

Grammar Explanation

Identifying and fixing problems with word order

- In indirect questions (where the question word is in the middle of the sentence), place the subject immediately after the question word.
 - Incorrect: *The investigators did not discover **why did the disaster occur**.*
 - Corrected: *The investigators did not find out **why the disaster occurred**.*
- In direct questions, make sure a verb comes before the subject except when the question word or phrase is the subject (e.g., ***Who won** yesterday?*).
 - Incorrect: *Which debate **she won**?*
 - Corrected: *Which debate **did she win**?*
- When introducing a clause with *not only* or another negative or restrictive expression, put the verb before the subject.
 - Incorrect: *Not only **the proposal is** helpful for seniors, it benefits children as well.*
 - Corrected: *Not only **is the proposal** helpful for seniors, it benefits children as well.*
- When describing nouns, place the adjective clause (beginning with *that*, *which*, *who*, etc.) or prepositional phrase (a phrase beginning with *by*, *in*, *on*, etc.) immediately after the specific noun or noun phrase that it is describing.
 - Example: *For the sociology paper ***that has been assigned***, I chose an article ***by Helen Lee*** from the textbook.*
- When describing a verb, do not put an adverb (e.g., *always*, *quickly*) between the verb and the object.
 - Incorrect: *Middle class Americans do not receive ***always*** health insurance.*
 - Corrected: *Middle class Americans do not ***always*** receive health insurance.*

Excerpted from: Sentence Structure: Exercise 4