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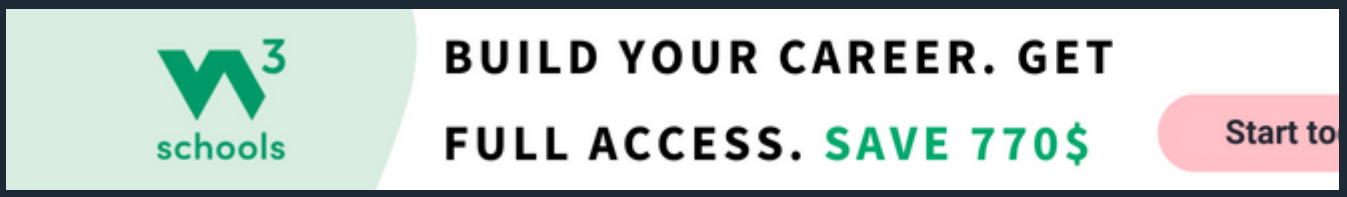

MySQL ALTER TABLE Statement

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MySQL ALTER TABLE Statement

The `ALTER TABLE` statement is used to add, delete, or modify columns in an existing table.

The `ALTER TABLE` statement is also used to add and drop various constraints on an existing table.

ALTER TABLE - ADD Column

To add a column in a table, use the following syntax:

```
ALTER TABLE table_name
ADD column_name datatype;
```

The following SQL adds an "Email" column to the "Customers" table:

```
ALTER TABLE Customers
ADD Email varchar(255);
```

ALTER TABLE - DROP COLUMN

To delete a column in a table, use the following syntax (notice that some database systems don't allow deleting a column):

```
ALTER TABLE table_name
DROP COLUMN column_name;
```

The following SQL deletes the "Email" column from the "Customers" table:

Example

```
ALTER TABLE Customers
DROP COLUMN Email;
```

ALTER TABLE - MODIFY COLUMN

To change the data type of a column in a table, use the following syntax:

```
ALTER TABLE table_name
MODIFY COLUMN column_name datatype;
```

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MySQL ALTER TABLE Example

Look at the "Persons" table:

ID	LastName	FirstName	Address	City
1	Hansen	Ola	Timoteivn 10	Sandnes
2	Svendson	Tove	Borgvn 23	Sandnes
3	Pettersen	Kari	Storgt 20	Stavanger

Now we want to add a column named "DateOfBirth" in the "Persons" table.

We use the following SQL statement:

Example

```
ALTER TABLE Persons
ADD DateOfBirth date;
```

Notice that the new column, "DateOfBirth", is of type date and is going to hold a date. The data type specifies what type of data the column can hold. For a complete reference of all the data types available in MySQL, go to our complete Data Types reference.

The "Persons" table will now look like this:

2	Svendson	Tove	Borgvn 23	Sandnes
3	Pettersen	Kari	Storgt 20	Stavanger

Change Data Type Example

Now we want to change the data type of the column named "DateOfBirth" in the "Persons" table.

We use the following SQL statement:

Example

```
ALTER TABLE Persons
MODIFY COLUMN DateOfBirth year;
```

Notice that the "DateOfBirth" column is now of type year and is going to hold a year in a two- or four-digit format.

DROP COLUMN Example

Next, we want to delete the column named "DateOfBirth" in the "Persons" table.

We use the following SQL statement:

Example

```
ALTER TABLE Persons
DROP COLUMN DateOfBirth;
```

ID	LastName	FirstName	Address	City
1	Hansen	Ola	Timoteivn 10	Sandnes
2	Svendson	Tove	Borgvn 23	Sandnes
3	Pettersen	Kari	Storgt 20	Stavanger

Test Yourself With Exercises

Exercise:

Add a column of type `DATE` called `Birthday`.

```
[          ] Persons
[                    ];
```

Submit Answer »

Start the Exercise

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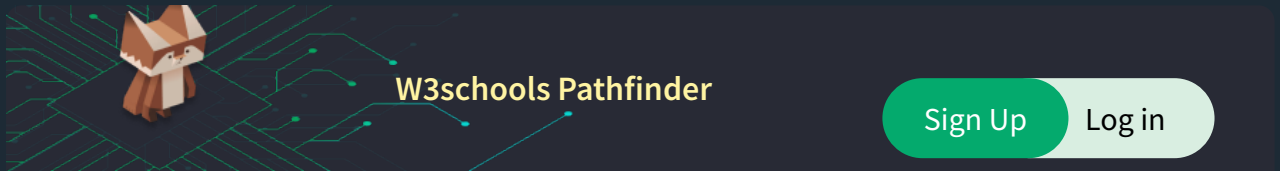

