The Relational Data Model and Relational Database Constraints

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Informal Definitions

- Key of a Relation:
  - Each row has a value of a data item (or set of items) that uniquely identifies that row in the table
    - Called the *key*
  - In the STUDENT table, SSN is the key

  - Sometimes row-ids or sequential numbers are assigned as keys to identify the rows in a table
    - Called *artificial key* or *surrogate key*

Formal Definitions - Schema

- The **Schema** (or description) of a Relation:
  - Denoted by R(A1, A2, ...An)
  - R is the **name** of the relation
  - The **attributes** of the relation are A1, A2, ..., An
- Example:

  CUSTOMER (Cust-id, Cust-name, Address, Phone#)
  - CUSTOMER is the relation name
  - Defined over the four attributes: Cust-id, Cust-name, Address, Phone#
- Each attribute has a **domain** or a set of valid values.
  - For example, the domain of Cust-id is 6 digit numbers.

Formal Definitions - Tuple

- A **tuple** is an ordered set of values (enclosed in angled brackets ‘< … >’)
- Each value is derived from an appropriate *domain*.
- A row in the CUSTOMER relation is a 4-tuple and would consist of four values, for example:
  - <632895, "John Smith", "101 Main St. Atlanta, GA 30332", "(404) 894-2000">
  - This is called a 4-tuple as it has 4 values
  - A tuple (row) in the CUSTOMER relation.
- A relation is a **set** of such tuples (rows)

Formal Definitions - Domain

- A domain is a unique set of values that can be assigned to an attribute in a database.
  - Example: phone_numbers are the set of 10 digit phone numbers
- A domain also has a data-type or a format defined for it.

Formal Definitions - Summary

- Formally,
  - Given R(A1, A2, ..., An)
  - r(R) $\subset$ dom (A1) X dom (A2) X ....X dom(An)
- R(A1, A2, …, An) is the **schema** of the relation
- R is the **name** of the relation
- A1, A2, …, An are the **attributes** of the relation
- r(R): a specific **state** (or "value" or “population”) of relation R – this is a *set of tuples* (rows)
  - r(R) = {t1, t2, …, tn} where each ti is an n-tuple
  - ti = <v1, v2, …, vn> where each vj *element-of* dom(Aj)

Formal Definitions - Example

- Let R(A1, A2) be a relation schema:
  - Let dom(A1) = {0,1}
  - Let dom(A2) = {a,b,c}
- Then: dom(A1) X dom(A2) is all possible combinations:

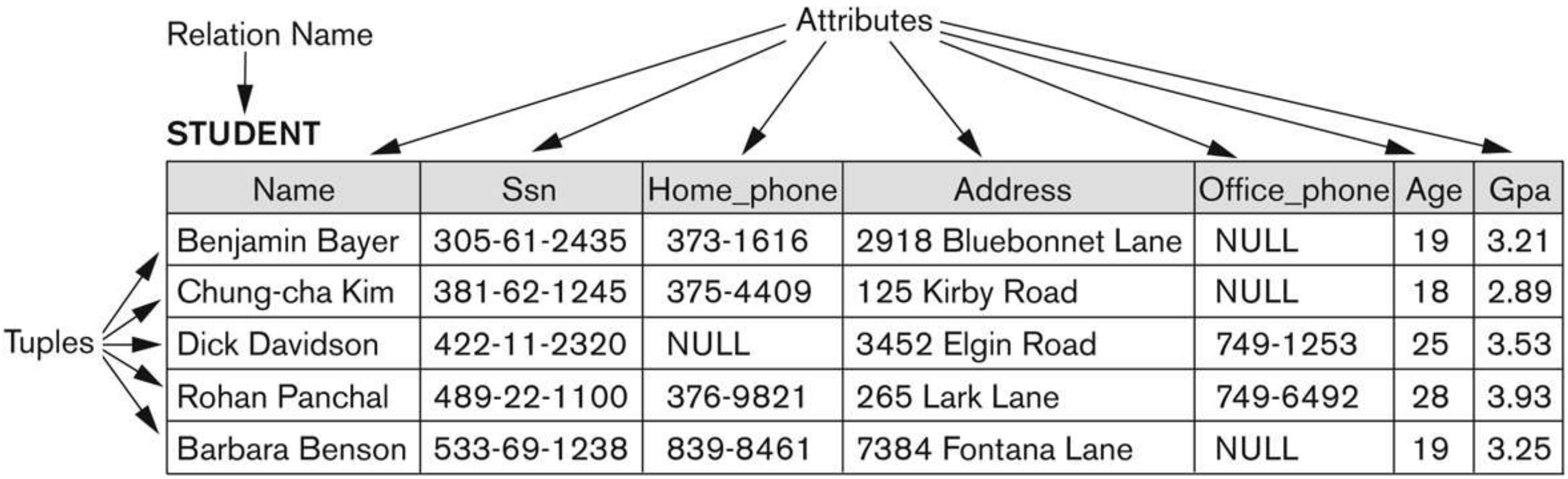
  {<0,a> , <0,b> , <0,c>, <1,a>, <1,b>, <1,c> }

