The **INSERT INTO SELECT** statement in SQL Server is used to insert data from one table into another. This is especially useful for copying data between tables, archiving records, or transforming and moving data from one schema to another.

The **INSERT INTO SELECT** statement requires that the data types in source and target tables match.

**NB:** The existing records on the target table are unaffected.

INSERT INTO SELECT Syntax

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* target\_table: The table where data will be inserted.
* column1, column2, ...: The columns in the target table.
* source\_table: The table from which the data is selected.
* condition: (Optional) A condition to filter the data being inserted.

**Example 1**: Copy all rows from one table to another

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This example copies all employee records from the Employees table to the EmployeesBackup table.

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AI-generated content may be incorrect.**Example 2:** Insert filtered data

Only employees with a salary above 50,000 are inserted into the HighSalaryEmployees table.

**Example 3:** Insert from a join

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This inserts historical orders and their related customer names into an archive table.

**NB:**

* The number and order of columns in the INSERT INTO clause must match those in the SELECT clause.
* Data types must be compatible.
* The target\_table can be a temporary table or even a table in a different database (with proper referencing).

**Important things to keep in mind when using INSERT INTO SELECT in SQL Server**

**1. Column Mismatch Errors**

* Make sure the number of columns and the datatypes **match** between the **INSERT INTO** list and the **SELECT** statement.
* If you don’t specify the column names in **INSERT INTO**, it assumes you’re inserting values for **all columns in order**, which can cause errors if the order or count is wrong.

**Bad Example (No column names):**

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**Better (Column names included:**

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**2. Inserting into Identity Columns**

* If the target table has an identity column (auto-increment), and you want to insert specific values into it (e.g., restoring archived data), you must enable identity insert:

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**3.** **Inserting into a Different Database**

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4. **Using SELECT INTO Instead**

If the destination table does **not exist yet**, you can use SELECT INTO instead of INSERT INTO SELECT to create it on the fly:

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NB: SELECT INTO does not copy indexes, constraints, or triggers – only data and schema.

5. **Using TOP with INSERT INTO SELECT**

To limit the number of rows inserted:

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