Introduction

Creating **forms** for your database can make entering data more convenient. When you create a form, you can design it in a way that works with your database and that makes sense to you.

In this lesson, you will learn how to **create** and **modify** forms. You'll also learn how to use form options like **design controls** and **form properties** to make sure your form works exactly the way you want.

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

To create a form:

Access makes it easy to create a **form** from any table in your database. Any form you create from a table will let you **view the data** that's already in that table and **add new data**. Once you've created a form, you can modify it by adding additional fields and **design controls** like combo boxes.

1. In the Navigation pane, select the table you want to use to create a form. You do not need to open the table.

2. Select the **Create** tab, locate the **Forms** group, and click the **Form**command.
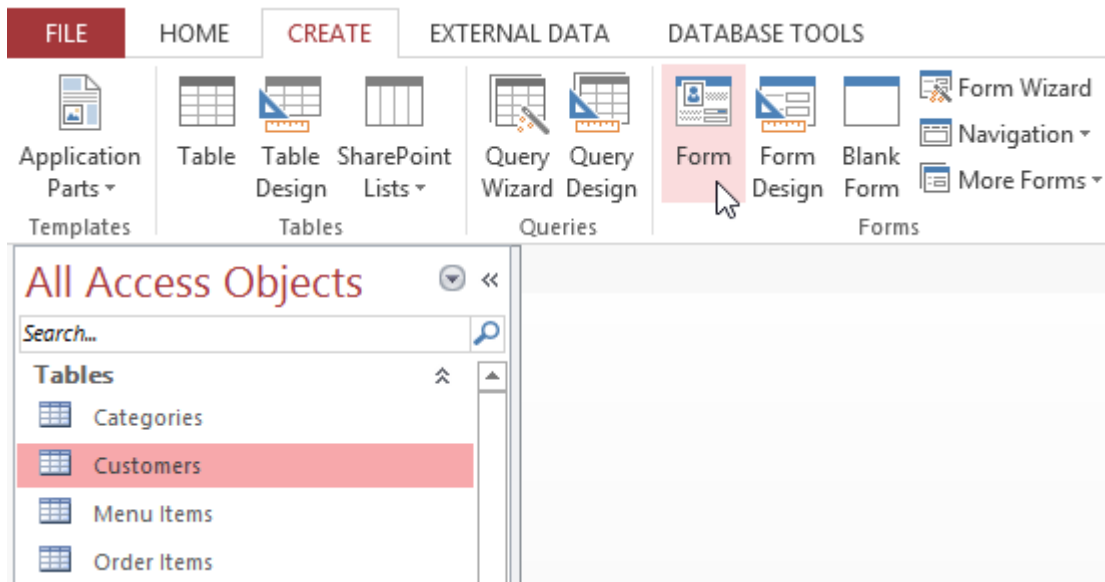
3. Your form will be created and opened in **Layout view**.

4. To **save** the form, click the **Save** command on the **Quick Access toolbar**. When prompted, type a **name** for the form, then click **OK**.
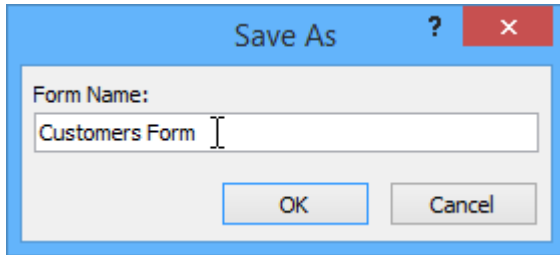
About subforms

If you created a form from a table whose records are linked to another table, your form probably includes a **subform**. A subform is a **datasheet form** that displays linked records in a table-like format. For instance, the subform included in the **Customers** form we just created displays linked customer **orders**.

We probably don't need to include this subform because we just want to use the Customers form to enter and review contact information. If you find that you don't need a subform, you can easily **delete** it. To do this, simply click it and press the **Delete** key on your keyboard.

	ID		Paid		Pre Order	Notes
+	38		Yes		No	
*	(New)		No		No	

A subform with information about each customer's order. This is more information than we need for the Customers form.

However, subforms are often quite helpful. Depending on the content and source of your form, you might find that the subform contains useful information, like in the example below. In our **Orders** form, the subform contains the name, quantity, and price of each item contained in the order, which is all useful information.

| Categor ▾	Product	▾	Quantity ▾	"Unit"	▾	Price	▾	Subtotal	▾
Cookies	Chocolate Chip		2	Single		$1.50		$3.00	
Cookies	Fudge Brownie		1	Single		$2.00		$2.00	
Cookies	Ginger Shortbread		1	Half-Dozer		$10.50		$10.50	
Pastries	Brownies		1	One Dozen		$19.00		$19.00	
Cakes	Black Forest		5	Single		$22.00		$110.00	
Cakes	Coconut		2	Single		$22.00		$44.00	
Cakes	Carrot Cake		1	Single		$22.00		$22.00	
Cookies	Fudge Chocolate		2	Single		$22.00		$44.00	
Cakes	Carrot Cake		1	Single		$22.00		$22.00	

Adding additional fields to a form

When you use the **Form** command on an existing table, all of the fields from the table are included in the form. However, if you later add additional fields to the table, these fields will **not** automatically show up in existing forms. In situations like this, you can **add** additional fields to a form.

