

Introduction

Whenever you're learning a new program, it's important to familiarize yourself with the program window and the tools within it. Working with Access is no different. Knowing your way around the Access environment will make learning and using Access much easier.

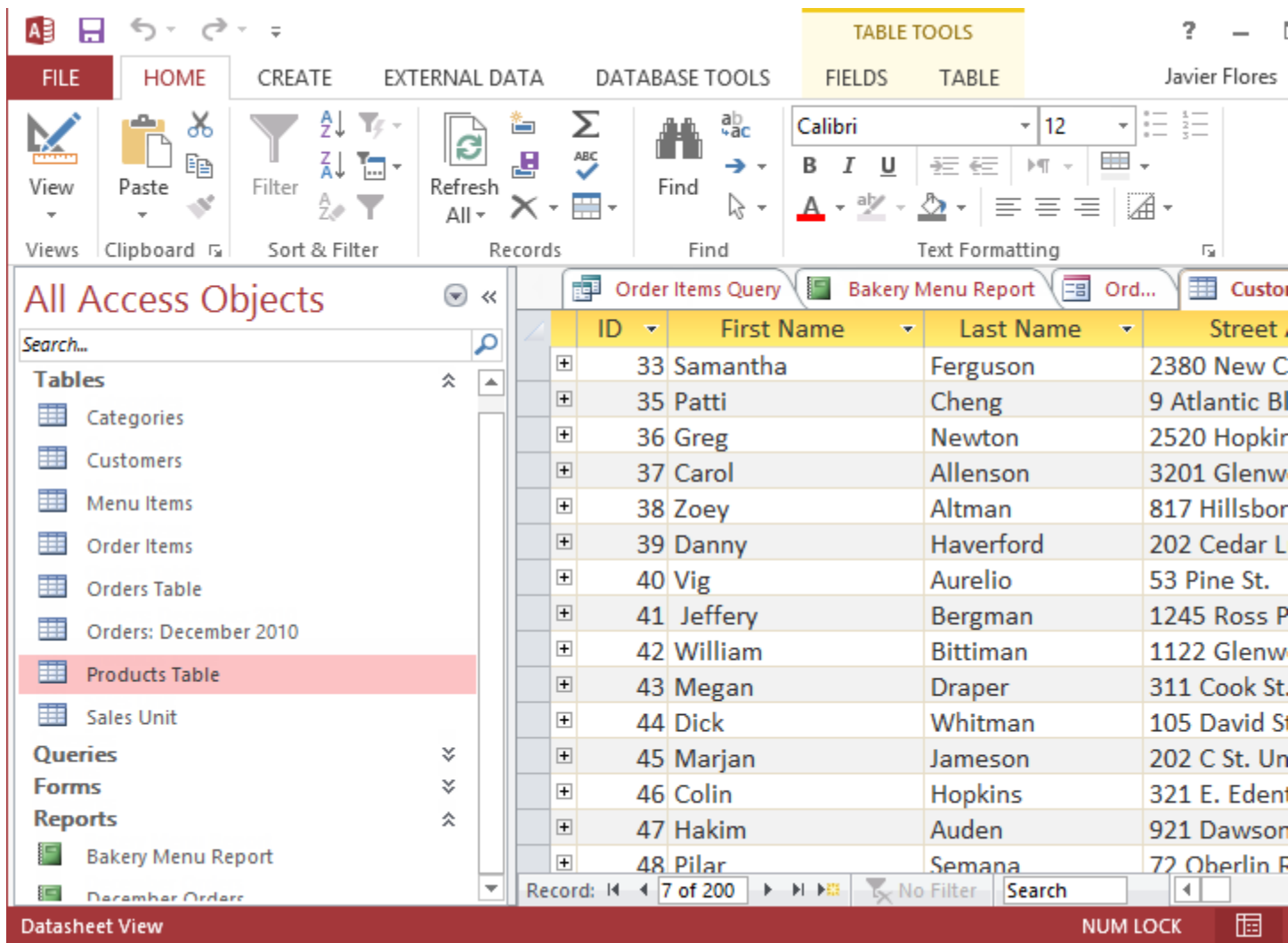
In this lesson, you will familiarize yourself with the Access environment, including the **Ribbon**, **Backstage view**, **Navigation pane**, **Document Tabs bar**, and more. You will also learn how to navigate with a **navigation form**, if your database includes one.

