke the record.
- Hardly had we arrived when it started raining.
- No sooner had she left than he called.

Other inversion patterns

- Only after the meeting did we realise the extent of the problem.
- Not until he read the report did he understand.
- Little did she know what was about to happen.
- Under no circumstances should you sign that document.

Function

- Adds formal, literary, or emphatic tone.
- Common in journalism, formal speeches, and literary writing.
- Rare in everyday conversation — use sparingly.

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Warm-up (10 min)

Task: Spot the unusual word order: students read 3 famous opening lines featuring inversion.

- 'Never before had I seen such beauty.' — elicit: what makes this different?
- Students attempt to re-write in normal order and compare the effect.

2. Presentation (15 min)

Task: Classify inversion triggers: never, rarely, hardly, scarcely, not only, little, no sooner.

- Formula: negative adverbial + auxiliary + subject + main verb.
- Highlight: which auxiliary to use depends on the tense of the original statement.

3. Guided practice (10 min)

Task: Rewrite sentences using the given inversion trigger.

- 'She had rarely felt so nervous.' + Rarely → 'Rarely had she felt so nervous.'
- 'They didn't realise the danger until it was too late.' + Not until → ...

4. Writing task (25 min)

Task: Write a dramatic opening paragraph for a story using at least 3 inverted structures.

- Peer feedback: does the inversion add to the impact?
- Discuss: when does it feel natural vs. forced?

5. Editing task (10 min)

Task: Add inversion to a flat paragraph to improve its rhetorical impact.

EXTENSION / HOMEWORK

Choose one:

1. Rewrite 6 normal sentences using inversion to increase their rhetorical impact.
2. Find 5 examples of inversion in journalistic or literary writing. Analyse their function.
3. Write a formal speech opening (100 words) that includes at least 4 examples of inversion.