- The relation state r(R) $\subset$ dom(A1) X dom(A2)
- For example: r(R) could be {<0,a> , <0,b> , <1,c> }
  - this is one possible state (or “population” or “extension”) r of the relation R, defined over A1 and A2.
  - It has three 2-tuples: <0,a> , <0,b> , <1,c>

Definition Summary

Informal Terms	Formal Terms
Table	Relation
Column Header	Attribute
All possible Column Values	Domain
Row	Tuple
Table Definition	Schema of a Relation
Populated Table	State of the Relation

Example – A relation STUDENT



Relation Name

Attributes

Tuples

STUDENT

Name	Ssn	Home_phone	Address	Office_phone	Age	Gpa
Benjamin Bayer	305-61-2435	373-1616	2918 Bluebonnet Lane	NULL	19	3.21
Chung-cha Kim	381-62-1245	375-4409	125 Kirby Road	NULL	18	2.89
Dick Davidson	422-11-2320	NULL	3452 Elgin Road	749-1253	25	3.53
Rohan Panchal	489-22-1100	376-9821	265 Lark Lane	749-6492	28	3.93
Barbara Benson	533-69-1238	839-8461	7384 Fontana Lane	NULL	19	3.25

Characteristics Of Relations

- Values in a tuple:
  - All values are considered atomic (indivisible).
  - Each value in a tuple must be from the domain of the attribute for that column
  - A special **null** value is used to represent values that are unknown or inapplicable to certain tuples.

Relational Integrity Constraints/ Rules

- There are three *main types* of constraints in the relational model:
  - **Key** constraints
  - **Entity integrity** constraints
  - **Referential integrity** constraints

- Another implicit constraint is the **domain** constraint
  - Every value in a tuple must be from the *domain of its attribute* (or it could be **null**, if allowed for that attribute)

Key Constraints

- **Superkey** of R:
  - Is a set of attributes SK of R with the following condition:
    - No two tuples in any valid relation state r(R) will have the same value for SK
    - That is, for any distinct tuples t1 and t2 in r(R), t1[SK] ≠ t2[SK]
    - This condition must hold in *any valid state* r(R)
- **Key** of R:
  - A "minimal" superkey
  - That is, a key is a superkey K such that removal of any attribute from K results in a set of attributes that is not a superkey (does not possess the superkey uniqueness property)

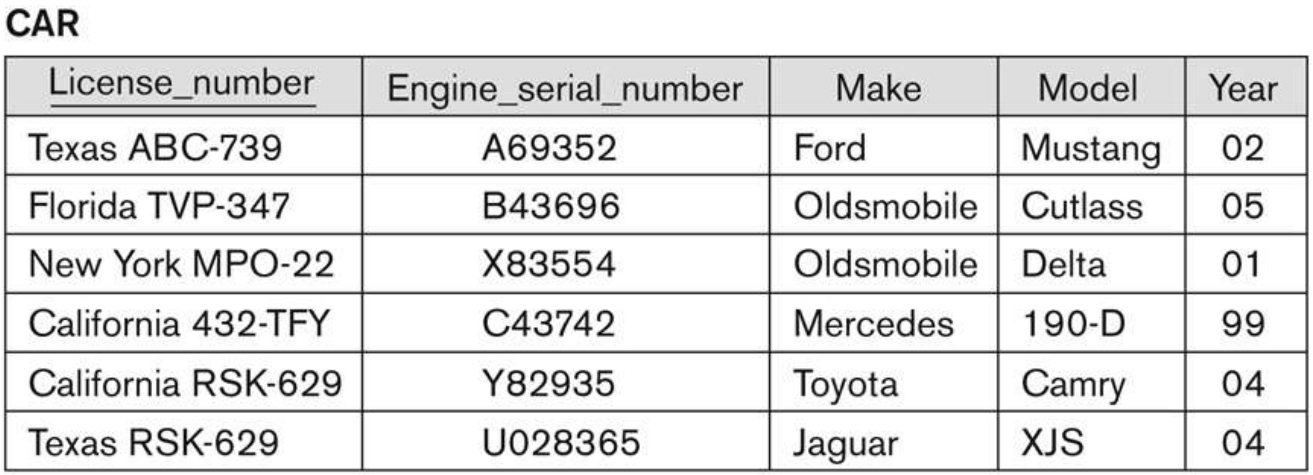
Key Constraints (continued)