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

Getting to know Access 2013

Access 2013 uses the **Ribbon** to organize commands, just like in Access 2010 and 2007. If you've used these versions before, Access 2013 will feel familiar. But if you are new to Access or have more experience with older versions, you should first take some time to become familiar with the **Access 2013 interface**.

Click the buttons in the interactive below to become familiar with the Access 2013 interface.



Working with your Access environment

If you've previously used Access 2010 or 2007, Access 2013 will feel familiar. It continues to use features like the **Ribbon** and the **Quick Access toolbar**—where you will find commands to perform common tasks in Access—as well as **Backstage view**.

The Ribbon

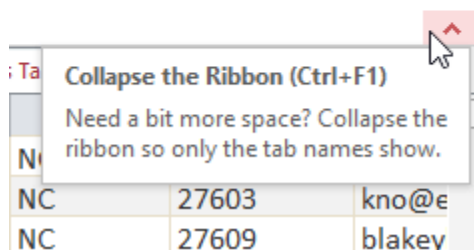
Access 2013 uses a **tabbed Ribbon system** instead of traditional menus. **The Ribbon contains multiple tabs**, each with several **groups of commands**. You will use these tabs to perform the most **common tasks** in Access.



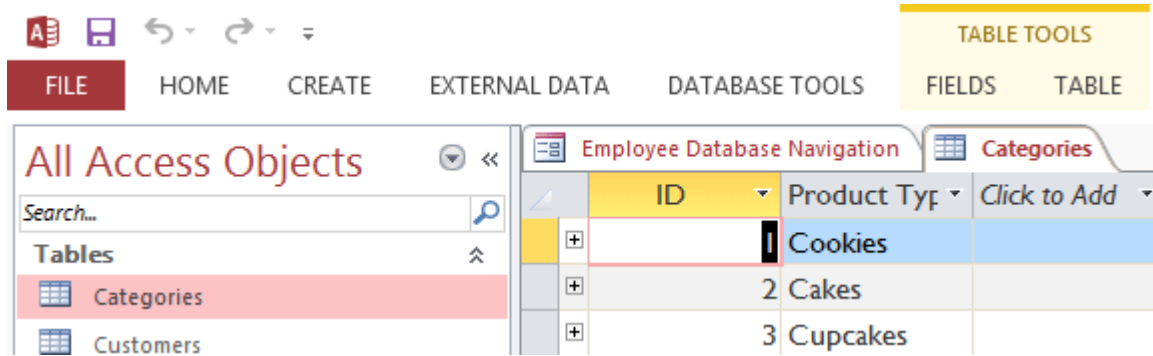
To minimize and maximize the Ribbon:

The Ribbon is designed to respond to your current task; however, you can choose to **minimize** the Ribbon if you find that it takes up too much screen space.

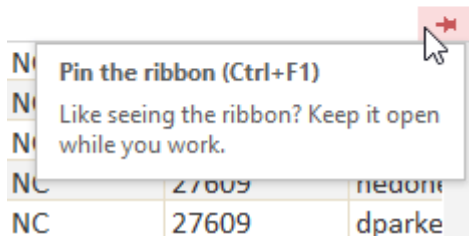
1. Click the **arrow** in the lower-right corner of the Ribbon to minimize it.



2. The **Ribbon** will be minimized. Click a **tab** to make the Ribbon reappear. It will disappear again when not in use.

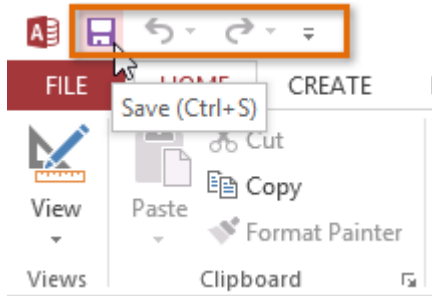


3. To **maximize** the Ribbon, click a tab, then click the **pin** icon in the lower-right corner. The Ribbon will appear at all times.



The Quick Access toolbar

The **Quick Access toolbar**, located above the Ribbon, lets you access common commands no matter which tab you are on. By default, it shows the **Save**, **Undo**, and **Repeat** commands. If you'd like, you can **customize** it by **adding additional commands**.



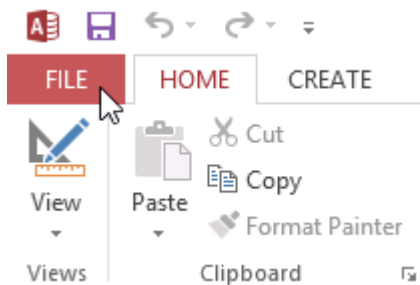
Note that the **Save** command only saves the current open object. In addition, the **Undo** command will not undo certain actions, like adding a record. Pay close attention to your information when using the **Undo** command to make sure it has the desired effect.

