

# **CMPT 308L-111: Lab 4**

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## Check Constraints

Tell me about check constraints: What are they? What are they good for? Whats the advantage of putting that sort of thing inside the database? Make up some examples of good uses of check constraints and some examples of bad uses of check constraints. Explain the differences in your examples and argue your case.

Check constraints are used to restrict data sets. They act as rules that must be followed when editing or entering data. They are useful because they prevent the misinterpretation of data (data cannot be entered unless it follows a specific format or certain rules). Some different constraints are `UNIQUE`, `NOT NULL`, `DEFAULT`, and `CHECK`. Additionally, keys that are used to enforce referential integrity are also kinds of constraints. A good way to use check constraints would be to ensure that fields that must be present during data entry are. For example, a field that asks for a person's name should have a constraint of `NOT NULL`, since everybody should have a name. A bad way to use check constraints would be to add information into a database that may not be correct. For example, defaulting a birthday field to a specific date instead of using `NULL` as a placeholder value until the correct birth date is obtained could be misleading or confusing (what if somebody was born on the default date?).