

Grammar Explanation

Avoiding double negatives

- Use only one negative in a clause. Using more than one negative in a single sentence is incorrect.
 - Incorrect: *Joe will **not** get **no** parole before serving at least ten years.*
 - Corrected: *Joe will **not** get parole before serving at least ten years.*

- Pronouns such as *nobody*, *no one*, *none*, *nothing* are negative. Do not use them with *no* or *not*.
 - Incorrect: *The defendant has **not** done **nothing** illegal.*
 - Corrected: *The defendant has **not** done **anything** illegal.*

- *Never* and *neither* have negative meanings. Do not use them with *no* or *not*.
 - Incorrect: *Mr. Myers **doesn't** agree with the proposal **neither**.*
 - Corrected: *Mr. Myers **doesn't** agree with the proposal **either**.*

- Words such as *barely*, *scarcely*, *hardly* are considered negative. Do not use them with *no* or *not*.
 - Incorrect: *The politicians **don't hardly** understand what caused the sudden shift in public opinion.*
 - Corrected: *The politicians **hardly** understand what caused the sudden shift in public opinion.*

Excerpted from: Editing Exercises: Exercise 2