SQL LIKE Operator

The SQL LIKE Operator

The `LIKE` operator is used in a `WHERE` clause to search for a specified pattern in a column.

There are two wildcards often used in conjunction with the `LIKE` operator:

- The percent sign (%) represents zero, one, or multiple characters
- The underscore sign (_) represents one, single character

Note: MS Access uses an asterisk (*) instead of the percent sign (%), and a question mark (?) instead of the underscore (_).

The percent sign and the underscore can also be used in combinations!

LIKE Syntax

```
SELECT column1, column2, ...
FROM table_name
WHERE columnN LIKE pattern;
```

Tip: You can also combine any number of conditions using `AND` or `OR` operators.

Here are some examples showing different `LIKE` operators with '%' and '_' wildcards:

LIKE Operator	Description
WHERE CustomerName LIKE 'a%'	Finds any values that start with "a"
WHERE CustomerName LIKE '%a'	Finds any values that end with "a"
WHERE CustomerName LIKE '%or%'	Finds any values that have "or" in any position

WHERE CustomerName LIKE '_r%'	Finds any values that have "r" in the second position
WHERE CustomerName LIKE 'a_%'	Finds any values that start with "a" and are at least 2 characters in length
WHERE CustomerName LIKE 'a__%'	Finds any values that start with "a" and are at least 3 characters in length
WHERE ContactName LIKE 'a%o'	Finds any values that start with "a" and ends with "o"

Demo Database

The table below shows the complete "Customers" table from the Northwind sample database:

CustomerID	CustomerName	ContactName	Address	City	Pos
1	Alfreds Futterkiste	Maria Anders	Obere Str. 57	Berlin	122
2	Ana Trujillo Emparedados y helados	Ana Trujillo	Avda. de la Constitución 2222	México D.F.	050
3	Antonio Moreno Taquería	Antonio Moreno	Mataderos 2312	México D.F.	050
4	Around the Horn	Thomas Hardy	120 Hanover Sq.	London	WA1
5	Berglunds snabbköp	Christina Berglund	Berguvsvägen 8	Luleå	S-9
6	Blauer See Delikatessen	Hanna Moos	Forsterstr. 57	Mannheim	683
7	Blondel père et fils	Frédérique Citeaux	24, place Kléber	Strasbourg	670
8	Bólido Comidas	Martín Sommer	C/ Araquil, 67	Madrid	280

SQL LIKE Examples

The following SQL statement selects all customers with a CustomerName starting with "a":

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers
WHERE CustomerName LIKE 'a%';
```

Try it Yourself »

The following SQL statement selects all customers with a CustomerName ending with "a":

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers
WHERE CustomerName LIKE '%a';
```

Try it Yourself »

The following SQL statement selects all customers with a CustomerName that have "or" in any position:

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers
WHERE CustomerName LIKE '%or%';
```

Try it Yourself »

The following SQL statement selects all customers with a CustomerName that have "r" in the second position:

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers
WHERE CustomerName LIKE '_r%';
```

The following SQL statement selects all customers with a CustomerName that starts with "a" and are at least 3 characters in length:

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers
WHERE CustomerName LIKE 'a__%';
```

The following SQL statement selects all customers with a ContactName that starts with "a" and ends with "o":

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers
WHERE ContactName LIKE 'a%o';
```

The following SQL statement selects all customers with a CustomerName that does NOT start with "a":

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers
WHERE CustomerName NOT LIKE 'a%';
```