

21.4**Double Negatives • Practice 1**

The Mistaken Use of Double Negatives Do not write sentences with double negatives.

AVOIDING DOUBLE NEGATIVES	
Double Negative	Corrected Sentence
I can't <i>never</i> remember his name.	I can <i>never</i> remember his name. I can't <i>ever</i> remember his name.
They haven't given me <i>none</i> .	They <i>have</i> given me <i>none</i> . They haven't given me <i>any</i> .
We <i>never</i> saw <i>no</i> lions.	We <i>never</i> saw <i>any</i> lions. We saw <i>no</i> lions.

Exercise 1 **Avoiding Double Negatives in Sentences.** Underline the word in parentheses that completes each sentence correctly.

EXAMPLE: I haven't (never, ever) been to Japan.

- Our group (will, won't) never be able to finish on time.
- He didn't say (nothing, anything) about his future plans.
- I (do, don't) want to see anything on television this evening.
- Nobody had heard (nothing, anything) about the speech.
- My sister doesn't (ever, never) get up early on weekends.
- The chairman hasn't appointed (no one, anyone) to head the committee.
- He (should, shouldn't) never have expected everyone to assist him.
- She hasn't (ever, never) explained why she is studying this area.
- We (could, couldn't) see nothing from where we sat.
- She won't lend me (none, any) of her books.

Exercise 2 **Correcting Sentences With Double Negatives.** Rewrite each sentence below in two different ways.

EXAMPLE: I haven't never been to Cape Cod.

I have never been to Cape Cod.

I haven't ever been to Cape Cod.

- Don't do nothing until you receive further instructions.

- There isn't no one on our team who plays as well as James.

- William can't find none of the original drafts of his story.

- They couldn't determine no cause for such an action.

- They won't allow no one in until 7:45 P.M.

21.4 Double Negatives • Practice 2

Exercise 1 Correcting Double Negatives. The following sentences contain double negatives. Rewrite each sentence in *two* ways.

EXAMPLE: We didn't tell Frank nothing about the surprise.
We didn't tell Frank anything about the surprise.
We told Frank nothing about the surprise.

1. Jennifer didn't see nobody she knew at the conference.

2. Michael couldn't find nothing about his topic in the encyclopedia.

3. Franklin never suggests nothing really original.

4. I haven't never eaten octopus.

5. Don't say nothing about the contest to Don.

Writing Application Writing Negative Sentences. Use each of the following words in a negative sentence.

EXAMPLE: nobody
When I called her house, nobody answered.

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|-----------|-------------|
| 1. wasn't | 6. can't |
| 2. never | 7. nowhere |
| 3. not | 8. nothing |
| 4. didn't | 9. wouldn't |
| 5. none | 10. no |
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
 6. _____
 7. _____
 8. _____
 9. _____
 10. _____