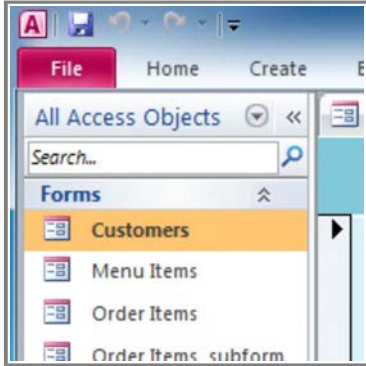




Introduction



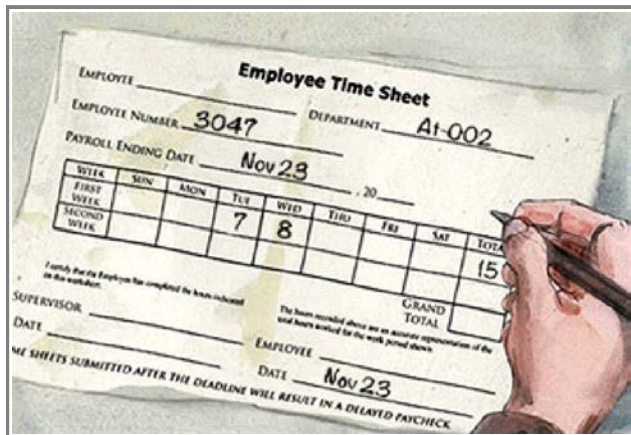
While you can always enter data directly into database tables, you might find it easier to use **forms**. Using a form to enter data lets you be certain that you're entering the right data in the right location and format. This can help keep your database accurate and consistent.

This lesson will address the **benefits of using forms** in a database. You will review examples of different forms and form components. Finally, you will learn how to **use forms** to **enter** new records and **view** and **edit** existing ones.

In this lesson, we will be working with forms in our sample database. If you would like to follow along, [download our example](#) and use it to follow the procedures demonstrated in this lesson.

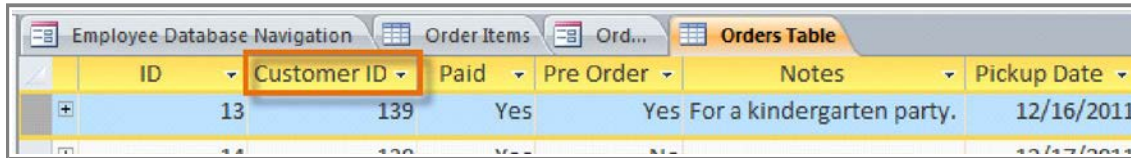
Why Use Forms?

Many of us fill out forms so often that we hardly even notice when we're asked to use them. Forms are so popular because they're useful for both the person asking for the information and the person providing it. They are a way of requiring information in a specific format, which means the person filling out the form knows exactly which information to include and where to put it.



Filling out a paper form

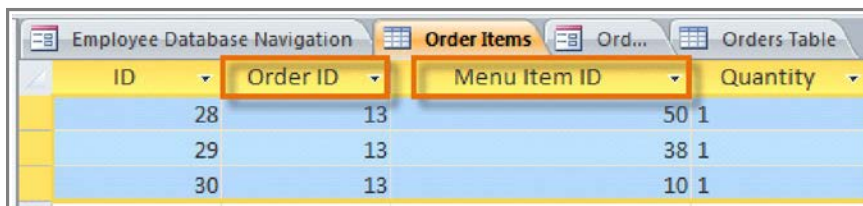
This is just as true of forms in Access. When you enter information into a form in Access, that data goes exactly where it's supposed to go-- into one or more related tables. While entering data into simple tables is fairly straightforward, data entry becomes more complicated as you start populating tables with records from elsewhere in the database. For instance, the **orders table** in a bakery's database might link to information about customers, products, and prices drawn from related tables. A record with information about a single order might look like this:



ID	Customer ID	Paid	Pre Order	Notes	Pickup Date
13	139	Yes	Yes	For a kindergarten party.	12/16/2011

A record of an order

In fact, in order to see the entire order, you would also have to look at the **order items table**, where the menu items that make up each order are recorded.



ID	Order ID	Menu Item ID	Quantity
28	13	50	1
29	13	38	1
30	13	10	1

More records describing the same order

The records in these tables include **ID numbers** of records from other tables. You can't learn much just by glancing at these records, as the ID numbers don't tell you much about the data they relate to. Plus, since you have to look at two tables just to view one order, you might have a hard time even finding the right data. It's easy to see how viewing or entering many records this way could become a difficult and tedious task.

