

Lesson 1

Getting Started with a Database

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

1. Start Access and make a copy of a database.
2. Identify parts of the Access screen.
3. Select objects in the database window.
4. Open a table and navigate in the table.
5. Open multiple tables.
6. Edit records in a table.
7. Print a table.
8. Close a database and exit Access.

Estimated Time: 1 hour

Microsoft Access is the database product in the Microsoft Office suite as well as a stand-alone product. It is a powerful and flexible *relational database management system* (RDBMS).

You have used and are a part of many databases. The telephone book is a database that displays information about people, companies, churches, schools, and other groups. You are part of your school's database because the school keeps track of when you enrolled, what courses you have taken, what grades you received, where you live, and other information.

Navigating in Access is like navigating in Windows 95. If you don't know how to use Windows 95, see Appendices A through E.

Starting Access

An Access database may contain several different objects. These objects include tables, queries, reports, forms, macros, and modules. The objects are used to store, display, select, or perform an action in your database.

In this lesson, you will be working with tables. All information you

collect in your database is stored in tables. Within each table, information is stored as records. Each distinct piece of information becomes a record which is stored in a single row of a table. Records are further divided into fields which are stored in columns. A single record may have as few as two fields.

Your school, for example, has a table of students' names, social security numbers, and addresses. A student's name, social security number, and address, collectively, is a record of information on a single student. A student's name, separately, is a field. Your school probably has another table that lists all the available courses. Another table would list which students enrolled in which courses. All of the information is certainly not stored in one big table. Your school's database consists of small, manageable tables that are all somehow related.

There are several ways to start Access, depending on how your system is set up. For example, you can use the Windows 95 taskbar, the Microsoft Office Shortcut bar, My Computer, or Windows Explorer. If a shortcut has been created to start Access, you can double-click the shortcut icon on the desktop.

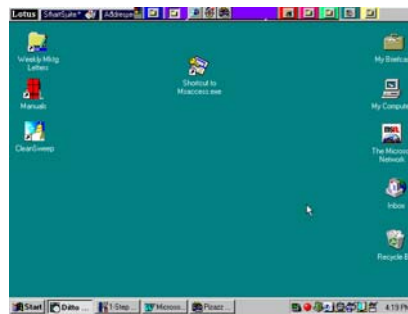


Figure 1-1: Shortcut to start Access

NOTE: Windows allows for great flexibility in starting its applications. If you have any problems, ask your instructor for help.

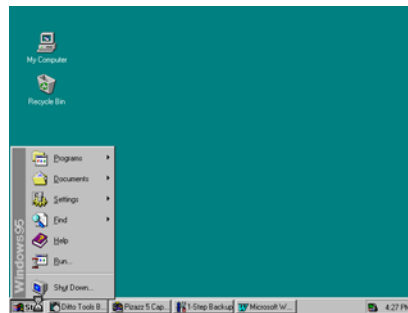


Figure 1-2: Starting Access from the Windows taskbar

EXERCISE 1-1

Start Access and Copy a Database

Access automatically saves any changes you make to data in a database. Since you will be making changes throughout this course, you will need a database that reflects those changes. At the beginning of each lesson you will be copying a database template and then renaming that database using your initials to distinguish your database from other students' databases.

1. Turn on your computer. Windows 95 will load.
2. Click the Start button <Start> with your left mouse button on the Windows taskbar, and then point to Programs. The Programs menu appears.
3. Click Microsoft Access. You may have to point first to a program group that contains Microsoft Access, such as Microsoft Office. In a few seconds, the program is loaded, and the Access dialog box appears. This dialog box prompts you to create a new database or open an existing database.

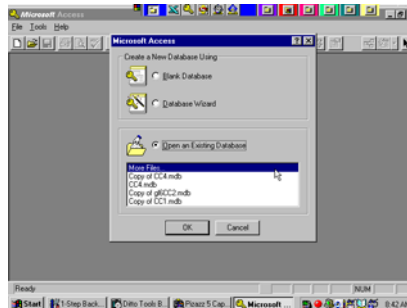


Figure 1-3: When Access starts, a dialog box appears

4. The dialog box may list several recently opened database names. Click to select **More Files** and click OK to see your default location for all databases.
5. Locate the file name **CC1.mdb** and click once to select it. Click the right mouse button once while pointing at the selected filename. Choose Copy from the shortcut menu.
6. Move the pointer anywhere on the unused white area of the filename section of the Open window and click the right mouse button once. Choose Paste from the shortcut menu. A file named “Copy of CC1.mdb” appears.

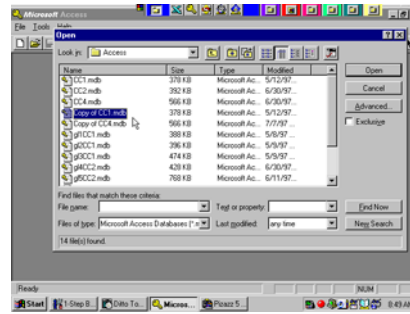


Figure 1-4: Copying a database

NOTE: Depending on the computer you are using, you may see other filenames listed in the Open window.

7. Select the file name **Copy of CC1.mdb**. Click the right mouse button. Choose **Rename** from the shortcut menu. Key **[your initials]1CC1.mdb**. Press [Enter].
8. Locate your file name **[your initials]1CC1.mdb** and double-click the file name to open the file. The Access screen and Database window appear. The Database window is the main base for all the operations you perform when working with your database.

