Word Order

CEFR C1 · Information structure, end-weight and marked orderings

WS1 Given–New & End-focus · WS2 End-weight & Extraposition · WS3 Inversion, Cleft & Fronting · WS4 Critical Analysis & Writing · Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Given–New & End-focus

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: Old Information First, New Information Last

English orders a clause so that **given** (known) information comes early and **new** or focal information falls at the end — the *end-focus* principle. Word-order choices (active vs passive, dative alternation, fronting) are often driven by this, not by grammar alone.

Principle	Motivation	Example
End-focus	new/important info last	The prize went to **a complete unknown**.
Passive	keep given subject as topic	**The painting** was bought by a collector.
Dative shift	shorter/given object first	He gave **it** to the museum.
Fronting	make an element the topic	**As for cost**, we'll discuss that later.

Part A – Reorder for End-focus

Rewrite so the new or focal element lands at the end.

1. A stranger no one recognised won the award. → _____
2. The committee, after long debate, rejected it. → _____
3. To the archive she donated the letters. → _____

Part B – Active or Passive?

Choose the version with better information flow and justify it.

#	Context (given topic in brackets)	Choice & reason
1	(The bridge) A famous firm designed the bridge. / The bridge was designed by a famous firm.	
2	(Marie Curie) Marie Curie discovered radium. / Radium was discovered by Marie Curie.	
3	(the report) The committee has finally approved the report. / The report has finally been approved.	

Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 2: End-weight & Extraposition

Name: _____ *Date:* _____ *Level: C1 (CEFR)*

Reference: Light Before Heavy

English prefers **light** (short) elements before **heavy** (long) ones. Extraposition with **it** shifts a heavy subject clause to the end (*It surprised us that…*); heavy noun phrases and clauses gravitate rightward. Balancing weight improves readability and rhythm.

Awkward (heavy early)	Improved (heavy last)
That he lied to the board is obvious.	**It** is obvious that he lied to the board.
To predict the outcome was impossible.	**It** was impossible to predict the outcome.
A report running to 400 pages was filed.	A report was filed, **running to 400 pages**.
She gave the fund all her savings.	She gave all her savings **to the fund**.

Part A – Apply Extraposition

1. That the plan failed shocked no one. → _____
2. To find a solution quickly proved hard. → _____
3. Whether she knew remains unclear. → _____

Part B – Rebalance for End-weight

Rewrite so the heaviest element comes last.

#	Unbalanced sentence	Rebalanced
1	He explained his reasons for resigning after twenty years to us.	
2	A woman carrying three heavy bags and a child entered.	
3	The idea that machines might one day think troubled him.	

Score: _____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Inversion, Cleft & Fronting

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: Marked Orders for Focus

Beyond negative inversion, C1 writers control **clefts** (splitting a clause to spotlight a constituent), **subject–verb inversion** after fronted place/direction adverbials, and **fronting** for topic and contrast. Each redistributes focus without changing propositional content.

Structure	Example	Focus
it-cleft	It was patience that won it.	spotlights the subject
wh-cleft	What we lacked was time.	spotlights the new element
Place inversion	Down the valley rolled the mist.	vivid; heavy subject last
Negative inversion	Not once did she waver.	emphatic + inversion
Fronting	This much we know.	topic / contrast

Part A – Rewrite as the Structure Named

1. Her honesty impressed them most. (it-cleft) → _____
2. We need more time, above all. (wh-cleft) → _____
3. A lone figure stood at the gate. (place inversion) → _____
4. She never once looked back. (negative inversion) → _____

Part B – Choose the Best Structure

State which marked structure best serves each aim and why.

#	Communicative aim	Structure & reason
1	Pinpoint WHICH factor was decisive	
2	Add dramatic, formal weight to a negative adverbial	
3	Create a vivid image with a long subject	

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Critical Analysis & Writing

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Part A – Critical Reading

> It was not the scale of the failure that stunned observers, but its speed. Down came the share price; with it went the confidence of a decade. What the board had dismissed as a temporary dip proved terminal. Never before had so established a firm unravelled so fast — and only when the auditors arrived did the extent of the losses, hidden for years in the accounts, finally emerge.

1. Identify the two clefts and state what each foregrounds.
2. Find the place inversion and the negative inversion; rewrite each in neutral order.
3. The final clause defers "finally emerge" to the end. Analyse how end-focus and end-weight operate here.
4. Rewrite the passage in flat, neutral order. What rhetorical effects are lost?

Part B – Extended Analytical Writing

Write a formal analytical paragraph of 160–200 words on: "Word order in English is less a matter of rule than of emphasis."

You must include and underline: (1) one **cleft**; (2) one instance of **inversion** (negative or place); (3) one deliberate use of **end-weight/extraposition**; (4) one **fronted** element serving cohesion; (5) two **epistemic hedges** calibrated to claim strength.

#	Line
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

Features: _____ / 5 Word count: _____ Score: _____ / 35

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only — C1 Level, Word Order

Worksheet 1 – Part A (model)

1 The award was won by a stranger no one recognised. / The award went to a stranger no one recognised. · 2 After long debate, the committee rejected it. (or keep passive to end on the agent if that is focal) · 3 She donated the letters to the archive.

Worksheet 1 – Part B (model)

1 Passive — keeps "the bridge" (given) as topic; the firm is new. · 2 Active — "Marie Curie" is the given topic; radium is the new focus at the end. · 3 Passive — "the report" is given; the agent is redundant, so end-focus falls on "approved".

Worksheet 2 – Part A

1 It shocked no one that the plan failed. · 2 It proved hard to find a solution quickly. · 3 It remains unclear whether she knew.

Worksheet 2 – Part B (model)

1 He explained to us his reasons for resigning after twenty years. (light "to us" before the heavy NP) · 2 A woman entered, carrying three heavy bags and a child. · 3 The idea troubled him that machines might one day think. (extrapose the heavy appositive clause)

Worksheet 3 – Part A (model)

1 It was her honesty that impressed them most. · 2 What we need (above all) is more time. · 3 At the gate stood a lone figure. · 4 Not once did she look back.

Worksheet 3 – Part B (model)

1 it-cleft — isolates and identifies the decisive factor. · 2 negative inversion — lends formal, dramatic emphasis a cleft can't. · 3 place inversion — lets a long, vivid subject fall at the end (end-weight) while foregrounding the setting.

Worksheet 4 – Part A (model)

1 "It was not the scale of the failure that stunned observers, but its speed" (it-cleft — contrasts speed vs scale); "What the board had dismissed as a temporary dip proved terminal" (wh-cleft — foregrounds the misjudged thing). · 2 Place inversion: "Down came the share price" → The share price came down / fell. Negative inversion: "Never before had so established a firm unravelled so fast" → So established a firm had never before unravelled so fast. · 3 The heavy participial modifier ("hidden for years in the accounts") is held back so the clause ends on the focal verb "emerge"; end-weight defers the long modifier, end-focus lands the revelation last. · 4 Neutral order removes the contrastive spotlighting, the dramatic cadence and the build to the final revelation; the account reads informative but flat.

Worksheet 4 – Part B: Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Cleft	Correctly formed; focus motivated	0–5
Inversion	Negative or place inversion, correct	0–5
End-weight	Extraposition/end-weight used deliberately	0–5

Fronting / cohesion	Fronted element links back; topic clear	0–5
Argument & length	160–200 words; developed with hedges	0–5