A form containing the same data might look like this:

Employee Database Navigation | Order Items | **Orders** | Orders Table

Orders

Customer: Order #: Pickup Date:

Notes:

Pre Order
 Paid

Category	Product	Quantity	"Unit"	Price	Subtotal
Cookies	Oatmeal Raisin	1	One Dozen	\$14.00	\$14.00
Cookies	Butter Pecan	1	One Dozen	\$14.00	\$14.00
Cakes	Cookies n' Cream	1	Single	\$22.00	\$22.00
*					
	Total				\$50.00

Record: 14 | 1 of 3 | No Filter | Search

The same order viewed in a form

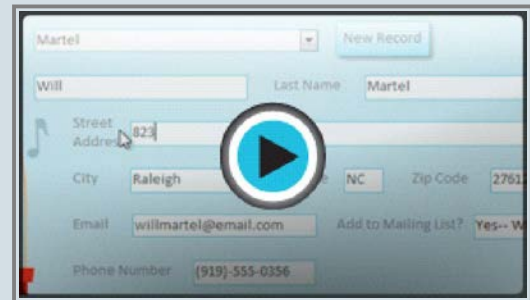
As you can see, this record is much easier to understand when viewed in a form. Modifying the record would be easier, too, since you wouldn't have to know any ID numbers to enter new data. When you're using a form, you don't have to worry about entering data into the right tables or in the right format-- the form can handle those things itself. There's no need to go back and forth between tables or search carefully within a table for a certain record, since forms let you see entire records one at a time.

Not only do forms make the data entry process easier for the user, they keep the database itself working smoothly. With forms, database designers can control exactly how users are able to interact with the database. They can even set restrictions on individual form components to ensure that all of the needed data is entered, and that it's all entered in a valid format. This is useful, as keeping the data consistent and well-organized is essential for an accurate and powerful database.

Working with Forms


To work with forms in Access, you'll need to know how to open a form, as well as view and edit the information in a form.

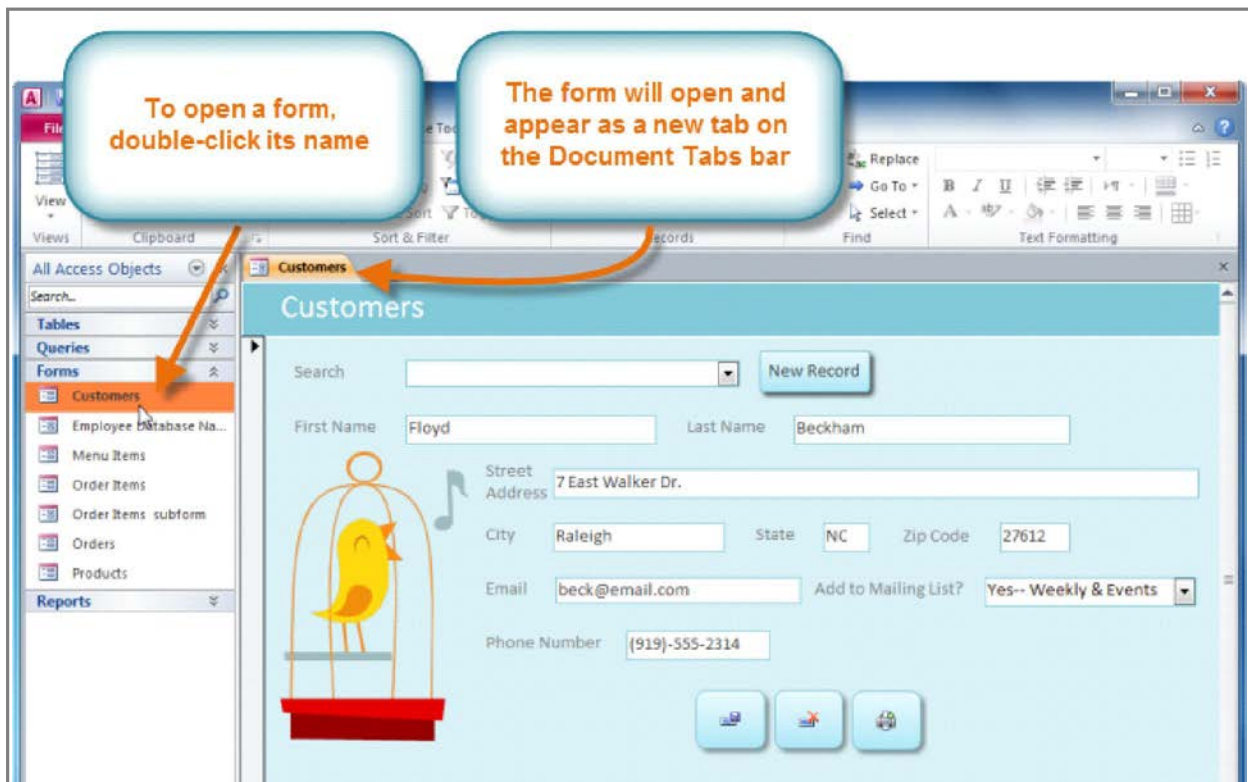
Video: Working with Forms in Access 2010



Watch the video (4:16). [Need help?](#)

To Open an Existing Form:

1. **Open** your database and locate the **Navigation Pane**.
2. In the **Navigation Pane**, locate the form you would like to open. Forms are marked with the  icon.
3. **Double-click** the name of the form. It will open and appear as a **tab** in the **Document Tabs bar**.



Opening a form

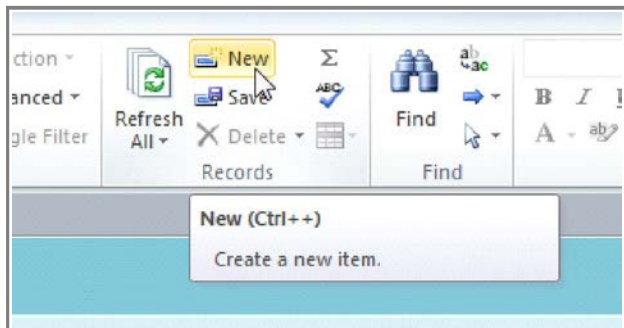
Entering and Modifying Data

Depending on the database you're using, the forms you work with may include special tools and features that let you do common tasks with one click of a button. You'll see examples of these tools in the interactives on the next page. However, no matter what type of form you're working with, you can follow the same procedures for carrying out certain basic tasks.

To Add a New Record:

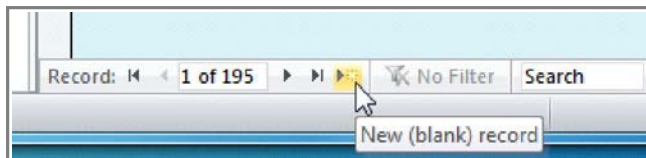
There are two ways to add a new record to a form:

- In the **Records** group on the **Home** tab of the **Ribbon**, click the **New** command.



Creating a new record from the Ribbon

- On the **Record Navigation bar** at the bottom of the window, click the **New Record** button.



Creating a new record from the Record Navigation bar

To Find an Existing Record to View or Edit:

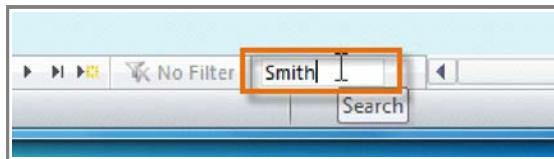
There are two ways to find and view an existing record using a form, and they both use the **Navigation Bar** at the bottom of the screen:

- To look through records one at a time, click the **navigation arrows**. The right arrow will take you to the next record, and the left arrow will take you to the previous one.



Navigating through records

- To **search** for a record, type a word that you know is contained in that record in the **navigation search box**.



Searching for a record

To Save the Current Record:

1. Select the **Home** tab and locate the **Records** group.
2. Click the **Save** command. The current record will be saved.



Saving a record

To Delete the Current Record:

1. Select the **Home** tab and locate the **Records** group.
2. Click the **Delete** command. The record will be permanently deleted.



Deleting a record

Using Form Features

The exact procedure you use for filling out a form will vary depending on the content and design of the form you are using. The forms in your database might be similar to the examples in the two interactives below. Between them, they include most of the features you'll commonly encounter in forms.

➤➤➤ Click the buttons in the interactive below to learn about a **simple form**.

Customers

Search

First Name Last Name

Street Address

City State Zip Code

Email Add to Mailing List?

Phone Number

Record: 112 of 195 No Filter Search

Click the buttons in the interactive below to learn about a **complex form**.

Orders

New Order

Customer Love Order # 39 Pickup Date 12/24/2010

Notes Apparently, he plans to eat most of this himself?! Maybe that was a joke...

 Pre Order
 Paid

Add Item

Category	Product	Quantity	"Unit"	Price	Subtotal
Pies	Pumpkin	1	Single	\$15.00	\$15.00
Pies	Peanut Butter Chocolate	1	Single	\$16.00	\$16.00
Cakes	Italian Rum	1	Single	\$22.00	\$22.00
Cakes	German Chocolate	1	Single	\$22.00	\$22.00
Cakes	Gingerbread - Winter	1	Single	\$24.00	\$24.00
Cakes	Gingerbread - Winter	1	Single	\$24.00	\$24.00
Pastries	Tiramisu	1	One Dozen	\$30.00	\$30.00
Cakes	Buche de Noel (Christmas Cake)	1	Single	\$32.00	\$32.00
*					
Total					\$185.00

Record: 1 of 8
No Filter
Search

Record: 35 of 46

Challenge!

1. If you haven't already, [download our sample database](#) and **open** it.
2. Open the **Orders Form**.
3. **Create a new record** with the following data:
 - o **Customer:** Eric Oglesby



- **Pickup date:** February 14, 2011
 - **Order items:** Cakes: Coconut (1)
 - **Notes:** Write "Happy Valentine's Day!" with pink frosting.
 - **Pre Order:** Yes
 - **Paid:** Yes
4. Open the **Customers Form**.
 5. **Find** the record for customer **Dwight Parker** and make the following changes:
 - **Street Address:** 190 Cook Street
 - **City:** Chapel Hill
 - **Zip Code:** 27514
 - **Email:** dwightp@email.com