

Interval inversion & compound intervals

Turn an interval upside down and it becomes a different interval — but a completely predictable one. Two small rules cover every case, and a third handles intervals too wide for an octave.

THE RULE OF NINE — THE NUMBERS ALWAYS ADD TO 9

1 ↔ 8
UNISON · OCTAVE

2 ↔ 7
SECOND · SEVENTH

3 ↔ 6
THIRD · SIXTH

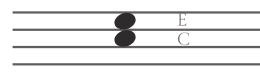
4 ↔ 5
FOURTH · FIFTH

Move the lower note up an octave — or the upper note down one. Subtract the number you started with from nine and you have the answer.

QUALITY FLIPS TOO

START WITH	BECOMES	NOTE
Major	Minor	Swaps both ways.
Perfect	Perfect	The one that stays itself.
Aug.	Dim.	Swaps both ways.

WORKED EXAMPLE — A 3RD INVERTS TO A 6TH



C up to E **major 3rd**

Three letters — C, D, E. Four semitones, so major.



E up to C **minor 6th**

Drop the E an octave: the same letters now span a sixth. 3 + 6 = 9.

COMPOUND INTERVALS — WIDER THAN AN OCTAVE

INTERVAL	MADE OF	SIMPLE EQUIVALENT	FROM C
9th	An octave plus a 2nd	2nd	C up to the D above the next C
10th	An octave plus a 3rd	3rd	C up to E, an octave higher
12th	An octave plus a 5th	5th	C up to G, an octave higher

Subtract seven, name what is left, then put the octave back. Quality carries over: a major 10th is a major 3rd, only wider.

WHY INVERSION IS WORTH KNOWING

It halves the work: learn intervals up to a fifth and inversion gives you the rest. Every sixth is an upside-down third.

COUNT LETTER NAMES, THEN QUALITY

Name the number first, by counting letters inclusively. Only then decide the quality by counting semitones — the other order is where mistakes come from.