

# from zero to query

a sql primer

oskar 2023-02-16

# sql - a fundamental tool for the data professional

- database management
- data pipeline engineering
- data modeling
- data designing
- big data (parallel, distributed)
- data querying
- data analytics

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**classical database**

**analytical database**

**schema**

**table**

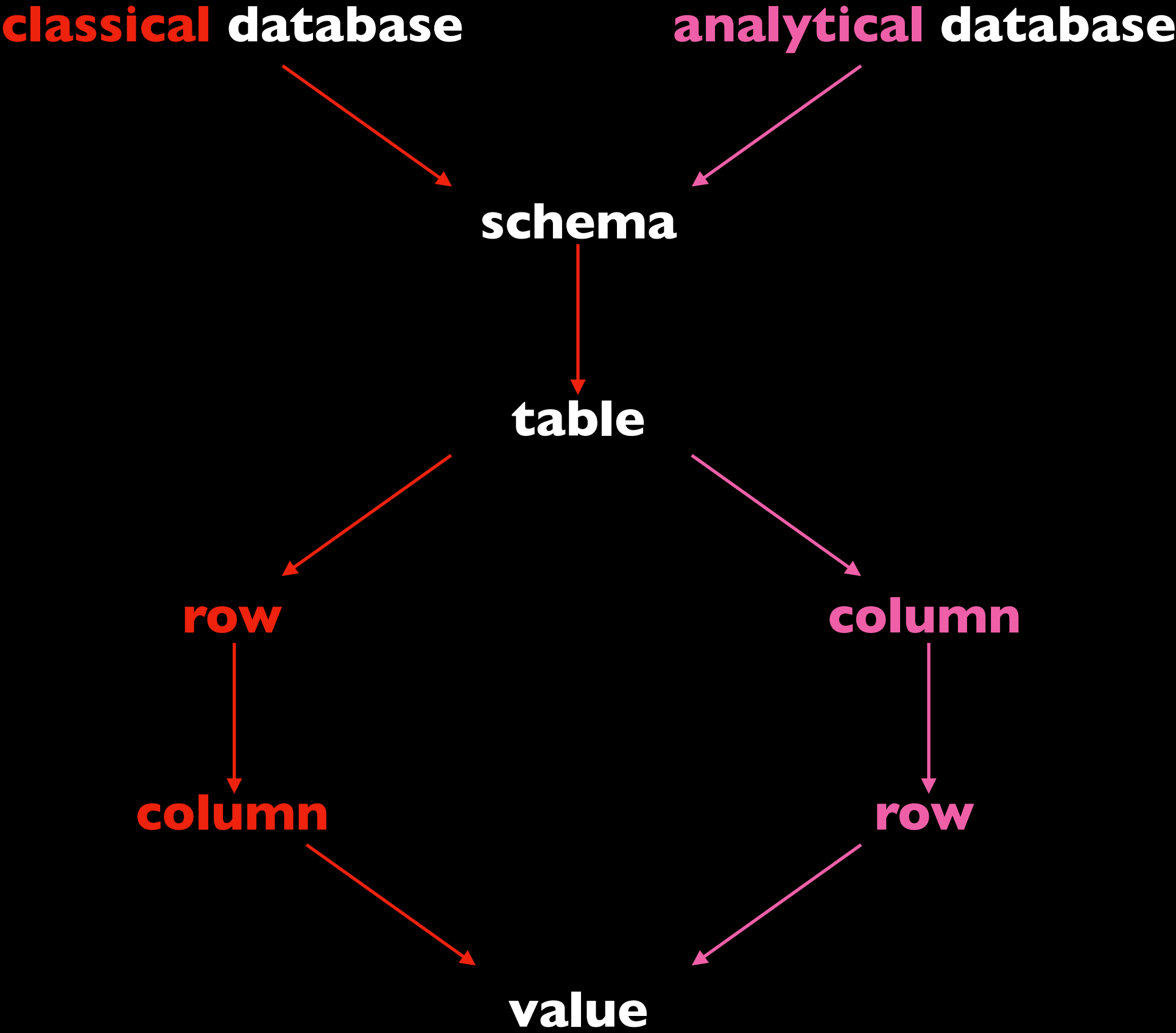
**row**

**column**

**column**

**row**

**value**



data definition	data management	data querying	data control	transaction control
to operate on entire tables	to operate on table cells, rows, columns	to fetch data from tables	to control access to schemas + tables	for transactional atomicity, dev
CREATE	INSERT	SELECT	GRANT	COMMIT
DROP	UPDATE		REVOKE	ROLLBACK
ALTER	DELETE			SAVE POINT
TRUNCATE				

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# a note on `sqlite`

- small (<2mb)
- open source
- serverless
- self-contained
- fast
- complete
- in-memory
- cross-platform
- ubiquitous



# sqlite commands



- these are not sql commands!
- they start with a '.'
- they operate on the environment, not the data
- examples:
  - .quit
  - .open <path-to-database>
  - .show
  - .help
  - .cd <directory>
  - .shell CMD ARGS...

