

No sooner ... than, etc.

If the second event occurs immediately after the first, we can express that idea using the structure *no sooner ... than*.

Note that in this structure *no sooner* introduces the event that occurred first.

*No sooner **had I arrived** at the station than the train **came**.*
past perfect past simple
(= *I came first and the train arrived right after me.*)

No sooner had we heard the noise than we rushed to the spot.
No sooner had she finished one project than she started working on the next.
No sooner had I closed my eyes than I fell asleep.

Note that *did* is also possible in this structure.

No sooner did I arrive at the station than the train came.
No sooner did we hear the noise than we rushed to the spot.

When we begin a sentence with a negative word, we put the auxiliary verb before the subject.

No sooner had she read the letter than she started crying.
(*NOT No sooner she read the letter than she started crying.*)

Note that *when* and *before* are not possible in this structure.

Hardly and scarcely

It is possible to express the same idea using *hardly/scarcely...when*.

Hardly had I reached the station when the train came.
Scarcely had I reached the station when the train arrived.

As soon as

This structure is also used with the same meaning.

As soon as I arrived at the station, the train came.
As soon as she finished one project, she started working on the next.