General SQL Topics

1. INTRODUCTION TO SQL

- **SQL**: Structured Query Language, used to interact with relational databases.
- Relational Database: Stores data in tables (rows & columns).
- Common RDBMS: MySQL, PostgreSQL, SQLite, Oracle, SQL Server.

2. SQL DATA TYPES

- **INT**: Integer numbers
- VARCHAR(n): Variable-length string with a maximum of n characters
- CHAR(n): Fixed-length string
- DATE / DATETIME: Date or timestamp
- **DECIMAL(p, s)**: Exact numeric value with precision and scale
- BOOLEAN: True or False
- TEXT: Long-form string data

3. BASIC SQL COMMANDS

➤ Create Table

```
CREATE TABLE Employees (
id INT PRIMARY KEY,
name VARCHAR(100),
salary INT,
department VARCHAR(50)
);
```

➤ Insert

```
INSERT INTO Employees (id, name, salary, department) VALUES (1, 'Alice', 60000, 'HR');
```

➤ Select

```
SELECT * FROM Employees;
SELECT name, salary FROM Employees;
SELECT * FROM Employees WHERE salary > 50000;
```

➤ Update

UPDATE Employees SET salary = 70000 WHERE id = 1;

> Delete

DELETE FROM Employees WHERE id = 1;

4. FILTERING DATA

➤ WHERE, AND, OR, NOT

SELECT * FROM Employees WHERE department = 'HR' AND salary > 50000;

➤ IN, BETWEEN, LIKE

SELECT * FROM Employees WHERE department IN ('HR', 'Sales');

SELECT * FROM Employees WHERE salary BETWEEN 40000 AND 70000;

SELECT * FROM Employees WHERE name LIKE 'A%'; -- starts with A

5. SORTING & LIMITING

SELECT * FROM Employees ORDER BY salary DESC;

SELECT * FROM Employees LIMIT 5;

6. AGGREGATE FUNCTIONS

SELECT COUNT(*) FROM Employees;

SELECT AVG(salary) FROM Employees;

SELECT SUM(salary), MAX(salary), MIN(salary) FROM Employees;

7. GROUPING & FILTERING AGGREGATES

SELECT department, AVG(salary) AS avg_salary FROM Employees GROUP BY department HAVING AVG(salary) > 50000;

8. JOINS

➤ Syntax:

SELECT e.name, d.name FROM Employees e JOIN Departments d ON e.department_id = d.id;

8.1. INNER JOIN

SELECT e.name, d.dept_name FROM Employees e INNER JOIN Departments d ON e.department_id = d.id;

• \checkmark Only matching department IDs shown.

8.2. LEFT JOIN

SELECT e.name, d.dept_name FROM Employees e LEFT JOIN Departments d ON e.department_id = d.id;

• \checkmark All employees shown, even if no department.

8.3. RIGHT JOIN

SELECT e.name, d.dept_name FROM Employees e RIGHT JOIN Departments d ON e.department_id = d.id;

• \checkmark All departments shown, even if no employee.

8.4. FULL OUTER JOIN

SELECT e.name, d.dept_name
FROM Employees e
LEFT JOIN Departments d ON e.department_id = d.id
UNION
SELECT e.name, d.dept_name
FROM Employees e
RIGHT JOIN Departments d ON e.department_id = d.id;

9. SUBQUERIES

Used to embed one query inside another.

```
SELECT name FROM Employees
WHERE salary > (
SELECT AVG(salary) FROM Employees
);
```

10. CONSTRAINTS

- PRIMARY KEY: Uniquely identifies each record
- FOREIGN KEY: Links to primary key of another table
- UNIQUE: Ensures all values in a column are different
- NOT NULL: Disallows NULL values
- CHECK: Ensures a condition is met

11. NORMALIZATION

- Process of organizing data to reduce redundancy and improve data integrity.
- 1NF: Atomic values
- **2NF**: No partial dependencies
- **3NF**: No transitive dependencies
- Ensures data integrity and minimizes duplication.

Why Normalize?

- Eliminate duplicate data
- Ensure data consistency
- Improve data structure for querying and updates

Normal Forms (NF)

✓ 1NF – First Normal Form

Rule: All values must be atomic (indivisible).

Fix: Remove repeating groups and store one value per cell.