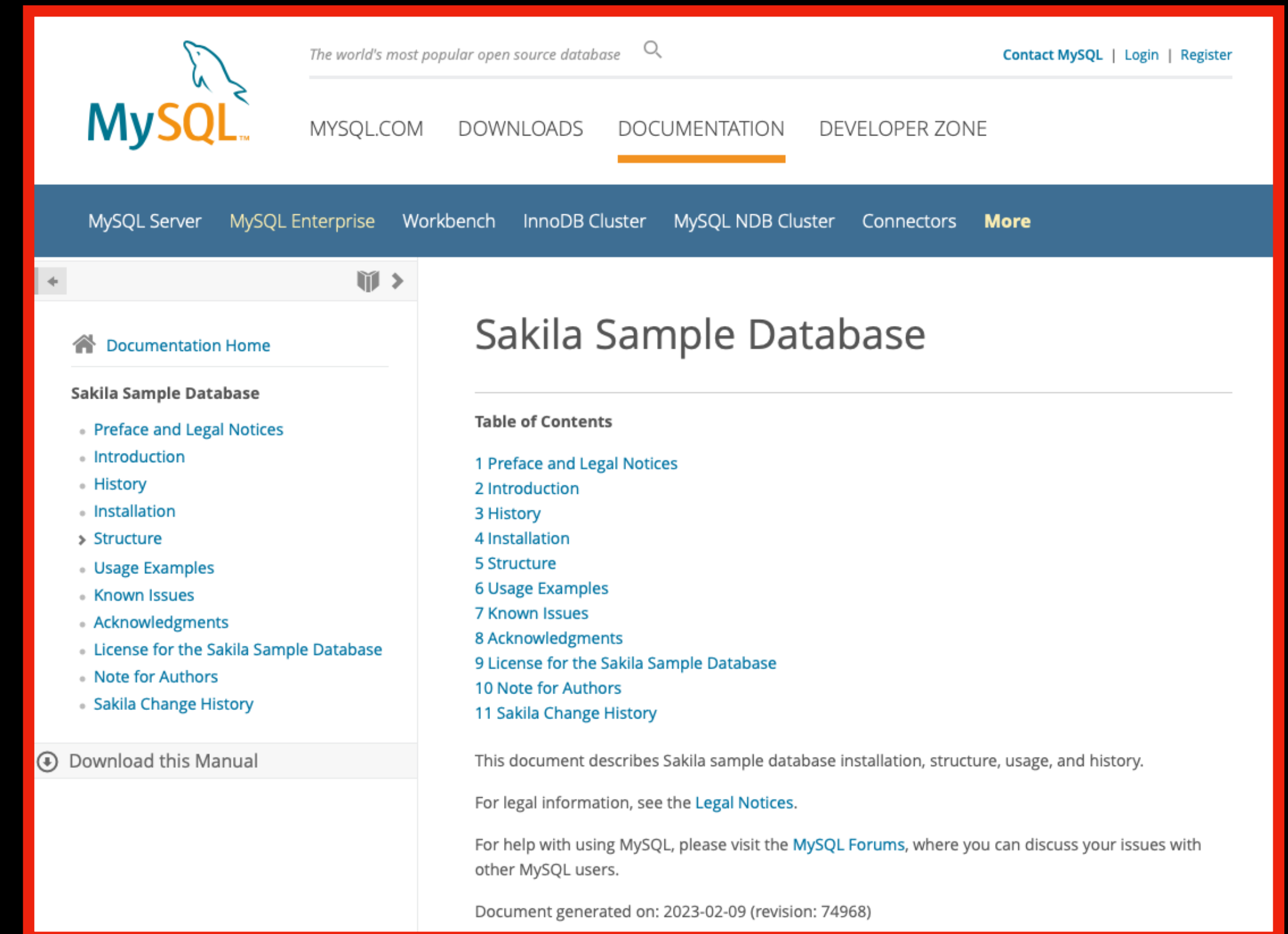


# sql commands

- these run on the database
- they end with a ';' ;
- you can add comments with '-- a comment'
- they operate on the data tables
- example:
  - SELECT column1, column2 FROM table; -- a&b

# the sakila training data

- classic, fictional data
- dvd rental company
- 20 relational tables:
  - normalised: no repetition
- stores
- inventory
- films
- film casting
- actors
- film ratings



```
.open data/sqlite-sakila.db
```

```
.header ON
```

```
.mode qbox
```

```
.show
```

```
.tables
```

