

Whether or If

Both whether and if can be used to introduce indirect yes/no questions.

I don't know whether I can come. OR I don't know if I can come.

I don't know whether I will have time. OR I don't know if I will have time.

After some verbs, whether is preferred to if.

We discussed whether we should move to another city. (More normal than 'We discussed if we should...')

Whether is usually preferred in a two-part question with or.

I don't know whether I should accept or refuse. OR I don't know if I should accept or refuse.

If cannot be used after prepositions.

We haven't settled the question of whether we should move to a bigger city. (NOT We haven't settled the question of if we should move to a bigger city.)

Whether is used before to-infinitives. If cannot be used before to-infinitives.

I don't know whether to accept or refuse. NOT I don't know if to accept or refuse.

If is not normally used to introduce a clause used as subject or complement.

Whether we can trust our guide is another matter. (More natural than 'If we can trust our guide is another matter'.)

The question is whether our guide can be trusted.

Note that if is possible in a very informal style.

The question is if our guide can be trusted.