



SQL TOP, LIMIT or ROWNUM Clause

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The SQL SELECT TOP Clause

The SELECT TOP clause is used to specify the number of records to return.

The SELECT TOP clause is useful on large tables with thousands of records. Returning a large number of records can impact on performance.

Note: Not all database systems support the SELECT TOP clause. MySQL supports the LIMIT clause to select a limited number of records, while Oracle uses ROWNUM.

SQL Server / MS Access Syntax:

```
SELECT TOP number | percent column_name(s)
FROM table_name
WHERE condition;
```

MySQL Syntax:

```
SELECT column_name(s)
FROM table_name
WHERE condition
LIMIT number;
```

Oracle Syntax:

```
SELECT column_name(s)
FROM table_name
WHERE ROWNUM <= number;
```

Demo Database

Below is a selection from the "Customers" table in the Northwind sample database:

CustomerID	CustomerName	ContactName	Address	City	PostalCod
1	Alfreds Futterkiste	Maria Anders	Obere Str. 57	Berlin	12209
2	Ana Trujillo Emparedados y helados	Ana Trujillo	Avda. de la Constitución 2222	México D.F.	05021
3	Antonio Moreno Taquería	Antonio Moreno	Mataderos 2312	México D.F.	05023
4	Around the Horn	Thomas Hardy	120 Hanover Sq.	London	WA1 1DP
5	Berglunds snabbköp	Christina Berglund	Berguvsvägen 8	Luleå	S-958 22



SQL TOP, LIMIT and ROWNUM Examples

The following SQL statement selects the first three records from the "Customers" table:

Example

```
SELECT TOP 3 * FROM Customers;
```

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The following SQL statement shows the equivalent example using the LIMIT clause:

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers  
LIMIT 3;
```

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The following SQL statement shows the equivalent example using ROWNUM:

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers  
WHERE ROWNUM <= 3;
```

SQL TOP PERCENT Example

The following SQL statement selects the first 50% of the records from the "Customers" table:

Example

```
SELECT TOP 50 PERCENT * FROM Customers;
```

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ADD a WHERE CLAUSE

The following SQL statement selects the first three records from the "Customers" table, where the country is "Germany":

Example

```
SELECT TOP 3 * FROM Customers  
WHERE Country='Germany';
```

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The following SQL statement shows the equivalent example using the LIMIT clause:

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers  
WHERE Country='Germany'  
LIMIT 3;
```

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The following SQL statement shows the equivalent example using ROWNUM:

Example

```
SELECT * FROM Customers  
WHERE Country='Germany' AND ROWNUM <= 3;
```

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