# .tables

```
sqlite> .tables
```

actor

address

category

city

country

customer

customer\_list

```
sqlite> █
```

film

film\_actor

film\_category

film\_list

film\_text

inventory

language

payment

rental

sales\_by\_film\_category

sales\_by\_store

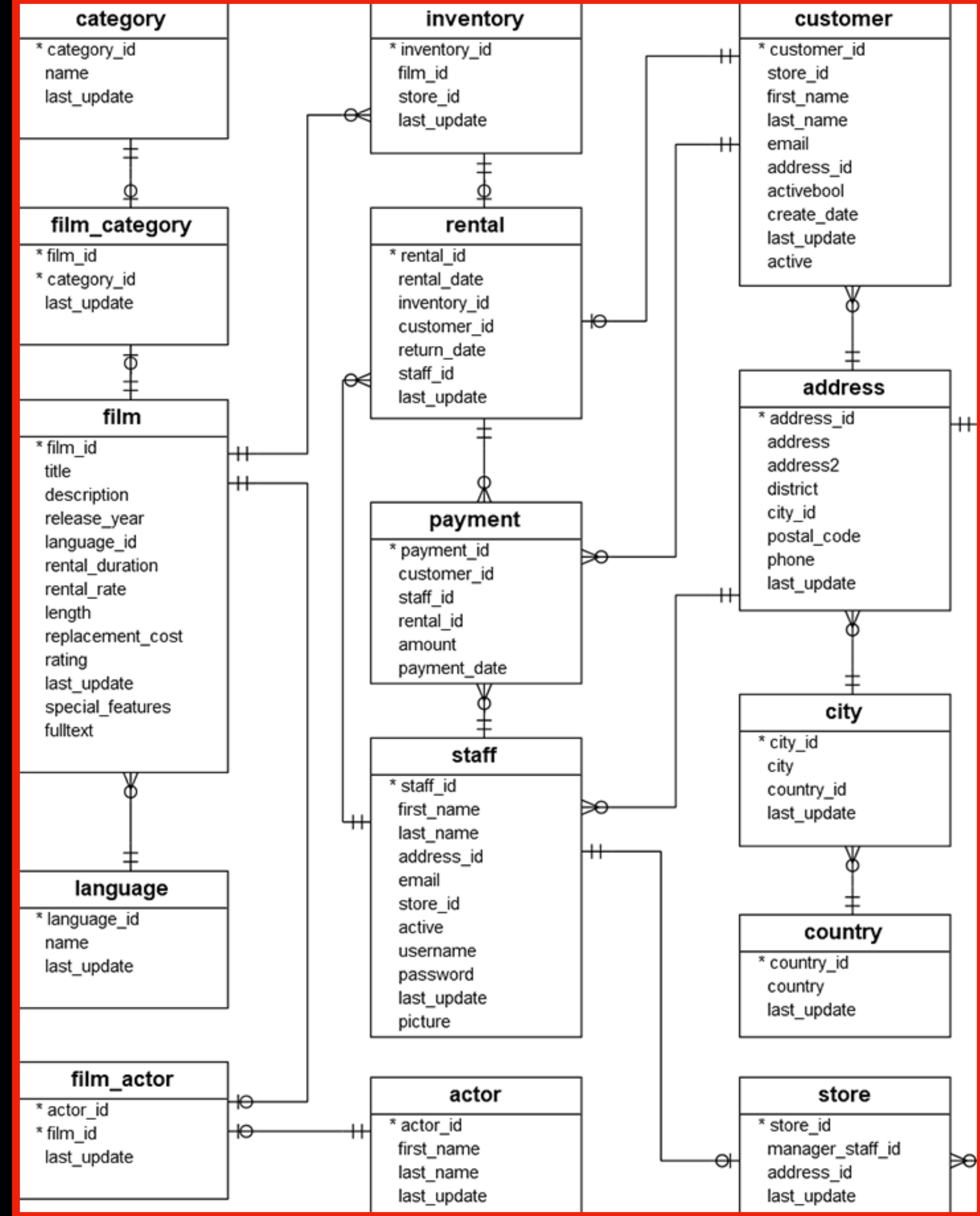
staff

staff\_list

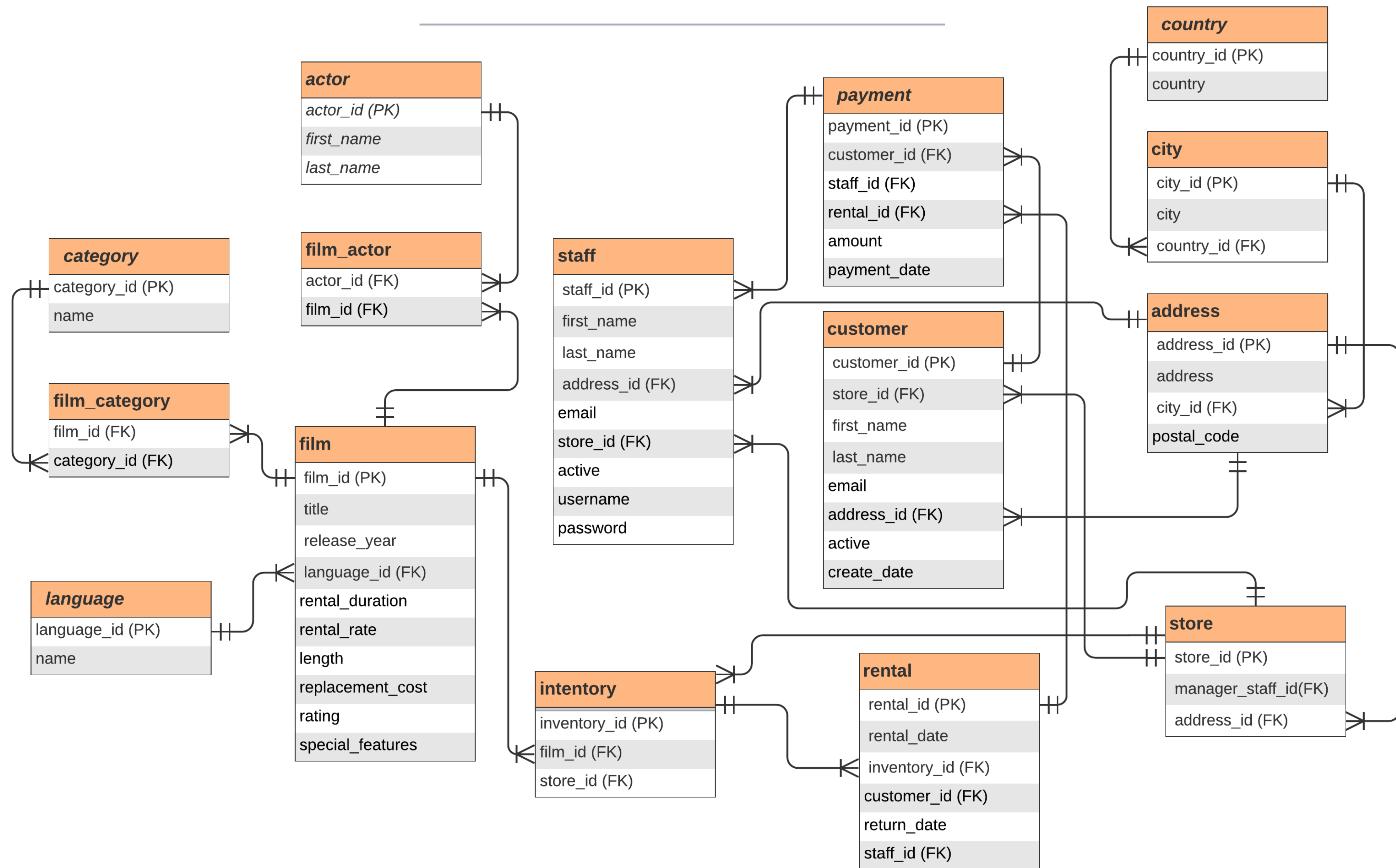
store

# the sakila training data

- classic, fictional data
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- 20 relational tables:
  - normalised: no repetition
  - stores
  - inventory
  - films
  - film casting
  - actors
  - film ratings



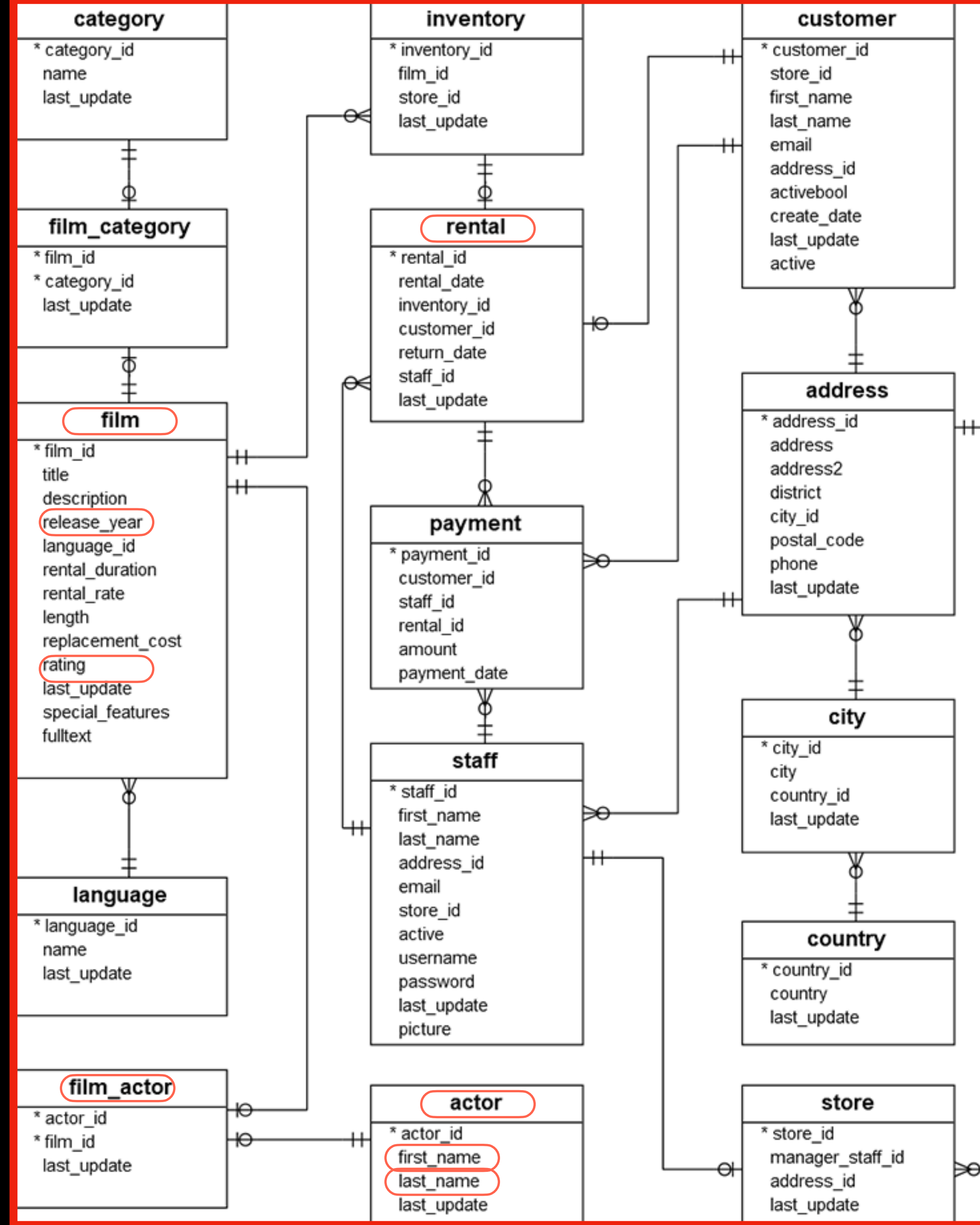
# SQLite3 Sakila Sample Database ERD





today's objective:

“which **top 10** actors were rented out the greatest number of times, counting only ‘**R**’ rated films made in **2006**?”



# today's plan:

“which top 10 actors were rented out the greatest number of times, counting only ‘R’ rated films made in 2006?”

- SELECT {columns} FROM {table};
- + LIMIT num
- + WHERE {a\_condition}
- + ORDER BY {columns}
- + INNER JOIN {table\_2} ON {col1}={col2}
- + GROUP BY {columns}
- + HAVING {a\_condition}



# what do the tables contain?

“which top 10 actors were rented out the greatest number of times, counting only ‘R’ rated films made in 2006?”

