

Database Design

Third Normal Form



ACADEMY

Objectives

This lesson covers the following objectives:

- Identify transitive dependencies in a data model
- Define the rule of Third Normal Form in the normalization process
- Examine a non-normalized entity and determine which rule, or rules of normalization are being violated
- Apply the rule of Third Normal Form to resolve a violation in the model

Purpose

Your goal as a database designer is to "store information in one place only and in the best possible place."
Following the rules of normalization helps you achieve this goal.

You may want to enter different kinds of information for a friend in your personal address book: phone number, address, name of school or place of work.

Purpose (cont.)

If you have several friends who go to the same school, and you enter the school's street address along with each of them, you would not only be duplicating data but causing potential problems -- for instance, if the school moved and changed its address, you would have to go back and change it everywhere!

Normalization is a process to eliminate these kinds of problems.

Third Normal Form Rule

The rule of Third Normal Form (3NF) states that no non-UID attribute can be dependent on another non-UID attribute.

Third Normal Form prohibits transitive dependencies. A transitive dependency exists when any attribute in an entity is dependent on any other non-UID attribute in that entity.

Third Normal
Form Violation

CD
id
* title
* producer
* year
o store name
o store address

Third Normal Form Rule (cont.)

Think of the kind of information you'd like to store about your CD collection. Does information about the store where you bought the CD belong in the same entity?

If the store address changed, you would have to change the information on all the CDs that were bought at that store.

Third Normal
Form Violation

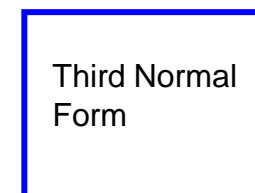
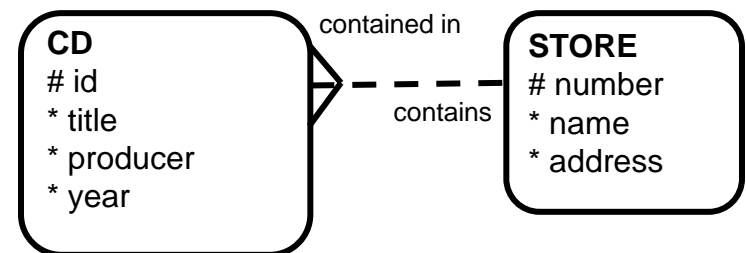
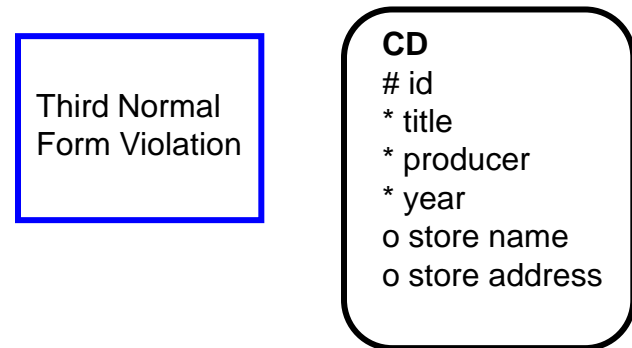
CD
id
* title
* producer
* year
o store name
o store address

Third Normal Form Transitive Dependency

The store address is dependent on the CD number, which is the UID of the CD entity. So this entity is in 1NF and 2NF.

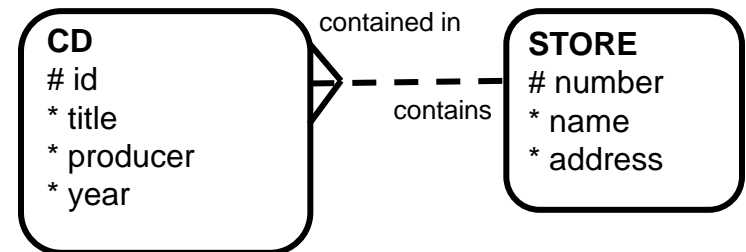
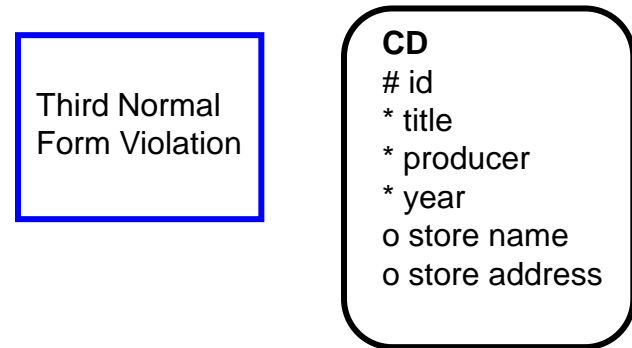
But store address is also dependent on store name, which is a non-UID attribute.

