

# Introduction

While you can always enter data directly into database tables, you might find it easier to use **forms**. Forms ensure you're entering the right data in the right location and format. This can help keep your database accurate and consistent.

This lesson will address the **benefits of using forms** in a database. You will review examples of different forms and form components. Finally, you will learn how to **use forms** to **enter** new records and **view** and **edit** existing ones

Throughout this tutorial, we will be using a sample database. If you would like to follow along, you'll need to download our “Forms.accdb”. You will need to have Access 2013 installed on your computer in order to open the example.

## Why use forms?

Many of us fill out forms so often that we hardly notice when we're asked to use them. Forms are so popular because they're useful to the person asking for the information and to the person providing it. They are a way of requiring information in a specific format, which means the person filling out the form knows exactly which information to include and where to put it.

**Employee Time Sheet**

EMPLOYEE \_\_\_\_\_  
EMPLOYEE NUMBER 3047 DEPARTMENT A1-002  
PAYROLL ENDING DATE Nov 23, 20\_\_

WEEK	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	TOTAL
FIRST WEEK								
SECOND WEEK		7	8					15
GRAND TOTAL								

I certify that the Employee has completed the hours indicated on this worksheet.  
SUPERVISOR \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
EMPLOYEE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE Nov 23

ALL SHEETS SUBMITTED AFTER THE DEADLINE WILL RESULT IN A DELAYED PAYCHECK

This is just as true of forms in Access. When you enter information into a form in Access, the data goes exactly where it's supposed to go: into one or more related tables. While entering data into simple tables is fairly straightforward, data entry becomes more complicated as you start populating tables with records from elsewhere in the database. For instance, the **orders table** in a bakery's database might link to information on customers, products, and prices drawn from related tables. For example, in the Orders Table below the Customer ID field is linked to the Customers table.

Customers Orders Table Order Items					
	ID	Customer ID	Paid	Pre Order	
+	13	139	Yes	Yes	
+	14	130	Yes	No	
+	15	129	Yes	Yes	
+	16	124	Yes	No	

In fact, in order to see the entire order you would also have to look at the **Order Items table**, where the menu items that make up each order are recorded.

Customers Orders Table Order Items				
	ID	Order ID	Menu Item ID	Quantity
	28	13	50	1
	29	13	38	1
	30	13	10	1

The records in these tables include **ID numbers** of records from other tables. You can't learn much just by glancing at these records because the ID numbers don't tell you much about the data they relate to. Plus, because you have to look at two tables just to view one order, you might have a difficult time even finding the right data. It's easy to see how viewing or entering many records this way could become a difficult and tedious task.

A form containing the same data might look like this:

Customers
Orders Table
Order Items
**Orders**

## Orders

New Order

Customer: Tappen
Order #: 13
Pickup Date: 12/16/2011

Notes: For a kindergarten party. Write, "Happy 6th Birthday, Matthew!" on the cake and draw a rabbit in icing next to the text.
☒ Pre Order
☒ Paid

Add Item

Category	Product	Quantity	Unit	Price	Subtotal
Cookies	Oatmeal Raisin	1	One Dozen	\$14.00	\$14.00
Cookies	Butter Pecan	1	One Dozen	\$14.00	\$14.00
Cakes	Cookies n' Cream	1	Single	\$22.00	\$22.00
*					
<b>Total</b>					<b>\$50.00</b>

Record: 1 of 3
No Filter
Search


As you can see, this record is much easier to understand when viewed in a form. Modifying the record also would be easier because you wouldn't have to know any ID numbers to enter new data. When you're using a form, you don't have to worry about entering data into the right tables or in the right format—the form can handle these things itself. There's no need to go back and forth between tables because forms bring all of the information you need together in one place.