- SELECT {columns} FROM {table};
- + LIMIT num
- + WHERE {a\_condition}
- + ORDER BY {columns}
- + INNER JOIN {table\_2} ON {col1}={col2}
- + GROUP BY {columns}
- + HAVING {a\_condition}

# SELECT ... FROM ...;

- SELECT \* FROM {table};  
-- returns all columns and all rows from {table}
- SELECT col2, col1 FROM example\_table;  
-- returns columns 'col2' and 'col1' (in that order) from example\_table
- SELECT a.first\_name, a.last\_name FROM actor a;  
-- creates an alias for actor, refers to columns 'first\_name', 'last\_name'
- SELECT price + tax AS total\_cost FROM sales;  
-- returns a single column, sum of price+tax, calls the output 'total\_cost'

that's too many rows!

“which top 10 actors were rented out the greatest number of times, counting only ‘R’ rated films made in 2006?”

- SELECT {columns} FROM {table};
- + LIMIT num
- + WHERE {a\_condition}
- + ORDER BY {columns}
- + INNER JOIN {table\_2} ON {col1}={col2}
- + GROUP BY {columns}
- + HAVING {a\_condition}

# SELECT ... FROM ... LIMIT ...;

- SELECT \* FROM {table} LIMIT {n};  
-- returns {n} unspecified rows of all columns from {table}
- SELECT \* FROM sales LIMIT 5;  
-- returns 5 unspecified rows of all columns from sales
- SELECT sale\_date, sale\_cost FROM sales LIMIT 15;  
-- returns 15 unspecified rows of two columns from sales table
- SELECT id AS region\_id, name AS region\_name FROM regions LIMIT 10;  
-- returns region id and region name for 10 unspecified rows

# SELECT (aggregate function) FROM ... ;

- SELECT COUNT(\*) AS num\_records FROM table\_name;  
-- returns the number of rows in table\_name, names the output 'num\_records'
- SELECT SUM(s.sale\_cost) AS total\_sales FROM sales s;  
-- returns the sum of the sale cost column from the sales table
- SELECT AVG(s.sale\_cost) AS average\_sales FROM sales s;  
-- returns the average of the sale cost column from sales
- SELECT MAX(s.sale\_cost) AS highest\_value\_sale FROM sales s;  
-- returns the highest value sale from sales
- SELECT MIN(s.sale\_date) AS earliest\_sale FROM sales s;  
-- returns the date of the earliest sale from sales

# but i only want specific rows!

“which top 10 actors were rented out the greatest number of times, counting only ‘R’ rated films made in 2006?”

- SELECT {columns} FROM {table};
- + LIMIT num
- + WHERE {a\_condition}
- + ORDER BY {columns}
- + INNER JOIN {table\_2} ON {col1}={col2}
- + GROUP BY {columns}
- + HAVING {a\_condition}

# SELECT ... FROM ... WHERE ... [LIMIT n];

- SELECT \* FROM {table} WHERE {column}={expression};  
-- returns only rows where the value in {column} equals {expression}
- SELECT \* FROM table\_name WHERE column1<>{expression};  
-- returns only rows where the value in column1 is not {expression}
- SELECT name AS item\_name FROM items WHERE item\_price>=10;  
-- returns names of items whose price is greater than or equal to £10
- SELECT name FROM items WHERE item\_price>=10 LIMIT 8;  
-- returns 8 of the items whose price is greater or equal to £10

# comparison operators

operator syntax	meaning
{column} = {expression}	column value is equal to expression value
{column} <> {expression}	column value is not equal to expression value
{column} != {expression}	column value is not equal to expression value
{column} < {expression}	column value is less than expression value
{column} <= {expression}	column value is less than or equal to expression value
{column} > {expression}	column value is greater than expression value
{column} >= {expression}	column value is greater than or equal to expression value
{column} IN ({exp1}, {exp2}, ...)	column value is one of 'exp1', 'exp2', ...
{column} LIKE '%expr%'	(string) column contains substring 'expr'
{column} BETWEEN {exp1} AND {exp2}	{exp1} <= column value <= {exp2}



# SELECT ... FROM ... WHERE ...;

- SELECT \* FROM sales WHERE sale\_date BETWEEN '2023-02-01' AND '2023-02-04';  
-- returns only sales occurring between feb 1<sup>st</sup> and feb 4<sup>th</sup>, inclusive
- SELECT \* FROM sales WHERE region\_id IN (14,56,43) ;  
-- returns only sales in regions with id 14, 56, or 43
- SELECT \* FROM region WHERE region\_name LIKE '%new%';  
-- returns only regions whose name contains 'new'

# but i only want the most extreme rows!

“which top 10 actors were rented out the greatest number of times, counting only ‘R’ rated films made in 2006?”

- SELECT {columns} FROM {table};
- + LIMIT num
- + WHERE {a\_condition}
- + ORDER BY {columns}
- + INNER JOIN {table\_2} ON {col1}={col2}
- + GROUP BY {columns}
- + HAVING {a\_condition}

SELECT ... FROM ... ORDER BY ... LIMIT ...;

- SELECT \* FROM items ORDER BY item\_cost LIMIT 10;  
-- return only the top 10 least expensive items in the catalog
- SELECT \* FROM items ORDER BY item\_cost DESC LIMIT 10;  
-- return only the top 10 most expensive items in the catalog

# but my information is spread over two tables!

“which top 10 actors were rented out the greatest number of times, counting only ‘R’ rated films made in 2006?”

- SELECT {columns} FROM {table};
- + LIMIT num
- + WHERE {a\_condition}
- + ORDER BY {columns}
- + INNER JOIN {table\_2} ON {col1}={col2}
- + GROUP BY {columns}
- + HAVING {a\_condition}

# JOIN

city

city_id	city	country_id	last_update
1	A Corua (La Corua)	87	2021-03-06 15:51:49
2	Abha	82	2021-03-06 15:51:49
3	Abu Dhabi	101	2021-03-06 15:51:49
4	Acua	60	2021-03-06 15:51:49
5	Adana	97	2021-03-06 15:51:49
6	Addis Abeba	31	2021-03-06 15:51:49
7	Aden	107	2021-03-06 15:51:49
8	Adoni	44	2021-03-06 15:51:49

country

country_id	country	last_update
1	Afghanistan	2021-03-06 15:51:49
2	Algeria	2021-03-06 15:51:49
3	American Samoa	2021-03-06 15:51:49
4	Angola	2021-03-06 15:51:49
5	Anguilla	2021-03-06 15:51:49
6	Argentina	2021-03-06 15:51:49
7	Armenia	2021-03-06 15:51:49
8	Australia	2021-03-06 15:51:49
9	Austria	2021-03-06 15:51:49

# JOIN

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Turkey

country

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# JOIN

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Turkey

Yemen

country

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8	Australia	2021-03-06 15:51:49
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we want this

city-and-country

city_id	city	country
1	?	?
2	?	?
3	?	?
4	?	?
5	?	?
6	?	?
7	?	?
8	?	?

