



Bridging Work A'Level Music – Eduqas

Understanding inversions
and figured bass.

Inversions and figured bass

- Please open the accompanying document and scroll down to the section on Figured Bass.
- Figured Bass is just the numerical way of writing an inversion chord. It was very popular in the Baroque era and used by Harpsichord players to construct the desired harmony in a piece of music.
- We are going to go over the basics of how to work with figured bass and how it is constructed or "realised".
- Have some manuscript paper to hand so that you can try writing out the inversions listed on each slide.
- The tasks are in red on each slide.

Here is a video to help if you need it, watch before you start the exercises:



Root Position Triad

5

3

- This means you count 5 up from the given bass note and 3 up from the given bass.
- This will result in a root position chord.
- On your paper write out these chords in root position:
- C
- F
- G

First Inversion Triad

6

3

- This means you count 6 up from the given bass note and then 3 up from the given bass note.
- This will result in a first inversion chord.
- Try this with the following notes in the bass:
- C
- F
- G

Second Inversion Triad

6

4

- This means you count 6 up from the given bass note and then 4 up from the given bass note.
- This will result in a second inversion chord.
- Try this with the following notes in the bass:
 - C
 - F
 - G

Root Position of a 7th Chord. Often shortened to just "7".

7

5

3

- This means you count 7 up from the given bass note and then 5 up from the given bass note and then 3 up from the bass note.
- This will result in a 7th chord in root position.
- Try this with the following notes in the bass:
- C
- F
- G

First inversion of a 7th Chord. Often shortened to 6/5.

6

5

3

- This means you count 7 up from the given bass note and then 5 up from the given bass note and then 3 up from the bass note.
- This will result in a 7th chord in first inversion.
- Try this with the following notes in the bass:
- C
- F
- G

Second inversion of a 7th Chord. Often shortened to 4/3.

6

4

3

- This means you count 7 up from the given bass note and then 5 up from the given bass note and then 3 up from the bass note.
- This will result in a 7th chord in second inversion.
- Try this with the following notes in the bass:
- C
- F
- G

Third inversion of a 7th Chord. Often shortened to 4/2 or just 2.

6

4

2

- This means you count 7 up from the given bass note and then 5 up from the given bass note and then 3 up from the bass note.
- This will result in a 7th chord in third inversion.
- Try this with the following notes in the bass:
- C
- F
- G