

# Introduction

After creating a form, you might want to modify its appearance. **Formatting** your forms can help make your database look consistent and professional. Some formatting changes can even make your forms easier to use. With the formatting tools in Access, you can customize your forms to look exactly the way you want.

In this lesson, you will learn how to **add command buttons, modify form layouts, add logos and other images, and change form colors and fonts.**

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

## Formatting forms

Access offers several options that let you make your forms look exactly the way you want. While some of these options—like **command buttons**—are unique to forms, others may be familiar to you.

### Command buttons

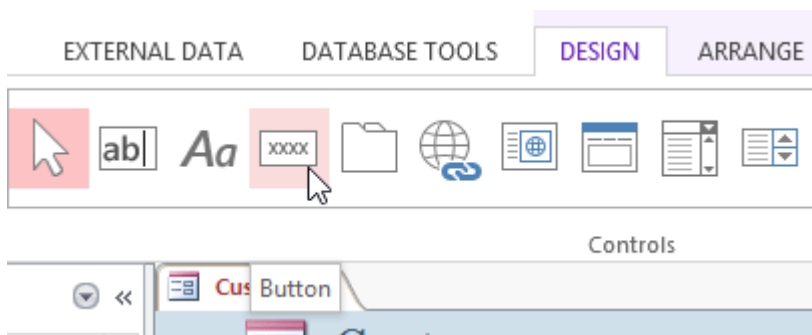
If you want to create a way for users of your form to quickly perform specific actions and tasks, consider adding **command buttons**. When you create a command button, you specify an action for it to carry out when clicked. By including commands for common tasks right in your form, you're making the form easier to use.

Access offers many different types of command buttons, but they can be divided into a few main categories:

- **Record Navigation** command buttons, which allow users to move among the records in your database
- **Record Operation** command buttons, which let users do things like save and print a record
- **Form Operation** command buttons, which allow users to quickly open or close a form, print the current form, and perform other actions
- **Report Operation** command buttons, which offer users a quick way to do things like preview or mail a report from the current record

To add a command button to a form:

1. In **Form Layout** view, select the **Design** tab, then locate the **Controls** group.
2. Click the **Button** command.



3. Choose the desired location for the command button, then click the mouse.

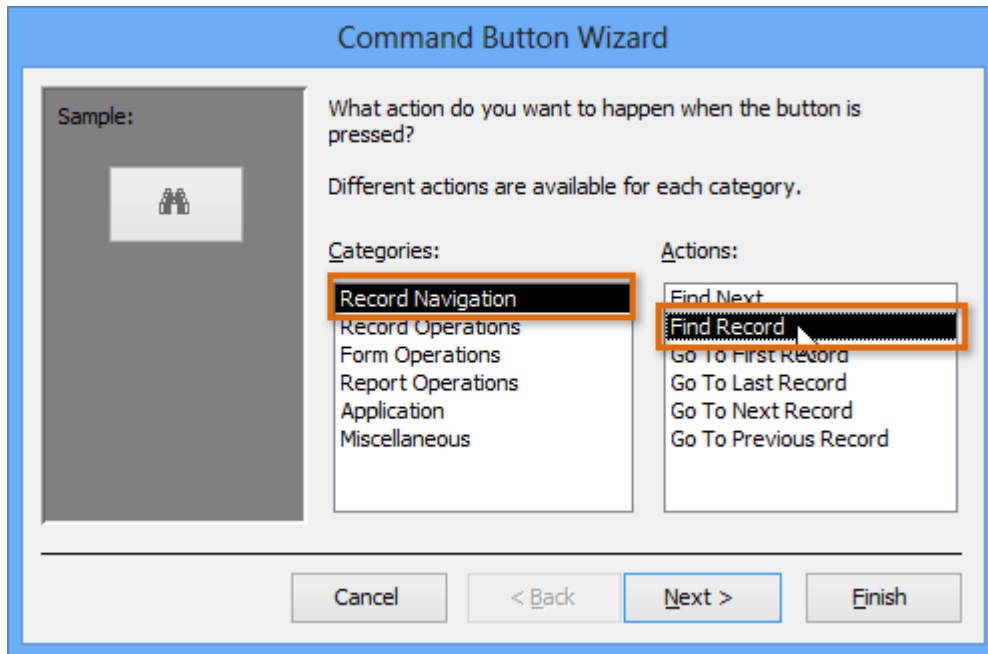
Add to Mailing List?