we want this

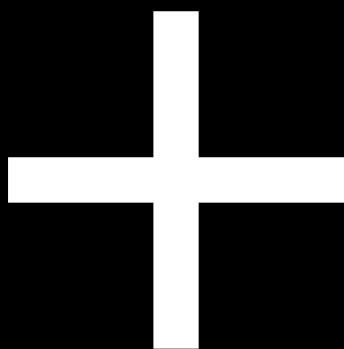
city-and-country

city_id	city	country
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3	Abu Dhabi	United Arab Emirates
4	Acua	Mexico
5	Adana	Turkey
6	Addis Abeba	Ethiopia
7	Aden	Yemen
8	Adoni	India

so we add a JOIN to the WHERE clause

city

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8	Australia	2021-03-06 15:51:49
9	Austria	2021-03-06 15:51:49

```
SELECT
    city_id, city, country
FROM
    city
    INNER JOIN country ON city.country_id=country.country_id
;
```

so we add a JOIN to the WHERE clause

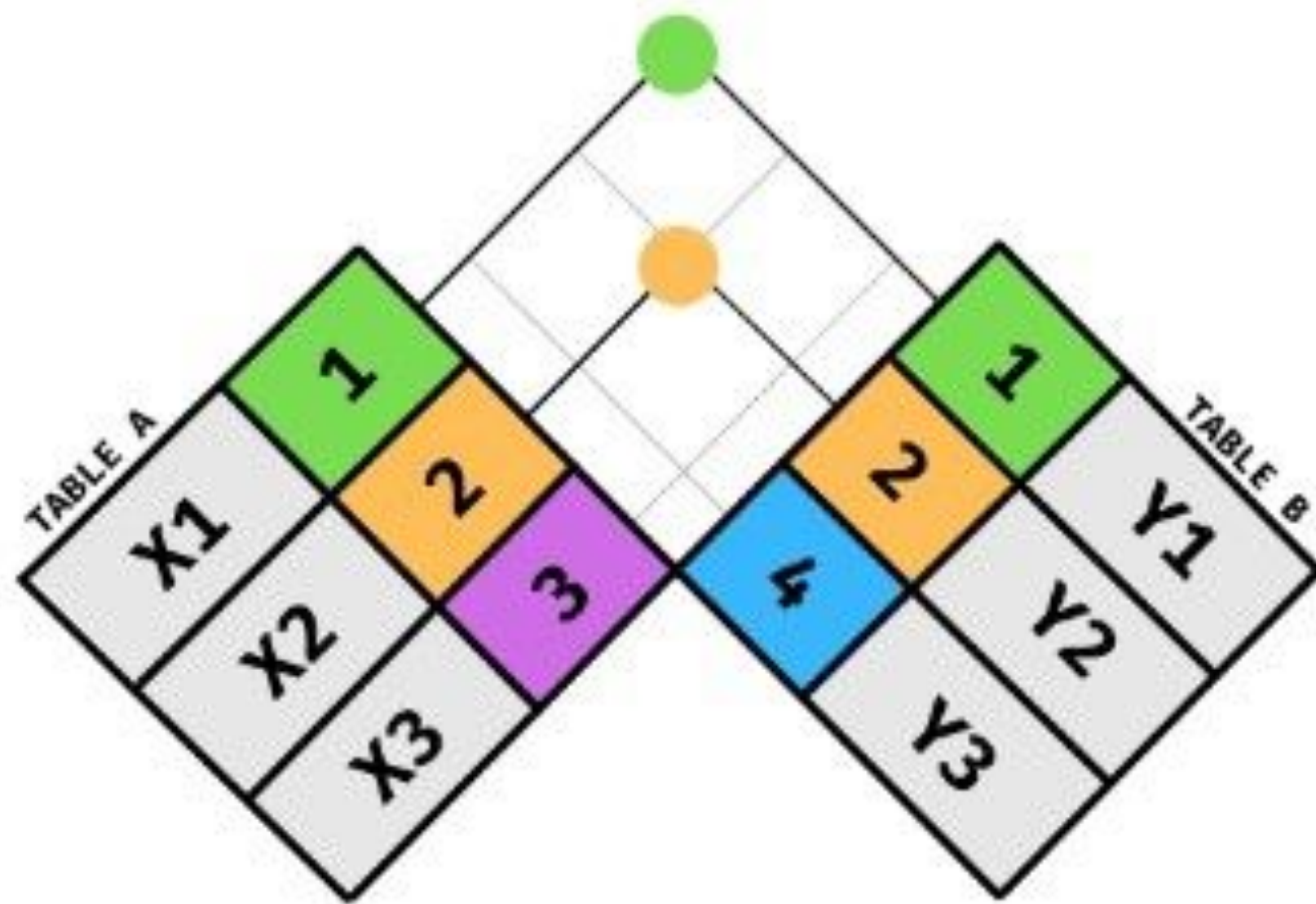
## city-and-country

**=**

city_id	city	country
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2	Abha	Saudi Arabia
3	Abu Dhabi	United Arab Emirates
4	Acua	Mexico
5	Adana	Turkey
6	Addis Abeba	Ethiopia
7	Aden	Yemen
8	Adoni	India

```
SELECT
    city_id, city, country
FROM
    city
    INNER JOIN country ON city.country_id=country.country_id
;
```

# FROM a INNER JOIN b



## INNER JOIN



```
SELECT  
  <SELECT LIST>  
FROM    TABLE_A A  
INNER JOIN TABLE_B B  
  ON A.KEY = B.KEY
```

KEY	VAL_X	VAL_Y
1	X1	Y1
2	X2	Y2





@DATAWITHDANNY

Table 1

A
B
C

Table 2

A
B
D

INNER JOIN: show all matching records in both tables.

A	A
B	B

LEFT JOIN: show all records from left table, and any matching records from right table.

A	A
B	B
C	

RIGHT JOIN: show all records from right table, and any matching records from left table.

A	A
B	B
	D

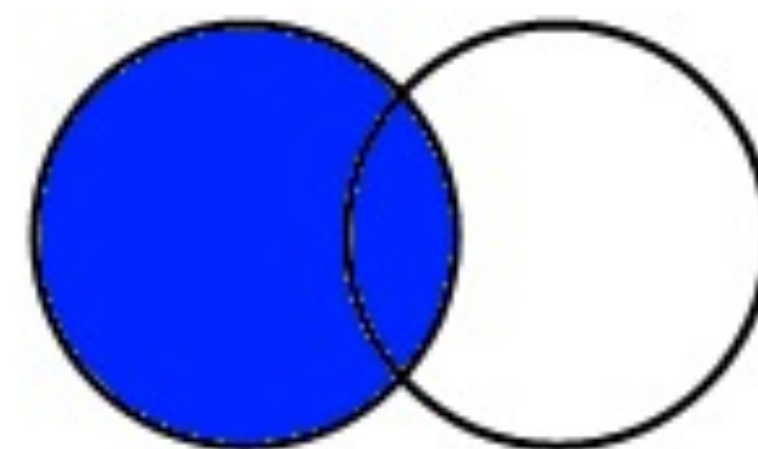
FULL JOIN: show all records from both tables, whether there is a match or not.