To add a field to a form:

1. Select the **Design** tab, then locate the **Tools** group on the right side of the Ribbon.

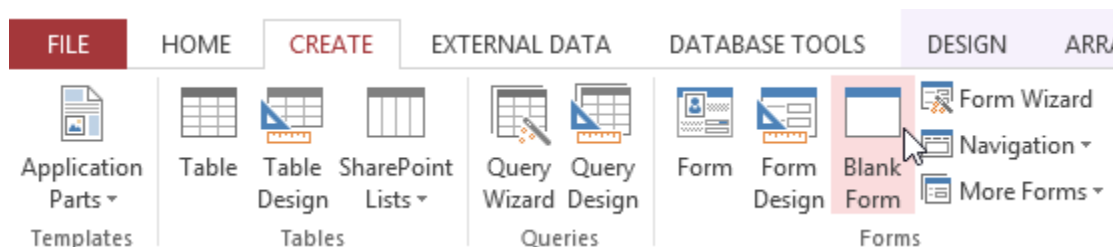2. Click the **Add Existing Fields** command.
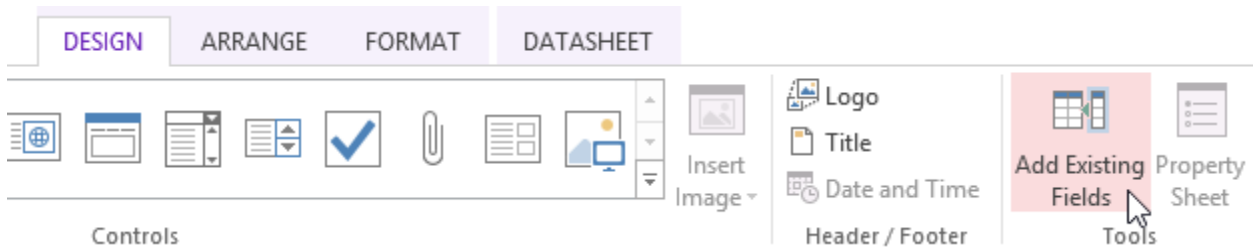
3. The **Field List** pane will appear. Double-click the desired field(s).
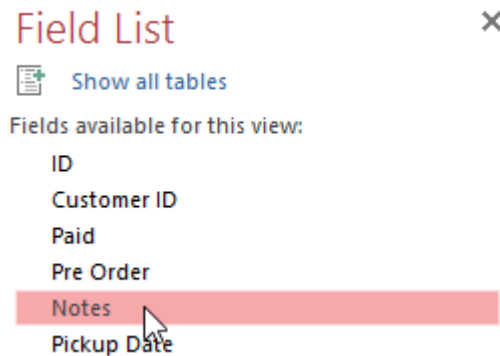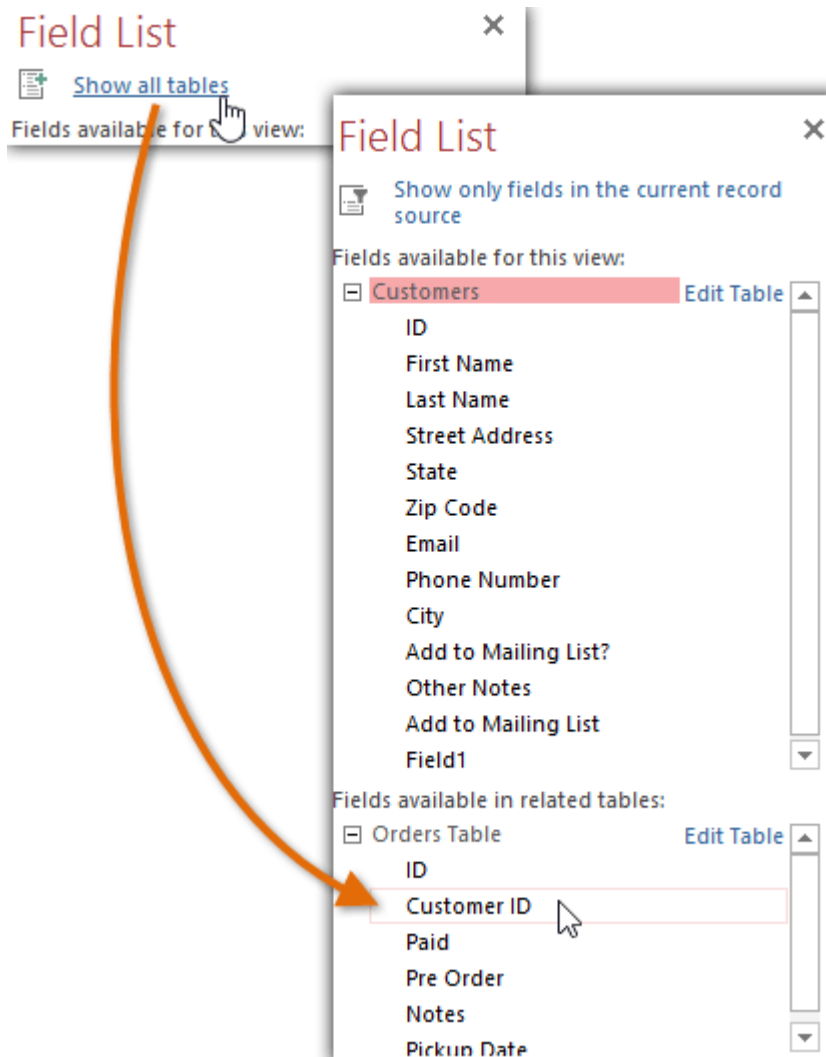

4. The field will be added.

You can also use the above procedure to add fields to a totally blank form. Simply **create a form** by clicking the **Blank Form** command on the **Create**tab, then follow the above steps to add the desired fields.

