

SQL Introduction

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## SQL Wildcards

In this tutorial, we'll learn about the Wildcards in SQL and how to use them with examples.

A wildcard character in SQL is used with the `LIKE` clause to replace a single or set of characters in any string. For example,

```
SELECT *
FROM Customers
WHERE last_name LIKE 'R%';
```

Here, `%` (means zero or more characters) is a wildcard character. Hence, the SQL command selects customers whose `last_name` starts with `R` followed by zero or more characters after it.

Table: Customers

customer_id	first_name	last_name	age	country
1	John	Doe	31	USA
2	Robert	Luna	22	USA
3	David	Robinson	22	UK
4	John	Reinhardt	25	UK
5	Betty	Doe	28	UAE

```
SELECT *
FROM Customers
WHERE last_name LIKE 'R%';
```

customer_id	first_name	last_name	age	country
3	David	Robinson	22	UK
4	John	Reinhardt	25	UK

Example: SQL Wildcards

Recommended Reading: [SQL LIKE Operator](#)

### % Wildcard in SQL

The `%` wildcard in SQL is used to represent zero or more characters. For example,

```
SELECT *
FROM Customers
WHERE last_name LIKE 'R%';
```

Here, the SQL command selects customers whose last name starts with `R` followed by zero or more characters.

Expression	String	Matched?
R%	R	match
	Run	match
	Mere	no match
	Summer	no match

### \_ Wildcard in SQL

The `_` wildcard in SQL is used to represent exactly one character in a string. For example,

```
SELECT *
FROM Customers
WHERE country LIKE 'U_';
```

Here, the SQL command selects customers whose `country` name starts with `U` and is followed by only one character.

Expression	String	Matched?
U_	U	no match
	UK	match
	USA	no match

### [] Wildcard in SQL

The `[]` wildcard in SQL is used to represent any one character inside brackets. For example,

```
SELECT *
FROM Customers
WHERE country LIKE 'U[KA]%';
```

Here, the SQL command selects customers whose `country` name starts with `U` and is followed by either `K` or `A`. Any number of characters are allowed afterwards.

Expression	String	Matched?
U[KA]%	U	no match
	UK	match
	UAE	match
	USA	no match

### ! Wildcard in SQL

The `!` wildcard in SQL is used to exclude characters from a string. For example,

```
SELECT *
FROM Customers
WHERE last_name LIKE '[!DR]%';
```

Here, the SQL command selects customers whose `last_name` does not start with `D` or `R`.

Expression	String	Matched?
[!DR]%	Doe	no match
	Reinhardt	no match
	Luna	match
	D	no match
	O	match
	R	no match

### Wildcard Characters in Different Databases

Different databases have different sets of wildcard characters. Some of them are listed here.

Database Systems
SQL Server
PostgreSQL and MySQL
Oracle

Previous Tutorials

SQL LIKE

Next Tutorial: SQL UNION

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### Related Tutorials

Programming

SQL LIKE and NOT LIKE Operators

Programming

SQL SELECT

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SQL IN Operator

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SQL AND, OR, and NOT Operators