A	A
B	B
C	
	D

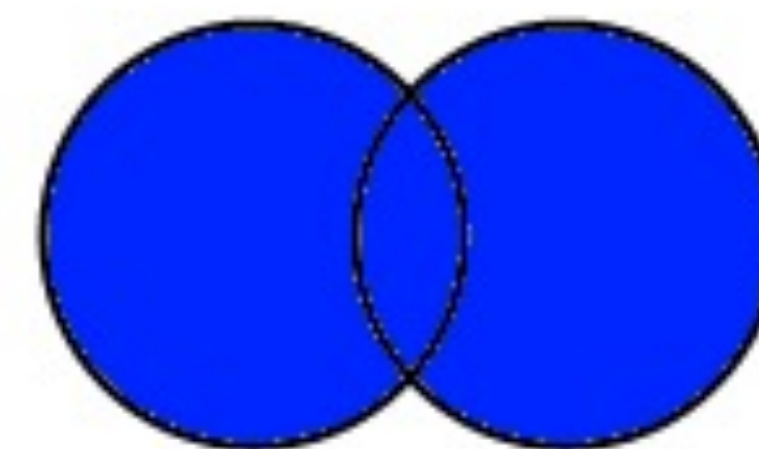




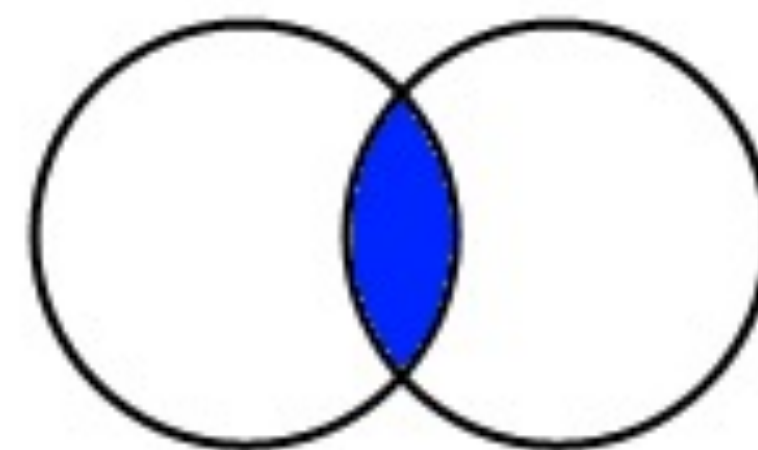
LEFT JOIN



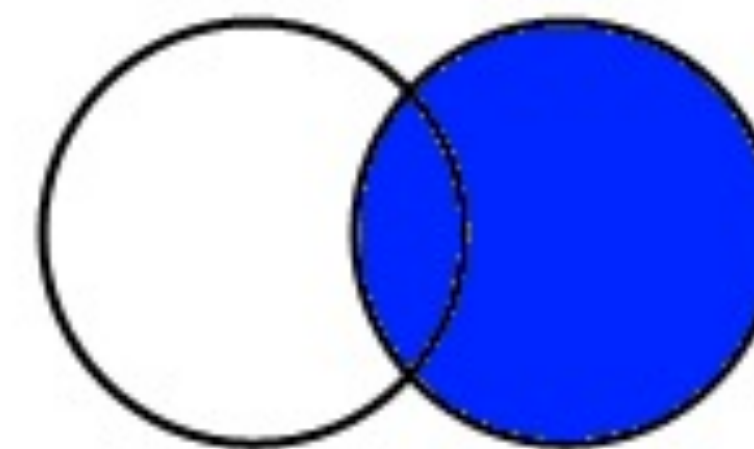
FULL OUTER JOIN



INNER JOIN



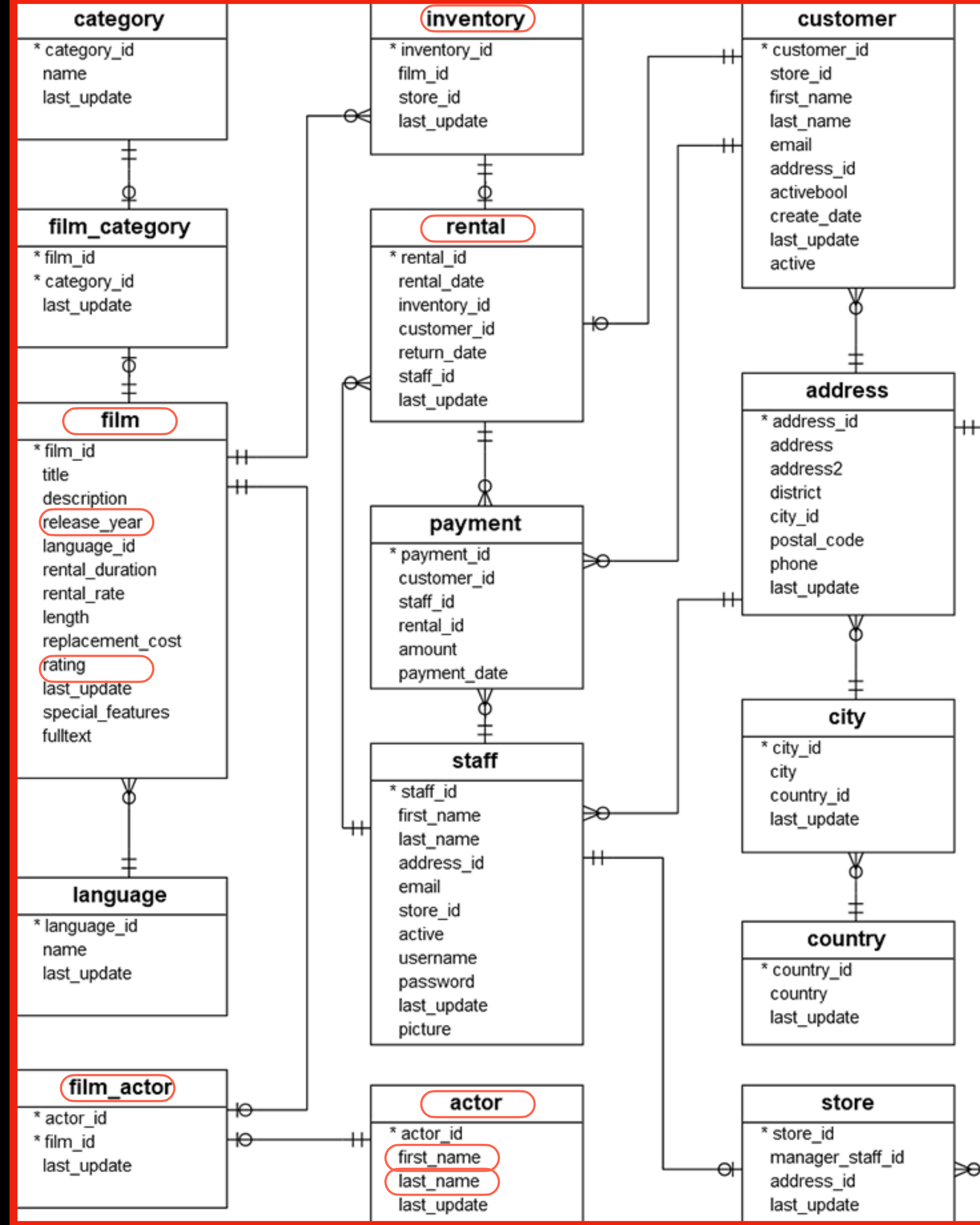
RIGHT JOIN





today's objective:

“which **top 10** actors were rented out the greatest number of times, counting only ‘**R**’ rated films made in **2006**?”

