


Access Terminology

A database is an organized collection of information. Access makes it easy not only to organize data but also to manipulate and analyze the data it contains. You need to be familiar with a few database terms before you learn how to use a database.

- Field:** A field is a piece of information such as a First Name, City, or State. The field is the most basic element of an Access database.
- Record:** A record is a collection of related fields. An example might be a table of clients. Each record stores all information about a client in fields such as: First Name, Last Name, Street Address, City, State, Zip Code, Phone Number, and Birthday.
- Table:** A table is a collection of records with the same fields, as in our example of a client table. The records consist of rows in the table and the fields are the columns. For example, a table named Employees would be expected to only include company employees.
- Database file:** The database file is a collection of related tables. The file also contains the other Access database objects such as the Forms, Queries, Reports and Macros that comprise a specific database.
- Primary Key:** The primary key  is a field containing unique identifying information for each record, such as an identification number or social security number. Access uses this field to locate a specific record. Primary keys also allow you to relate tables. Although not commonly used, a primary key may also be the combination of more than one field.
- Query:** A query is an Access object that allows you to specify which fields and records you want to see. Queries are often used as the basis of reports. The query selects the records and fields to view and the report allows you to enhance the appearance of the resulting list produced.
- Form:** A form is a way to view, enter, edit, or print records in a table. You can design the form to match existing forms you already use.
- Report:** Reports allow you to present and view selected information in a meaningful way. The most common report layout organizes the information in columns. You can use reports to create totals and sub-totals.