

Inversion & Subjunctives

- On defining inversion
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On defining inversion

□ To put it simply, inversion may be loosely defined as reversal of word order

Standard word order in English:

S + V + O + Adv of manner + adv of place + Adv of time

She seldom stares at the stars directly in the sky at nights

Seldom does she look at the stars directly in the sky at nights.



Types of inversion

A. Necessary inversion: Subject-operator inversion

Little did I realize that my friends would play dirty tricks to frighten me in the cemetery.

B. Optional inversion: Subject + verb inversion

Slowly out of the hangar rolled the gigantic aircraft.

Necessary inversion: Subject-operator inversion

A. Yes/no questions

1. Have you ever travelled abroad?
2. Did you see him on your way to school?
3. Are you a relative of mine?

B. Wh questions

1. How long will it take me to finish typing it?
2. Where did you say you met him?
3. Which road shall we drive on?

C. After time adverbials or restrictive expressions:

never, hardly, hardly ever, seldom, rarely, barely, scarcely,
little, no sooner ... than

1. Rarely does he greet strange people.
2. Never before have I seen such a splendid palace.
3. Little does he know about Shakespeare.

D. After negative adverbs:

under/in no circumstances, at no time, not until, not only, in
no way, by no means, on no account, not for one
moment, not, not since, no longer, no more but not not
far, not long, or no doubt



1. Not only did he break into my house, but he also killed my wife.
2. Not since last summer has she gone swimming.
3. Under no circumstances are you allowed to share my bicycle.
4. By no means did I manage to keep you posted about our arrangement.
5. On no account was the surgeon qualified enough to operate my six-year-old sister.
6. Not a single nice word has he uttered.
7. Not until last month did I hear from him.



Incorrect:

8. No doubt will he give us a key. (No doubt he will give us a key).
9. Not far from here can you see him. (Not far from here you can see him).
10. Not long after that did she get married. (not long after that she got married.)



E. After only + time expression or prepositional phrase:

only when/before/then/after/; only by hard work/ only by chance etc

1. Only after he had joined us did we set out for our barbecue.
2. Only by treason did you manage to ascend the throne.
3. Only through diligence can you overcome the problems ahead of you.
4. Incorrect: only was he against me in the meeting.



Only when/after/before or not until + clause +
inversion:

1. Only when the famine gets worse will world government begin to react.
2. Only before we arrived at the train station had the train left there.
3. Not until the train pulled into the station did I find that my coat had gone.



F. After **so ... that** and **such ... that** in result clauses

1. **So angrily was he shouting that** no one dared to talk to him.
2. **Such a nice dress was it that** my sister was immediately tempted to buy it.

G. After **Nor, neither, and so** to avoid repetition

1. She never failed any exam. **Nor** did I.
2. They have no intention of paying. **Neither** do we.
3. He was sick yesterday. **So** was I.
4. They had already left home. **So** had I.



H. After **as** and **than** in comparisons

1. He worshiped idols, as did his ancestors before him.
2. City dwellers have a higher death rate than do country people.

I. In conditionals

1. Should I watch a movie, I will prefer to watch “the hours”.
2. were it not for his wife’s money, he would not have that position.
3. Had I known what was going to happen, I would never have left her alone.



After **well** meaning wisely, **wisely**, with good reason,
to such length, to such a point, to such a degree,
particularly

1. Well did he say that.
2. Wisely did he behave himself before the guests.
3. To such length did he go with his jokes that every body began to be disgusted.
4. Particularly does this observation apply to those who have lost sight and hearing in adult life. (Helen Keller)



Optional inversion: Subject + verb inversion

- A. After place adverbial expressions such as over the roof, on the grass, in front of the mosque etc
1. On the grass sat an enormous frog.
 2. High in the sky was flying a golden eagle.
 3. On the battlefield were fighting the soldiers.
 4. Across from the drugstore stood our university.
 5. Deep under the sea were seen creatures unknown to the researchers.