Other Notes

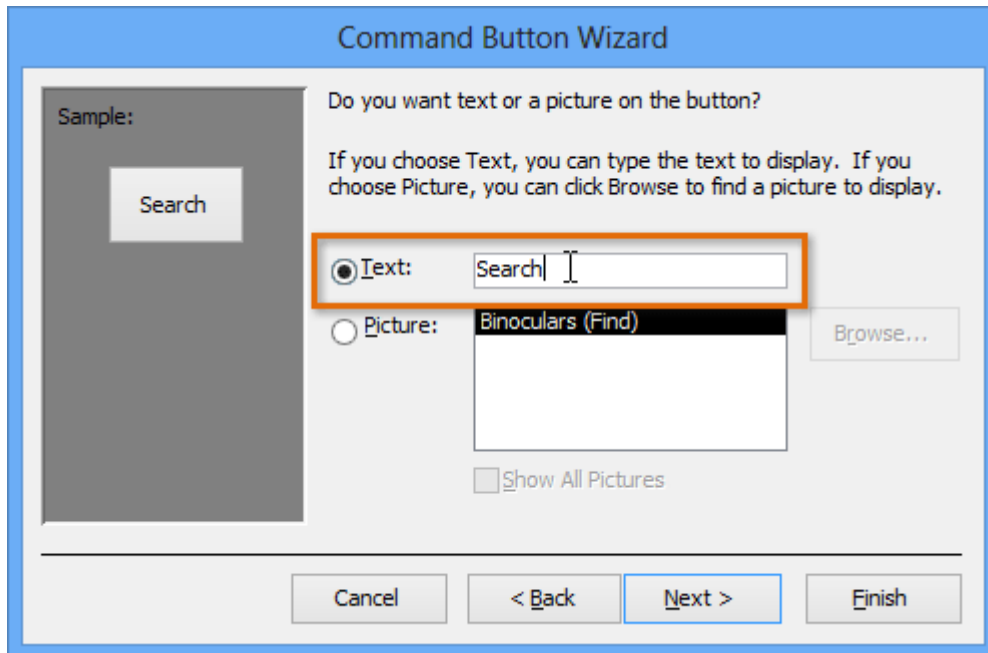
4. The **Command Button Wizard** will appear. In the **Categories** pane, select the category of button you want to add.

We want to find a way to move more quickly to specific records, so we'll choose the **Record Navigation** category.

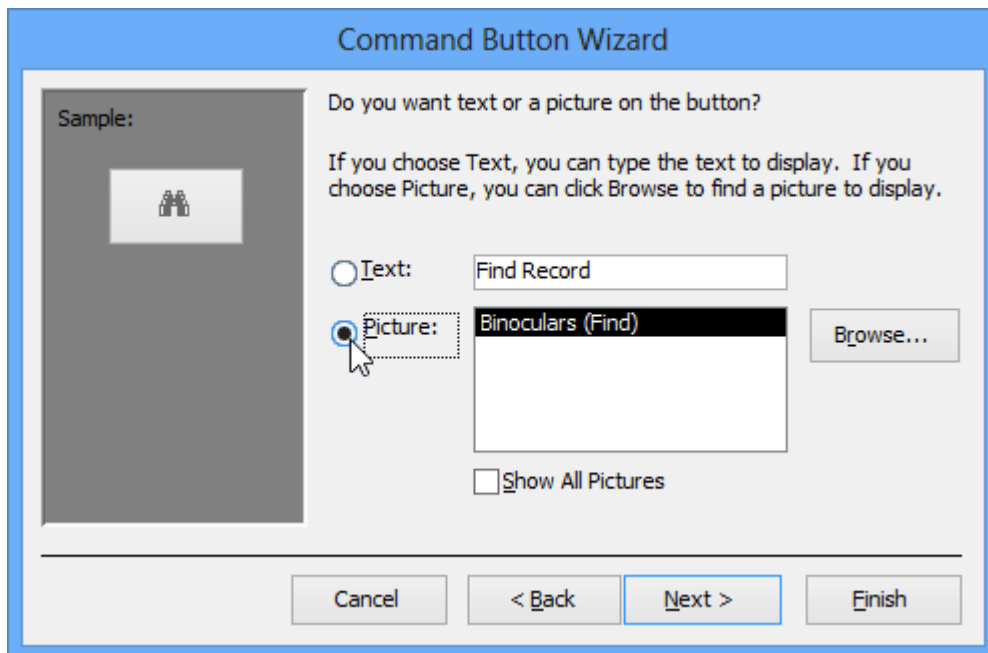
5. The list in the **Actions** pane will update to reflect your chosen category. Select the action you want the button to perform, then click **Next**. In our example, we'll choose **Find Record**.