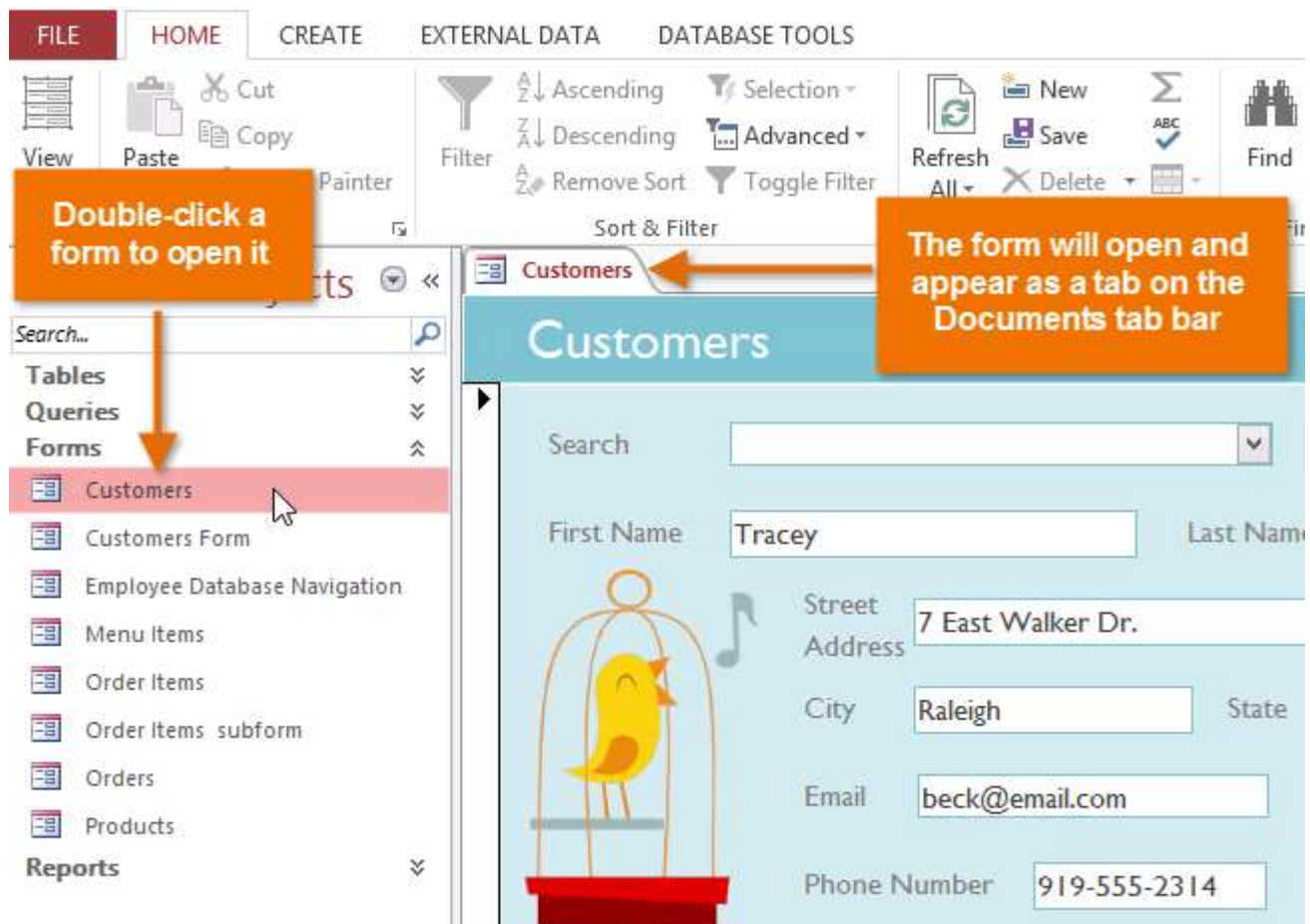
Not only do forms make the data entry process easier for the user, but they also keep the database itself working smoothly. With forms, database designers can control exactly how users are able to interact with the database. They can even

set restrictions on individual form components to ensure all of the needed data is entered and that it's all entered in a valid format. This is useful because keeping data consistent and organized is essential for an accurate and powerful database.