NOTE: If the file you want is not listed or if you cannot find the folder where the file is located, ask your instructor for help.

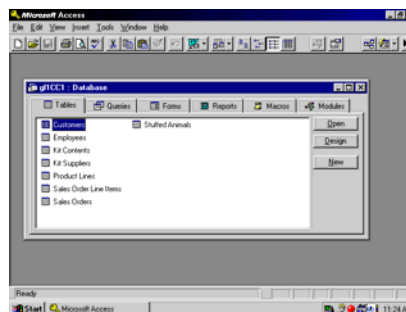


Figure 1-5: The Access screen

TABLE 1-1 PARTS OF THE ACCESS SCREEN

PART OF THE SCREEN	PURPOSE
Title bar	Contains the program name (Access).
Database title bar	Contains the name of the database (CC1.mdb).
Menu bar	Displays the names of menus that you can use to perform various tasks. You can access menus with the mouse or the keyboard.
Database Toolbar	Row of buttons that allow mouse pointer control of commands. The Access program opens with the Database toolbar displayed by default, you will learn about the other toolbars later.
Database window	Displays a tab for each of the objects in the database. It also includes Command buttons to Open or Design an existing object or create a New one.
Object tabs	Displays tabs you can select to work with group of objects. These objects include tables, queries, forms, reports, macros, or modules.
Status bar	Displays information about a task that you are performing. Indicators on the status bar show the current mode of operation.

EXERCISE 1-2

Display Database Properties

1. Move the pointer to **F**ile on the menu bar. Click the left button to open the menu.
2. Move the pointer down to **D**atabase Properties and click the left mouse button. This opens the Properties dialog box.

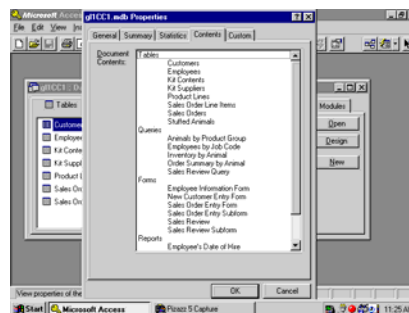


Figure 1-6: Properties dialog box - Contents tab

TABLE 1-2 PROPERTIES DIALOG BOX TABS

TAB	PURPOSE
General	Contains the date the database was created, last modified, and last opened. Also contains the file name, size, location of the database, and attributes.
Summary	Displays the database title, author, company, category, keywords, and comments.
Statistics	Contains the date the database was created, last modified, printed, and last opened.
Contents	Displays a listing of all the tables, queries, forms, reports, macros, and modules that a database contains.
Custom	Use this tab to assign a custom property for a file. You can add a name, type, and value for the custom property.

3. Click the Contents tab at the top of the dialog box. This tab displays a listing of all the tables, queries, forms, reports, macros, and modules in the current database.
4. Click OK at the bottom of the dialog box to close the dialog box.

Identifying Parts of the Access Screen

Some parts of the Access screen, such as toolbar buttons, are identified by name when you point to them with the mouse.

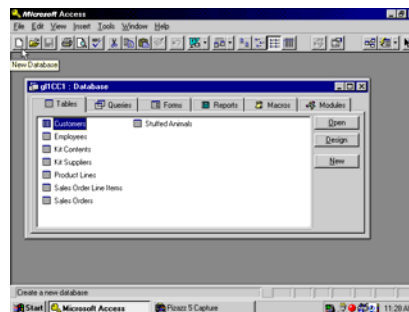


Figure 1-7: Identifying a toolbar button

EXERCISE 1-3

Identify Buttons, Menus, and Menu Items

1. Position the pointer over the New Database button <New Database> on the Database toolbar. A *ScreenTip* (a box with the button name) appears below the button. This is the button you would click if you want to open a blank database or choose from a list of sample databases.
2. Move the mouse pointer (but don't click) over the Open Database button <Open Database> on the toolbar. This is the button you would click if you want to open an existing database.

NOTE: Some toolbar buttons are light gray, indicating that they are currently not available. The action called for is not possible. For example, you try to use "Save" when you have not created anything for the computer to Save. You can still identify such a button by name by positioning the mouse pointer over it.

3. Point to other toolbar buttons to identify them by name.

TIP: The menu bar shows which commands have corresponding keyboard shortcuts. Keyboard shortcuts appear on the menu to the right of the menu command. Notice that you can print a table by choosing Print from the File menu, by clicking the Print button on the toolbar, or by pressing [Ctrl]+[P].

4. Move the pointer to Edit on the menu bar. Click the left mouse button. This action opens the Edit menu. Click Edit to close the menu.
5. Click View to open the View menu. Without clicking the mouse button, move the pointer down to the Arrange Icons menu option. The right-pointing arrow indicates a cascading menu. This cascading menu displays options for arranging the icons in the database window.
6. Click a blank area of the screen to close the menu. Be careful not to click a menu option or toolbar button.

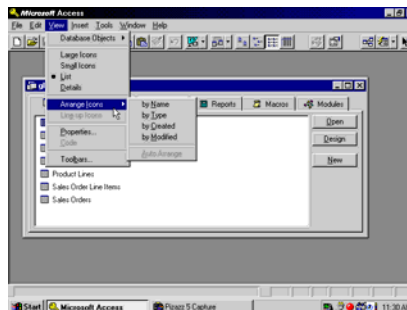


Figure 1-8: Displaying menu options