

DBS Assignment 1 Access control activities



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PDF

explain this pdf, and answer me step by step until i say next answer

Great We'll go **step by step** as you asked.

✓ Step 1 – Understanding the Problem (Activity 1 Overview)

From the PDF , the system is a **sales order database** with:

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📌 Three Tables:

1. CUSTOMER

- Primary Key: *(name, street_number)*

2. ORDER

- Primary Key: *(date_of_receipt, foreign key from CUSTOMER)*

3. ORDER_ITEM

- Primary Key: *(item_name, foreign key from ORDER)*

And the relationships are:

CUSTOMER → ORDER → ORDER_ITEM
 (1 to many) (1 to many)

That means:

- One customer can have many orders
- One order can have many items

🎯 Security Requirements

We also have **role-based access requirements**:

👤 Tracey (Supervisor)

- Can **see everything**
- Can **change everything**

👤 Bill, 🤱 Sheila, 🤱 Govind

- Do routine work
- Cannot create new customers
- Only **Tracey and Govind** can handle orders > £1000

Temporary Staff

- Can process orders
-  Cannot see customer details

What We Must Do First

Before writing security controls, we must:

1. Design the schema correctly

2. Ensure:

- Primary Keys
- Foreign Keys
- Correct relationships

Step 1A – Designing the Tables (Conceptual Schema)

CUSTOMER

Field	Type
name	VARCHAR
street_number	VARCHAR
city	VARCHAR
phone	VARCHAR

Primary Key: (name, street_number)

ORDER

Field	Type
order_id	INT
date_of_receipt	DATE
customer_name	VARCHAR
customer_street_number	VARCHAR
total_amount	DECIMAL

Foreign Key:

(customer_name, customer_street_number) → CUSTOMER

 **ORDER_ITEM**

Field	Type
item_name	VARCHAR
order_id	INT
quantity	INT
price	DECIMAL

Foreign Key:

order_id → ORDER

 **Important Design Observation**

Even though the problem says:

ORDER is keyed on date-of-receipt and the foreign key from CUSTOMER

In real databases, this is dangerous (dates are not unique).

👉 So we introduce `order_id` as a **safe primary key**, which is best practice.

 **Now Step 1B – SQL Schema Script**

Here is the clean SQL:

```

CREATE TABLE CUSTOMER (
    name VARCHAR(50),
    street_number VARCHAR(10),
    city VARCHAR(50),
    phone VARCHAR(15),
    PRIMARY KEY (name, street_number)
);

CREATE TABLE ORDERS (
    order_id INT PRIMARY KEY,
    date_of_receipt DATE,
    customer_name VARCHAR(50),
    customer_street_number VARCHAR(10),
    total_amount DECIMAL(10,2),
    FOREIGN KEY (customer_name, customer_street_number)
        REFERENCES CUSTOMER(name, street_number)
        ON DELETE CASCADE
);

CREATE TABLE ORDER_ITEM (
    item_name VARCHAR(50),
    order_id INT,
    quantity INT,
    price DECIMAL(10,2),
    PRIMARY KEY (item_name, order_id),
    FOREIGN KEY (order_id)
        REFERENCES ORDERS(order_id)
        ON DELETE CASCADE
);

```

Why ON DELETE CASCADE?

If:

- A customer is deleted → Their orders delete
- An order is deleted → Order items delete

This directly relates to **Activity 7 question about cascade behavior** later 

Summary of Step 1

- ✓ Three tables created
- ✓ Primary keys defined
- ✓ Foreign keys defined
- ✓ 1-to-many relationships implemented
- ✓ Delete rules added

Say “**next answer**” and we will proceed to:

Step 2 – Populating the Database (Activity 2)

Sources



Activity 2

✓ Activity 2 – Populating the Database

(As per the PDF instructions
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This is a **security exercise**, so the data:

- Does NOT need to be realistic
- Must be **clear and meaningful**
- Must respect **foreign key relationships**

🎯 Goal of Activity 2

We now:

1. Insert sample customers
2. Insert sample orders
3. Insert sample order items
4. Include:
 - Some normal orders (< £1000)
 - Some large orders (> £1000) ⚠️ for testing later

