An **index**, as you would expect, is a data structure that the database uses to find records within a table more quickly. Indexes are built on one or more columns of a table; each index maintains a list of values within that field that are sorted in ascending or descending order. Rather than sorting records on the field or fields during query execution, the system can simply access the rows in order of the index.

**Indexes** are used to quickly locate data without having to search every row in a database table every time a database table is accessed. **Indexes** can be created using one or more columns of a database table, providing the basis for both rapid random lookups and efficient access of ordered records.

the SQL to create an index is:

CREATE INDEX <indexname> ON <tablename> (<column>, <column>...);

To enforce unique values, add the UNIQUE keyword:

CREATE UNIQUE INDEX <indexname> ON <tablename> (<column>, <column>...);

To remove an index, simply enter:

DROP INDEX <indexname>;

The field or combination of fields on which the index is built is called the index key. When you create an index, whose key is a single field, you have created a **single-field index** (also called a **single-column index**). A **multiple-field index** (also called a **multiple-column index**) is an index with more than one key field. When creating a multiple-field index, you list the more important key first. In addition, if data for either key appears in descending order, you must follow the field name with the word **DESC**.