This is an example of a transitive dependency and a violation of Third Normal Form.



Third Normal Form Transitive Dependency (cont.)

The correctly normalized model is shown here: create a second entity **STORE**, with a relationship to **CD**.



Third Normal Form

Third Normal Form Example

Consider a system that tracks information about cities -- size, population, mayor, and so on.

The first model shows an entity that includes state information. Although state is an attribute of city, state flower is really an attribute of state.

Third Normal
Form Violation

CITY
id
* name
* size
* population
* mayor
* state
* state flower

Third Normal
Form

CITY
id
* name
* size
* population
* mayor

in

have

STATE
id
* name
* flower

Third Normal Form Example (cont.)

The second model, with a new entity STATE, is in Third Normal Form.

Third Normal
Form Violation

CITY
id
* name
* size
* population
* mayor
* state
* state flower

Third Normal
Form

CITY
id
* name
* size
* population
* mayor

in

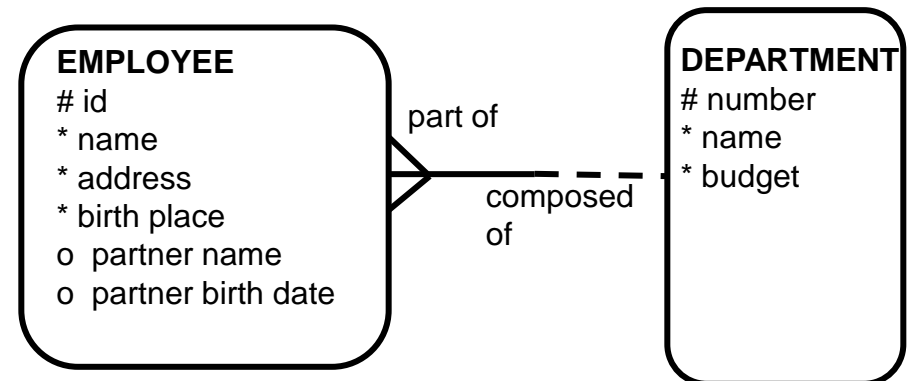
have

STATE
id
* name
* flower

Third Normal Form Second Example

In this example, assume the following business rule: each employee can have one partner.

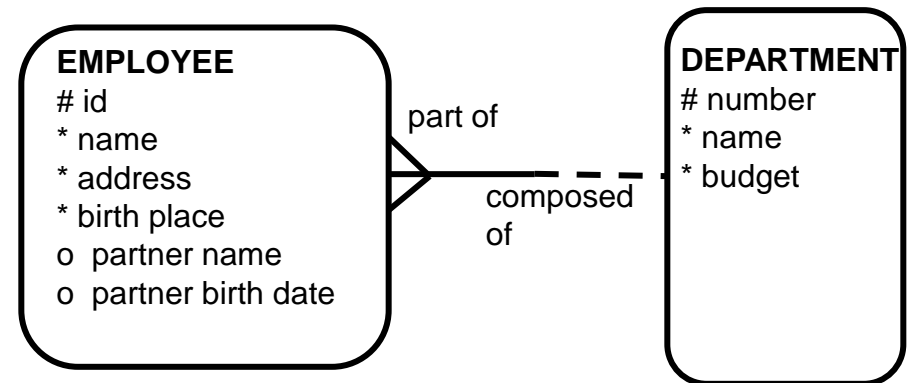
This model violates Third Normal Form because partner birth date is an attribute of partner, not of EMPLOYEE.



