# SPAG L2 – Positive and negative sentences

# 1 of 17 – Welcome

Welcome to this session on affirmative (positive) and negative sentences.

In this session we will cover:

* Identifying affirmative (positive) and negative sentences
* No and not – contractions
* Negative transformations
* Subject-verb agreement
* Indefinite pronouns
* Double negatives

# 2 of 17 – Question 1

Some examples of ‘negative’ sentences have the word ‘no’ or ‘not’ used with a verb or an auxiliary verb. An example of this type of negative sentence is:

She may **not** be aware of the danger.

In spoken English we very often use a shortened version of the word ‘not’.

The word ‘not’ is shortened to **n’t**.

What is this called? Pick one of the following.

* Correction
* Contraction
* Connective

**Answer:**

The correct answer is **contraction**.

# 3 of 17 – Identifying positive and negative sentences

Some examples of ‘negative’ sentences have the word ‘no’ or ‘not’ used with a verb or an auxiliary verb. These ‘auxiliary verbs’ include: am, are, is, do, does and can.

For example:

An affirmative (positive) would be: ‘Yes, I do like olives.’

A negative would be: ‘No, I don’t like olives.’

In the above example, ‘like’ is the main verb. ‘Do’ is the auxiliary verb, and the word not (shortened to n’t) is used to show that the meaning of the sentence is negative.

What is a negative transformation?

A negative transformation is when the word ‘not’ transforms an affirmative (positive) sentence into a negative one.

# 4 of 17 – Question 2

Identify whether each of the following sentences are affirmative or negative.

Affirmative sentences state that something is the case.

Negative sentences state that something is not the case.

1. I get up at 7 o’clock every day.
2. I don’t usually feel like eating breakfast.
3. I don’t feel properly awake until about 10 o’clock in the morning.
4. I usually enjoy my day at college.
5. I hate doing homework at the weekend!

**Answers:**

1. ‘I get up at 7 o’clock every day.’ Is an affirmative sentence.
2. ‘I don’t usually feel like eating breakfast.’ Is a negative sentence.
3. ‘I don’t feel properly awake until about 10 o’clock in the morning.’ Is a negative sentence.
4. ‘I usually enjoy my day at college.’ Is an affirmative sentence.
5. ‘I hate doing homework at the weekend!’ Is an affirmative sentence.

# 5 of 17 – Identifying positive and negative sentences

**IMPORTANT NOTE**:

In the example, ‘I hate doing homework at the weekend’, the verb ‘hate’ has a negative meaning.

**HOWEVER: this is still an affirmative sentence!** Look at how **negative transformation** is used in the following sentences.

* I hate doing homework at the weekend!
* I **don’t** hate doing homework at the weekend!

Here are some more examples:

Affirmative sentences using a negative word:

1. I feel sad after watching the film.
2. She’s disgusted by cyber-bullying.

Negative transformations of those sentences:

1. I don’t feel sad after watching the film.
2. She isn’t disgusted by cyber-bullying.

# 6 of 17 – Negative transformation

Here are some examples of turning positive sentences into negative ones.

Positive sentences:

1. I like Brussels sprouts.
2. You should talk back to teachers.
3. He can play the trombone.
4. I’ve been to the dentist this year.

Negative transformations:

1. I don’t like Brussels sprouts.
2. You shouldn’t talk back to teachers.
3. He can’t play the trombone.
4. I’ve not been to the dentist this year, or, I haven’t been to the dentist this year.

# 7 of 17 – Negative transformation example

In the last example, the final sentence can be transformed in two different ways:

I’ve not been to the dentist’s this year.

Or

I **haven’t** been to the dentist’s this year.

Both have the same meaning.

# 8 of 17 – Subject-verb agreement

Subject-verb agreement is an important part of grammar, and many mistakes are made with it, especially when speaking informally or in ‘slang’.

Subjects: I, you, he, she, it, they or a noun.

Auxiliary verbs: am, are, is, do, does, has, have.

The subject has to ‘agree’ with the auxiliary verb it’s used with. For example, I am, you are, Anna is, Steve does, they have.

Here is a correct example:

I **do** my own ironing.

Here is an incorrect example:

I does my own ironing.

# 9 of 17 – Question 3

Find the verbs in the following sentences that do not agree with their subject and state the correct form of the verb.

1. They is so good at playing FIFA.
2. Jay aren’t going to watch Aston Villa on Saturday.
3. I think Wayne Rooney don’t play for England anymore.

Answers:

For the first sentence, the incorrect verb is, ‘Is’ and should be replaced by ‘are’.

