

Tricky Synthesis & Transformation Questions

There are certain S&T questions types that can be easily “solved” if you know the “pattern”. One of these is the *No sooner / Barely, Hardly, Scarcely* question.

e.g. The door automatically opened once I rang the bell.

No sooner _____.

The table below should serve as a “template” for you to easily answer these questions:

given word(s)	the very next word	First action	“connector”	Second action
No sooner	<i>had</i>	always use the past participle form of the verb: ate (past form) x eaten (past participle form) ✓	<i>than</i>	copy directly as it appears in the question stem
Hardly/ Barely/ Scarcely	<i>had</i>	always use the past participle form of the verb: ate (past form) x eaten (past participle form) ✓	<i>when</i>	copy directly as it appears in the question stem

“No sooner (had)” and “Hardly/Barely/Scarcely (had)” both are used to show two events that happened almost immediately after each other.

Common mistakes students make when attempting this:

- Wrong usage of the “connector”: using “then” instead of “than” / mixing up “than” and “when”

A trick to help you remember!

Use the “-er” in “sooner” as *comparing* the two actions. This way, you will always remember to use “than” instead of “then”

- Forgetting to change the verb in the “First action” to the past participle form.

Remember!

After “had”, the next verb we use *must always be* in the past participle form.

So ... *Can you now successfully attempt the question above?*

No sooner had I rung the bell than the door automatically opened.

Well done! All the best for your examinations!