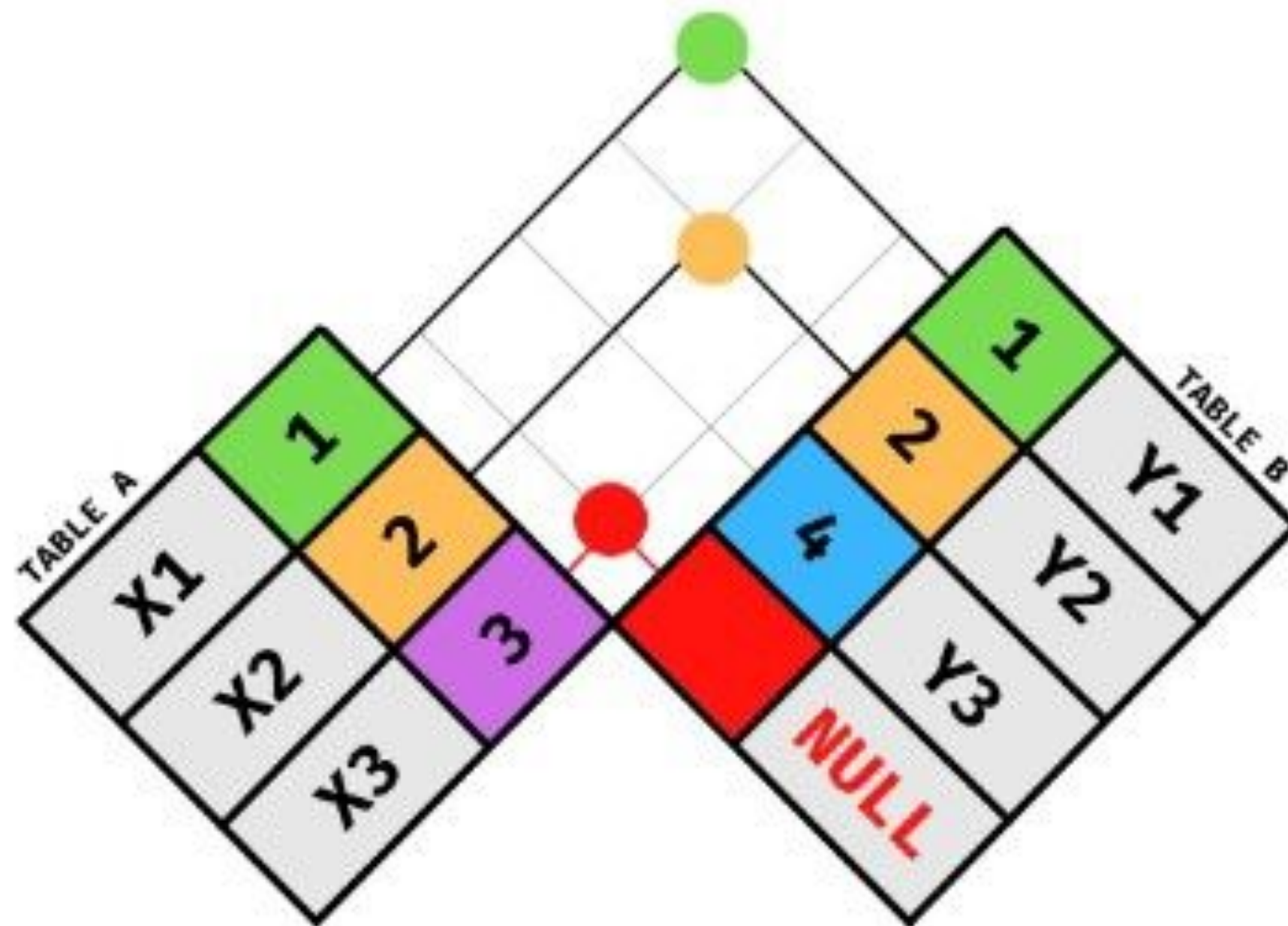


```
SELECT ... FROM a INNER JOIN b ON ...;
```

- SELECT a.city, b.country  
FROM city a  
INNER JOIN country b ON a.country\_id=b.country\_id  
; -- output a table with city-country names
- SELECT f.title, f.length, l.name  
FROM film f  
INNER JOIN language l ON f.language\_id=l.language\_id  
WHERE rating='R'  
LIMIT 10; -- output a sample of films and the name of the language it is in

-

# LEFT OUTER JOIN



## LEFT JOIN



```
SELECT  
    <SELECT LIST>  
FROM    TABLE_A A  
LEFT JOIN TABLE_B B  
ON A.KEY = B.KEY
```

KEY	VAL_X	VAL_Y
1	X1	Y1
2	X2	Y2
3	X3	NULL

# how can i aggregate select rows into a single row?

“which top 10 actors were rented out the greatest number of times, counting only ‘R’ rated films made in 2006?”

- SELECT {columns} FROM {table};
- + LIMIT num
- + WHERE {a\_condition}
- + ORDER BY {columns}
- + INNER JOIN {table\_2} ON {col1}={col2}
- + GROUP BY {columns}
- + HAVING {a\_condition}



```
SELECT {col}, ... FROM ... GROUP BY {col};
```

- SELECT region\_id, COUNT(\*) FROM sales GROUP BY region\_id;  
-- return each region's number of records from the sales table
- SELECT region\_id, AVG(item\_price) FROM items GROUP BY item\_type;  
-- return the average price of items of each type from the items table
- SELECT item\_type, MAX(item\_price) FROM items GROUP BY item\_type;  
-- returns the price of the priciest item of each type from the item table

# how do i report only some aggregated groups?

“which top 10 actors were rented out the greatest number of times, counting only ‘R’ rated films made in 2006?”

- SELECT {columns} FROM {table};
- + LIMIT num
- + WHERE {a\_condition}
- + ORDER BY {columns}
- + INNER JOIN {table\_2} ON {col1}={col2}
- + GROUP BY {columns}
- + HAVING {a\_condition}

SELECT {col}, ... FROM ... GROUP BY {col};

- SELECT col1, COUNT(\*) AS num FROM table GROUP BY col1 HAVING num>10;  
-- count instances of each value of col1, but only output rows with count>10
- SELECT rating, AVG(length) AS len FROM film GROUP BY rating HAVING len<115;  
-- the film rating categories with average length of film under 115 minutes
- SELECT actor\_id, COUNT(\*) AS n FROM film\_actor GROUP BY actor\_id HAVING n<15;  
-- which actor ids have appeared in fewer than 15 films?

# how do i combine the components of a SELECT?

“which top 10 actors were rented out the greatest number of times, counting only ‘R’ rated films made in 2006?”

- SELECT {columns} FROM {table};
- + LIMIT num
- + WHERE {a\_condition}
- + ORDER BY {columns}
- + INNER JOIN {table\_2} ON {col1}={col2}
- + GROUP BY {columns}
- + HAVING {a\_condition}



how the query  
is written

SELECT ...

FROM + JOIN

WHERE ...

GROUP BY ...

HAVING ...

ORDER BY ...

LIMIT ...

how you should  
think about it

FROM + JOIN

↓  
WHERE

↓  
GROUP BY

↓  
HAVING

↓  
SELECT

↓  
ORDER BY

↓  
LIMIT



your turn! compose a query to answer:









“which top 10 actors were rented out the greatest number of times, counting only ‘R’ rated films made in 2006?”

