SQL TOP, LIMIT, FETCH FIRST or ROWNUM Clause

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The SQL SELECT TOP Clause

The `SELECT TOP` clause is used to specify the number of records to return.

The `SELECT TOP` clause is useful on large tables with thousands of records. Returning a large number of records can impact performance.

Example

Get your own SQL Server

Select only the first 3 records of the Customers table:

```
SELECT TOP 3 * FROM Customers;
```

Try it Yourself »

Note: Not all database systems support the `SELECT TOP` clause. MySQL supports the `LIMIT` clause to select a limited number of records, while Oracle uses `FETCH FIRST` *n* `ROWS ONLY` and `ROWNUM`.

SQL Server / MS Access Syntax:

```
SELECT TOP number|percent column_name(s)
FROM table_name
WHERE condition;
```

MySQL Syntax:

```
SELECT column_name(s)
FROM table_name
WHERE condition
LIMIT number;
```

Oracle 12 Syntax:

```
SELECT column_name(s)
FROM table_name
ORDER BY column_name(s)
FETCH FIRST number ROWS ONLY;
```

Older Oracle Syntax:

```
SELECT column_name(s)
FROM table_name
WHERE ROWNUM <= number;
```

Older Oracle Syntax (with ORDER BY):

```
SELECT *
FROM (SELECT column_name(s) FROM table_name ORDER BY column_name(s))
WHERE ROWNUM <= number;
```

Demo Database

Below is a selection from the **<u>Customers</u>** table used in the examples:

CustomerID	CustomerName	ContactName	Address	City	PostalCode	Country
1	Alfreds Futterkiste	Maria Anders	Obere Str. 57	Berlin	12209	Germany
2	Ana Trujillo Emparedados y helados	Ana Trujillo	Avda. de la Constitución 2222	México D.F.	05021	Mexico
3	Antonio Moreno Taquería	Antonio Moreno	Mataderos 2312	México D.F.	05023	Mexico
4	Around the Horn	Thomas Hardy	120 Hanover Sq.	London	WA1 1DP	UK
5	Berglunds snabbköp	Christina Berglund	Berguvsvägen 8	Luleå	S-958 22	Sweden

LIMIT

The following SQL statement shows the equivalent example for MySQL:

Example

Select the first 3 records of the Customers table:

```
SELECT * FROM Customers
LIMIT 3;
```

Try it Yourself »

FETCH FIRST

The following SQL statement shows the equivalent example for Oracle:

Example

Select the first 3 records of the Customers table:

```
SELECT * FROM Customers
FETCH FIRST 3 ROWS ONLY;
```

SQL TOP PERCENT Example

The following SQL statement selects the first 50% of the records from the "Customers" table (for SQL Server/MS Access):

Example

```
SELECT TOP 50 PERCENT * FROM Customers;
```

Try it Yourself »

The following SQL statement shows the equivalent example for Oracle:

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers
FETCH FIRST 50 PERCENT ROWS ONLY;
```

ADD a WHERE CLAUSE

The following SQL statement selects the first three records from the "Customers" table, where the country is "Germany" (for SQL Server/MS Access):

Example

```
SELECT TOP 3 * FROM Customers
WHERE Country='Germany';
```

Try it Yourself »

The following SQL statement shows the equivalent example for MySQL:

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers
WHERE Country='Germany'
LIMIT 3;
```

Try it Yourself »

The following SQL statement shows the equivalent example for Oracle:

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers
WHERE Country='Germany'
FETCH FIRST 3 ROWS ONLY;
```

ADD the ORDER BY Keyword

Add the ` ORDER BY ` keyword when you want to sort the result, and return the first 3 records of the sorted result.

For SQL Server and MS Access:

Example

Sort the result reverse alphabetically by CustomerName, and return the first 3 records:

```
SELECT TOP 3 * FROM Customers
ORDER BY CustomerName DESC;
```

Try it Yourself »

The following SQL statement shows the equivalent example for MySQL:

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers
ORDER BY CustomerName DESC
LIMIT 3;
```

Try it Yourself »

The following SQL statement shows the equivalent example for Oracle:

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers
ORDER BY CustomerName DESC
FETCH FIRST 3 ROWS ONLY;
```