**Alternate Key in SQL**

The alternate key is a combination of one or more columns whose values are unique. A table consists of one or more Candidate keys, in which one will be Primary Key and rest of the keys, are called as Alternate keys. Alternate Key is not part of the primary key. There can be one or more alternate keys in a table and contain NULL values unless it is mentioned to be NOT NULL explicitly. The UNIQUE keyword is used to define the alternate key, which indicates the value must be unique. Simple words to say Candidate keys that are not selected as primary key are called Alternate key.

Some important points about Alternate Keys are as follows :

1. A Primary Key can’t be an Alternate Key. For a table with a single Candidate Key which has to be the Primary Key will not contain any Alternate Key.
2. A Foreign Key can’t be an Alternate Key as it is only used to reference another table.
3. The alternate Key should be unique.
4. An Alternate Key can be a set of a single attribute or multiple attributes.
5. It can be NULL as well.

In this article, we are going to see how to create an ALTERNATE Key in SQL using sample tables as shown.

## SQL Super Key

The following article provides an outline for SQL Super Key. Super Key in relational databases is an attribute or a set of attributes that uniquely identifies a row or a record in the database table. By attribute, we mean a field or column in the table. There can be more than one super key in the database and it can also be NULL. Super key can be considered similar to super set in relational algebra.

We can define a super key as a set of those keys that identify a row or a tuple uniquely. The word super denotes the superiority of a key. Thus, a super key is the superset of a key known as a **Candidate key** (discussed in the next section). It means a **Candidate key**  is obtained from a super key only.

Here, we will discuss about the super key, i.e., what is the role of a super key, how to use it, and will be looking at some practical examples that will help us to understand it in a better way.

## Role of Super Key

The role of the super key is simply to identify the tuples of the specified table in the database. It is the superset where the candidate key is a part of the super key only. So, all those attributes in a table that is capable of identifying the other attributes of the table in a unique manner are all super keys.

4. Unique Key

Unique Key can be a field or set of fields that can be used to uniquely identify the table from the database. One or more fields can be declared as a unique Key. The unique Key column can also hold the NULL value. Use of Unique Key improves the performance of data retrieval. It makes searching for records from the database much faster & more efficient.