To add a field from a different table:

You can also add fields from **different tables** in your database to the form.

1. From the **Field List** pane, click **Show All Tables**.

2. Click the plus sign + next to the table that contains the field you want to add, then double-click the desired field.

3. The new field will be added.

Adding design controls

Design controls set restrictions on the fields in your forms. This helps you better control how the data is entered into your forms, which in turn helps keep the database consistent.
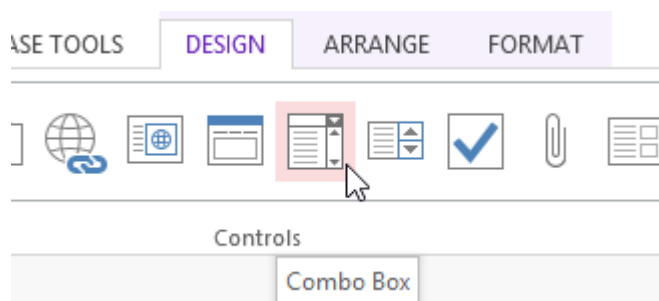
Combo boxes

A **combo box** is a drop-down list you can use in your form in place of a field. Combo boxes **limit** the information users can enter by forcing them to select only the **options**you have specified.

Combo boxes are useful for fields that have a limited number of possible valid responses. For instance, you might use a combo box to make sure people only enter a valid U.S. state while entering an address, or that they only choose products that already exist in your database while placing an order.

To create a combo box:

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

2. Select the **Combo Box** command, which looks like a drop-down list.
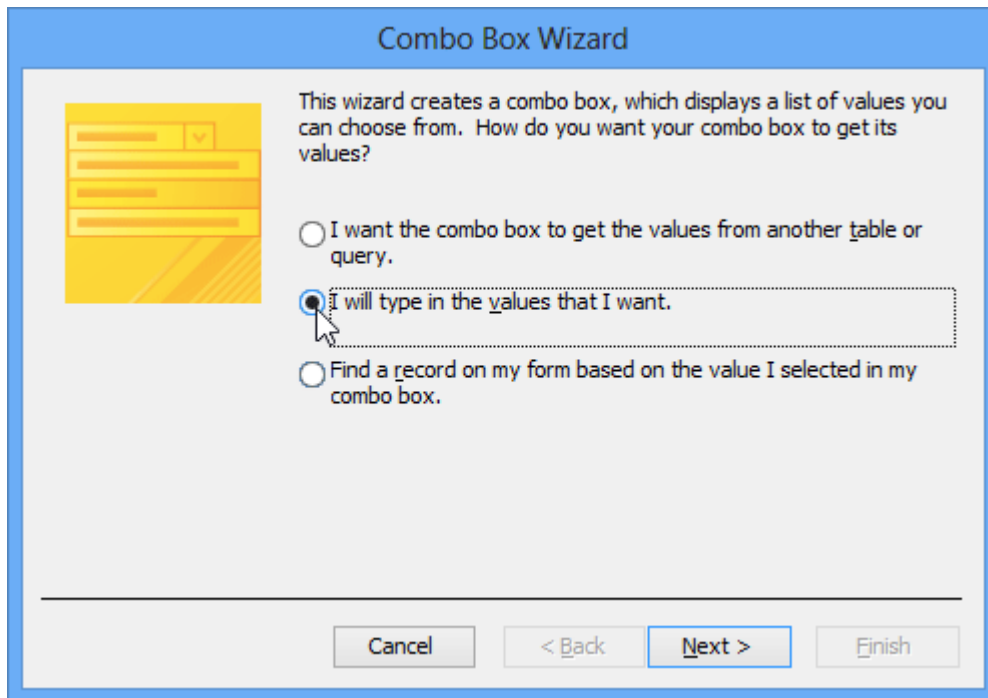
3. Select the desired location for the combo box. A line will appear to indicate the location where your combo box will be created. In our example, we'll place it between the **City** field and the **Add to Mailing List?** fields.

4. The **Combo Box Wizard** dialog box will appear. Select **I will type in the values that I want**, then click **Next**.

5. Type the choices you want to appear in your drop-down list. Each choice should be on its own row.
In our example, we are creating a combo box for the **Add to Mailing List?**field in our form, so we will enter all of the possible valid responses for this field. Users will be able to select one of three choices from our finished combo box: **No**, **Yes - Weekly**, and **Yes - Special Events and Offers**.

6. If necessary, **resize** the column so all of your text is visible. Once you are satisfied with your list, click **Next**.

