You use the SET TRANSACTION ISOLATION LEVEL READ COMMITTED statement when you want to ensure that statements cannot read data altered by other transactions when those transactions have not yet been committed. When you set the READ COMMITTED transaction level, data can be altered by other transactions between individual statements within the current transaction.

You use the SET TRANSACTION ISOLATION LEVEL READ UNCOMMITTED statement when you want to allow statements to read rows altered by other transactions before those transactions have been committed.

You use the SET TRANSACTION ISOLATION LEVEL SNAPSHOT statement when you want to ensure that data read by any statement in a transaction will be transactionally consistent with how that data existed at the start of the transaction. SNAPSHOT transactions do not block other transactions from writing data.

You use the SET TRANSACTION ISOLATION LEVEL SERIALIZABLE statement when you want to ensure that Transact-SQL statements cannot read data that has been altered but not committed, that other transactions cannot modify data read by the current transaction until the transaction commits, and other transactions cannot insert rows with key values that would fall into the range read by statements in the current transaction until that transaction completes.