## Working with forms

To open an existing form:

1. Open your database, and locate the **Navigation pane**.
2. In the Navigation pane, locate the form you want to open. Forms are marked with the  icon.
3. Double-click the desired form. It will open and appear as a **tab** in the **Document Tabs bar**.



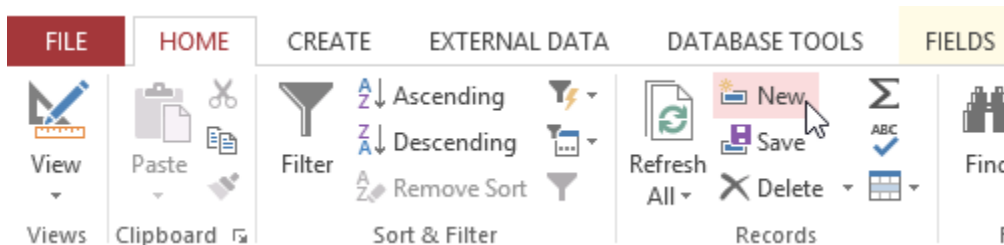
## Entering and modifying data

Depending on the database you're using, the forms you work with may include special tools and features that let you perform common tasks with one click of a button. You'll see examples of these tools in the interactives on the next page. However, no matter what type of form you're working with, you can follow the same procedures for carrying out certain basic tasks.

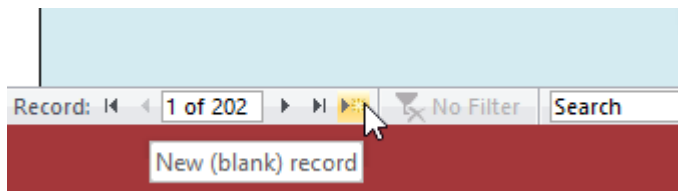
### To add a new record:

There are two ways to add a new record to a form:

- In the **Records** group on the **Home** tab of the **Ribbon**, click the **New** command.



- On the **Record Navigation bar** at the bottom of the window, click the **New Record** button.



### To find an existing record to view or edit:

There are two ways to find and view an existing record using a form, and they both use the **Navigation bar** at the bottom of the screen:

- To look through records one at a time, click the **navigation arrows**. The right arrow will take you to the next record, and the left arrow will take you to the previous one.

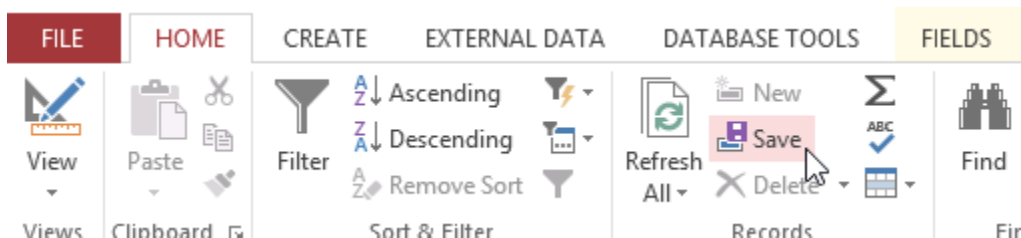


- To **search** for a record, type a word you know is contained in that record in the **navigation search box**.



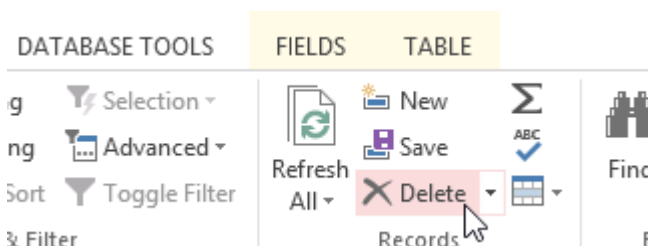
To save the current record:

1. Select the **Home** tab and locate the **Records** group.
2. Click the **Save** command. The current record will be saved.