6. You can now decide whether you want your button to include **text** or a **picture**. A live preview of your button appears on the left.
7. To include **text**, select the **Text** option, then type the desired word or phrase into the text box.

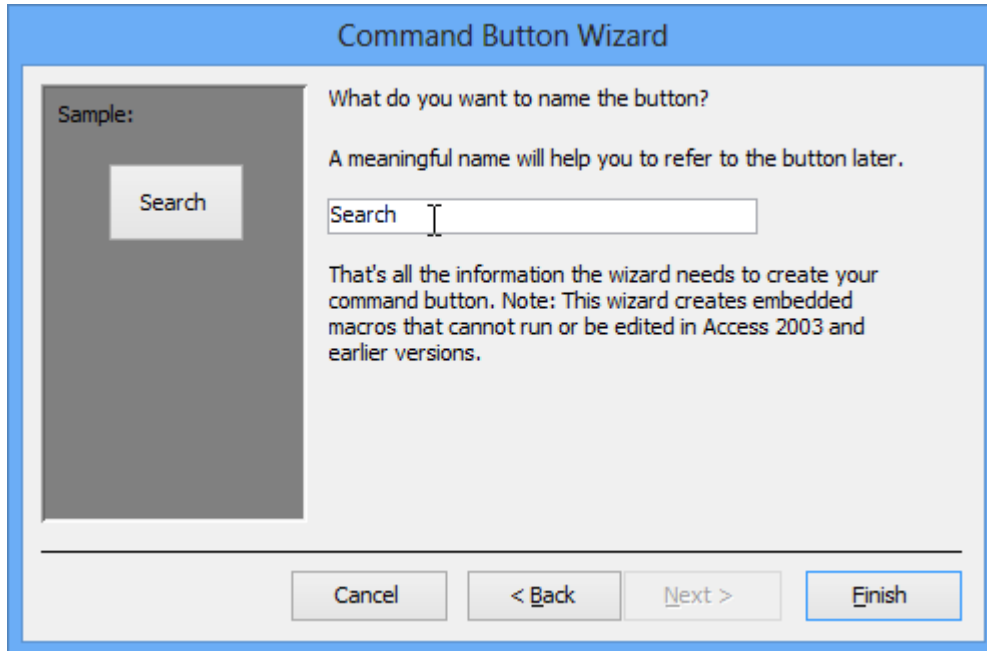


8. To include a **picture**, select the **Picture** option. You can decide to keep the default picture for that command button or select another picture. Click **Show All Pictures** to choose from another command button icon or **Browse** to choose a picture from your computer.

