Word Order

CEFR B2 · Fronting, marked order and adverbial flexibility

WS1 Fronting for Emphasis · WS2 Adverb Position & Meaning · WS3 Negative Inversion · WS4 Analysis & Writing · Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Fronting for Emphasis

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Reference: Moving Elements to the Front

Fronting moves an element to the start of the clause to mark it as the topic or to create contrast. Most fronting keeps normal subject–verb order; only **negative/restrictive** adverbials trigger inversion (covered in WS3). Fronting adds emphasis and improves cohesion by linking back to the previous sentence.

Neutral	Fronted	Effect
I can't stand that noise.	**That noise**, I can't stand.	topic / contrast
A vase stood on the shelf.	**On the shelf** stood a vase.	place fronting + inversion
She was born poor but proud.	**Poor but proud**, she was born.	descriptive emphasis
We will never forget that day.	**That day** we will never forget.	emphatic topic

Part A – Front the Element in Bold

1. I really dislike **his attitude**. → _____
2. A small church stood **at the top of the hill**. → _____
3. We remember **those summers** most fondly. → _____
4. The results were **most surprising**. → _____

Part B – Front for Cohesion

Rewrite the second sentence with fronting so it links back to the first.

#	Pair	Rewrite (fronted)
1	We discussed the budget. / We could not agree on the budget.	
2	She offered three reasons. / I accepted none of the reasons.	
3	He faced many obstacles. / He overcame every obstacle.	

Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Adverb Position & Meaning

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Reference: Position Can Change Meaning

Some adverbs change meaning or scope with position. *Only, even, just, also* and focusing adverbs attach to whatever they precede. Sentence adverbs (*clearly, frankly, unfortunately*) comment on the whole clause and can move; manner adverbs comment on the verb and are less mobile.

Sentence	Meaning
Only she told him the truth.	no one else told him
She **only** told him the truth.	she did nothing but tell
She told **only** him the truth.	she told him and no one else
She told him **only** the truth.	nothing but the truth

Part A – Explain the Meaning Change

State how the meaning differs when *only* moves.

#	Pair	Difference in meaning
1	a) I only saw Ben. b) I saw only Ben.	
2	a) Even Sara laughed. b) Sara even laughed.	
3	a) He just wanted to help. b) He wanted to help just her.	

Part B – Position the Focusing Adverb

Place *only* so the sentence has the meaning given.

1. (meaning: nobody else came) _____ Tom _____ came _____ to the party.
   _____
2. (meaning: she read and did nothing else) She _____ read _____ the book.
   _____
3. (meaning: he spoke to her and no one else) He spoke _____ to _____ her.
   _____

Part C – Move the Sentence Adverb

Give two acceptable positions for the adverb in brackets.

1. (frankly) I don't agree with the decision. _____
2. (unfortunately) The train was delayed. _____

Score: _____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Negative Inversion

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Reference: Front a Negative, Invert the Verb

When a negative or restrictive adverbial is fronted for emphasis, the subject and auxiliary **invert**, as in a question. This is a marker of formal and literary register.

Neutral	Inverted (emphatic / formal)
I had never seen such a crowd.	**Never had I** seen such a crowd.
She rarely raises her voice.	**Rarely does she** raise her voice.
He didn't realise until later.	**Not until later did he** realise.
They had no sooner arrived than it began.	**No sooner had they** arrived than it began.
You must not open it in any case.	**Under no circumstances must you** open it.

Part A – Invert for Emphasis

1. I have never heard such a claim. → Never _____.
2. We had hardly sat down when the bell rang. → Hardly _____.
3. She little suspected the truth. → Little _____.
4. You will not find better value anywhere. → Nowhere _____.
5. They understood the risk only then. → Only then _____.

Part B – Correct the Inversion

#	Wrong sentence	Correction
1	Never I had felt so welcome.	
2	No sooner we had left than it rained.	
3	Rarely she does complain.	
4	Not only he was late, but he lost the keys.	

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Analysis & Writing

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: B2 (CEFR)

Part A – Passage Analysis

> Not until the final page did the meaning become clear. On the desk lay the letter she had never sent; beside it, the reply she had never received. Rarely had a silence said so much. That version of events, the family would never accept — and only years later, when the house was sold, did the truth finally surface.

1. Identify the three examples of inversion and rewrite each in neutral order.
2. Find one fronted element that does **not** trigger inversion and explain why.
3. Comment on how the fronting in "That version of events, the family would never accept" serves cohesion and emphasis.
4. Rewrite the passage entirely in neutral order. What is lost?

Part B – Extended Writing

Write 160–190 words in a formal or literary register (a report, review, or narrative). You must include and underline: (1) at least two instances of **fronting** (one with inversion, one without); (2) at least one **focusing adverb** (*only/even/just*) placed for precise scope; (3) one **sentence adverb**; (4) consistent register throughout.

#	Line
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	

Fronting: _____ / 2 Focus adverb: _____ / 1 Score: _____ / 35

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only — B2 Level, Word Order

Worksheet 1 – Part A (model)

1 His attitude, I really dislike. · 2 At the top of the hill stood a small church. · 3 Those summers we remember most fondly. · 4 Most surprising were the results.

Worksheet 1 – Part B (model)

1 The budget, we could not agree on. · 2 Three reasons she offered; none (of them) I accepted. · 3 Many obstacles he faced; every one he overcame.

Fronting the shared element links the two sentences and signals contrast — a cohesion tool, not just emphasis.

Worksheet 2 – Part A (model)

1 a) I did nothing but see Ben (maybe I did nothing else); b) I saw Ben and no one else. · 2 a) Sara was the least likely to laugh, yet did; b) laughing was one surprising thing among others Sara did. · 3 a) his only wish was to help; b) the person he wanted to help was her specifically.

Worksheet 2 – Part B

1 Only Tom came to the party. · 2 She only read the book. (or: She read only the book, for "nothing but the book") · 3 He spoke only to her.

Worksheet 2 – Part C (model)

1 Frankly, I don't agree… / I frankly don't agree… / I don't agree with the decision, frankly. · 2 Unfortunately, the train was delayed. / The train was, unfortunately, delayed. / The train was delayed, unfortunately.

Worksheet 3 – Part A

1 Never have I heard such a claim. · 2 Hardly had we sat down when the bell rang. · 3 Little did she suspect the truth. · 4 Nowhere will you find better value. · 5 Only then did they understand the risk.

Worksheet 3 – Part B

1 Never had I felt so welcome. · 2 No sooner had we left than it rained. · 3 Rarely does she complain. · 4 Not only was he late, but he (also) lost the keys.

Worksheet 4 – Part A (model)

1 "Not until the final page did the meaning become clear" → The meaning did not become clear until the final page. / "On the desk lay the letter…" → The letter she had never sent lay on the desk. / "Rarely had a silence said so much" → A silence had rarely said so much. / "only years later … did the truth surface" → The truth finally surfaced only years later. · 2 "That version of events, the family would never accept" — object fronting; no inversion because the fronted element is not a negative/restrictive adverbial, so subject–verb order is kept. · 3 It fronts the object as a topic linking back to the narrative and throws contrastive weight onto "never accept". · 4 Neutral order removes the suspense, the cadence and the foregrounding; the prose reads flatter and less literary.

Worksheet 4 – Part B: Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks

Fronting	One with inversion + one without, both correct	0–5
Focusing adverb	Placed for precise, intended scope	0–4
Sentence adverb	Used and positioned naturally	0–3
Register & task	160–190 words; consistent register	0–3