

Inversion of If-Clauses

Inversion = Changing the word order

We can invert the if-clauses of conditional sentences and rewrite them in a different way. The inversion of the if-clause leads to the omission of the word "if" and a slight change in the word order, but the meaning of the if-clause stays the same and does not change.

Type I:

In conditional sentences type I, if we want to invert the if-clause, we have to omit the word "if" and we need to use the word "should" instead of "if". In other words, we replace "if" with "should".

Examples:

- **If you study,** you will pass.
- **Should you study,** you will pass.

- **If Michael invests** his money wisely, he can become rich.
- **Should Michael invest** his money wisely, he can become rich.

- **If it doesn't rain,** we will go on a picnic.
- **Should it not rain,** we will go on a picnic.

Type II:

For inversion in conditional sentences type II, if we have the verb "were" in the if-clause, we should omit the word "if" and we ought to move "were" to the beginning of the if-clause.

Examples:

- **If I were a bird,** I could fly.
- **Were I a bird,** I could fly.

- **If Sally were** a millionaire, she would help the poor.
- **Were Sally** a millionaire, she would help the poor.

- **If he weren't ready,** he wouldn't be here.
- **Were he not ready,** he wouldn't be here.

- **If I weren't busy,** I would help you.
- **Were I not busy,** I would help you.

Point:

If we don't have the verb "were" in the if-clause, we should rewrite the if-clause with the expression "be to do something". Then we can invert it easily.

be to do sth = be about to do sth; be supposed to do sth

Examples:

- If you studied, you would pass.
- If you were to study, you would pass.
- Were you to study, you would pass.

- If you didn't study, you would fail.
- If you weren't to study, you would fail.
- Were you not to study, you would fail.

Type III:

If we want to invert the if-clause in conditional sentences type III, we have to omit the conditional word "if" and we need to move the auxiliary verb "had" to the beginning of the if-clause. In other words, we replace "if" with "had".

Examples:

- If you had studied, you would have passed.
- Had you studied, you would have passed.

- If Robert had set up his own business, he would have become rich.
- Had Robert set up his own business, he would have become rich.

- If you hadn't studied, you would have failed.
- Had you not studied, you would have failed.

- If Sara hadn't wasted her time in her youth, she would have become more successful.
- Had Sara not wasted her time in her youth, she would have become more successful.

Point:

Inversion of if-clauses in conditional sentences serves several purposes:

1. **Formality:** Inverted conditionals are often used to create a more formal tone. This structure is more common in written English and formal situations.
2. **Emphasis:** Inversion can add emphasis to the condition, making it stand out more. For example, "Had I known" emphasizes the condition more strongly than "If I had known".
3. **Variety:** Using inversion adds variety to sentence structures, which can make writing more engaging and less repetitive.
4. **Politeness:** In some cases, inversion can make requests or statements sound more polite. For example, "Should you need any assistance" sounds more polite than "If you need any assistance".

Source:

[Intermediate 1 \(anglophone.ir\)](http://intermediate1(anglophone.ir))