This will help us test:

- High-value order restriction
- Delete cascading
- Role-based access

✓ Step 2A – Insert Customers

```
INSERT INTO CUSTOMER VALUES
('Alice', '101', 'London', '9876543210'),
('Bob', '202', 'Manchester', '9123456780'),
('Charlie', '303', 'Birmingham', '9988776655');
```

- ✓ Clear names
- ✓ Different cities
- ✓ Simple recognizable data

✓ Step 2B – Insert Orders

We now insert:

- Some small orders

- Some large orders (>1000)

```
INSERT INTO ORDERS VALUES
(1, '2026-02-20', 'Alice', '101', 450.00), -- Normal order
(2, '2026-02-21', 'Alice', '101', 1500.00), -- Large order
(3, '2026-02-22', 'Bob', '202', 750.00), -- Normal order
(4, '2026-02-23', 'Charlie', '303', 2500.00); -- Large order
```

Now we have:

Order	Amount	Type
1	450	Normal
2	1500	Large ⚠️
3	750	Normal
4	2500	Large ⚠️

These will be important for **privilege testing later**.

✓ Step 2C – Insert Order Items

```
INSERT INTO ORDER_ITEM VALUES
('Keyboard', 1, 2, 100.00),
('Mouse', 1, 1, 50.00),
('Laptop', 2, 1, 1500.00),
('Printer', 3, 1, 750.00),
('Coffee Machine', 4, 5, 500.00);
```

- ✓ Order 2 and 4 relate to large orders
- ✓ Coffee Machine entry will help in Activity 7 scenario ☺

🧠 Why This Data Is Good for Security Testing

It allows us to test:

- Normal staff processing small orders
- Blocking large orders for some users
- Deletion cascade
- Temporary staff restrictions
- Insert attempts into high-value orders

✓ Result After Activity 2

Database now contains:

- 3 Customers
- 4 Orders
- 5 Order Items

- 2 High-value orders (>£1000)

The database is now ready for:

👉 Activity 3 – Security Analysis (User-role matrix + GRANT statements)

Say “**next answer**” to proceed to Activity 3.

Sources



next

✓ Activity 3 – Analysing the Problem (Security Design)

(As required in the PDF
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Now we convert the textual requirements into a **clear role-resource access matrix**, and then into SQL **GRANT** statements.

🎯 Step 3A – Identify Roles

Treat names as **database roles**:

- TRACEY
- BILL
- SHEILA
- GOVIND
- TEMP_STAFF

🎯 Step 3B – Identify Database Resources

Resources:

1. CUSTOMER table
2. ORDERS table
3. ORDER_ITEM table
4. (Later) Views for restricted access

🎯 Step 3C – Build Access Matrix

Access Requirements from Problem

Role	CUSTOMER	ORDERS	ORDER_ITEM	Special Rules
Tracey	SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE, DELETE	ALL	ALL	Full control
Bill	SELECT, UPDATE	SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE	SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE	 Cannot create customers
Sheila	Same as Bill	Same	Same	Same
Govind	Same as Bill + can handle large orders	Same	Same	Can process >£1000
Temp Staff	 No SELECT	INSERT, UPDATE	INSERT, UPDATE	Cannot see customer details

Important Special Condition

Orders > £1000

Only:

- Tracey
- Govind

Can handle these.

This **cannot be enforced using simple GRANT**.

 It requires:

- A VIEW
- Or a TRIGGER
- Or CHECK constraint with procedure logic

We will use a **VIEW-based solution** (clean and exam-friendly).

