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SQL | OFFSET-FETCH Clause

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OFFSET and FETCH Clause are used in conjunction with SELECT and ORDER BY clause to provide a means to retrieve a range of records.

OFFSET

The OFFSET argument is used to identify the starting point to return rows from a result set. Basically, it exclude the first set of records.

Note:

- OFFSET can only be used with ORDER BY clause. It cannot be used on its own.
- OFFSET value must be greater than or equal to zero. It cannot be negative, else return error.

Syntax:

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```
SELECT column_name(s)
FROM table_name
WHERE condition
ORDER BY column_name
OFFSET rows_to_skip ROWS;
```

Examples:

Consider the following Employee table,

Fname	Lname	SSN	Salary	Super_ssn
John	Smith	123456789	30000	33344555
Franklin	Wong	333445555	40000	888665555
Joyce	English	453453453	80000	333445555
Ramesh	Narayan	666884444	38000	333445555
James	Borg	888665555	55000	NULL
Jennifer	Wallace	987654321	43000	88866555
Ahmad	Jabbar	987987987	25000	987654321
Alicia	Zeala	999887777	25000	987654321

- Print Fname, Lname of all the Employee except the employee having lowest salary.

```
SELECT Fname, Lname
FROM Employee
ORDER BY Salary
OFFSET 1 ROWS;
```

Output:

Fname	Lname
Alicia	Zeala
John	Smith
Ramesh	Narayan
Franklin	Wong
Jennifer	Wallace
James	Borg
Joyce	English

FETCH

The FETCH argument is used to return a set of number of rows. FETCH can't be used itself, it is used in conjunction with OFFSET.

Syntax:

```
SELECT column_name(s)
FROM table_name
ORDER BY column_name
OFFSET rows_to_skip
FETCH NEXT number_of_rows ROWS ONLY;
```

Example:

- Print the Fname, Lname from 3rd to 6th tuple of Employee table when sorted according to the Salary.

```
SELECT Fname, Lname  
FROM Employee  
ORDER BY Salary  
OFFSET 2 ROWS  
FETCH NEXT 4 ROWS ONLY;
```

Output:

Fname	Lname
John	Smith
Ramesh	Narayan
Franklin	Wong
Jennifer	Wallace

- Print the bottom 2 tuples of Employee table when sorted by Salary.

```
SELECT Fname, Lname  
FROM Employee  
ORDER BY Salary  
OFFSET (SELECT COUNT(*) FROM EMPLOYEE) - 2 ROWS  
FETCH NEXT 2 ROWS;
```

Output:

Fname	Lname
James	Borg
Joyce	English

Important Points:

1. OFFSET clause is mandatory with FETCH. You can never use, ORDER BY ... FETCH.
2. TOP cannot be combined with OFFSET and FETCH.
3. The OFFSET/FETCH row count expression can be only be any arithmetic, constant, or parameter expression which will return an integer value.
4. ORDER BY is mandatory to be used with OFFSET and FETCH clause.
5. OFFSET value must be greater than or equal to zero. It cannot be negative, else return error.

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