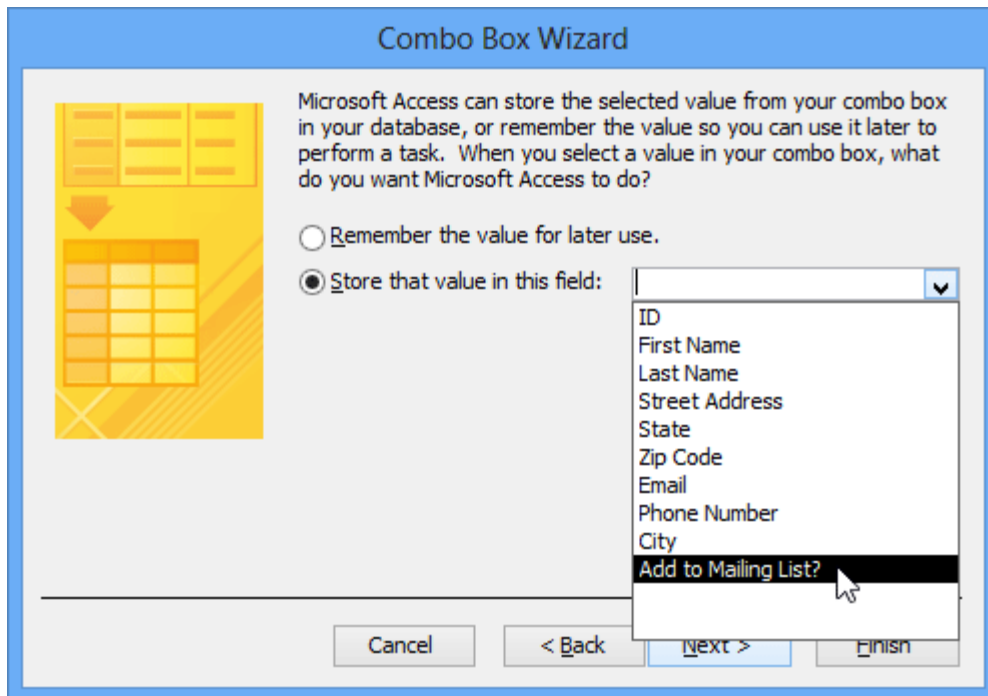7. Select **Store that value in this field**, then click the drop-down arrow and **select** the **field** where you want selections from your combo box to be recorded. After making your selection, click **Next**.

8. Enter the **label**—or **name**—that will appear next to your combo box. Generally, it's a good idea to use the name of the field you chose in the previous step.
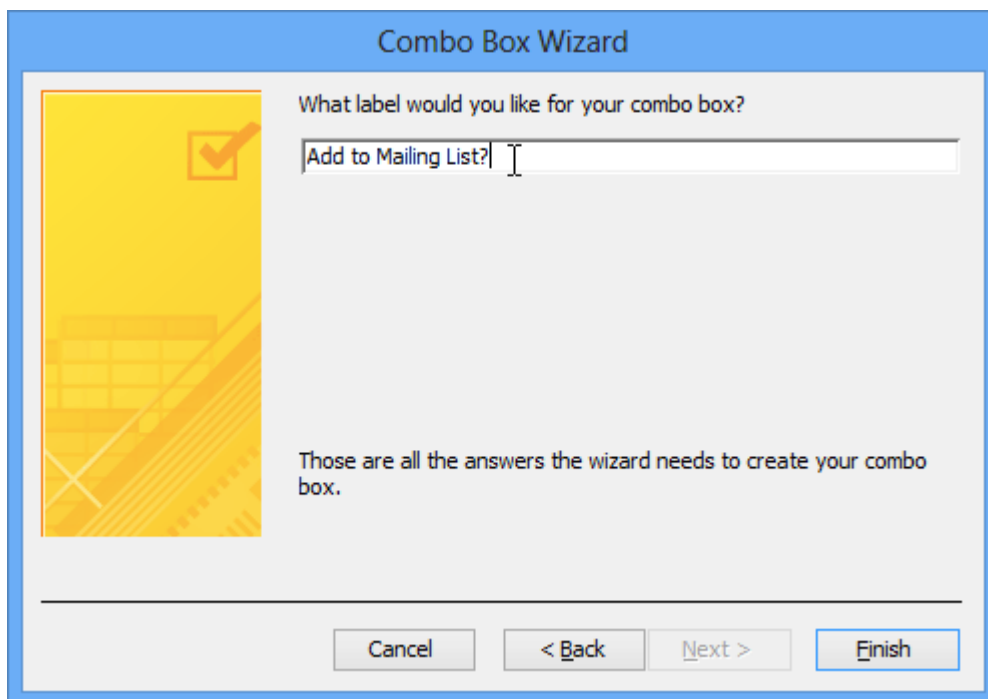
9. Click **Finish**. Your combo box will appear on the form. If you created your combo box to **replace** an existing field, you should **delete** the first field. In our example, you might notice that

we now have two fields with the same name. These two fields send information to the same place, so we don't need them both.
We'll **delete** the one without the combo box.

10.   Switch to **Form** view to **test** your combo box. Simply click the drop-down arrow and verify that the list contains the correct choices. The combo box can now be used to enter data.

If you want to include a drop-down list with a long list of options and don't want to type all of them out, create a combo box and choose the first option in the Combo Box Wizard, **I want to get the values from another table or query**. This will allow you to create a drop-down list from a table field.
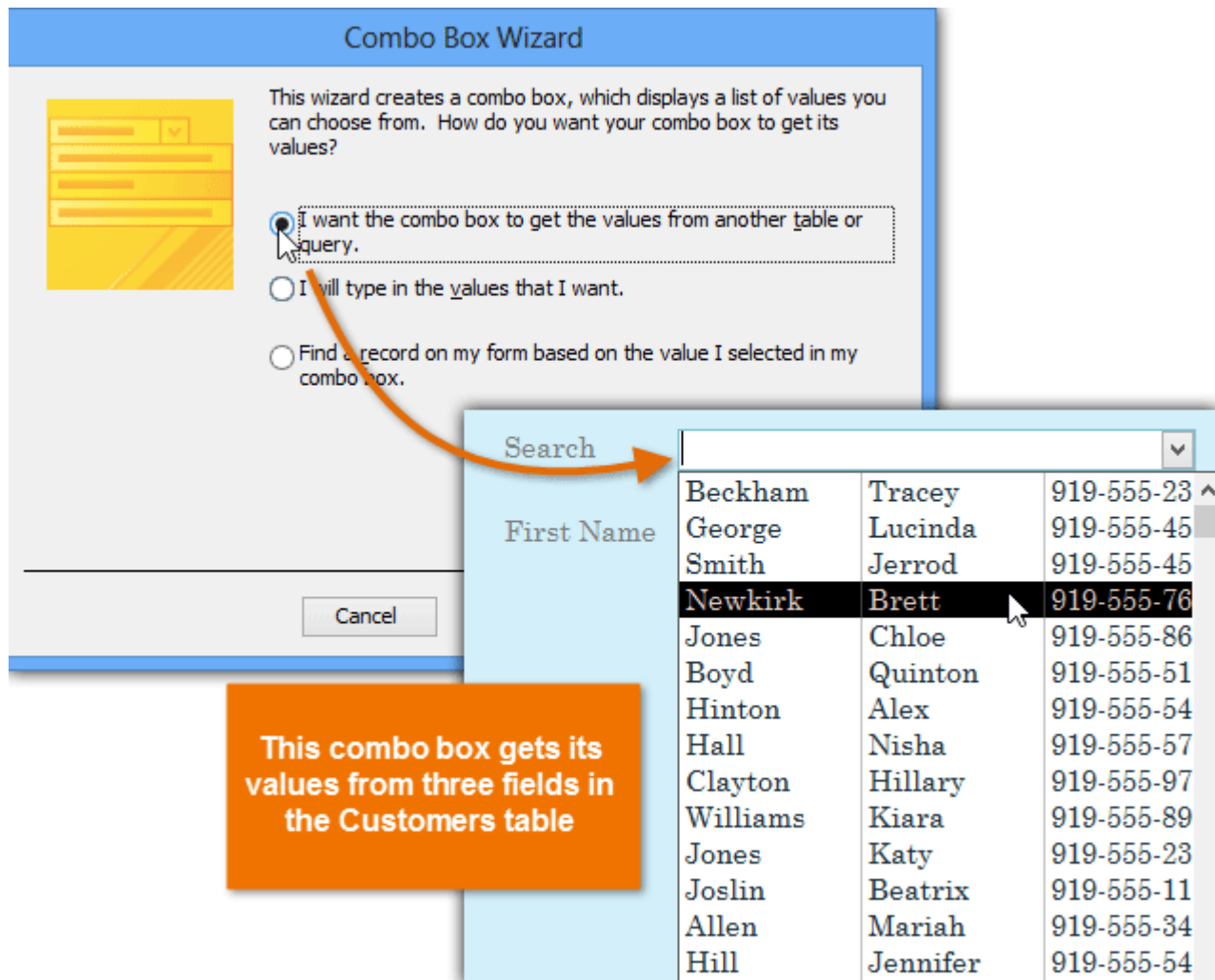
Some users report that Access malfunctions while working with forms. If you have a problem performing any of these tasks in Layout view, try switching to Design view.

Customizing form settings with the Property Sheet

The **Property Sheet** is a pane containing **detailed information** on your form and each of its components. From the Property Sheet, you can make changes to every part of your form, both in terms of function and appearance.

The best way to familiarize yourself with the Property Sheet is to **open** it and **select**various options. When you select an option, Access will display a brief description of the option on the **bottom-left border** of the program window.
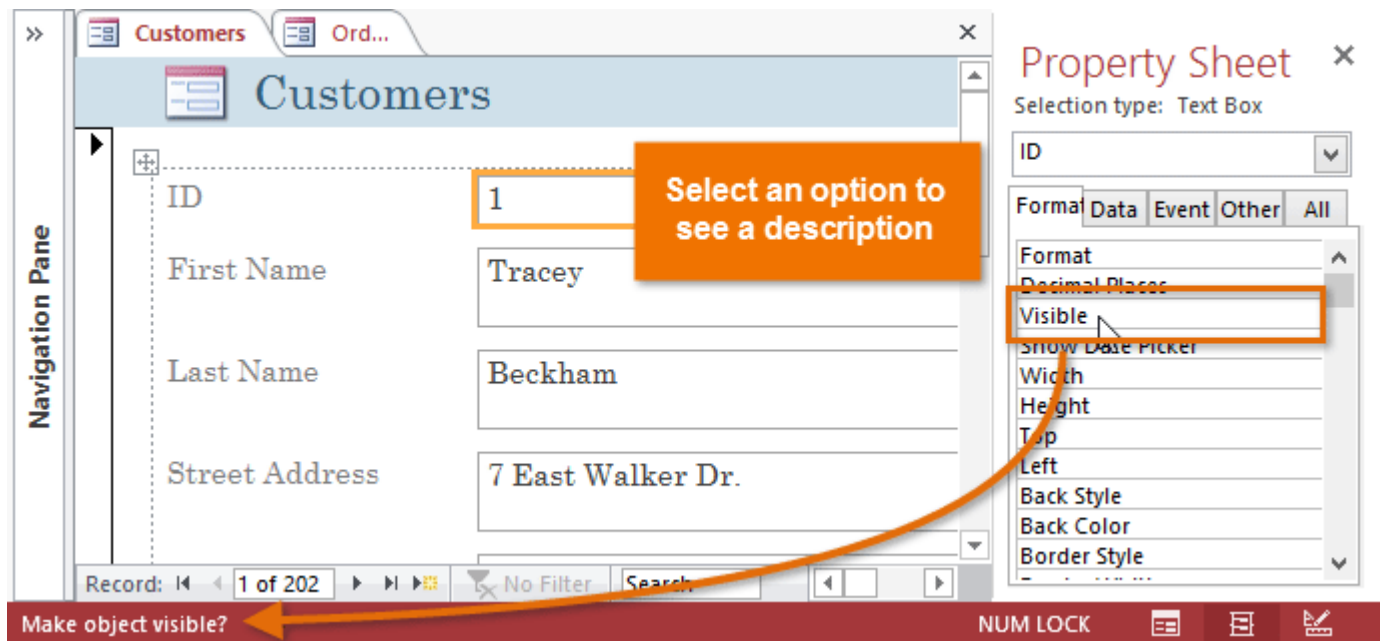