Step 3D – Security Strategy

We will:

1. Create Roles
2. Revoke default privileges
3. Grant carefully
4. Create views:
 - **NORMAL_ORDERS** (≤ 1000)

- CUSTOMER_HIDDEN_VIEW (for temp staff)

✓ Step 3E – SQL Role Creation

```
CREATE ROLE TRACEY;
CREATE ROLE BILL;
CREATE ROLE SHEILA;
CREATE ROLE GOVIND;
CREATE ROLE TEMP_STAFF;
```

✓ Step 3F – Grant Privileges

👤 Tracey – Full Control

```
GRANT ALL PRIVILEGES ON CUSTOMER TO TRACEY;
GRANT ALL PRIVILEGES ON ORDERS TO TRACEY;
GRANT ALL PRIVILEGES ON ORDER_ITEM TO TRACEY;
```

👤 Bill & 🤷 Sheila

Cannot create customers.

```
GRANT SELECT, UPDATE ON CUSTOMER TO BILL;
GRANT SELECT, UPDATE ON CUSTOMER TO SHEILA;

GRANT SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE ON ORDERS TO BILL, SHEILA;
GRANT SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE ON ORDER_ITEM TO BILL, SHEILA;
```

Notice:

- No INSERT on CUSTOMER

👤 Govind

Same as above, but will later receive access to large orders.

```
GRANT SELECT, UPDATE ON CUSTOMER TO GOVIND;
GRANT SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE ON ORDERS TO GOVIND;
GRANT SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE ON ORDER_ITEM TO GOVIND;
```

👤 Temporary Staff

Cannot see CUSTOMER table.

```
GRANT INSERT, UPDATE ON ORDERS TO TEMP_STAFF;
GRANT INSERT, UPDATE ON ORDER_ITEM TO TEMP_STAFF;
```

No SELECT on CUSTOMER.

🧠 But Wait...

Right now:

Bill, Sheila, Govind can still modify large orders.

We haven't enforced:

Orders above £1000 only for Tracey and Govind

That is coming in the next step using **Views**.

✓ Summary of Activity 3 So Far

- ✓ Roles identified
- ✓ Access matrix developed
- ✓ SQL GRANT drafted
- ✓ High-value order issue pending enforcement

Next we implement:

👉 High-Value Order Control using Views (critical security logic)

Say “**next answer**” to continue.

Sources



next

✓ Activity 3 (Continued) – Enforcing the £1000 Restriction

From the problem statement :

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“Make sure that large orders (above £1000) cannot be handled by anyone except Tracey and Govind.”

Simple GRANT statements cannot enforce value-based restrictions.

So we use **Views** to restrict access.

🎯 Strategy

We split the ORDERS table logically:

1. **NORMAL_ORDERS** → total_amount ≤ 1000
→ Accessible by Bill, Sheila

2. ALL_ORDERS → Full access

→ Accessible only by Tracey and Govind

We also REVOKE direct access to the base table from restricted users.

✓ Step 1 – Create Restricted View

```
CREATE VIEW NORMAL_ORDERS AS
SELECT *
FROM ORDERS
WHERE total_amount <= 1000
WITH CHECK OPTION;
```

🔍 Why WITH CHECK OPTION?

It ensures:

- Users cannot INSERT or UPDATE rows that violate the condition.
- So Bill/Sheila cannot insert an order > 1000 through this view.

This is the key control.

✓ Step 2 – Remove Direct Table Access

We now revoke direct ORDERS table access from Bill and Sheila.

```
REVOKE ALL ON ORDERS FROM BILL;
REVOKE ALL ON ORDERS FROM SHEILA;
```

Now they cannot bypass the view.

✓ Step 3 – Grant Access to View Instead

```
GRANT SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE ON NORMAL_ORDERS TO BILL;
GRANT SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE ON NORMAL_ORDERS TO SHEILA;
```

Now:

- ✓ They can see small orders
- ✓ They can insert small orders
- ✗ They cannot touch orders > 1000

✓ Step 4 – Give Full ORDERS Access to Tracey and Govind

```
GRANT SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE, DELETE ON ORDERS TO TRACEY;
GRANT SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE, DELETE ON ORDERS TO GOVIND;
```

They have full control.

Now the Rule is Properly Enforced

Role	Small Orders	Large Orders
Tracey	✓	✓
Govind	✓	✓
Bill	✓	✗
Sheila	✓	✗
Temp	Depends on view design	✗

Now Fix Temporary Staff Rule

"Temporary member can process orders but cannot see customer details."

We must prevent SELECT on CUSTOMER.

They already have no SELECT privilege.

To make it cleaner, we create a processing view.