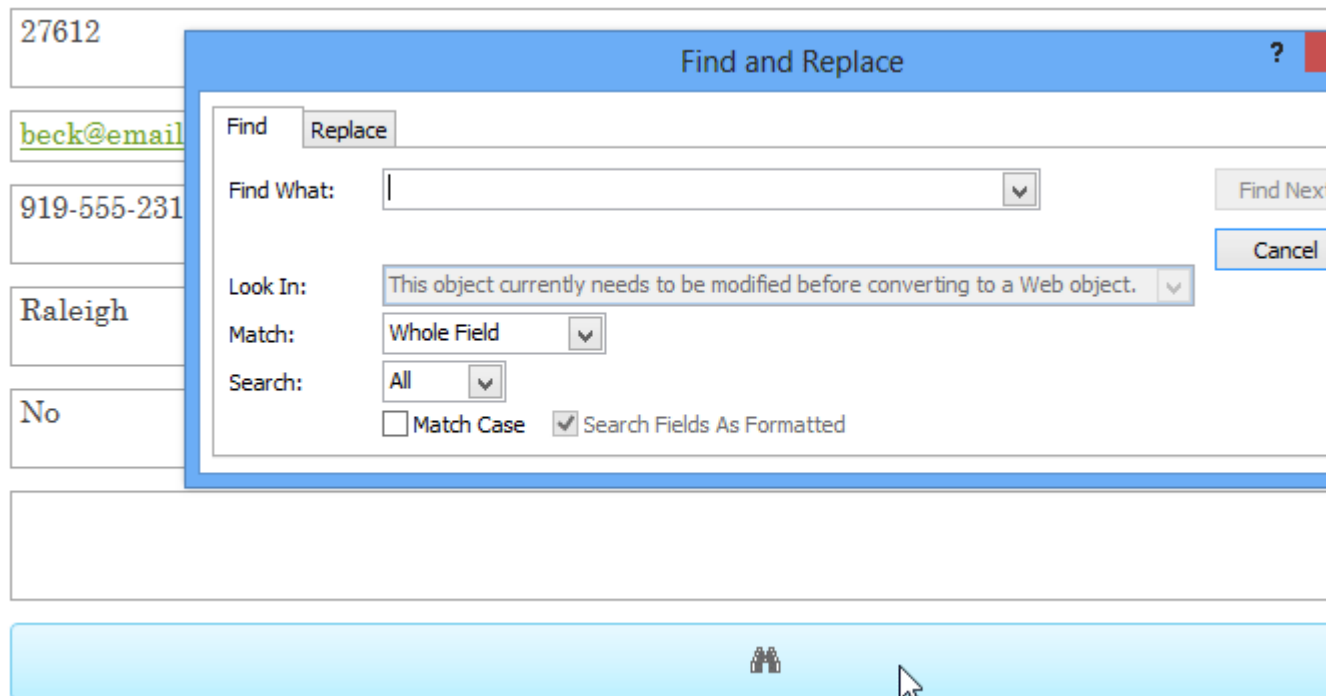


9. When you are satisfied with the appearance of your command button, click **Next**.

10. Type a **name** for the button. This name won't appear on the button, but knowing the name will help you quickly identify the button if you ever want to **modify** it with the **Property Sheet**. After adding the button name, click **Finish**.



11. Switch to **Form** view to test the new button. Our **Search** button opens the **Find and Replace** dialog box.



Some users report that Access malfunctions while formatting forms. If you have a problem performing any of these tasks in Layout view, try switching to Design view.

## Modifying form layout

When you create a form, Access arranges the form components in a default layout where the fields are neatly stacked up on top of each other, all exactly the same width. While this layout is functional, you might find that it doesn't best fit your information. For instance, in the form below most of the fields are almost completely empty because the data stored there doesn't take up much room.

Customers	
ID	1
First Name	Tracey
Last Name	Beckham
Street Address	7 East Walker Dr.
State	NC
Zip Code	27612
Email	<a href="mailto:beck@email.com">beck@email.com</a>
Phone Number	919-555-2314
City	Raleigh
Add to Mailing List?	No
Other Notes	

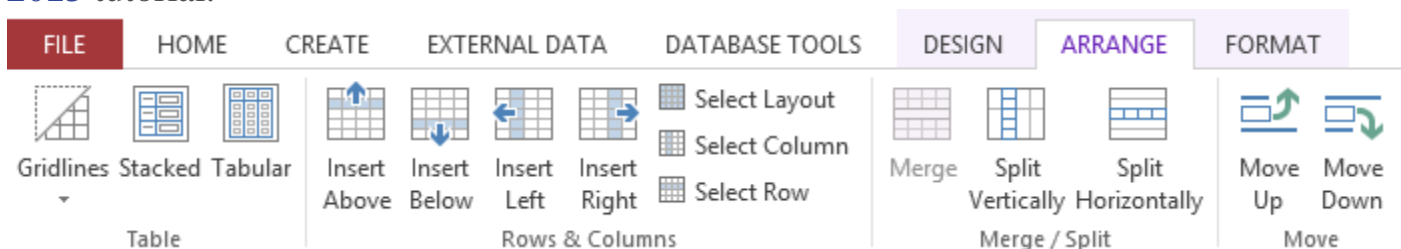
The form would fit the data better if we made the fields and command buttons smaller and even put some of them side by side. However, with the default layout, you won't be able to put two fields next to each other or resize one field or button without resizing all of them. This is because Access lines up form components in rows and columns. When you resize a field, you're really resizing the column that contains it.

**Customers**

ID	1	
First Name	Tracey	
Last Name	Beckham	
Street Address	7 East Walker Dr.	
State	NC	
Zip Code	27612	
Email	beck@email.com	

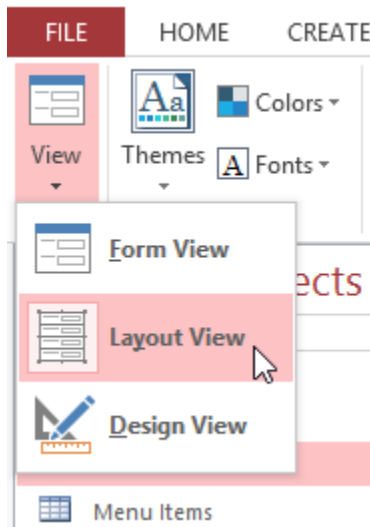
To resize and rearrange our fields the way we want, we'll have to **modify the form layout**. For instance, because the default layout for our form contains only two columns—one for the **field labels** and another for the **fields**—we would have to **create a new column** to put two fields side by side.

We can do this using the command on the **Arrange** tab, which contains all of the tools we'll need to customize a form's layout. If you've ever built and modified **tables** in Microsoft Word, you already know how to use most of these tools. If you're unfamiliar with tables, review our [Tables](#) lesson from our [Word 2013](#) tutorial.

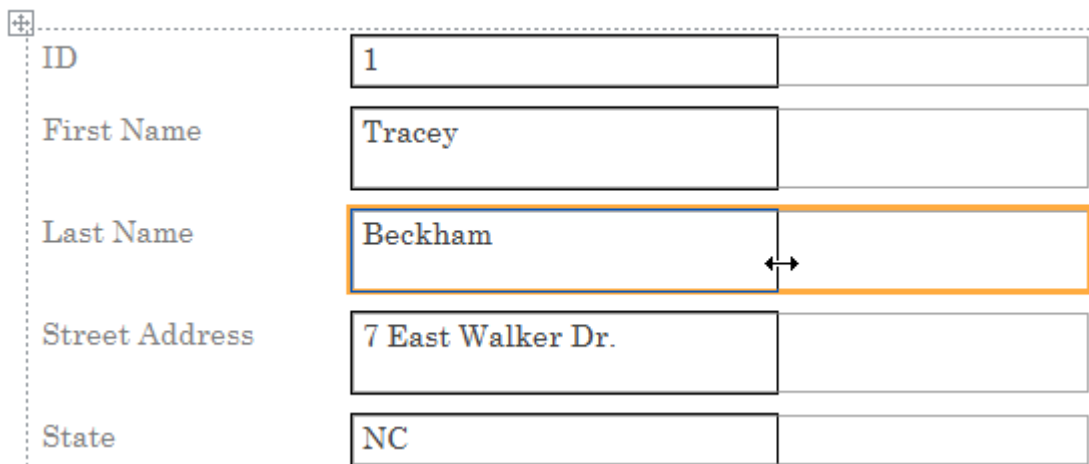


To resize form components:

1. Switch to **Layout view**.



2. Select the field or button you want to resize, then **hover your mouse** over the edge. Your cursor will become a double-sided arrow.
3. Click and drag the mouse to resize the selected object.

A screenshot of a form with several input fields. The 'Last Name' field, containing the text 'Beckham', is highlighted with an orange border. A double-headed horizontal arrow cursor is positioned over the right edge of this field, indicating it is being resized. The form includes fields for 'ID' (1), 'First Name' (Tracey), 'Last Name' (Beckham), 'Street Address' (7 East Walker Dr.), and 'State' (NC).

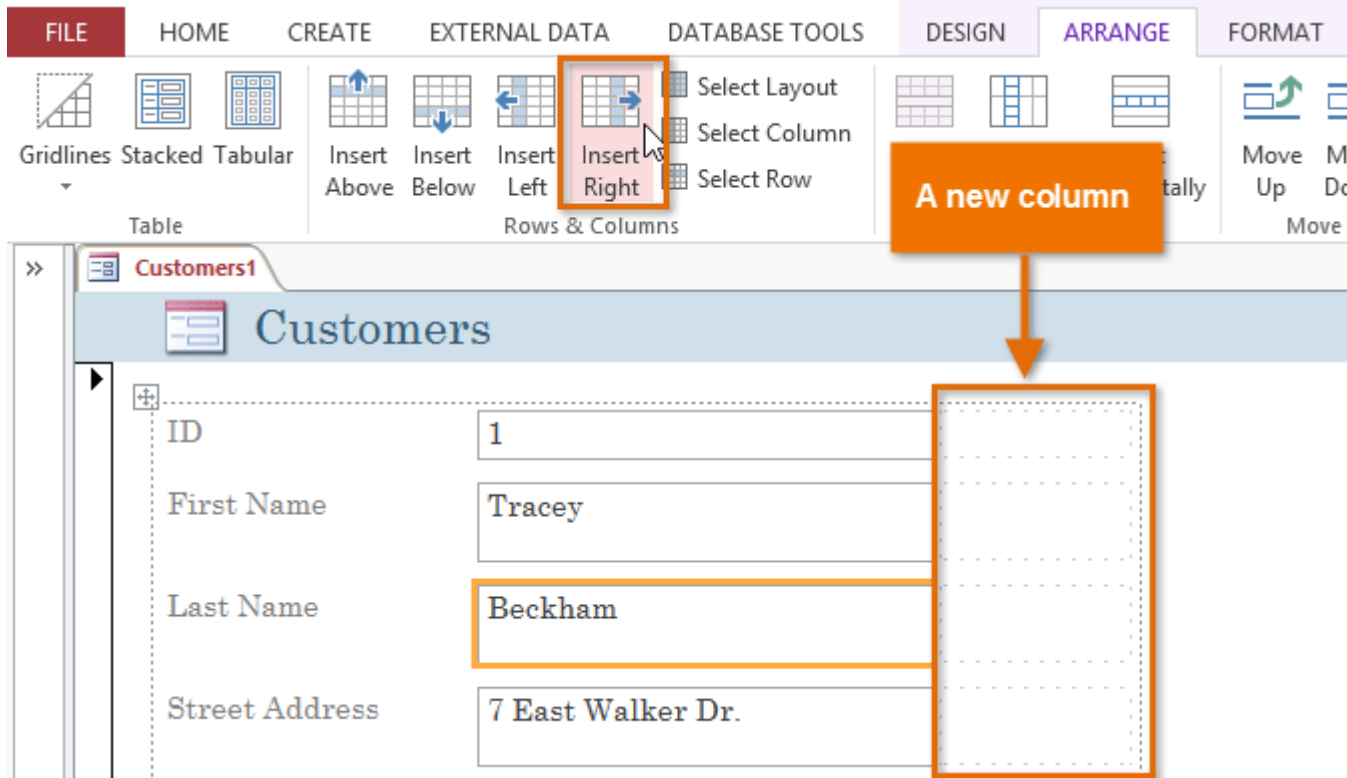
4. The field or button will be resized, as well as every other item aligned with it.