For the second sentence, the incorrect verb is ‘aren’t’ and should be replaced by ‘isn’t’.

For the third sentence, the incorrect verb is ‘don’t’ and should be replaced by ‘doesn’t’.

# 10 of 17 – Question 4

Another way we can make negative sentences is by using ‘indefinite pronouns’.

Try to match the following words with their opposites.

Words:

1. no-one
2. nobody
3. nowhere
4. nothing
5. none

Opposites:

1. all, some
2. everywhere, somewhere, anywhere
3. everything, something, anything
4. everyone, someone, anyone
5. everybody, somebody, anybody

**Answers**:

No-one matches with: everyone, someone anyone

Nobody matches with: everybody, somebody, anybody

Nowhere matches with: everywhere, somewhere, anywhere

Nothing matches with: everything, something, anything

None matches with: all, some

# 11 of 17 – Identifying positive and negative sentences

Using indefinite pronouns, we can make negative sentences in two ways.

We can use a negative indefinite pronoun with an affirmative verb, or a positive indefinite pronoun with a negative verb.

To explain it more simply, here are two examples:

* I can find nothing in my bedroom.
* I can’t find anything in my bedroom.

Both sentences mean the same thing.

# 12 of 17 – Question 5

Try to identify the missing pronoun from each other following sentences. Choose from some of the listed pronouns given to you.

1. Kevin’s really disrespectful; I think **blank** likes him.
2. It’s so foggy, I can’t see **blank**!
3. When our cat ran away, she was **blank** to be found for weeks.
4. **Blank** you could say could ever make this better.
5. **Blank** of you must be late handing in your essay.

Indefinite pronouns:

Everywhere, nowhere, somewhere, anywhere, everything, anything, something, nothing, everyone, anyone, someone, no-one/nobody, all, none

Answers:

1. Kevin’s really disrespectful; I think **no-one/nobody** likes him.
2. It’s so foggy, I can’t see **anything**!
3. When our cat ran away, she was **nowhere** to be found for weeks.
4. **Nothing** you could say could ever make this better.
5. **None** of you must be late handing in your essay.

# 13 of 17 – Question 6

So, we should avoid putting negative verbs in the same sentence as negative words and pronouns like:

* no / not / none / nothing / nowhere / no-one / nobody

For example, we cannot say, as Dot Branning does in Eastenders: ‘I ain’t never heard of no licence.’

Try to correct the following sentences:

1. I haven’t done nothing today.
2. They can’t go nowhere tonight; they’re grounded.
3. She hasn’t got no money.

**Answers:**

1. I haven’t done anything today.
2. They can’t go anywhere tonight; they’re grounded.
3. She hasn’t got any money.

# 14 of 17 – Question 7

In conversation, pop songs and slang, people use a number of negative verbs that do not actually exist in correct English!

Which of the following words exist in correct English?

* Ain’t
* Couldn’t
* Shan’t
* Cen’t
* Mightn’t

Answer:

The words ‘Couldn’t’, ‘Shan’t’ and ‘Mightn’t’ exist in correct English.

# 15 of 17 – Question 8

To re-cap, you will be completing two short quizzes. For the first one, all you have to do is create new sentences using negative auxiliary verbs and different indefinite pronouns.

Original sentences:

* I have nothing in my pockets.
* The little girl could find her dog nowhere.
* The spy was told he must talk to no-one.

Fill in the gaps in the following sentences to make the sentences correct.

* I **blank** have **blank** in my pockets.
* The little girl **blank** find her dog **blank**.
* The spy was told he **blank** talk to **blank**.

Answers:

* I **don’t** have **anything** in my pockets.
* The little girl **couldn’t** find her dog **anywhere**.
* The spy was told he **mustn’t** talk to **anyone**.

# 16 of 17 – Question 9

Finally, try to correct the mistakes in the following sentences. All of them contain one mistake.

1. She don’t work here any more.
2. The bees have escaped – their everywhere!
3. There wasn’t no more room left in his suitcase.

Answers:

1. She **doesn’t** work here any more.
2. The bees have escaped – **they’re** everywhere.
3. There wasn’t **any** more room left in his suitcase.

# 17 of 17 – End

Well done. You have completed this session on affirmative (positive) and negative sentences.

In this session we have covered:

* Identifying affirmative (positive) and negative sentences
* No and not – contractions
* Negative transformations
* Subject-verb agreement
* Indefinite pronouns
* Double negatives

If you are unsure or have any questions about any of these topics, make a note and speak to your tutor for more help.