- Example: Consider the CAR relation schema:
  - CAR(State, Reg#, SerialNo, Make, Model, Year)
  - CAR has two keys:
    - Key1 = {State, Reg#}
    - Key2 = {SerialNo}
  - Both are also superkeys of CAR
  - {SerialNo, Make} is a superkey but *not* a key.
- In general:
  - Any *key* is a *superkey* (but not vice versa)
  - Any set of attributes that *includes a key* is a *superkey*
  - A *minimal* superkey is also a key

Key Constraints

- If a relation has several **candidate keys**, one is chosen arbitrarily to be the **primary key**.
  - The primary key attributes are underlined.
- Example: Consider the CAR relation schema:
  - CAR(State, Reg#, SerialNo, Make, Model, Year)
  - We chose SerialNo as the primary key
- The primary key value is used to *uniquely identify* each tuple in a relation
  - Provides the tuple identity
- Also used to *reference* the tuple from another tuple

CAR table with two candidate keys – LicenseNumber chosen as Primary Key



CAR

License_number	Engine_serial_number	Make	Model	Year
Texas ABC-739	A69352	Ford	Mustang	02
Florida TVP-347	B43696	Oldsmobile	Cutlass	05
New York MPO-22	X83554	Oldsmobile	Delta	01
California 432-TFY	C43742	Mercedes	190-D	99
California RSK-629	Y82935	Toyota	Camry	04
Texas RSK-629	U028365	Jaguar	XJS	04

Entity Integrity

- **Entity Integrity:**
  - The *primary key attributes* PK of each relation schema R in S cannot have null values in any tuple of r(R).
    - This is because primary key values are used to *identify* the individual tuples.
    - t[PK] ≠ null for any tuple t in r(R)
    - If PK has several attributes, null is not allowed in any of these attributes
  - Note: Other attributes of R may be constrained to disallow null values, even though they are not members of the primary key.

Referential Integrity

- A constraint involving **two** relations
- Used to specify a **relationship** among tuples in two relations:
  - The **referencing relation** and the **referenced relation**.

Referential Integrity

- Tuples in the **referencing relation** R1 have attributes FK (called **foreign key** attributes) that reference the primary key attributes PK of the **referenced relation** R2.
    - A tuple t1 in R1 is said to **reference** a tuple t2 in R2 if t1[FK] = t2[PK].
- A referential integrity constraint can be displayed in a relational database schema as a directed arc from R1.FK to R2.

Referential Integrity (or foreign key) Constraint

- Statement of the constraint
  - The value in the foreign key column (or columns) FK of the the **referencing relation** R1 can be **either**:
    - (1) a value of an existing primary key value of a corresponding primary key PK in the **referenced relation** R2, or
    - (2) a **null**.
- In case (2), the FK in R1 should **not** be a part of its own primary key.

Different Types of Keys in Relational Model

- Candidate Key
- Primary Key
- Super Key
- Alternate Key
- Foreign Key
- Composite Key

Candidate Key

- The minimal set of attributes that can uniquely identify a tuple is known as a candidate key
- It is a minimal super key.
- The minimal set of attributes that can uniquely identify a record.
- It must contain unique values.
- It can contain NULL values.
- Every table must have at least a single candidate key.
- A table can have multiple candidate keys but only one primary key.
- The candidate key can be simple (having only one attribute) or composite as well.

Primary Key

- It is a unique key.
- It can identify only one tuple (a record) at a time.
- It has no duplicate values, it has unique values.
- It cannot be NULL.
- Primary keys are not necessarily to be a single column; more than one column can also be a primary key for a table.