Step 5 – Create Safe Processing View

```
CREATE VIEW ORDER_PROCESSING_VIEW AS
SELECT order_id, date_of_receipt, total_amount
FROM ORDERS;
```

Notice:

- No customer_name
- No street number

Now grant:

```
GRANT INSERT, UPDATE, SELECT ON ORDER_PROCESSING_VIEW TO TEMP_STAFF;
```

This allows:

- ✓ Processing
- ✓ But no customer visibility

Security Status After This

- ✓ Value-based restriction enforced
- ✓ Customer confidentiality enforced
- ✓ Direct table bypass removed
- ✓ Access is strictly role-controlled

✓ Activity 3 Completed

We now have:

- Roles
- Grants
- Views
- Enforcement logic
- Proper restrictions

Next:

👉 Activity 4 – Executing the Security Script & What Happens Internally

Say “**next answer**” to continue.

Sources



next

✓ Activity 4 – Executing the Security Script

As stated in the PDF :

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“Execute the security script (if you have a DBMS environment). Otherwise, get a friend to critique.”

Here we assume we are executing it in a real DBMS (e.g., MySQL / PostgreSQL / Oracle style system).

🎯 What Happens When We Execute the Script?

We execute in this order:

1. Create Tables
2. Insert Data
3. Create Roles
4. Revoke Unwanted Privileges
5. Create Views
6. Grant Privileges

💡 Important: Default Behavior in SQL Systems

When tables are created:

- The creator (usually DBA / Owner) automatically gets ALL privileges.
- Other users get nothing unless granted.
- PUBLIC privileges may exist depending on DBMS.

So execution must ensure:

```
REVOKE ALL ON CUSTOMER FROM PUBLIC;
REVOKE ALL ON ORDERS FROM PUBLIC;
REVOKE ALL ON ORDER_ITEM FROM PUBLIC;
```

This prevents accidental leaks.

🧠 Internal DBMS Behavior After GRANT

When we run:

```
GRANT SELECT ON NORMAL_ORDERS TO BILL;
```

The DBMS:

- Records this in system catalog tables
- Associates the role BILL with that object
- Enforces privilege check during query parsing

So when Bill runs:

```
SELECT * FROM ORDERS;
```

The DBMS checks:

✗ No privilege → Access denied

When Bill runs:

```
SELECT * FROM NORMAL_ORDERS;
```

✓ Allowed

🎯 If Execution Fails – Possible Reasons

1. Foreign key constraint errors
2. View created before base table
3. Attempting to REVOKE privilege never granted
4. Missing CHECK OPTION support (older DBMS)

🔥 What Should Be Verified After Execution?

You must confirm:

- ✓ Bill cannot insert customers
 - ✓ Sheila cannot insert customers
 - ✓ Bill cannot access orders > 1000
 - ✓ Temp cannot view CUSTOMER table
 - ✓ Tracey can modify everything
 - ✓ Govind can handle large orders
-

⚠ Common Mistakes in This Activity

Students often:

- Forget to revoke direct table access
- Forget WITH CHECK OPTION
- Forget to prevent PUBLIC access
- Grant too much privilege accidentally
- Give SYSADMIN level permissions

These errors will appear in Activity 7 

✓ Outcome of Activity 4

If correctly executed:

- Access control is active
 - Privileges are enforced dynamically
 - Views restrict sensitive operations
 - Value-based access control is functional
-

Next:

👉 Activity 5 – Testing the Access Control Mechanism Thoroughly

This is where we simulate what Bill, Sheila, Govind, Temp and Tracey try to do.

Say “**next answer**” to continue.

Sources



next

Activity 5 – Testing the Access Control Mechanism

As required in the PDF :
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“Formulate SELECT statements from the problem specification and issue SELECT statements to check that they have been correctly implemented.”

Now we simulate **real user behavior**.

We log in as each role and test.

Test 1 – Bill Tries to Create Customer

```
INSERT INTO CUSTOMER VALUES ('David', '404', 'Leeds', '9000000000');
```

Expected Result:

 Access Denied

Reason:

Bill does not have INSERT on CUSTOMER.