Third Normal
Form Violation

Third Normal Form Second Example (cont.)

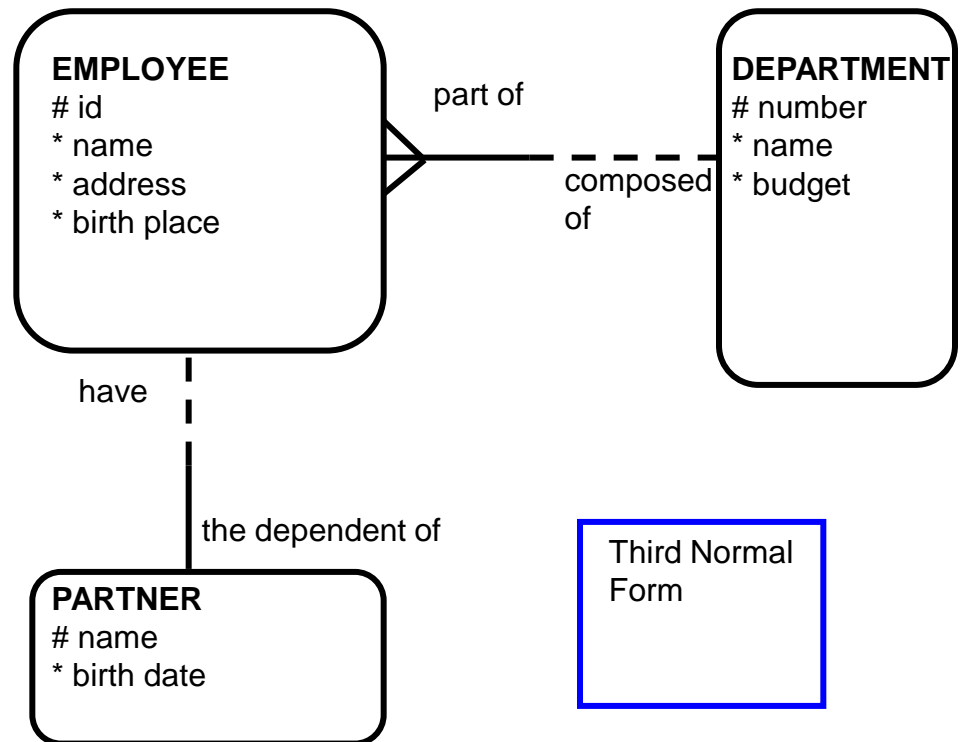
Another way of stating
Third Normal Form: non-
UID attributes can't have
attributes of their own.