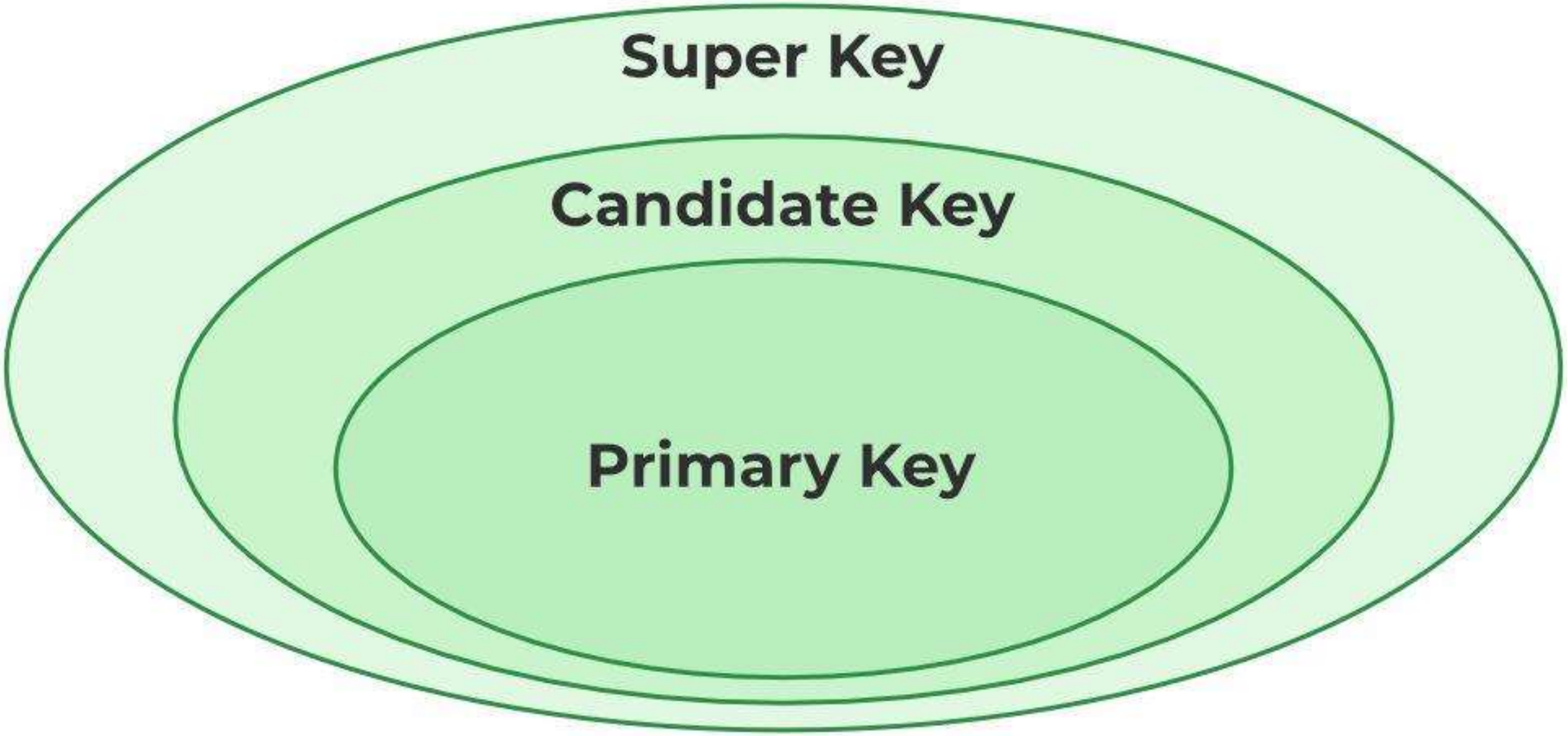
Primary Key

- There can be more than one candidate key in relation out of which one can be chosen as the primary key.
- For Example

  Student(STUD_NO, SNAME, ADDRESS, PHONE)
- STUD_NO, as well as STUD_PHONE, are candidate keys for relation STUDENT but STUD_NO can be chosen as the primary key .

