

# Introduction

2 minutes

In the early years of computing systems, every application stored data in its own unique structure. When developers wanted to build applications to use that data, they had to know a lot about the particular data structure to find the data they needed. These data structures were inefficient, hard to maintain, and hard to optimize for good application performance. The *relational* database model was designed to solve the problem of multiple arbitrary data structures. The relational model provides a standard way of representing and querying data that can be used by any application. One of the key advantages of the relational database model is its use of *tables*, which are an intuitive, efficient, and flexible way to store and access structured information.

The simple yet powerful relational model is used by organizations of all types and sizes for a broad variety of information management needs. Relational databases are used to track inventories, process ecommerce transactions, manage huge amounts of mission-critical customer information, and much more. A relational database is useful for storing any information containing related data elements that must be organized in a rules-based, consistent structure.

In this module, you'll learn about the key characteristics of relational databases, and explore relational data structures.

## Learning objectives

In this module you will learn how to:

- Identify characteristics of relational data
- Define normalization
- Identify types of SQL statement
- Identify common relational database objects

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## Next unit: Understand relational data

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