Pay close attention as you modify your form and its fields. It's possible to make subtle changes with the Property Sheet. Because there are so many options, it can sometimes be difficult to remember which one you used to modify each aspect of your form.

Modifying form settings

There are far too many options in the Property Sheet to discuss them all in detail. We'll review two useful ones here: **hiding** fields, and setting fields with **dates** to **automatically fill in the current date**. Practicing these procedures should also give you a sense of how to work with other Property Sheet settings.
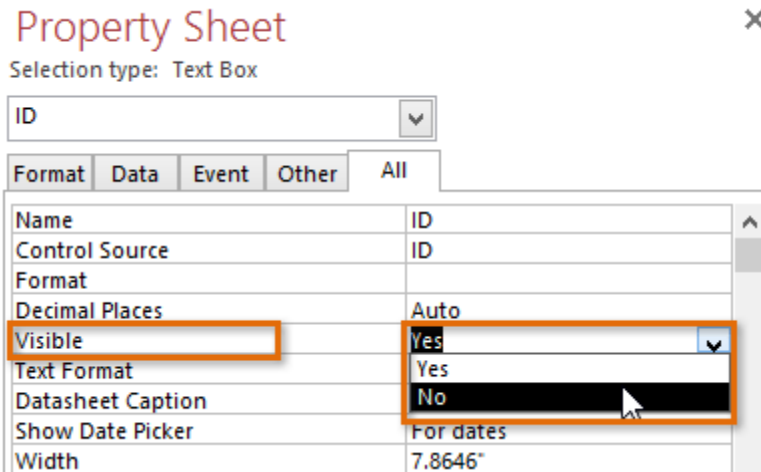
To hide a field:

