1. What is database normalization?

Normalization is a process of organizing the columns and tables of a relational database to minimize data redundancy and improve data integrity.

1. Why is normalization important?

Normalization is crucial for several reasons that contribute to a healthy and efficient database;

1. Reduce data redundancy: By eliminating duplicate data, its saves storage space and prevents inconsistencies that can arise when the same data is stored in multiple places.
2. Improve data integrity: Ensures that data is consistent and accurate across the database. When data changes, it only needs to be updated in one place.
3. Enhances Data Consistency: Prevents update, insertion, and deletion anomalies, which are problems that occur when data is not properly organized.
4. Simplifies Queries: While it might seem counterintuitive due to more joins, a normalized schema often makes it easier to write clear and specific queries because each piece of information has a designated, logical home.
5. Better Database Design: Promotes a cleaner, more logical, and more scalable database structure.

Imagine a school database. If you store student details (name, address, phone) directly in a Courses table for every course a student takes, you'll repeat the student's name and address multiple times. If the student moves, you'd have to update their address in many places, risking errors. Normalization would put student details in a separate Students table, and the Courses table would just have a StudentID to link to it.

Types of normal forms (1NF, 2NF, 3NF, BCNF)?

Normalization is defined through a series of "normal forms." Each normal form builds upon the previous one, adding stricter rules to reduce redundancy and improve data integrity. The most commonly discussed normal forms are: