

# MySQL - Like Operator

The SQL **LIKE** operator is used to retrieve the data in a column of a table, based on a specified pattern.

It is used along with the **WHERE** clause of the **UPDATE**, **DELETE** and **SELECT** statements, to filter the rows based on the given pattern. These patterns are specified using Wildcards.

Syntax :

**SELECT** column1, column2, ...

**FROM** table\_name

**WHERE** column **LIKE** specified\_pattern;

## Wildcards :

SQL wildcards are special characters used in SQL queries to match patterns in the data. Following are the wildcards used in conjunction with the **LIKE** operator in MySQL database –

Wildcard	Definition
<b>%</b>	The percent sign represents zero, one or multiple characters.
<b>_</b>	The underscore represents a single number or character.

The table given below has a few examples showing the **WHERE** clause having different **LIKE** operators with '%' and '\_'

Statement	Description
<b>WHERE</b> salary <b>LIKE</b> '200%'	Finds any values that start with 200.
<b>WHERE</b> salary <b>LIKE</b> '%200%'	Finds any values that have 200 in any position.
<b>WHERE</b> salary <b>LIKE</b> '_00%'	Finds any values that have 00 in the second and third positions.
<b>WHERE</b> salary <b>LIKE</b> '2_%_ %'	Finds any values that start with 2 and are at least 3 characters in length.
<b>WHERE</b> salary <b>LIKE</b> '%2'	Finds any values that end with 2.
<b>WHERE</b> salary <b>LIKE</b> '_2%3'	Finds any values that have a 2 in the second position and end with a 3.
<b>WHERE</b> salary <b>LIKE</b> '2___3'	Finds any values in a five-digit number that start with 2 and end with 3.

## LIKE operator with AND or OR Operators

We can also use the **LIKE** operator with multiple string patterns for selecting rows by using the **AND** or **OR** operators.

Syntax :

**SELECT** column1, column2, ...

**FROM** table\_name

**WHERE** column1 **LIKE** pattern1 **OR** column2 **LIKE** pattern2 **OR** ...;

Example :

```
SELECT *  
  
FROM employee  
  
WHERE emp_name LIKE 'a%' OR salary LIKE '5%' ;
```

## NOT operator with the LIKE condition

We use the **NOT** operator with **LIKE** to extract the rows which do not contain a particular string provided in the search pattern.

Syntax :

```
SELECT column1, column2, ...  
  
FROM table_name  
  
WHERE column1 NOT LIKE pattern;
```

Example :

```
SELECT *  
  
FROM employee  
  
WHERE emp_name NOT LIKE 'a%' ;
```

## Uses of LIKE Operator in SQL

- It helps us to extract data that matches with the required pattern.
- It helps us in performing complex regex-based queries on our data.
- It simplifies complex queries.