Example (Bad):

ID Name Phones

1 Alice 1234, 5678

Fix (1NF):

ID Name Phone

- 1 Alice 1234
- 1 Alice 5678

Rule: Be in 1NF + No Partial Dependency on a composite key.

Fix: Move partially dependent data to a new table.

Example:

Composite key: (StudentID, CourseID)

StudentID CourseID StudentName

Fix (2NF):

- Table 1: StudentCourses(StudentID, CourseID)
- Table 2: Students(StudentID, StudentName)

Rule: Be in 2NF + No transitive dependency.

Fix: Remove data that's indirectly dependent on the primary key.

Example (Bad):

EmpID Name DeptID DeptName

Fix (3NF):

- Table 1: Employees(EmpID, Name, DeptID)
- Table 2: Departments(DeptID, DeptName)

☐ When Not to Normalize?

- For read-heavy applications (analytics, reporting)
- When query performance is more important than data integrity

Real-Life Analogy

- 1NF: Each house (record) has its own mailbox (cell), not a shared one
- **2NF:** One key opens only one mailbox (no shared access)

• **3NF:** The key opens the right mailbox and not someone else's cabinet (no indirect dependencies)

12. INDEXING

Indexing is a powerful technique to speed up SELECT queries on large tables.

- Speeds up WHERE, JOIN, GROUP BY, and ORDER BY queries
- Boosts search performance on large datasets.
- Avoid on frequently updated or low-cardinality columns
- Use EXPLAIN to test effectiveness
- Avoid over-indexing (inserts & updates become slower).

V Types

Single-column Index

```
CREATE INDEX idx salary ON Employees(salary);
```

• Composite Index

```
CREATE INDEX idx name dept ON Employees(name, department);
```

13. VIEWS

- A view is a virtual table based on a query
- They do not store data. Use **Materialized Views** (if supported) for cached result.
- Simplify complex queries.
- Enhance security (restrict column access)
- Enable reusable logic

Example

```
CREATE VIEW HR_Employees AS
SELECT name, salary
FROM Employees
WHERE department = 'HR';
```

14. TRANSACTIONS & ACID

A **Transaction** is a logical unit of work consisting of one or more SQL statements.

Use ROLLBACK; to undo changes before COMMIT;.

ACID:

o **Atomicity**: All or none

Consistency: Valid data stateIsolation: No interference

Durability: Permanent changes

Example

```
BEGIN;

UPDATE Accounts SET balance = balance - 100 WHERE id = 1;

UPDATE Accounts SET balance = balance + 100 WHERE id = 2;

COMMIT;
```

15. WINDOW FUNCTIONS

Window functions perform calculations across rows related to the current row — without collapsing them like GROUP BY.

Used for row-level calculations without grouping.

Use cases: Leaderboards, Change Tracking, Tired analysis

RANK(), DENSE_RANK(), ROW_NUMBER()

Example

```
SELECT name, salary,
   RANK() OVER (ORDER BY salary DESC) AS salary_rank
FROM Employees;
```

Popular Window Functions

- ROW NUMBER(), RANK(), DENSE RANK()
- LAG(), LEAD()
- NTILE (n) (for percentiles)

16. COMMON TABLE EXPRESSIONS (CTEs)

CTEs are temporary result sets used within queries — easier to read & maintain.

♦ Syntax

```
WITH HighEarners AS (
```

```
SELECT * FROM Employees WHERE salary > 50000
)
SELECT name FROM HighEarners;
```

☐ Benefits

- Break complex queries into readable blocks
- Use recursive CTEs for hierarchical data

17. UNION vs UNION ALL

```
SELECT name FROM Managers
UNION
SELECT name FROM Employees; -- Removes duplicates
SELECT name FROM Managers
UNION ALL
SELECT name FROM Employees; -- Keeps duplicates
```

18. SET OPERATIONS

```
SELECT name FROM A INTERSECT SELECT name FROM B;
SELECT name FROM A EXCEPT
SELECT name FROM B;
```

• A Not supported in MySQL; supported in PostgreSQL/SQL Server.

19. NULL Handling

SELECT name, COALESCE(nickname, 'No Nick') FROM Users; SELECT NULLIF(salary, 0); -- Returns NULL if salary = 0

- Use IS NULL / IS NOT NULL
- COALESCE(), IFNULL(), NULLIF()

20. CASE Statements

SELECT name,

CASE
WHEN salary > 70000 THEN 'High'
WHEN salary > 40000 THEN 'Medium'
ELSE 'Low'
END AS salary_level
FROM Employees;

21. Stored Procedures & Functions (Advanced)

Stored Procedures are saved SQL blocks that perform actions.

Functions return a single value. Use procedures for reusable logic. Use functions in SELECT, WHERE, or JOIN clauses

Procedure Example

```
CREATE PROCEDURE GetHighEarners()
BEGIN
   SELECT * FROM Employees WHERE salary > 70000;
END;
```

V Function Example

```
CREATE FUNCTION TaxAmount(salary DECIMAL)
RETURNS DECIMAL
BEGIN
RETURN salary * 0.10;
END;
```

22. Temporary Tables

CREATE TEMPORARY TABLE Temp_Employees AS SELECT * FROM Employees WHERE department = 'HR';

23. Triggers (Advanced - Rare)

CREATE TRIGGER before_insert_trigger
BEFORE INSERT ON Employees
FOR EACH ROW
SET NEW.salary = IF(NEW.salary < 0, 0, NEW.salary);

• Used for validation, logging, auto-calculation.

24. Data Definition vs Data Manipulation vs Data Control

- DDL (Definition): CREATE, ALTER, DROP
- DML (Manipulation): SELECT, INSERT, UPDATE, DELETE
- DCL (Control): GRANT, REVOKE
- TCL (Transaction): COMMIT, ROLLBACK

INTERVIEW QUERY PATTERNS

➤ Nth Highest Salary

SELECT DISTINCT salary FROM Employees ORDER BY salary DESC LIMIT 1 OFFSET 1; -- 2nd highest

➤ Duplicate Rows

SELECT name, COUNT(*) FROM Employees GROUP BY name HAVING COUNT(*) > 1;

➤ Same Salary Employees

```
SELECT * FROM Employees
WHERE salary IN (
SELECT salary FROM Employees
GROUP BY salary
HAVING COUNT(*) > 1
);
```

➤ Employees with Max Salary Per Department

```
SELECT name, department_id, salary
FROM (
    SELECT *,
        RANK() OVER (PARTITION BY department_id ORDER BY salary DESC) AS rnk
    FROM Employees
) ranked
WHERE rnk = 1;
```

➤ Self Join Example

SELECT A.name AS Employee, B.name AS Manager FROM Employees A JOIN Employees B ON A.manager_id = B.id;

EXISTS vs IN vs JOIN

```
-- EXISTS
SELECT name FROM Employees e
WHERE EXISTS (
SELECT 1 FROM Departments d WHERE d.id = e.department_id
);
-- IN
SELECT name FROM Employees
WHERE department_id IN (SELECT id FROM Departments);
-- JOIN
SELECT e.name, d.name FROM Employees e
JOIN Departments d ON e.department_id = d.id;
```

Advanced SQL Topics

1. Recursive CTEs (Made Simple)

A **Recursive CTE** lets a query call itself, useful when working with **hierarchies** like employees & managers or categories & subcategories.

Easy Analogy:

Think of it like a loop in SQL. Start with one person (manager), then find their subordinates, then subordinates of subordinates, and so on.

Syntax:

```
WITH RECURSIVE cte_name AS (
SELECT ... -- Starting point (anchor)
UNION ALL
SELECT ... FROM cte_name ... -- Repeat until done
)
SELECT * FROM cte_name;
```

Example:

```
WITH RECURSIVE Subordinates AS (
SELECT id, name, manager_id FROM Employees WHERE id = 1 -- Top manager
UNION ALL
SELECT e.id, e.name, e.manager_id
FROM Employees e
JOIN Subordinates s ON e.manager_id = s.id
)
SELECT * FROM Subordinates;
```

2. Window Functions

These functions **look at other rows** in the result **without grouping** them. Useful when you want to compare each row with others.

Everyday Use Case:

"Show each employee's salary along with the previous and next employee's salary."