Backstage view

Backstage view gives you various options for saving, opening, and printing your database.

To access Backstage view:

1. Click the **File** tab on the **Ribbon**.



2. **Backstage view** will appear.

Click the buttons in the interactive below to learn more about using Backstage view.



Info

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Compact &
Repair Database

Compact & Repair

Help prevent and correct database file problems by using Compact and Repair.

[View and edit database properties](#)



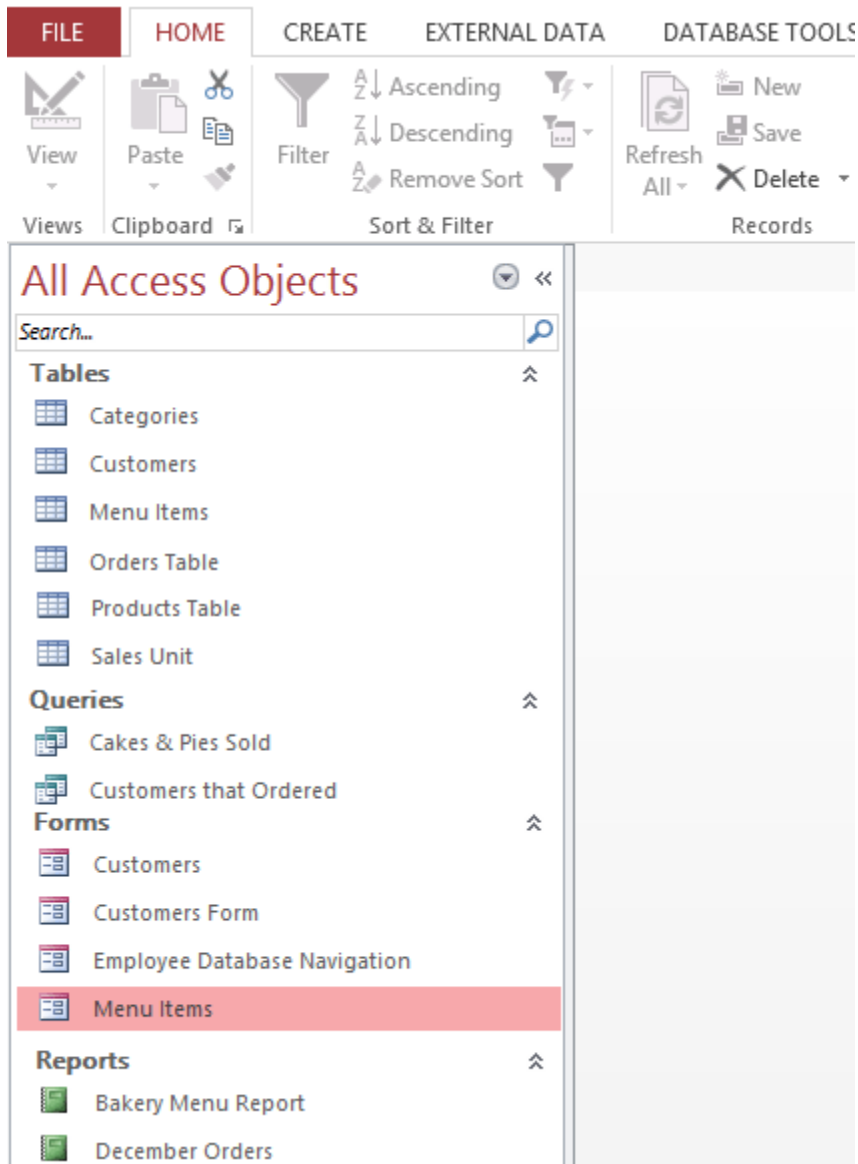
Encrypt with
Password

Encrypt with Password

Use a password to restrict access to your database. Files that use the 2007 Microsoft Access file format or later are encrypted.