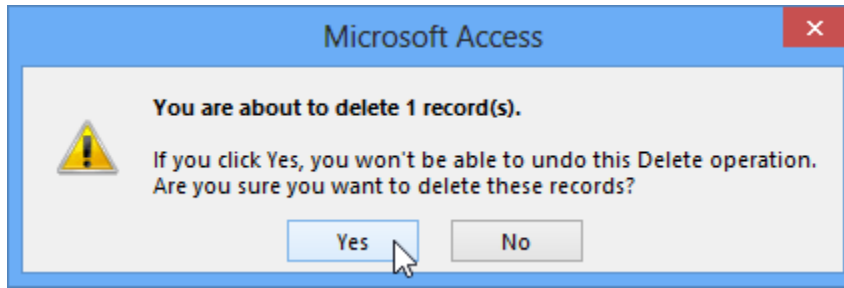


To delete the current record:

1. Select the **Home** tab and locate the **Records** group.
2. Click the **Delete** command.



3. A dialog box will appear. Click **Yes**.



4. The record will be permanently deleted.

## Using form features

The exact procedure you use for filling out a form will vary depending on the content and design of the form you're using. The forms in your database might be similar to the examples in the two interactives below. Between them, they include most of the features you'll commonly encounter in forms.

Click the buttons in the interactive below to learn about a **simple form**.

Customers

Customers

Search

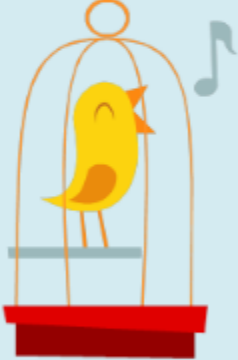
New Record

First Name

Filip

Last Name

Piatek



Street Address

7 East Walker Dr.

City

Raleigh

State

NC

Zip Code

27605

Email

piatekfil@email.com

Add to Mailing List?

Yes-- Weekly & Events

Phone Number

919-555-1285

Some forms may include more options, like calendar buttons, drop-down lists, yes-no checkboxes, subforms, and embedded tables.

Click the buttons in the interactive below to learn about a more **complex form**.



**Orders**

# Orders

**New Order**

Customer

Love

Order #

39

Pickup Date

12/24/2013

Notes

Apparently, he plans to eat most of this himself?! Maybe that was a joke...

☒ Pre Order  
☒ Paid

**Add Item**

Category	Product	Quantity	"Unit"	Price	Subtotal
Pies	Pumpkin	1	Single	\$15.00	\$15.00
Pies	Peanut Butter Chocolate	1	Single	\$16.00	\$16.00
Cakes	Carrot Cake	3	Single	\$22.00	\$66.00
Cakes	Italian Rum	1	Single	\$22.00	\$22.00
Cakes	German Chocolate	1	Single	\$22.00	\$22.00
Cakes	Gingerbread - Winter	1	Single	\$24.00	\$24.00
Cakes	Gingerbread - Winter	1	Single	\$24.00	\$24.00
Pastries	Tiramisu	1	One Dozen	\$30.00	\$30.00
Cakes	Buche de Noel (Christmas Cake)	1	Single	\$32.00	\$32.00
*	<b>Total</b>				<b>\$251.00</b>

Record: 1 of 9

No Filter

Search

## Challenge!

1. Open an **existing Access database**. If you want, you can use our "Forms.accdb".
2. Open the **Orders Form**.
3. **Create a new record** with the following data:
  - o **Customer:** Eric Oglesby

- **Pickup date:** February 14, 2014
- **Order items:** Cakes: Coconut (1)
- **Notes:** Write "Happy Valentine's Day!" with pink frosting.
- **Pre Order:** Yes
- **Paid:** Yes

4. Open the **Customers Form**.

5. **Find** the record for customer **Dwight Parker** and make the following changes:

- **Street Address:** 190 Cook Street
- **City:** Chapel Hill
- **Zip Code:** 27514
- **Email:** dwightp@email.com