Test 2 – Bill Views Small Orders

```
SELECT * FROM NORMAL_ORDERS;
```

Expected Result:

 Only orders ≤ 1000 displayed

From our data:

- Order 1 (450)
- Order 3 (750)

Correct behavior.

Test 3 – Bill Tries to View Large Orders Directly

```
SELECT * FROM ORDERS;
```

Expected Result:

 Access Denied

Because:

- Direct ORDERS access revoked.
-

Test 4 – Bill Attempts to Insert Large Order

```
INSERT INTO NORMAL_ORDERS  
VALUES (10, '2026-02-25', 'Alice', '101', 2000);
```

Expected Result:

 Rejected

Reason:

WITH CHECK OPTION prevents inserting rows > 1000.

Test 5 – Govind Inserts Large Order

```
INSERT INTO ORDERS  
VALUES (11, '2026-02-25', 'Bob', '202', 3000);
```

Expected Result:

 Success

Govind has full ORDERS privileges.

Test 6 – Temporary Staff Tries to View Customer Data

```
SELECT * FROM CUSTOMER;
```

Expected Result:

 Access Denied

Correct enforcement of privacy rule.

Test 7 – Temp Staff Uses Processing View

```
SELECT * FROM ORDER_PROCESSING_VIEW;
```

Expected Result:

 Allowed

 No customer name shown

Confidentiality preserved.

Test 8 – Tracey Deletes a Customer

```
DELETE FROM CUSTOMER  
WHERE name = 'Alice' AND street_number = '101';
```

Expected Result:



Success

And because of:

ON DELETE CASCADE

-
- All Alice's orders deleted
-
- All related order items deleted

This answers part of Activity 7 later 

How We Detect Violations

When unauthorized access is attempted:

- DBMS throws permission error
- Can be logged in:
 - Audit logs
 - Error logs
 - Security monitoring system

If All These Behave Correctly

Then:

-
- Privilege enforcement works
-
- View-based restriction works
-
- Value restriction works
-
- Confidentiality rule works
-
- Cascade behavior works

Activity 5 Completed

Now comes:

Activity 6 - Conclusion (Additional Security Measures + Strengths & Weaknesses Analysis)

This is usually a theory-heavy evaluation section.

Say "**next answer**" to continue.

Sources



next

Activity 6 – Conclusion

(As required in the PDF)
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Now we must:

1. Suggest **additional SQL security measures**
 2. Comment on **strengths**
 3. Comment on **weaknesses**
-

Part 1 – Additional SQL Security Measures

Even though our design works, more security enhancements can be added:

1. Use Stored Procedures Instead of Direct Table Access

Instead of:

```
GRANT INSERT ON ORDERS TO BILL;
```

We could:

- Remove direct insert privilege
- Create a stored procedure `process_order()`
- Grant EXECUTE on that procedure

 Better control

 Business rules enforced centrally

2. Row-Level Security (If DBMS Supports It)

Modern DBMSs allow:

```
CREATE POLICY ...
```

This enforces:

- Value-based conditions automatically
- Stronger enforcement than views

Better than `WITH CHECK OPTION`.

3. Audit Logging

Enable:

- Login audit

- Failed access logging
- Data modification logging

This would answer Activity 7 detection question.

✓ 4. Password Policies

Enforce:

- Strong passwords
- Password expiry
- Account lockout after failed attempts

This limits misuse by staff.

✓ 5. Remove ON DELETE CASCADE (Optional Security Choice)

Instead of cascade:

- Use **ON DELETE RESTRICT**

Prevents accidental mass deletion.

💪 Strengths of Our Security Design

- ✓ Role-based access control (RBAC)
 - ✓ Value-based restriction via view
 - ✓ Proper privilege separation
 - ✓ No unnecessary SYSADMIN rights
 - ✓ Privacy preserved for temporary staff
 - ✓ Cascade relationships clearly defined
-

⚠ Weaknesses of Our Approach

1. View-based restriction can sometimes be bypassed by direct table access if mistakenly granted.
 2. Value restriction depends on CHECK OPTION — not very flexible.
 3. ON DELETE CASCADE could allow large accidental data loss.
 4. Tracey has full privileges — risk of internal abuse.
 5. No multi-level approval system for high-value orders.
-

🧠 Overall Evaluation

The system implements:

- Discretionary Access Control (DAC)
- Basic Role-Based Access Control (RBAC)
- Partial Mandatory Access (through value condition)

Security level: Moderate

Not enterprise-grade.