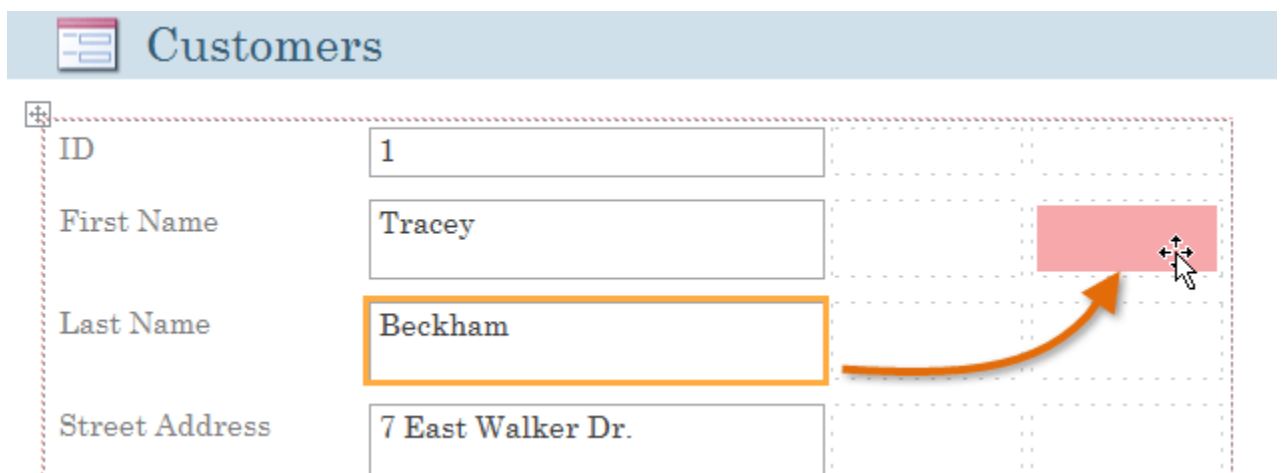
ID	1
First Name	Tracey
Last Name	Beckham
Street Address	7 East Walker Dr.
State	NC
Zip Code	27612

To move form components:

1. If necessary, **add columns or rows** to make room for the field or button you want to move by using the **Insert** commands in the **Rows & Columns** group. In our example, we want to move the **Last Name** field to the right of the **First Name** field, so we'll have to create two new columns to the right: one for the field label, and one for the field itself. To do this, we'll click the **Insert Right** command twice.




- Click and drag the field or button to its new location. If you're moving a field, make sure to move the **field label** as well.



- Repeat the steps above for any other fields or buttons you want to move.



## Customers

ID	<input type="text" value="1"/>		
First Name	<input type="text" value="Tracey"/>	Last Name	<input type="text" value="Beckham"/>
Street Address	<input type="text" value="7 East Walker Dr."/>	State	<input type="text" value="NC"/>
Zip Code	<input type="text" value="27612"/>	Email	<input type="text" value="beck@email.com"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text" value="919-555-2314"/>	City	<input type="text" value="Raleigh"/>
Add to Mailing List?	<input type="text" value="No"/>	Other Notes	<input type="text"/>
<div></div>			

If you want to make a field take up **more** or **less** space than one column, you can use the **Merge** and **Split** commands. The Merge command **combines** two or more cells, while the **Split** command **divides** a cell.