The Navigation pane

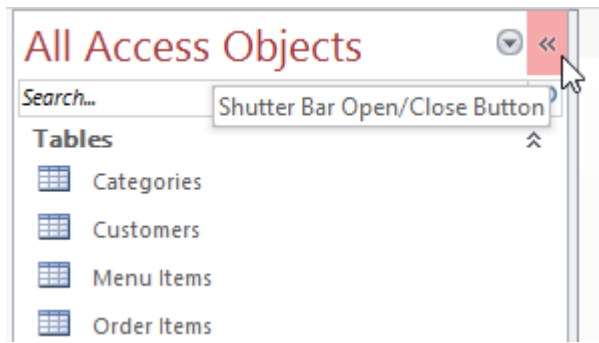
The **Navigation pane** is a list containing every object in your database. For easier viewing, the objects are organized into groups by type. You can **open**, **rename**, and **delete** objects using the Navigation pane.



To minimize and maximize the Navigation pane:

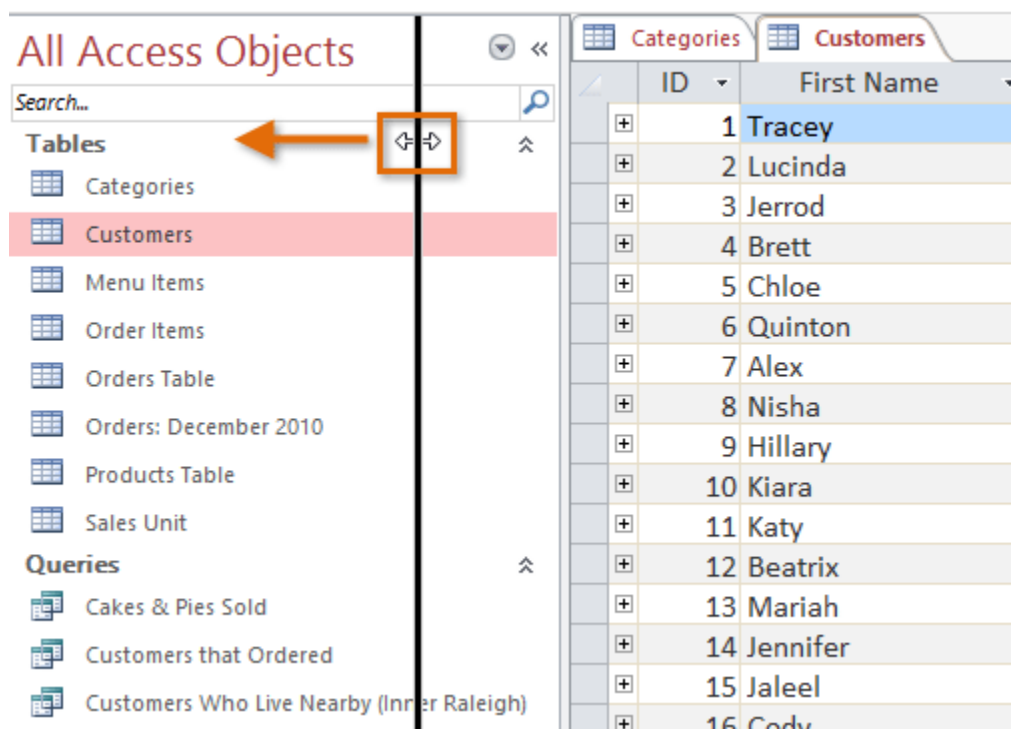
The Navigation pane is designed to help you manage all of your objects; however, if you feel that it takes up too much of your screen space you can **minimize** it.

1. To minimize the Navigation pane, click the **double arrow** in the upper-right corner.



2. The Navigation pane will be minimized. Click the **double arrow** again to maximize it.

If you want to make the Navigation pane smaller without fully minimizing it, you can **resize** it. Simply click and drag the right border of the Navigation pane. When it is the desired size, release your mouse.



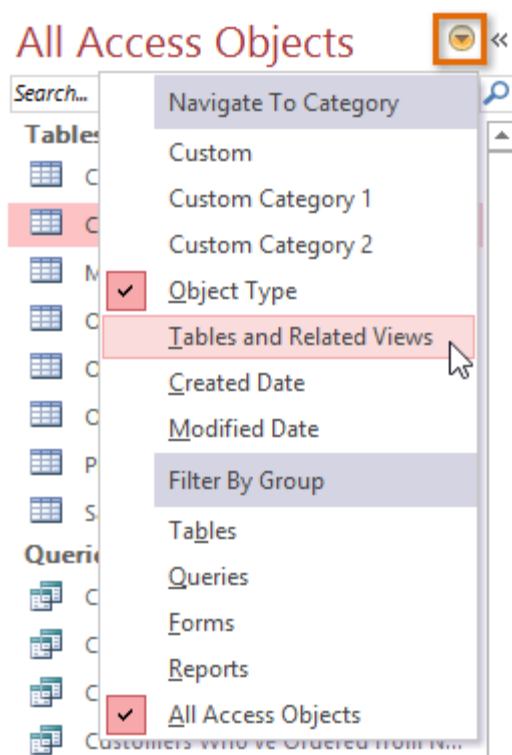
Object sorting in the Navigation pane

By default, objects are sorted by **type**, with tables in one group, forms in another, and so on. However, if you want you can sort the objects in the Navigation pane into groups of your choosing. There are four sort options:

