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# The structure of the English Sentence

In this first part of the grammar you are going to review the most common structures in English. In addition, you will study some structures that differ from the normal syntactic order.

We will review some of the things that you have studied in previous years.

→ **Basic Syntax in English** = The order of the normal sentence in English.

→ **The structure of questions** = Questions are an inversion of the normal sentence order.

→ **Inversions** = Sentences that use inversions to emphasize a part of the sentence.

### Basic Syntax in English

When writing in a foreign language it is important to know and to review the order of the words in the sentences we make. Many times we translate directly from our native language and we do not notice that the order of elements is not necessarily the same. One of the main differences between the Romance and the Germanic languages is based on the versatility of the former in the order of the words in the sentence. Declinations allow a wide range of syntactic structures, whereas in English, for instance, subjects and verbs should be closed together or otherwise it would be impossible to understand the sentences.

<b>BASIC SYNTACTIC ORDER:</b> That is the most common. It is employed in affirmative and negative sentences.	
<b>SIMPLE SENTENCE</b> One Conjugated Verb	<p>A)        <u>SUBJECT + VERB + COMPLEMENTS</u>           I            am (not)        very happy</p> <p>B)        <u>SUBJECT + AUXILIARY VERB + VERB + COMPLEMENTS</u>           I            have (not)        been        in England before</p>
<b>COMPOUND SENTENCE</b>	<p>A) <u>SUBJECT+VERB+COMPLEMENTS+CONJUNC.+SUBJEC+VERB+COMPLEMENTS</u> You    are    the student    whose    exam    was lost    last year</p>

Questions are a type of inversion. The inversion allows the hearer to understand that it is a question.

<b>QUESTIONS:</b> An inversion in the syntactic structure shows the interrogative aspect of the sentence.	
<b>SIMPLE SENTENCE</b> One Conjugated Verb	<p>A)        <u>VERB + SUBJECT + COMPLEMENTS</u>           Am            I    (not)        very happy    ?</p> <p>B)        <u>AUXILIARY VERB + SUBJECT + VERB + COMPLEMENTS</u>           Have            I (not)        been        in England ?</p> <p>C)        <u>INT. PRONOUN+AUXILIARY VERB + SUBJECT + VERB +PREP?</u>           What            are            you        waiting for?</p>
<b>COMPOUND SENTENCE</b>	<p>A) <u>VERB+SUBJECT +COMPLEMENTS +CONJUNC.+SUBJEC</u>           <u>+VERB+COMPLEMENTS</u> Are    you        the student    whose    exam    was lost    last year ?</p>

The interrogative pronouns will always have a function in the sentence.

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS		
	<b>SUBJECT</b> WHO - WHAT - WHICH	<b>ADVERB</b> WHEN - WHY - HOW
	<b>OBJECT</b> WHICH - WHOM (WHO)	<b>POSSESSIVE</b> WHOSE

You should be able to distinguish between:

QUESTIONS: Different functions of the interrogative pronoun	
<b>Pronoun as subject</b>	<p><b>Who invited you to the party?</b> =&gt; <i>Somebody invited you to the party</i>                      Pronoun as Subject + verb + objects ?                      There is no inversion because the subject (the interrogative pronoun) cannot follow the verb. The structure of the sentence is that of a normal sentence in English = SVC</p>
<b>Pronoun as object</b>	<p><b>Who did you invite to the party?</b> =&gt; <i>You invited somebody to the party</i>                      Interrogative pronoun as object + AUX + Subject + verb + other object.                      You must have and inversion. If there is no auxiliary you must use "DO". In addition you must have a subject between the auxiliary and de verb.</p>

A.- Decide whether the interrogative pronoun is subject or object.