Key Functions:

- LAG(column) Looks **before** current row
- LEAD(column) Looks **after** current row
- NTILE(n) Divides into n equal groups (for percentiles/quartiles)
- RANK(), DENSE_RANK(), ROW_NUMBER() Ranking logic

Example:

SELECT name, salary, LAG(salary) OVER (ORDER BY salary) AS prev_salary, LEAD(salary) OVER (ORDER BY salary) AS next_salary FROM Employees;

3. Working with JSON in SQL

Modern databases allow storing and querying **JSON data** inside SQL columns (especially useful in dynamic or semi-structured data).

PostgreSQL:

SELECT data->>'name' AS name FROM orders WHERE data->>'status' = 'shipped';

MySQL:

SELECT JSON EXTRACT(data, '\$.name') AS name FROM orders;

Q Here, data is a column containing JSON like: { "name": "Laptop", "status": "shipped" }

4. Performance Optimization Techniques

Optimizing your SQL queries can make your app faster, especially for large data.

a. Indexing

- Like a book index: helps locate rows faster
- Useful for WHERE, JOIN, and ORDER BY

CREATE INDEX idx_salary ON Employees(salary);

b. Query Refactoring

- Avoid SELECT * → only select needed columns
- Use EXISTS instead of IN when subquery is large
- Apply filters early (use WHERE before GROUP BY)

c. Execution Plan

Use EXPLAIN to understand how the database runs your query:

EXPLAIN SELECT * FROM Employees WHERE department_id = 3;

5. Stored Procedures & Functions (Simplified)

Stored Procedures = SQL scripts stored in the database that can be reused. Like a saved function.

Example with Loop:

```
DELIMITER //
CREATE PROCEDURE GiveBonus()
BEGIN
DECLARE done INT DEFAULT FALSE;
DECLARE emp_id INT;
DECLARE emp_cursor CURSOR FOR SELECT id FROM Employees;
DECLARE CONTINUE HANDLER FOR NOT FOUND SET done = TRUE;
OPEN emp_cursor;
read_loop: LOOP
 FETCH emp cursor INTO emp id;
 IF done THEN
  LEAVE read_loop;
 END IF:
 UPDATE Employees SET salary = salary + 5000 WHERE id = emp_id;
END LOOP:
CLOSE emp_cursor;
END //
DELIMITER;
```

6. Importing/Exporting Data

Moving data between CSV files and SQL is common in real projects.

MySQL:

```
LOAD DATA INFILE '/path/file.csv' INTO TABLE Employees FIELDS TERMINATED BY ',' LINES TERMINATED BY '\n' IGNORE 1 ROWS;
```

PostgreSQL:

COPY Employees(name, salary) FROM '/path/file.csv' DELIMITER ',' CSV HEADER;

7. Role-Based Access Control (Security Basics)

SQL lets you give different permissions to different users.

Example:

GRANT SELECT, INSERT ON Employees TO 'analyst'; REVOKE DELETE ON Employees FROM 'analyst';

√ 'analyst' can view and add data, but can't delete anything.

8. Star vs Snowflake Schema

Used in Data Warehouses & Reporting Tools.

Star Schema:

- One central fact table (e.g., Sales)
- Linked to dimension tables (Customer, Product)
- · Easy to query, faster for reporting

Snowflake Schema:

- · Dimensions are normalized
- Less redundancy but more joins

9. OLTP vs OLAP (Database Types Simplified)

Feature	OLTP	OLAP
Purpose	Daily transactions	Data analysis
Design	Highly normalized tables	Denormalized schema
Examples	Banking, eCommerce	Reporting,Data Warehouse

© INTERVIEW & PLACEMENT

♦ Basic Level (Entry / Fresher)

1. What is SQL?

Structured Query Language used to interact with relational databases.

2. What is the difference between WHERE and HAVING?

WHERE filters rows before aggregation, HAVING filters after aggregation.

3. What is a Primary Key?

A unique identifier for each row in a table. Cannot contain NULL values.

4. Difference between INNER JOIN and LEFT JOIN?

INNER JOIN: Returns matched rows only.

LEFT JOIN: Returns all rows from the left table, even if no match.

5. How do you handle NULLs in SQL?

Use IS NULL, IS NOT NULL, COALESCE(), IFNULL(), NULLIF().

6. What is a Foreign Key?

It links two tables by referring to the primary key of another table.

7. What is normalization?

Process of organizing data to reduce redundancy and improve integrity.