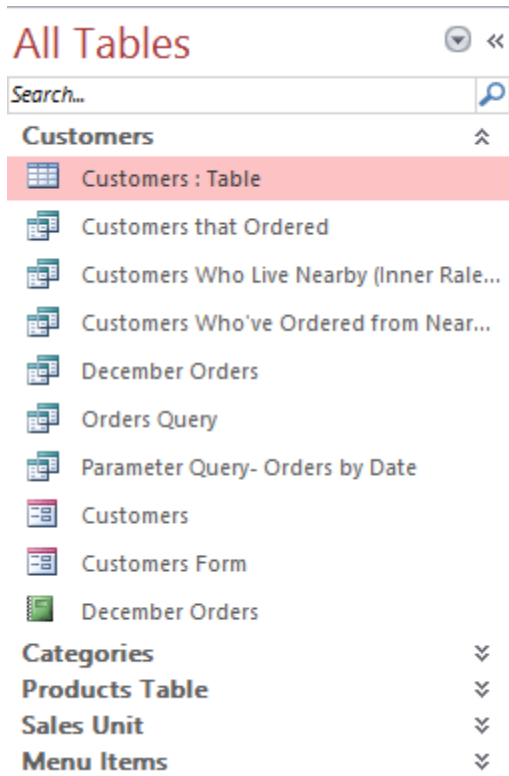
- **Custom** allows you to create a custom group for sorting objects. After applying the sort, simply drag the desired objects to the new group.
- **Object Type** groups objects by type. This is the default setting.
- **Tables and Related Views** groups forms, queries, and reports with the tables they refer to.
- **Created Date** or **Modified Date** sorts objects based on when they were created or last edited.

To sort objects in the Navigation pane:

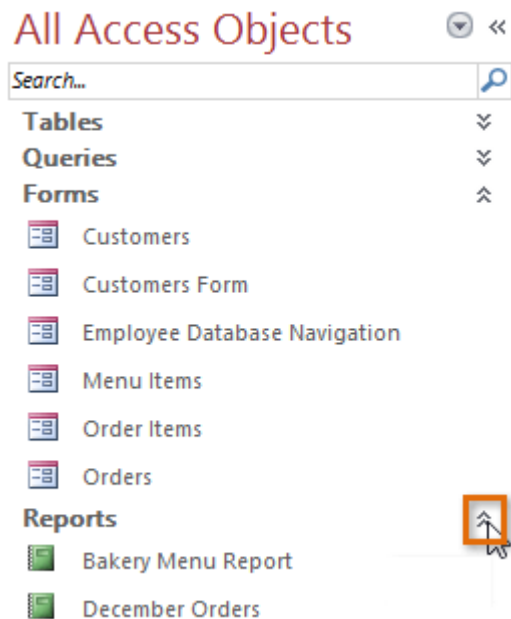
1. Click the **drop-down arrow** to the right of **All Access Objects**, then select the desired sort from the drop-down menu.



