

SQL Teaching

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Lesson 31: COALESCE

COALESCE takes a list of columns, and returns the value of the first column that is not null.

Suppose we wanted to find the most powerful weapon that a combatant has on hand. If value of *gun* is not null, that is the value returned. Otherwise, the value of *sword* is returned. Then you would run:

```
SELECT name, COALESCE(gun, sword) as weapon FROM fighters;
```

Suppose that a fighter's tank could count as a weapon, and it would take precedence over the gun and the sword. Could you find each fighter's weapon in that scenario?

Congrats! That is correct!
That is currently the end of the tutorial. Please check back later for more!

SQL:

```
SELECT name, COALESCE(tank, gun, sword) as weapon FROM fighters;
```

Run SQL

Result:

name	weapon
US Marine	M1A1 Abrams Tank
John Wilkes Booth	.44 caliber derringer
Zorro	Sword of Zorro
Innocent Bystander	null

Current tables:

fighters

id	name	gun	sword	tank
1	US Marine	Colt 9mm SMG	Swiss Army Knife	M1A1 Abrams Tank
2	John Wilkes Booth	.44 caliber derringer	null	null
3	Zorro	null	Sword of Zorro	null
4	Innocent Bystander	null	null	null

Expected Result:

name	weapon
US Marine	M1A1 Abrams Tank
John Wilkes Booth	.44 caliber derringer
Zorro	Sword of Zorro
Innocent Bystander	null

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