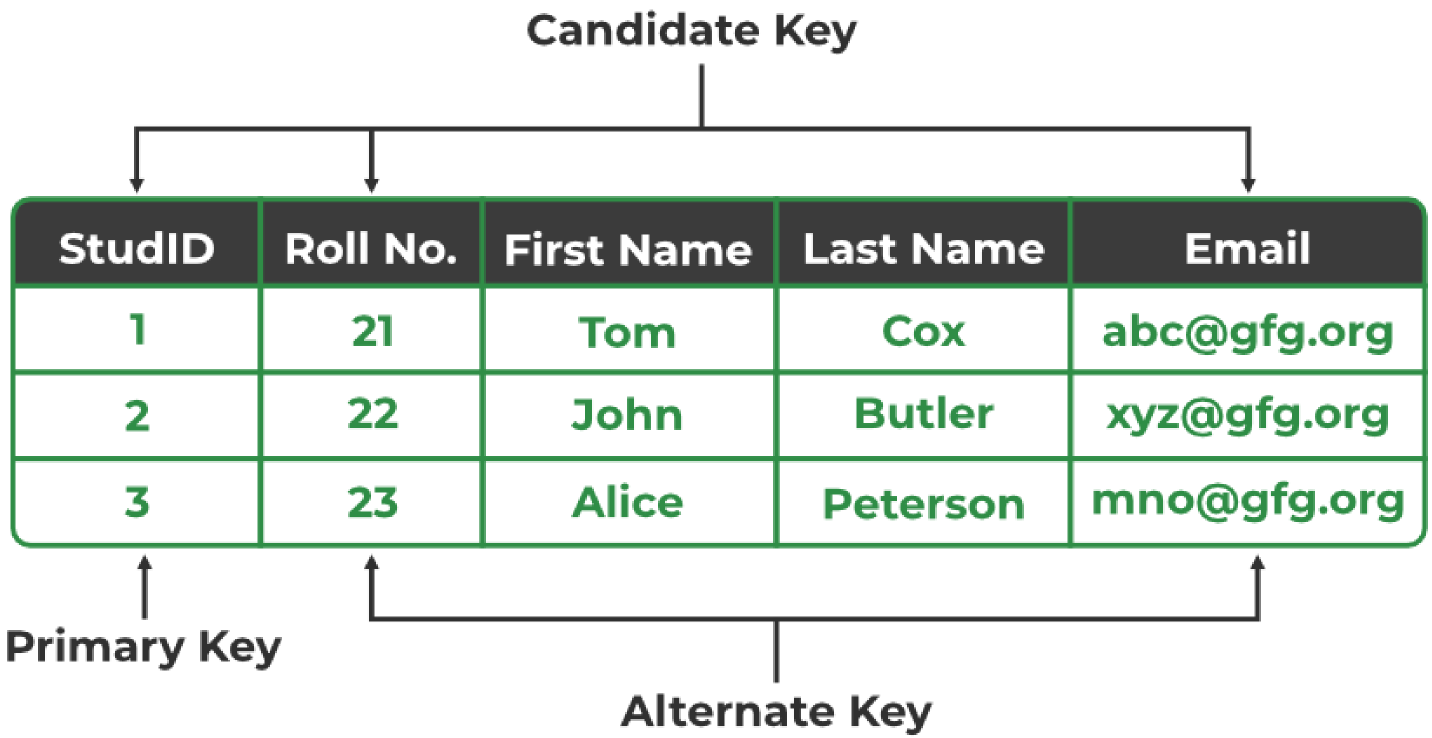
Super Key

- The set of attributes that can uniquely identify a tuple is known as Super Key.
- For Example, STUD_NO, (STUD_NO, STUD_NAME)
- STUD_NO+ name is a super key**.**
- A super key is a group of single or multiple keys that identifies rows in a table.
- It supports NULL values.
- Adding zero or more attributes to the candidate key generates the super key.
- A candidate key is a super key but vice versa is not true.


Super Key
Candidate Key
Primary Key

Alternate Key

- The candidate key other than the primary key is called an alternate key.
- All the keys which are not primary keys are called alternate keys.
- Consider the table student.
  STUD_NO, as well as PHONE both,
  are candidate keys for relation STUDENT
- Stud_no if primary key.
- PHONE will be an alternate key



StudID	Roll No.	First Name	Last Name	Email
1	21	Tom	Cox	abc@gfg.org
2	22	John	Butler	xyz@gfg.org
3	23	Alice	Peterson	mno@gfg.org

Foreign Key

- If an attribute can only take the values which are present as values of some other attribute, it will be a foreign key to the attribute to which it refers.
- The relation which is being referenced is called referenced relation .The relation which refers to the referenced relation is called referencing relation and the corresponding attribute is called referencing attribute.
- The referenced attribute of the referenced relation should be the primary key to it.
- It combines two or more relations (tables) at a time.
- They act as a cross-reference between the tables