2. The objects in the Navigation pane will now be sorted to reflect your choice.



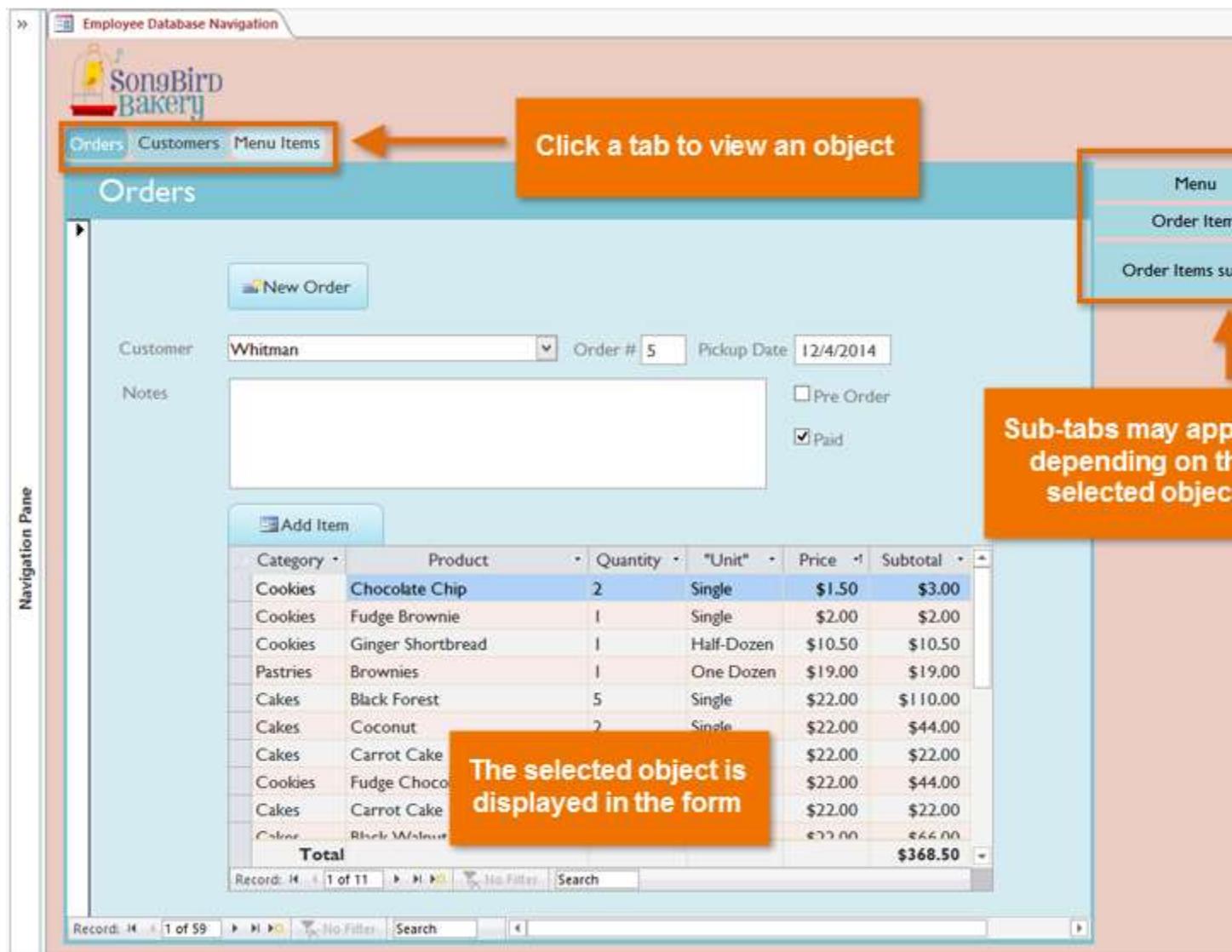
To further customize the appearance of the Navigation pane, you can **minimize groups** of objects you don't want to see. Simply click the **upward double arrow** next to the group name. To show a group, click the **downward double arrow**.



Databases with navigation forms

Some databases include a **navigation form** that opens automatically when the database is opened. Navigation forms are designed to be a **user-friendly** replacement for the **Navigation pane**. They contain **tabs** that allow you to view and work with common forms, queries, and reports. Having your frequently used objects available to you in one place lets you access them quickly and easily.

To open an object from a navigation form, click its tab. The object will be displayed within the navigation form. Once an object is open, you can work with it as you normally would.



Generally, navigation forms include only the objects a typical user will need to work with fairly regularly, which is why your navigation form may not include every single form, query, or report. This makes it easier to navigate the database. By hiding tables and rarely used forms, queries, and reports, it also reduces the chance of the database being damaged by users accidentally editing or deleting necessary data.

For this reason, it's important to ask your database designer or administrator before working with objects that are not available in your navigation form. Once you have the go-ahead, you can simply **maximize** the **Navigation pane** and open the objects from there.

Challenge!

1. Open an **existing Access database**. If you want, you can use our **Access 2013 sample database**.
2. Click through all of the **tabs** and notice how the options on the Ribbon change.
3. Try **minimizing** and **maximizing** the Ribbon.
4. Resize the **Navigation pane** to make it take up less room.
5. **Re-sort** the objects in the Navigation pane.