# hint: structure of the solution









```
SELECT
    {}          AS actor_name,
    COUNT({}) AS num_rentals
FROM {}table1
    INNER JOIN {}table2 ON {}join-condition
    INNER JOIN {}table3 ON {}join-condition
    INNER JOIN {}table4 ON {}join-condition
    INNER JOIN {}table5 ON {}join-condition
WHERE {}row condition1
    AND {}row condition2
GROUP BY {}column1
ORDER BY {}column DESC
LIMIT {}num
```





ORMs	data types	ORDER BY	CREATE TABLE	foreign keys	
	GROUP BY	SELECT / INSERT / UPDATE / DELETE	indexes	JOIN	
	LIMIT and OFFSET	NULL			
inverted indexes	query plans and EXPLAIN	ACID	keyset pagination		
computed columns	transactions				
window functions	ORDER BY in aggregates				
outer joins	CTEs	stored columns	normal forms		
connection pools	the DUAL table				
LATERAL joins	recursive CTEs				
ORMs create bad queries	stored procedures	cursors			
there are no non-nullable types	plan hints	optimizers don't work without table statistics			
MVCC garbage collection					
COUNT(*) vs COUNT(1)	isolation levels	generator functions zip when cross joined	sharding		
serializable restarts require retry loops on all statements	zigzag join	phantom reads	triggers	MERGE	
grouping sets, cube, rollup	write skew	partial indexes			
denormalization	SELECT FOR UPDATE	NULLs in CHECK constraints are truthy			
transaction contention	sargability	timestamptz doesn't store a timezone	star schemas		
ascending key problem	ambiguous network errors	utf8mb4			
cost models don't reflect reality	'null':jsonb IS NULL = false	TPCC requires wait times			
DEFERRABLE INITIALLY IMMEDIATE		causal reverse			
EXPLAIN approximates SELECT COUNT(*)	MATCH PARTIAL foreign keys				
vectorized doesn't mean SIMD	NULLs are equal in DISTINCT but inequal in UNIQUE	volcano model			
join ordering is NP hard	database cracking	WCOJ			
learned indexes	XTID exhaustion				
the halloween problem	dee and dum	SERIAL is non-transactional			
fsyncgate	allballs	NULL	every sql operator is actually a join		



ORMs	data types	ORDER BY	CREATE TABLE	foreign keys	
GROUP BY	SELECT / INSERT / UPDATE / DELETE			indexes	
LIMIT and OFFSET	NULL			JOIN	
inverted indexes	query plans and EXPLAIN	ACID	keyset pagination		
computed columns	transactions				
ORDER BY in aggregates					
normal forms					
connection pools	the DUAL table				
LATERAL joins	recursive CTEs				
ORMs create bad queries	stored procedures	cursors			
there are no non-nullable types	plan hints	optimizers don't work without table statistics			
MVCC garbage collection					
COUNT(*) vs COUNT(1)	isolation levels	generator functions zip when cross joined	sharding		
serializable restarts require retry loops on all statements	zigzag join	phantom reads	triggers	MERGE	
grouping sets, cube, rollup	write skew	partial indexes			
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learned indexes	XTID exhaustion				
the halloween problem	dee and dum	SERIAL is non-transactional			
fsyncgate	allballs	every sql operator is actually a join			
NULL					





ORMs

data types

ORDER BY

CREATE TABLE

foreign keys

GROUP BY

SELECT / INSERT / UPDATE / DELETE

LIMIT and OFFSET

NULL

indexes

JOIN



inverted indexes

query plans and EXPLAIN

ACID

keyset pagination

computed columns

transactions

window functions

ORDER BY in aggregates

outer joins

CTEs

stored columns

normal forms



connection pools

the DUAL table

LATERAL joins

recursive CTEs

ORMs create bad queries

stored procedures

cursors

there are no non-nullable types

plan hints

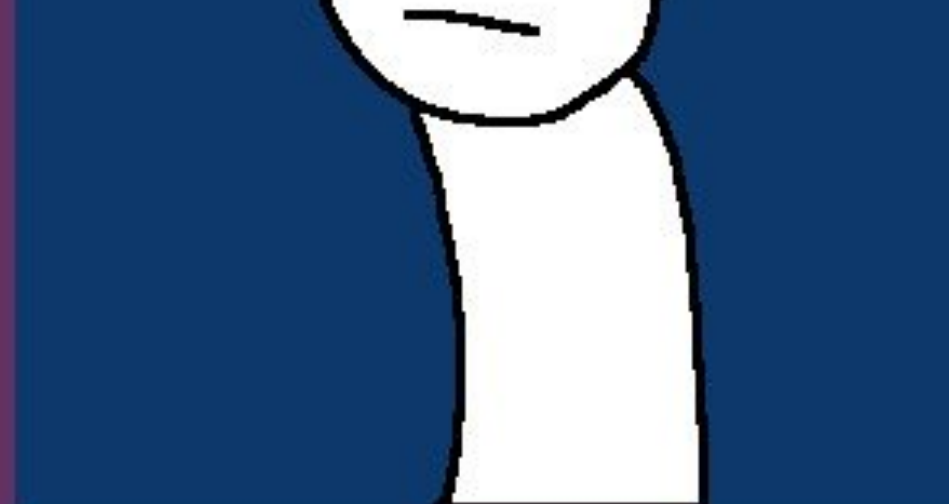
optimizers don't work without  
table statistics

MVCC garbage collection





there are no non-nullable types  
plan hints  
optimizers don't work without table statistics  
MVCC garbage collection



COUNT(\*) vs COUNT(1)  
isolation levels  
generator functions zip when cross joined  
sharding  
serializable restarts require retry loops on all statements  
zigzag join  
phantom reads  
triggers  
MERGE  
grouping sets, cube, rollup  
write skew  
partial indexes



denormalization  
SELECT FOR UPDATE  
NULLs in CHECK constraints are truthy  
star schemas  
transaction contention  
sargability  
timestampz doesn't store a timezone  
utf8mb4  
ascending key problem  
ambiguous network errors



cost models don't reflect reality  
'null'::jsonb IS NULL = false  
TPCC requires wait times  
DEFERRABLE INITIALLY IMMEDIATE





cost models don't  
reflect reality

EXPLAIN approximates  
SELECT COUNT(\*)

'null'::jsonb IS NULL = false

DEFERRABLE INITIALLY IMMEDIATE

MATCH PARTIAL foreign keys

TPCC requires wait times

causal reverse



vectorized doesn't  
mean SIMD

NULLs are equal in DISTINCT  
but inequal in UNIQUE

volcano model

join ordering is NP hard

database cracking

WCOJ

learned indexes

XTID exhaustion



the halloween problem

dee and dum

SERIAL is non-transactional

fsyncgate

allballs

NULL

every sql operator is  
actually a join





# further learning

- refresher:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbKty5ZVKMY>
- pandas experts note:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmrmwFPMMaM>
- more discussion:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV6Mh2JI9zQ>
- deeper learning:  
<https://app.datacamp.com/learn/career-tracks/data-analyst-in-sql>
- two week free course online starting 2023-02-20:  
<https://corise.com/course/sql-crash-course>