8. What is denormalization?

Combining tables to improve read performance by reducing joins.

9. What does the DISTINCT keyword do?

Removes duplicate rows from the result set.

10. What is the use of LIMIT or TOP?

Used to limit the number of rows returned by a query.

♦ Intermediate Level

11. What are aggregate functions?

Functions like SUM(), AVG(), COUNT(), MAX(), MIN().

12. What is a subquery?

A query nested inside another query.

13. What is the difference between UNION and UNION ALL?

UNION removes duplicates, UNION ALL includes all rows.

14. Explain CASE statement.

Used to apply conditional logic within gueries.

15. What are indexes in SQL?

They improve the speed of data retrieval.

16. What is a view?

A virtual table based on the result-set of a query.

17. What are window functions?

Functions like RANK(), ROW_NUMBER() that work across rows.

18. Difference between RANK() and DENSE RANK()?

RANK() skips ranks on ties, DENSE RANK() does not.

19. What is a CTE (Common Table Expression)?

A temporary result set defined within the execution scope of a query.

20. Explain ACID properties.

Atomicity, Consistency, Isolation, Durability - ensures reliable transactions.

21. What is a composite key?

A primary key made of multiple columns.

22. Difference between DELETE and TRUNCATE?

DELETE can be conditional and logs row-by-row deletion; TRUNCATE removes all rows faster without logging each deletion.

23. What is a surrogate key?

A unique identifier for an entity that is not derived from application data.

24. What is referential integrity?

Ensures foreign key values match primary key values in the referenced table.

25. How does EXISTS differ from IN?

EXISTS stops on first match; IN evaluates all results.

26. How do you use GROUP BY with multiple columns?

You can group by multiple columns by separating them with commas.

27. Can we use ORDER BY with GROUP BY?

Yes. GROUP BY groups the data; ORDER BY sorts the grouped results.

28. What is a scalar subquery?

A subquery that returns exactly one value.

29. What are correlated subqueries?

Subqueries that refer to columns from the outer query.

30. What is the use of ISNULL() or IFNULL()?

To replace NULL values with custom values.

◆ Advanced Level

31. What are triggers in SQL?

Procedures that automatically execute on certain events.

32. What are stored procedures?

Reusable blocks of SQL statements stored in the database.

33. What is the use of EXPLAIN or EXPLAIN PLAN?

To understand how the database executes a query.

34. What are transactions?

A unit of work that is performed against a database.

35. How do you optimize a slow query?

Use indexing, limit joins, avoid SELECT *, and use EXPLAIN to analyze.

36. Difference between clustered and non-clustered index?

Clustered index determines row order in the table; non-clustered does not.

37. Difference between OLTP and OLAP systems?

OLTP: Online Transaction Processing (day-to-day operations).

OLAP: Online Analytical Processing (data analysis and reporting).

38. What are materialized views?

Stored query results that can be refreshed periodically.

39. How do you implement pagination in SQL?

Using LIMIT and OFFSET or ROW_NUMBER() for custom logic.

40. How do you handle duplicate rows?

Using ROW_NUMBER() or DISTINCT or CTEs with filtering.

41. What are the different types of joins?

INNER, LEFT, RIGHT, FULL OUTER, CROSS JOIN, SELF JOIN.

42. What is a CROSS JOIN?

Returns Cartesian product of two tables.

43. Can you sort by an alias in SQL?

Yes, you can use the alias name in the ORDER BY clause.

44. What is the difference between SQL and NoSQL?

SQL is relational and uses tables. NoSQL is non-relational and uses documents, key-value pairs, etc.

45. What are the common data types in SQL?

INT, VARCHAR, DATE, BOOLEAN, DECIMAL, TEXT.

46. Can a table have multiple foreign keys?

Yes, a table can reference multiple other tables using foreign keys.

47. What happens if you violate a foreign key constraint?

The guery fails with an integrity constraint violation.

48. How can you change a column datatype in SQL?

Using ALTER TABLE table_name MODIFY column_name new_datatype;

49. What are NULL-safe operators?

Operators like <=> in MySQL allow safe comparison with NULL.

50. How would you detect and remove duplicate records?

Using CTE and ROW_NUMBER() to filter duplicates.

