

The Inverted Nominal (I.N. Part 1)

Inverted Nominal - What is it?

Inverted nominal - Some verbs can have an object. In some certain grammatical situations, the object comes before the verb. No big deal.

Here we go!

Inverted Nominal - How to

If you're like me, you like cookies. I can't have just one or two, so for the purposes of my examples, we're going to use the plural form of briosgaid (boir.), briosgaidean. My verb of choice for the moment is "bèicearachd" which means "baking." I assume that this is a borrowed word and the dictionaries are a bit vague about it but it's too delicious not to use. We'll just go with it.

- 1) Is toil leam briosgaidean. \ I like cookies.
- 2) Is toil leam ithe. \ I like eating.

This is one of those "Is + Le" constructions, so we can like both nouns and verbal nouns here. Notice that the "a' " from the verbal noun is missing here. It is not used in this situation. Leave it off.

What happens when we want to add a prepositional phrase, like "in the kitchen"?

- 3) Càit' an toil leat a bhith ag ithe? \ Where do you like to be eating?
- 4) Is toil leam ithe anns a' chidsin. \ I like eating in the kitchen.

Notice in #3 that we've used the question word 'Càite' which takes the dependent form of the verb. In this case that is "an toil." Also, we've used the infinitive form of 'Bi' - 'a bhith.' Here we do use the "a' ." Remember that with the verbal noun, the particle "a' " can substitute for "in the act of" - so literally #3 means, "Where do you like to be in the act of eating?"

In #4, we attach the prepositional phrase "in the kitchen" at the end, as you might expect.

NOW, let's add the yummy cookies into the mix. Where do you think the cookies will go?

- 5) Is toil leam briosgaidean ithe anns a' chidsin. \ I like eating cookies in the kitchen.

The cookies goes BEFORE the verb. In addition, there's some funny business going on at the beginning of the verb at the end. Obviously there are some rules for that. Seo iad.

Verb Initial Letter	Rule	Example
vowel	no changes, no a's Note: this is NOT an opportunity for ' dh' '. Step away from the " dh' ".	Is toil leam uisge beatha òl. I like drinking whiskey.
consonant	lenite if possible, add an a (not a') before the verb. Note: verbs beginning with 'F + vowel' operate like vowels because F-lenited is silent. Note eile: this obeys the 'gumpot' rule [sg, sm, sp, st do not lenite]	Is toil leam cèic a dhèanamh. I like making [a] cake. Is toil leam uisge beatha fhaighinn. I like getting whisky.

So in these constructions, when the verbal noun has an object, the object goes before the noun. That's the inverted nominal.

Inverted Nominal - When to use it

Here's a chance to fall in love again with some of your favorite constructions. This is an assortment, but not a complete list.

"Is" Phrases

Is toil leam ...	\ I like...
Bu toil leam ...	\ I would like...
'S fheàrr leam ...	\ I prefer...
B' fheàrr leam ...	\ I would prefer...
'S urrainn dhomh ...	\ I can...
B' urrainn dhomh ...	\ I could...
Bu choir dhomh ...	\ I should...
'S fheàrr dhomh ...	\ I had better...
Is beag orm ...	\ I dislike
Is abhaist dhomh...	\ I usually
B' abhaist dhomh...	\ I used to

Auxiliary/Defective Verbs

Feumaidh mi ...	\ I must
Am faod mi ...	\ May I ... ?

“Bi” constructions

Tha mi ag iarraidh ...	\ I am wanting
Tha mi airson ...	\ I am for
Tha cuimhne agam air ...	\ I remember ...
Tha feum agam air ...	\ I need ...
Tha agam ri ...	\ I have to...
Tha dùil agam ri ...	\ I expect to
Tha mi feuchainn ri ...	\ I'm trying to ...

also, the Perfect Tenses, which have their own handout.

Examples:

- 6) Cha bu toil leis an duine cù a phògadh.
- 7) An fheàrr le Ewan MacGregor fìon dearg òl?
- 8) Cha b' fheàrr leis an nighean bheag craobh mhòr a streap.
- 9) An urrainn dhuibh each làidir a mharcadh? (or marcachadh)
- 10) Is beag orm fìon òl.
- 11) Is abhaist dhomh cèic ithe.
- 12) B' abhaist dhomh uisge beatha òl a h-uile latha.
- 13) Am feum mi doras a dhùnadh. Feumaidh/Chan fheum.
- 14) Am faod mi tì òl? Faodaidh/Chan fhaod.
- 15) Tha mi ag iarraidh cèic ithe.
- 16) Tha mi airson cofaidh a dhèanamh.
- 17) Bha mi air cèic ithe.

A few more example paradigms:

An urrainn dhut an uinneag fhosgladh?
An urrainn dhut cèic a bhèiceireachd?
An urrainn dhuibh Gàidhlig ionnsachadh?
An urrainn do dh'lain an doras fhosgladh?

Tha cuimhne agam air a' chèic ithe.
Tha feum agam air a' chèic ithe.

Tha mi a' sgrìobhadh.
Tha mi a' sgrìobhadh litir.
Tha mi a' sgrìobhadh air a' bhalla.
Tha mi a' sgrìobhadh litir air a' bhalla.

Tha mi ag iarraidh litir.
Tha mi ag iarraidh sgrìobhadh.
Tha mi ag iarraidh ithe.

Tha mi ag iarraidh pògadh.
Tha mi ag iarraidh duine a phògadh.

Tha mi ag iarraidh litir a sgrìobhadh.
Tha mi ag iarraidh litir a sgrìobhadh air a' bhalla.
Tha mi ag iarraidh sgrìobhadh air a' bhalla.

If the object is a pronoun, use the possessive pronoun forms. The rules of lenition and prefixing apply to the following verb.

Sources and further readings

Black, Ronald, Cothrom Ionnsachaidh, pp. 115-116, 117-119. (Inversion)
p. 117. (Pronoun objects used with inversion)
Byrne, Michel, Gràmar na Gàidhlig, pp. 126-130.