1. In either **Layout** or **Design** view, select the **Design** tab, then locate the **Tools** group. Click the **Property Sheet** command.
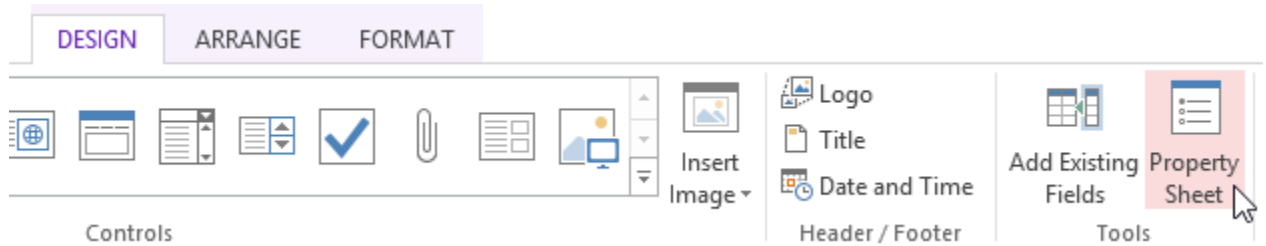
2. The **Property Sheet** will appear in a pane on the right. On the form, **select**the field you want to hide. In our example, we'll hide the **Customer ID** field because we don't want any of our users to try to edit it.
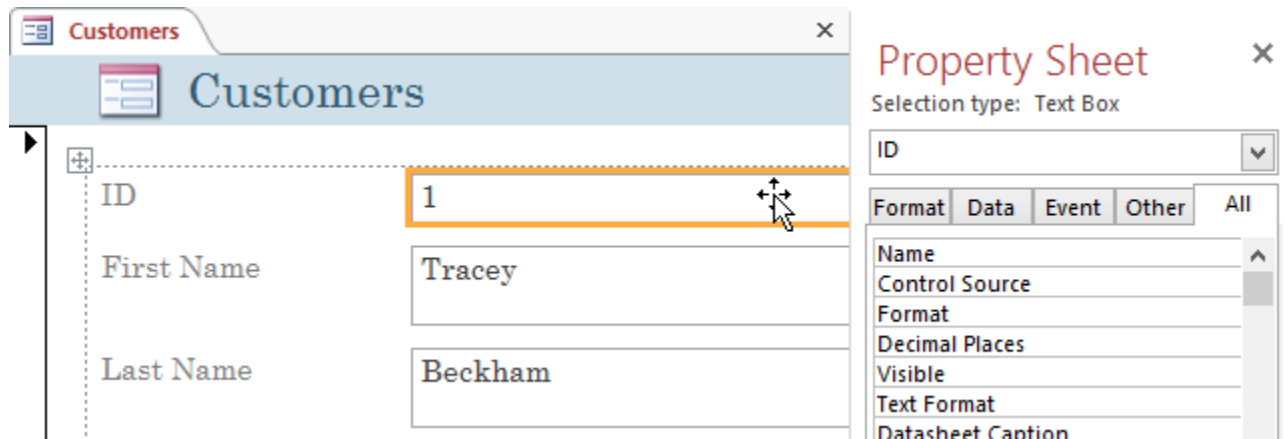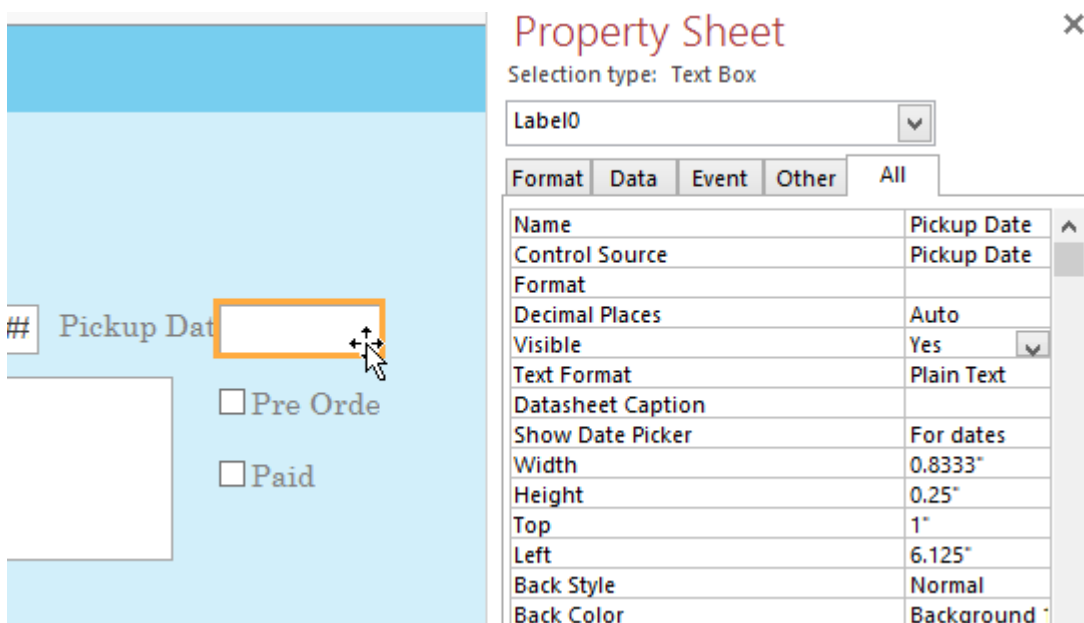

3. In the **Property Sheet**, click the **All** tab, then locate the **Visible** option on the fifth row.

4. Click the drop-down arrow in the column to the right, then select **No**.

5. Switch to **Form** view to verify that the field is hidden.

To set a field to autofill with the current date:

1. In either **Layout** or **Design** view, select the **Design** tab, then locate the **Tools** group. Click the **Property Sheet** command.

2. The **Property Sheet** will appear in a pane on the right. On the form, **select**the field you want to automatically fill in the current date. This **must** be a field with the **date** data type. For our example, we'll select the **Pickup Date**field on our **Orders** form.
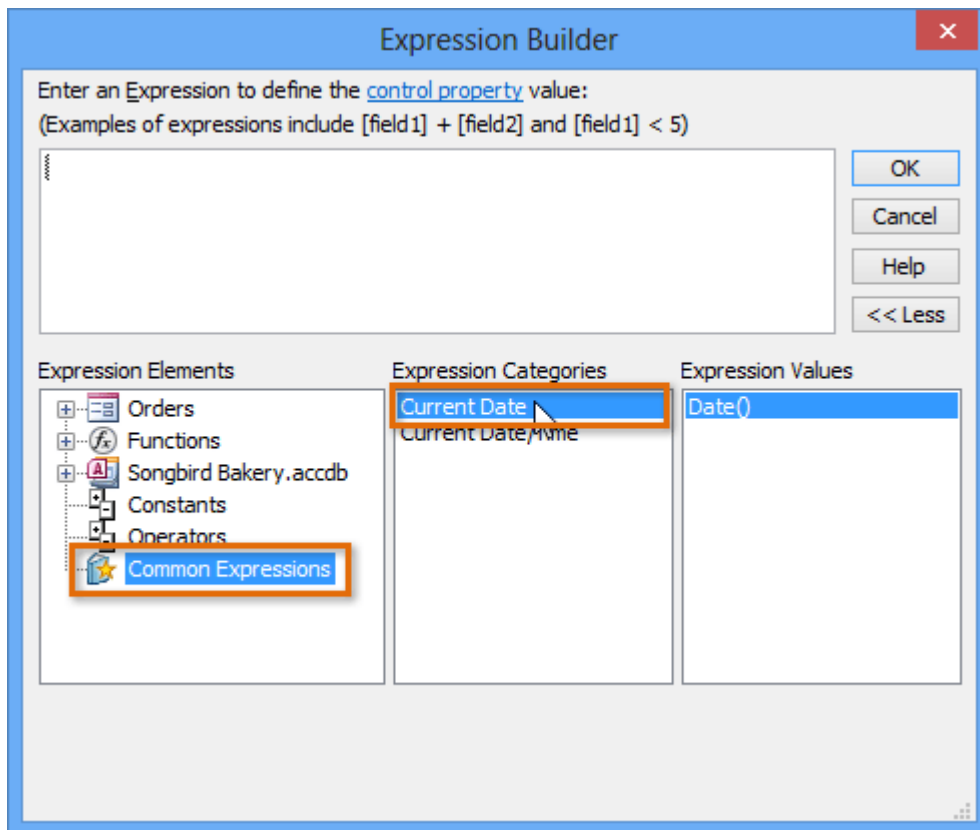
3. In the **Property Sheet**, click the **Data** tab, then select the **Default Value** field in the fourth row. Click the **Expression Builder** button that appears in the column to the right.
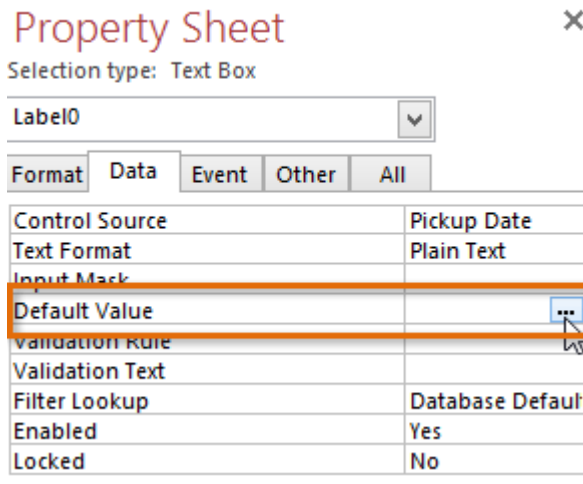
4. The **Expression Builder** dialog box will appear. In the **Expression Elements** list, click the words **Common Expressions**.

