



# Microsoft™ Access™ 2003

Quick Reference Guide



## What is Microsoft Access?

Access is a tool for building databases. A database stores information – such as sales records and product inventories – in a structured manner. It also enables you to extract pieces of information for analysis, enter and edit data quickly and accurately, and generate custom documents such as annual sales reports.

### Understanding Database Structure

A database is like a filing cabinet. In a filing cabinet, separate folders contain general types of information (for example, contact details for your entire sales team). Within these folders, you'll find individual documents about specific people or things (for example, contact details for a sales executive named William Beckett). Finally, within these individual sets of information you'll find units of data (for example, William Beckett's sales territory).

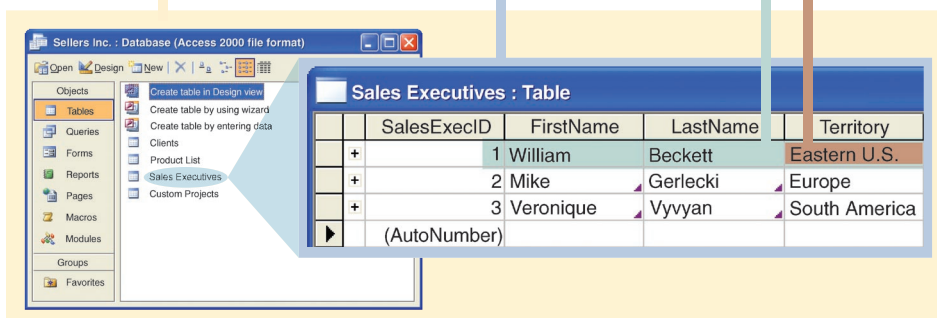
Instead of the folders, documents and units of data you would find in a real filing cabinet, a database contains *tables*, *records* and *fields*.

**The Database** contains information in organized tables. These tables may be self-contained, or share information with other related tables. Just as you can pull any folder from a filing cabinet and view its contents, you can open tables in your database and view the records they contain. See *Working with Databases*, page 2.

**Tables** are database components (also called *objects*) that look like spreadsheets and contain information arranged in rows and columns. Similar to a folder in a filing cabinet, you can look through any table (e.g. Sales Executives) and find specific instances of information, called records. See *Creating Tables and Relationships*, page 3.

**Records** contain a complete set of information about an individual person or thing in the table (e.g. a sales executive named William Beckett). Each record contains smaller units of information, called fields.

**Fields** are the smallest units of information a database can contain (e.g. William Beckett's sales territory).



	SalesExecID	FirstName	LastName	Territory
+	1	William	Beckett	Eastern U.S.
+	2	Mike	Gerlecki	Europe
+	3	Veronique	Vyvyan	South America
▶	(AutoNumber)			

## Table of Contents

### 2 Working with Databases

- The Application and Database Windows
- Displaying Toolbars
- Managing Database Files and Objects
- Object Views
- Using Wizards to Build Databases

### 3 Creating Tables and Relationships

- Creating a Table
- Editing a Table
- Creating and Editing Table Relationships
- Using Subdatasheets

### 4 Creating Forms and Reports

- Designing the Form Layout
- Editing a Form
- Deleting a Form
- Designing the Report Layout
- Adding a Chart to a Report
- Viewing and Printing Reports

### 5 Help Desk and Design Tools

- Importing and Exporting Data
- Creating PivotCharts
- Adding Smart Tags
- Backing Up a Database
- Using the Toolbox
- Basic Text Formatting
- Resizing or Moving Objects

### 6 Queries, Data Entry, and Switchboards

- Creating a Query
- Editing a Query
- Entering and Editing Data
- Navigation
- Creating Switchboards

... plus fold-out Shortcut table and New Feature summary!

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