✓ Activity 6 Completed

Now comes the final and most interesting part:

👉 Activity 7 - The Tracey Scenario (Privilege Abuse Testing)

This is where many students realize they gave too much power 😅

Say “**next answer**” to continue.

Sources



next

✓ Activity 7 – The Tracey Scenario

(From the PDF
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Now we analyse what happens after everything is implemented.

This section checks whether your security design is **correct or dangerously over-permissive**.

🔍 Question 1

❓ Tracey tried to delete the CUSTOMER table. Did she succeed?

🔎 Analysis

We gave Tracey:

GRANT ALL PRIVILEGES ON CUSTOMER TO TRACEY;

⚠️ Important:

ALL PRIVILEGES usually means:

- SELECT

- INSERT
- UPDATE
- DELETE
- REFERENCES

It does **NOT automatically include DROP TABLE** unless:

- She is table owner
- Or has DBA/SYSADMIN role

Correct Answer:

No, she should NOT succeed (if implemented correctly).

Unless:

You accidentally made her schema owner or DBA.

Question 2

? If she succeeded, why?

Because you might have:

- Created tables under Tracey's login
- Given her SYSADMIN role
- Granted **DROP** privilege explicitly
- Granted **WITH GRANT OPTION** carelessly

That would mean:

 You unintentionally gave her administrative privileges.

Question 3

? She tried to delete some customers. Did she succeed? Did deletes cascade?

We granted:

```
GRANT DELETE ON CUSTOMER TO TRACEY;
```

And table has:

```
ON DELETE CASCADE
```

Result:

- ✓ She can delete customers
- ✓ Related ORDERS deleted
- ✓ Related ORDER_ITEMS deleted

So YES — deletion succeeds and cascades.

This is expected.

But it's also risky.

Question 4

? She tried to insert a line in all orders over £1000 for 500 coffee machines. Did she succeed?

She has:

- ✓ Full ORDERS access
- ✓ Full ORDER_ITEM access

So yes, she can insert:

```
INSERT INTO ORDER_ITEM VALUES ('Coffee Machine', 2, 500, 500);
```

No restriction blocks her.

✓ So YES, she succeeds.

Unless you implemented:

- Business logic constraint
- Quantity restriction trigger

Which we did not.

Question 5

? How was the problem detected?

Through:

- ✓ Audit logs
- ✓ Transaction logs
- ✓ Unexpected inventory change
- ✓ Report anomalies
- ✓ Sales reporting mismatch

Without logging?

✗ It may go unnoticed.

Question 6

? She tried to change her password. Did she succeed?

In most DBMS:

- Users CAN change their own password.

Unless restricted by DBA.

So:

 Yes, she likely succeeds.

But this does not increase privilege.

Question 7

? How much privilege can any one individual ever be given?

This is a theory answer.

Principle of Least Privilege:

No individual should be given:

- Structural privileges (DROP, ALTER, CREATE)
- System-level privileges
- Both business and admin control

Separation of Duties must apply.

Best practice:

Role	Capability
DBA	Structure management
Supervisor	Business data control
Staff	Limited operational rights

Never combine DBA + Supervisor in one person.

Final Evaluation of Tracey

Tracey has:

-  Full business access
-  No structural control

✗ No SYSADMIN powers

If you implemented correctly:

Your system is secure.

If she could drop tables:

You made a serious design mistake.

🏁 Entire Exercise Summary

You have implemented:

- ✓ Database schema
 - ✓ Test data
 - ✓ Role-based access
 - ✓ Value-based restriction
 - ✓ View-based isolation
 - ✓ Confidentiality control
 - ✓ Cascade behavior testing
 - ✓ Abuse analysis
-

If you'd like, I can now:

- Give you a **clean exam-ready answer summary**
- Or provide a **complete combined SQL script**
- Or explain weakest point in whole design deeply
- Or simulate viva questions

Tell me what you want next.

Sources