- 1.- Who is this man? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.- What are you doing? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.- Who asked you that? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4.- Who did you ask that to? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.- Which cake do you prefer? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6.- Who are you teaching to? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7.- Who teaches you English? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.- What are you doing? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9.- What is Peter doing? \_\_\_\_\_
- 10.- Who took the wallet that was on the table? \_\_\_\_\_

INVERSION	
<b>Some structures invert the subject and the <u>auxiliary verb</u> to give emphasis. This happens...</b>	
<b>agreement</b>	After <b>so, neither, nor</b> and <b>as</b> <i>So do I. Neither do I / Nor do I.. Her patients loved her, as did her colleagues</i>
<b>result clauses</b>	After <b>so, such, to such a degree</b> , in if these linkers are placed at the beginning <i>So hard does he study that he will pass all his exams in June.</i>
<b>conditionals</b>	<b>should, were</b> and <b>had</b> are placed at the beginning ( <b>if</b> is no needed) <i>Should I see her, I'll tell you.</i> <i>Had I seen her, I would have told you.</i> <i>Were I you, I wouldn't tell her</i>
<b>place</b>	After some expressions at the beginning of the clause: <i>Barely, Hardly (ever) ... when, In no way, Out of..., Under no circumstances, Little, Never (before), No sooner... than, Not only ... but also, Nowhere, Seldom, Rarely, Scarcely (ever)... when.</i> <i>Little did I know about that problem.</i>
<b>Others</b>	With <i>Only after, Only if, Only when, Only by, Not since</i> and <i>Not till/until</i> the <b>inversion</b> occurs <b>in the main clause</b> . <i>Only if you see him <u>will you</u> understand what I'm telling you.</i>
<b>Some other structures invert the subject and the <u>main verb</u>:</b>	
<b>adverbs of place</b>	If the subject is not a pronoun <i>There <u>goes</u> the director. But There <u>he</u> goes.</i> <i>Here <u>is</u> your exam. But Here <u>it</u> is.</i>

**B.- Rewrite the sentences using the new beginning.**

1. We can go on with her idea only if the boss agrees.

Only if \_\_\_\_\_ on with her idea.

2. Peter won't leave the school under any circumstances.

Under \_\_\_\_\_ leave the school.

3. If the fire goes any further, the village will be destroyed.

Should \_\_\_\_\_.

4. If you had studied more, you would have passed the exam.

Had \_\_\_\_\_.

5. He had just returned from Belgium when he had to go to Amsterdam.

No sooner \_\_\_\_\_.

6. He took such a long nap that he woke up with a terrible headache.

Such a \_\_\_\_\_.

7. Peter never seems worried about the exams.

Never \_\_\_\_\_.

8. I've never studied so much anywhere else.

Nowhere \_\_\_\_\_.

9. I had barely finished laying the table when my first guests arrived.

Barely \_\_\_\_\_ when my first guests arrived.

10. Peter didn't thank me once for all this work.

Not \_\_\_\_\_.

**EXPRESSIONS WITH INVERTED ORDER**

<b>So</b>	<u>SO + AUX.+ SUBJECT</u> (when you agree with something) So do I So did I So had I  Ex. 'I went to the British Museum when I was in England' 'So did I'
<b>NEITHER, NOR</b>	<u>NEITHER or NOR + AUX.+ SUBJECT</u> (when you agree with something) Neither do I Nor did my parents Neither should she Ex. 'Some of my friends had never gone before' 'Neither had mine'

**C.-** Fill the gaps in the answers with *so, neither, nor* and the appropriate verb (and subject).

1. I don't feel like studying today.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Let's watch TV.*

2. I really like our English teacher.

\_\_\_\_\_ *He's very patient.*

3. I love going out at night.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. I don't know what to give mum for her birthday.

\_\_\_\_\_. Why don't we ask her what she wants?

5. We're thinking of going to Benidorm next summer.

\_\_\_\_\_. We have heard it is a great holiday resort.

**D.-** Error analysis. Find the word that should not be in the sentence.

1. Only when did she finished her work was she paid.
2. It was Peter who he decided when the course would start.
3. Whatever it is he doing.
4. He did left early for school.
5. I hate English and so does hates my friends.
6. Do you come in please.
7. Why does is it that you always do the wrong thing?
8. It was yesterday that Peter did came.
9. That was how had he created the school.
10. No sooner when had he arrived in his office than the telephone rang.

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