5. In the **Expression Categories** list, double-click **Current Date**.

6. The expression for **Current Date** will be added. Click **OK**.
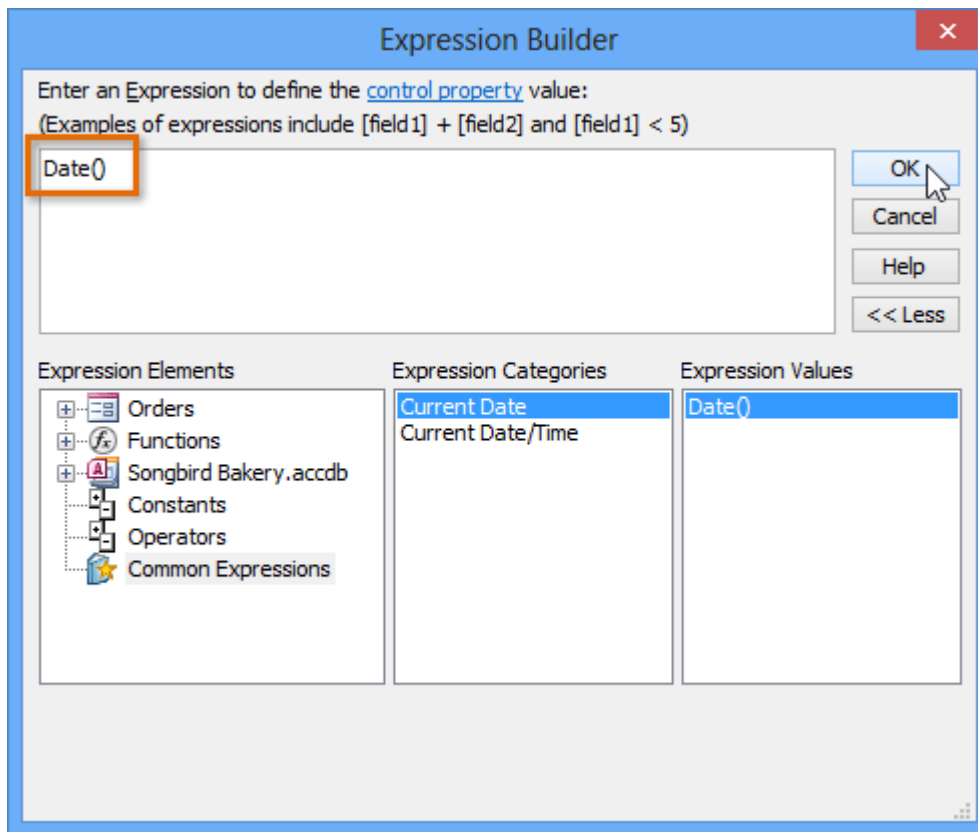
7. Switch to **Form** view to verify that the expression works. When you create a **new record** with that form, the date field you modified will automatically fill in the current date.

Challenge!

1. Open an **existing Access database**. If you want, you can use our "Creating Forms.accdb".
2. **Create** a form from the **Customers** table.
3. **Delete** the subform.
4. Create a **combo box**.

   o Add the following choices to the combo box:

     ▪ Raleigh

     ▪ Durham

     ▪ Hillsborough

     ▪ Cary

     ▪ Chapel Hill

     ▪ Garner

     ▪ Charlotte

   o **Store the value** in the **City** field, and label the combo box **NC CityList**. Click **Finish** when you are done with the Combo Box Wizard.

5. Switch to **Form** view, and click on the drop-down arrow in the combo box you created. You should see a list of cities.