Customers

Search

First Name  Last Name

Street Address

City  State  Zip Code

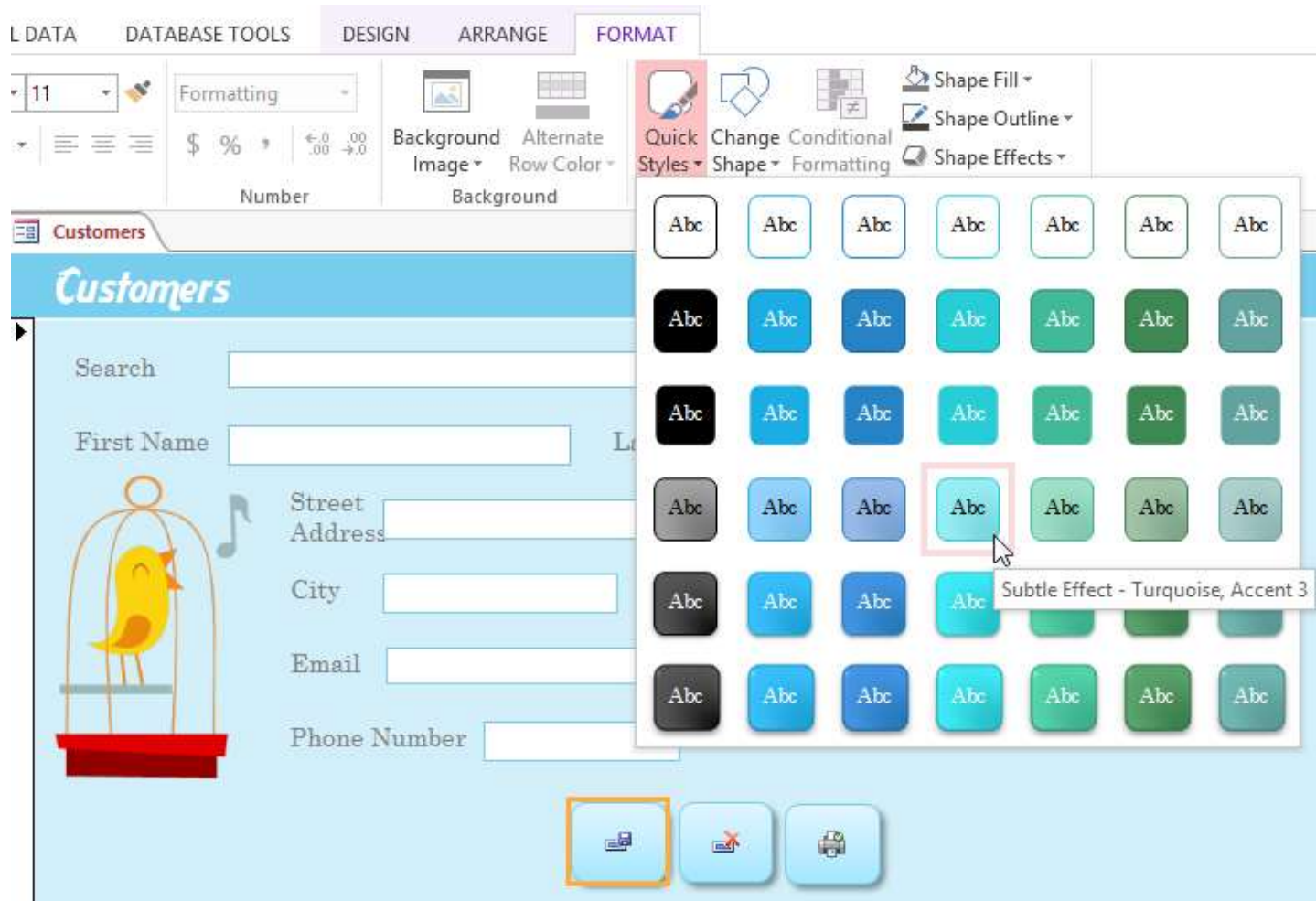
Email  Add to Mailing List?

Phone Number

## Modifying the colors and fonts of form components

To further customize the appearance of your forms, you can apply different **colors** and **fonts** to individual fields, buttons, labels, and other form components. Modifying form appearance this way is useful if you want to use a certain color or font scheme in a form but don't want these design elements to apply to your entire database.

For instance, in the form below we modified the **font** of our form **title**. We also applied a new **fill** and **border color** to the form **fields** and are doing the same with the **command buttons**.



You can make these changes using formatting techniques and tools similar to the ones you would use to modify shapes in **Word** and other Office programs. Simply select the object you want to modify while in **Layout** or **Design** view and use the formatting options on the **Format** tab to customize its appearance. For more information on making these types of modifications, review the [Shapes](#) lesson from our [Word 2013](#) tutorial.

## Challenge!

1. Open an **existing Access database**. If you want, you can use our “Formatting forms.accdb”.
2. Open the **Order Items** form.
3. Add a **command button** that creates a new record.

4. **Format** the newly added command button with the colors and style of your choosing.
5. Change the **theme colors** and **theme fonts**.
6. Add a **logo**.