B. After time adverbs: First, next, now and then

1. At first there was silence. **Then** came a voice that I knew. (Then, a voice came ...).
2. For the first hours the teams seemed evenly matched. **Then** came the turning point in the game as he scored. That was the final installment. **Next** is the news.
3. **Now** is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children. (Martin Luther King)

C. After particles denoting movement or direction with intransitive verbs such as come, fly, go etc



1. Down came the rain in torrents.
2. The door opened and in came the doctor.
3. The bus drew up and off got the passengers.
4. The sun came out and away went the clouds.
(Away they went).
5. Off we go.

D. After **here** and **there**

1. Here lands the plane.
2. There sings the cricket.
3. Here/there he shaves.



E. In direct speech

1. “Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred,” stated King.
2. “You always listen to the music loud,” complained my roommate.
3. “What in the world are you talking about?” she yelled. (Yelled she is incorrect).

F. After comparative or superlative phrases at the beginning of the second sentence for comparison purposes with the previous sentence



1. The first band was dire. **Much more exciting** was Red Heat, the second group to play.
2. Many of the monuments are truly awesome. **Best of all** is the Colosseum.
3. The actors were a mixed bunch. **Least inspiring of all** was Pacino.



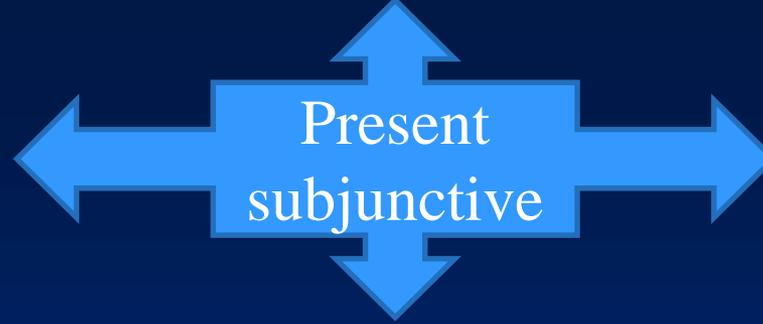
Subjunctives

A. Subjunctive:

A special verb form which refers to situations or events we hope or want to happen.

B. Types of subjunctive

1. Present subjunctive
2. Past subjunctive



➤ Special verbs and adjectives or nouns +that + subject + bare infinitive + the rest of the sentence

Advise, decree, move, prefer, request, suggest, ask, demand, propose, require, urge, command, insist, recommend, stipulate, insist, order, urge, necessary, recommended, urgent, vital, important, obligatory, imperative, required, mandatory, proposed, suggested, essential

1. The judge insisted that the jury return a verdict immediately.
2. I move that we adjourn until this afternoon.
3. Congress has decreed that the gasoline tax be abolished.
4. We proposed that he take a vacation.
5. It will be urgent that he change his mind.
6. It is important that you remember this question.
7. It will be a requirement that everything be prepared in advance.



➤ In fixed phrases and certain exclamations to express a wish or hope

1. Suffice it to say that he is a gallant man.
2. Down with him!
3. God save the queen!
4. Long live the king!
5. Heaven be praised!
6. God forgive you!
7. Heaven help us!
8. Damn you!



Past subjunctive

□ “Were” in hypothetical conditional and wish sentences

1. If she were the queen, the king would die of her moroseness.
2. She wishes she were a night flier.

□ After “would rather/sooner”

1. I would rather you arrived home earlier.
2. She would rather you called her back.

□ After as if/as though

1. He acts as if/as though he were the eldest son
2. You behaved as if/as though you owned the seat.
3. She weeps as though she lost her son.
4. My father snores in bed as if he did not sleep for a year.

□ After “it is (high) time + simple past

1. It is high time we left London.
 2. It is time she got married.
 3. It is high time the government abolished capital punishment.
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