

The process of turning a phrase or clause into a **negative** one (one that says something is *not*) is called **negation**.

This can be achieved by putting in the word **not**, or adding the ending **-n't** to a word.

I am *not* going.

Jane will *not* eat her lunch.

They *don't* know what is happening.

Using negatives

You should use the same verbs as you would for a positive structure:

- ✓ I *am* ready.
- ✓ I *am not* ready yet.
- ✗ I *ain't* ready yet.

It is important to put the word **not** in the correct place in a sentence, otherwise the meaning of the sentence may be confused. Compare the different meanings of these sentences:

I do *not* think the instructions are clear and they need to be rewritten.

I think the instructions are *not* clear and they need to be rewritten.



All the villages do *not* have running water.
Not all the villages have running water.

Double negatives

In Standard English only one word with negative meaning should be used in a sentence:

I did *not* do anything.

A **double negative** is what you get if you have two words with negative meaning in one sentence:

I did *not* do *nothing*.

This is not considered correct in Standard English, so it is best to avoid them in formal speech or writing.



How would you make these sentences negative?

- 1. Are you ready yet?**
- 2. I am happy about this.**
- 3. Listen to him!**