



Inversion: Only Expressions & Correlative Structures

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

1. Only after the meeting ____ the real problem.
a) we understood
b) did we understand
c) we did understand
d) understanding we
2. Not only ____ fluent in French, but she also speaks Japanese.
a) is she
b) she is
c) she does
d) does she
3. No sooner ____ the house than it started to rain.
a) they left
b) they had left
c) had they left
d) did they leave
4. Only when the sun set ____ how late it was.
a) they realised
b) they did realise
c) realising they
d) did they realise
5. Hardly ____ speaking when the audience started clapping.
a) she finished
b) had she finished
c) she had finished
d) did she finish
6. Only by working overtime ____ the deadline.
a) could we meet
b) we could meet
c) we meet
d) meeting we
7. Not only ____ the exam, but he also got the highest score.
a) he passed
b) he did pass
c) did he pass
d) passing he
8. No sooner ____ asleep than the alarm went off.
a) I fell
b) I had fallen
c) falling I
d) had I fallen
9. Only then ____ the importance of the decision.
a) did she appreciate
b) she appreciated
c) she did appreciate
d) appreciating she
10. Scarcely ____ the station when the train departed.
a) we reached
b) had we reached
c) we had reached
d) did we reach
11. Only if you study hard ____ the exam.
a) you pass
b) you will pass
c) will you pass
d) passing you



Answers

1. b) did we understand
2. a) is she
3. c) had they left
4. d) did they realise
5. b) had she finished
6. a) could we meet
7. c) did he pass
8. d) had I fallen
9. a) did she appreciate
10. b) had we reached
11. c) will you pass
12. d) was he
13. a) had they announced
14. b) did the team grasp
15. c) had we sat
16. d) but also
17. a) knew
18. b) was
19. c) than
20. d) knew



Explanations

1. “did we understand” (b)

When 'Only after...' begins a sentence, the main clause that follows needs inversion: 'Only after the meeting did we understand...' Use 'did' + base form for past simple inversion.

2. “is she” (a)

When 'Not only' starts the sentence, the first clause needs inversion: 'Not only is she fluent...' The auxiliary 'is' moves before the subject 'she'. The second clause ('but she also...') keeps normal word order.

3. “had they left” (c)

'No sooner...than' uses past perfect inversion: 'No sooner had they left the house than it started to rain.' The earlier event takes past perfect; the later event takes past simple.

4. “did they realise” (d)

'Only when...' at the front triggers inversion in the main clause: 'Only when the sun set did they realise...' Note: the inversion happens in the main clause, not the 'when' clause.

5. “had she finished” (b)

'Hardly...when' uses past perfect inversion: 'Hardly had she finished speaking when the audience started clapping.' The first action (finishing) takes past perfect; the second (clapping) takes past simple.

6. “could we meet” (a)

'Only by + -ing...' at the front triggers inversion in the main clause: 'Only by working overtime could we meet the deadline.' The modal 'could' moves before the subject.

7. “did he pass” (c)

'Not only' at the front requires inversion: 'Not only did he pass the exam...' Use 'did' + base form. The second clause with 'but...also' keeps normal word order.

8. “had I fallen” (d)

'No sooner...than' requires past perfect inversion: 'No sooner had I fallen asleep than the alarm went off.' The auxiliary 'had' moves before the subject 'I'.

9. “did she appreciate” (a)

'Only then' at the front triggers inversion: 'Only then did she appreciate...' Use 'did' + base form. 'Only then' means 'only at that moment'.

10. “had we reached” (b)

'Scarcely...when' follows the same pattern as 'Hardly...when': past perfect inversion. 'Scarcely had we reached the station when the train departed.'

11. “will you pass” (c)

'Only if...' at the front triggers inversion in the main clause: 'Only if you study hard will you pass the exam.' The modal 'will' moves before the subject in the main clause.

12. “was he” (d)

'Not only' at the front requires inversion: 'Not only was he rude...' The auxiliary 'was' moves before the subject 'he'.

13. “had they announced” (a)

'Hardly...when' requires past perfect inversion: 'Hardly had they announced the news when reporters arrived...' The auxiliary 'had' moves before the subject.

14. “did the team grasp” (b)

'Only after...' at the front triggers inversion in the main clause: 'Only after reading the report did the team grasp...'
Use 'did' + base form for past simple inversion.

15. “had we sat” (c)

'No sooner...than' requires past perfect inversion: 'No sooner had we sat down to eat than someone knocked on the door.'

16. “but also” (d)

When 'not only' does NOT begin the sentence (the subject 'He' starts it), no inversion is needed. Simply complete the correlative pair with 'but also': 'He is not only a talented singer but also a skilled dancer.'

17. “knew” (a)

When 'only' modifies the subject itself (Only Sarah), no inversion is needed. Normal word order applies: 'Only Sarah knew the answer.' Compare: 'Only then did Sarah know the answer.'

18. “was” (b)

'The only reason' is a subject noun phrase — it is not the fronted 'Only...' structure that triggers inversion. Normal word order applies: 'The only reason he passed was that...'

19. “than” (c)

When 'no sooner' is NOT at the beginning of the sentence, no inversion is needed. The correlative connector for 'no sooner' is always 'than': 'She had no sooner arrived home than the phone rang.'

20. “knew” (d)

When 'only' modifies the subject (Only his closest friends), no inversion is needed. Normal word order applies: 'Only his closest friends knew about the secret plan.'