

## What Are Double Negatives?

A **double negative** results when one uses more than one negative word or construction to express a single negative thought.

Double negatives are used in English to make a very positive statement, but this is not appropriate for a scientific paper. In addition, in Japanese, a double negative can actually strengthen the negativeness of a statement. However, its translation into English becomes quite difficult and confusing for the reader.

Remember, too, that words such as **hardly**, **barely**, and **scarcely** are negative in effect.

### Example 1

**Incorrect:** The coach was **unable** to offer **no** reasons for his team's behavior.

**Correct:** The coach was **unable** to offer **any** reasons for his team's behavior.

### Example 2

**Incorrect:** In fact, he was **hardly** able to say **nothing** at all.

**Correct:** In fact, he was **hardly** able to say **anything** at all.

### Example 3

**Incorrect:** **No** background staining was **not** seen.

**Correct:** Background staining was **not** seen.

**Also Correct:** **No** background staining was seen.