Real Company SQL Questions

Google

Second Highest Salary

```
SELECT MAX(salary) AS SecondHighest
FROM Employees
WHERE salary < (SELECT MAX(salary) FROM Employees);
```

Remove Duplicate Emails Using ROW_NUMBER()

```
WITH RankedEmails AS (
SELECT *, ROW_NUMBER() OVER (PARTITION BY email ORDER BY id)
AS rn
FROM Users
)
DELETE FROM RankedEmails WHERE rn > 1;
```

Employees Earning More Than Average Salary

```
SELECT name, salary
FROM Employees
WHERE salary > (SELECT AVG(salary) FROM Employees);
```

Amazon

Customers Who Ordered in Every Month

```
SELECT customer_id
FROM Orders
GROUP BY customer_id
HAVING COUNT(DISTINCT MONTH(order_date)) = 12;
```

Top 3 Earners in Each Department

```
SELECT *
FROM (
SELECT *, DENSE_RANK() OVER (PARTITION BY department_id
ORDER BY salary DESC) AS rank
FROM Employees
) ranked
WHERE rank <= 3;
```

Find Returning Users Using LAG

SELECT user_id, order_date, LAG(order_date) OVER (PARTITION BY user_id ORDER BY order_date) AS previous_order FROM Orders;

TCS

Employees Joined in Last 6 Months

SELECT * FROM Employees
WHERE join_date >= DATE_SUB(CURDATE(), INTERVAL 6 MONTH);

Manager-Reportee Mapping

SELECT e.name AS Employee, m.name AS Manager FROM Employees e

JOIN Employees m ON e.manager_id = m.id;

Department with Highest Average Salary

SELECT department_id FROM Employees GROUP BY department_id ORDER BY AVG(salary) DESC LIMIT 1;

Flipkart

Top 5 Selling Products by Revenue

SELECT product_id, SUM(price * quantity) AS revenue FROM Orders
GROUP BY product_id
ORDER BY revenue DESC
LIMIT 5;

Users with More Than 3 Failed Transactions

SELECT user_id FROM Transactions WHERE status = 'FAILED'

```
GROUP BY user_id
HAVING COUNT(*) > 3;
```

Orders Not Yet Shipped

```
SELECT *
FROM Orders
WHERE status = 'PLACED' AND shipped_date IS NULL;
```

SQL Problem-Solving Round

Nth Highest Salary

```
SELECT DISTINCT salary
FROM Employees
ORDER BY salary DESC
LIMIT 1 OFFSET N-1;
```

Duplicate Emails

```
SELECT email, COUNT(*)
FROM Users
GROUP BY email
HAVING COUNT(*) > 1;
```

• Top Earner per Department

```
SELECT name, department_id, salary
FROM (
    SELECT *, RANK() OVER (PARTITION BY department_id ORDER BY salary DESC) AS rnk
    FROM Employees
) ranked
WHERE rnk = 1;
```

Customers Who Never Ordered

```
SELECT c.customer_id, c.name
FROM Customers c
LEFT JOIN Orders o ON c.customer_id = o.customer_id
WHERE o.order_id IS NULL;
```

Employees Hired in the Last Month

SELECT * FROM Employees
WHERE hire_date BETWEEN DATE_SUB(CURDATE(), INTERVAL 1
MONTH) AND CURDATE();

User Order Summary

SELECT user_id, COUNT(*) AS order_count, SUM(total_amount) AS total_spent FROM Orders GROUP BY user_id;

7-Day Rolling Login Count

SELECT user_id, login_date,
 COUNT(*) OVER (
 PARTITION BY user_id ORDER BY login_date
 ROWS BETWEEN 6 PRECEDING AND CURRENT ROW
) AS seven_day_logins
FROM Logins;

Funnel Drop-off Analysis

SELECT stage, COUNT(DISTINCT user_id) AS user_count FROM Funnel GROUP BY stage ORDER BY stage;

Average Time Between Orders

SELECT user_id, AVG(DATEDIFF(order_date, LAG(order_date) OVER (PARTITION BY user_id ORDER BY order_date))) AS avg_days_between_orders FROM Orders;

Self Join for Employee Manager Mapping

SELECT e.name AS Employee, m.name AS Manager FROM Employees e JOIN Employees m ON e.manager_id = m.id;