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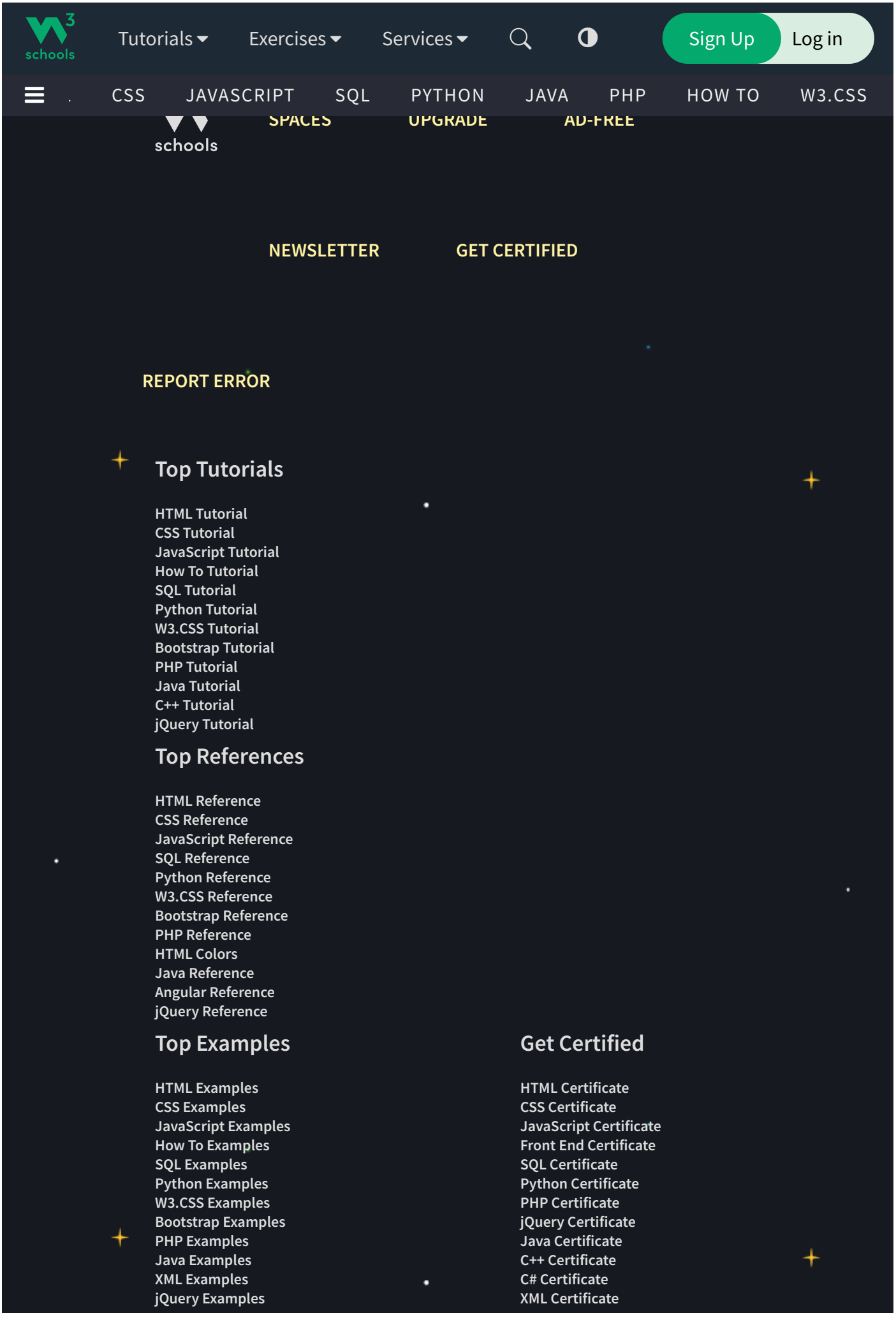
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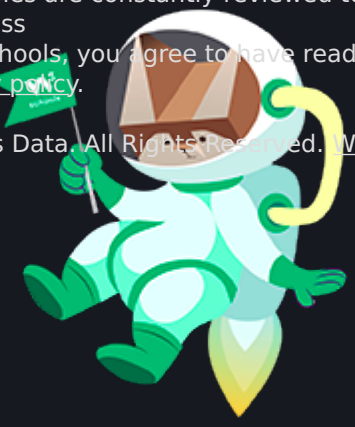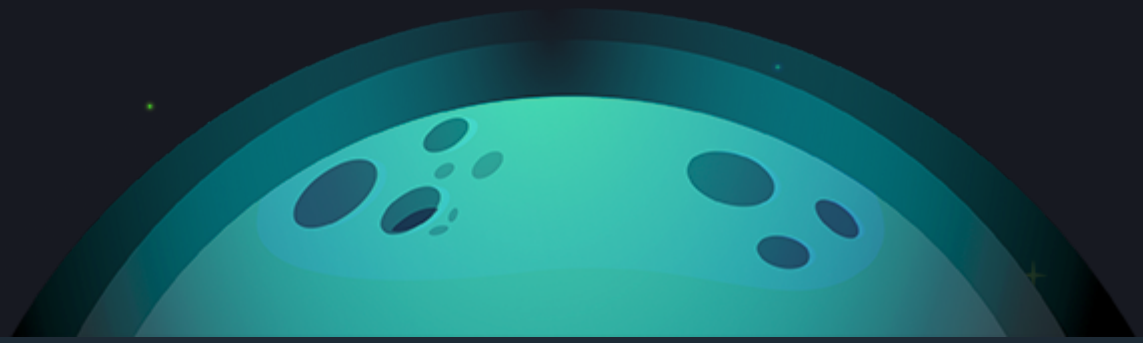
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