Introductory SQL

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About Databases and SQL

Understanding Database Objects

A **table** is a collection of data about a certain subject like customers, vendors or suppliers. It consists of columns and rows into which you store data.

A **field** is a column within a table. Fields all contain only one type of data. For example, within a customer table you might have a "First_Name" field into which you place only the customers' first names.

A **record** is a row within a table. A record contains one set of related field information about a single entry. For example, in a "Customer" table there may be a customer record that contains all of the field information about a single customer in a single row.

A **primary key** is a special relational database table column (or combination of columns) designated to uniquely identify each table record.

A **query** is used to extract only the data that you want or need to view from the tables. These objects are the "heart" of database design- and the whole point of using databases. Queries provide the data that is needed by the other database objects, often working in the background.

SQL is the language used to create the objects that exist within relational database management systems.

A **database** is the entire collection of tables, queries, and other related objects.

A **relational database management system** (RDBMS) is software used to create and maintain a database.

Database Normalization Guidelines

Database normalization is the process of structuring a database in accordance with **normal forms**- guidelines established to reduce data redundancy, while increasing data integrity in database design. While there are other forms, most database designers find it is adequate to design their relational databases to satisfy the normalization guidelines through the third or fourth normal "forms."

First normal form requires atomic, or unique, values at each column and row intersection in the entity table. There should be no repeating groups. Thus, no "Item1," "Item2" column design like you may see in a "flat-file" table layout.

Second normal form requires that every "non-key" column in a table must depend on the primary key. A table must also not contain a "non-key" column that pertains to only part of a composite, or multi-column, primary key.

Third normal form requires that no "non-key" column should depend on another "non-key" column. This is very similar to the second normal form. You shouldn't have a field that is an attribute of a non-primary key column in a table.

Fourth normal form forbids independent "1-to-many" relationships between primary key columns and non-key columns.

SQL Variations and Core SQL

The specific implementation of the SQL language may vary by vendor within database management software. SQL was designed as a standardized language to implement basic functionality within these programs- including running queries on data, modifying data within tables, displaying views of data, and creating and modifying database structures and data access. Most vendors have included their own vendor-specific extensions to the SQL language. Therefore, you may encounter vendor-specific variations to the standard SQL, often with their own names, such as the "Transact-SQL" which is used within Microsoft SQL Server. The "core" SQL is supported by all of the major database management systems, regardless of their own specific implementations and extensions.

Guide Conventions and Categories

This guide will refer to the core SQL within its examples. Most RDBMS implementations, such as SQL Server and Microsoft Access, require a semicolon at the end of executable SQL statements. However, the examples of core SQL shown in this guide **will not** show a semicolon at the end of the examples, as they are demonstrating core SQL and are not *literal* examples of SQL for any specific RDBMS. This guide will focus on the statements within standard SQL, grouped into four categories. **Data Definition Language (DDL)** statements, such as CREATE and ALTER, are used to create the database container, tables, and other objects. **Data Manipulation Language (DML)** statements, such as SELECT and INSERT, are used to manage the data contained within the tables. **Data Control Language (DCL)** statements, such as GRANT and REVOKE, are used to determine who can access the data and to set referential integrity. **Transactional Control Language (TCL)** statements, such as COMMIT and ROLLBACK, manage the transactions that occur within a database. The following notations are used in the syntax descriptions in the examples within this guide.

Notation	Example	Meaning
ALL CAPS	SELECT	The actual SQL code. Type this text exactly as shown.
Italics	*table_name*	SQL parameters to replace with content described by the italicized term.
|	ASC | DESC	Separates alternative choices from which to choose.
( )	(size)	Values to type for selected SQL commands. Include the parentheses when typing these values.
{ }	{ WHERE clause }	**Optional** or **RDBMS-dependent** clauses or values. Do not type the braces.
[ ]	[* | field1, field2]	**Required** choices from which to select. Do not type the brackets.
etc.	*field1, field2*, etc.	Repeat the pattern established by the preceding values, as needed.

Data Definition Language (DDL)

Creating a Database
CREATE DATABASE *database_name*

Creating a Table
CREATE TABLE *table_name*
(
field_name1 data_type(size),
field_name2 data_type(size),
field_name3 data_type(size),
etc.
)

Creating an Index
Sort a table by values contained in one or more fields.

To create a standard index that allows duplicate field values:
CREATE INDEX *index_name*
ON *table_name (field_name)*

To create a unique index that does NOT allow for duplicate field values:
CREATE UNIQUE INDEX *index_name*
ON *table_name (field_name)*

Creating a User
CREATE USER *user_name*

Creating a Role
CREATE ROLE *role_name*

About SQL Constraints
A constraint is a limitation that is placed upon the allowable values within a field. Constraints can be added to CREATE TABLE or ALTER TABLE statements.

NOT NULL: Field will not accept NULL values.
UNIQUE: Ensures all values entered into the field are unique.
PRIMARY KEY: Defines a field (or combination of fields) within a table as being the primary key. Must be unique and cannot contain NULL values.
FOREIGN KEY: Ensures all values within the field correspond to values found within another table's PRIMARY KEY field. Used as a referential integrity check to ensure that records within a field have a corresponding value within a related table.
CHECK: Specifies the allowable values that can be entered into a table.
DEFAULT: Places a default value into the field specified when a record is entered.

Applying SQL Constraints
[CREATE \| ALTER] TABLE *table_name*

field_name1 data_type(size) constraint_name;
field_name2 data_type(size) constraint_name;
field_name3 data_type(size) constraint_name;
etc.
}

Deleting Database Objects
To delete a database:
DROP DATABASE *database_name*

To delete a table within a database:
DROP TABLE *table_name*

To truncate a table within a database:
TRUNCATE TABLE *table_name*

To delete an index within a database:
DROP INDEX *index_name*

To delete a user within a database:
DROP USER *user_name*

To delete a role within a database:
DROP ROLE *role_name*

Modifying Table Structure
To alter a table to add a field:
ALTER TABLE *table_name*
ADD *field_name data_type*

To alter a table to delete a field:
ALTER TABLE *table_name*
DROP COLUMN *field_name*

To alter a table to modify a field's data type:
ALTER TABLE *table_name*
[MODIFY \| ALTER] COLUMN *field_name data_type*

To alter a table to add an SQL constraint:
ALTER TABLE *table_name*
ADD { CONSTRAINT } *sql_constraint*

To alter a table to delete an SQL constraint:
ALTER TABLE *table_name*
DROP { CONSTRAINT } *sql_constraint*

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Annelies Wilder-Smith

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