Third Normal
Form Violation

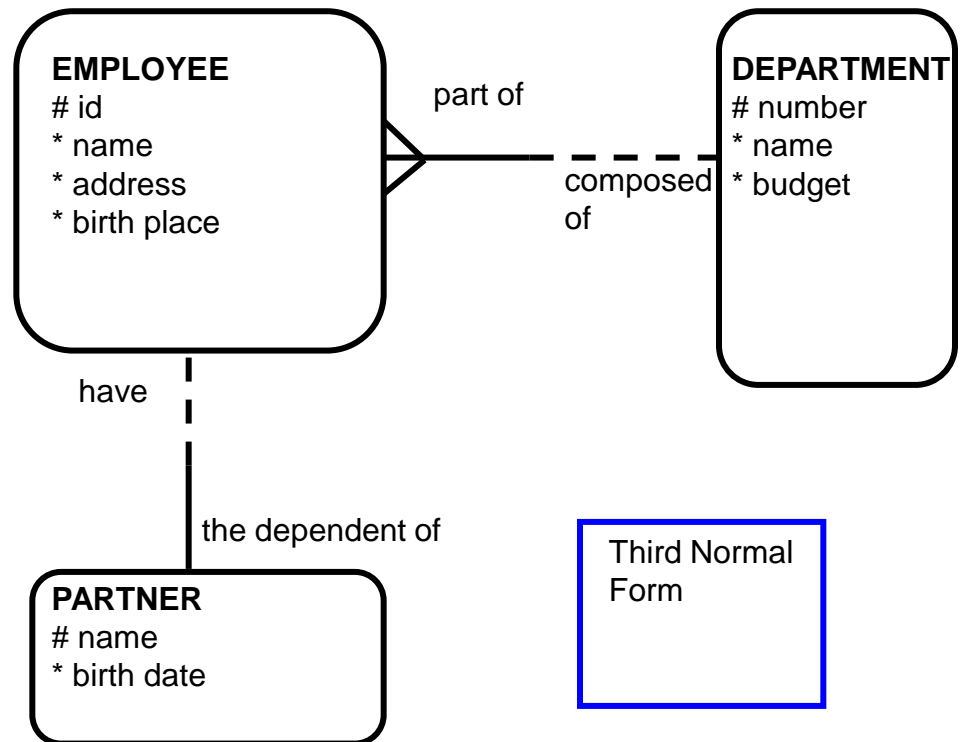
3NF Second Example Solution

This model supports Third Normal Form because partner birth date is an attribute of partner, not of EMPLOYEE.



3NF Second Example Solution (cont.)

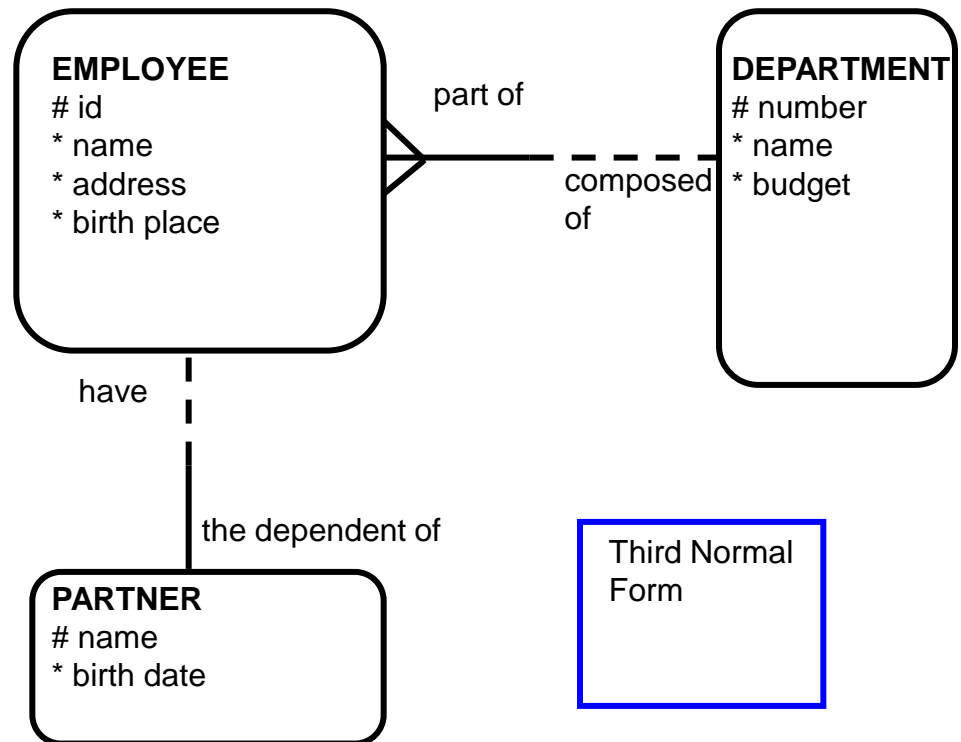
The 1:1 relationship is optional on the **EMPLOYEE** end because some employees will not have partners.



Third Normal
Form

3NF Second Example Solution (cont.)

It is mandatory on the PARTNER end because information about a partner is tracked only if that person is a partner of one and only one EMPLOYEE.



Terminology

Key terms used in this lesson included:

- Third Normal Form (3NF)
- Transitive dependency

Summary

In this lesson, you should have learned how to:

- Identify transitive dependencies in a data model
- Define the rule of Third Normal Form in the normalization process
- Examine a non-normalized entity and determine which rule, or rules of normalization are being violated
- Apply the rule of Third Normal Form to resolve a violation in the model