

MySQL Tutorial

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Abstract

This is the MySQL Tutorial from the MySQL [!#&!#current-series!#!#!](#) Reference Manual.

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Tutorial

This chapter provides a tutorial introduction to MySQL by showing how to use the `mysql` client program to create and use a simple database. `mysql` (sometimes referred to as the “terminal monitor” or just “monitor”) is an interactive program that enables you to connect to a MySQL server, run queries, and view the results. `mysql` may also be used in batch mode: you place your queries in a file beforehand, then tell `mysql` to execute the contents of the file. Both ways of using `mysql` are covered here.

To see a list of options provided by `mysql`, invoke it with the `--help` option:

```
shell> mysql --help
```

This chapter assumes that `mysql` is installed on your machine and that a MySQL server is available to which you can connect. If this is not true, contact your MySQL administrator. (If *you* are the administrator, you need to consult the relevant portions of this manual, such as [MySQL Server Administration](#).)

This chapter describes the entire process of setting up and using a database. If you are interested only in accessing an existing database, you may want to skip over the sections that describe how to create the database and the tables it contains.

Because this chapter is tutorial in nature, many details are necessarily omitted. Consult the relevant sections of the manual for more information on the topics covered here.

Chapter 1. Connecting to and Disconnecting from the Server

To connect to the server, you will usually need to provide a MySQL user name when you invoke `mysql` and, most likely, a password. If the server runs on a machine other than the one where you log in, you will also need to specify a host name. Contact your administrator to find out what connection parameters you should use to connect (that is, what host, user name, and password to use). Once you know the proper parameters, you should be able to connect like this:

```
shell> mysql -h host -u user -p
Enter password: *****
```

`host` and `user` represent the host name where your MySQL server is running and the user name of your MySQL account. Substitute appropriate values for your setup. The `*****` represents your password; enter it when `mysql` displays the `Enter password:` prompt.

If that works, you should see some introductory information followed by a `mysql>` prompt:

```
shell> mysql -h host -u user -p
Enter password: *****
Welcome to the MySQL monitor.  Commands end with ; or \g.
Your MySQL connection id is 25338 to server version: 5.1.59-standard
Type 'help;' or '\h' for help. Type '\c' to clear the buffer.
mysql>
```

The `mysql>` prompt tells you that `mysql` is ready for you to enter commands.

If you are logging in on the same machine that MySQL is running on, you can omit the host, and simply use the following:

```
shell> mysql -u user -p
```

If, when you attempt to log in, you get an error message such as `ERROR 2002 (HY000): CAN'T CONNECT TO LOCAL MYSQL SERVER THROUGH SOCKET '/TMP/MYSQL.SOCK' (2)`, it means that the MySQL server daemon (Unix) or service (Windows) is not running. Consult the administrator or see the section of [Installing and Upgrading MySQL](#) that is appropriate to your operating system.

For help with other problems often encountered when trying to log in, see [Common Errors When Using MySQL Programs](#).

Some MySQL installations permit users to connect as the anonymous (unnamed) user to the server running on the local host. If this is the case on your machine, you should be able to connect to that server by invoking `mysql` without any options:

```
shell> mysql
```

After you have connected successfully, you can disconnect any time by typing `QUIT` (or `\q`) at the `mysql>` prompt:

```
mysql> QUIT
Bye
```

On Unix, you can also disconnect by pressing Control+D.

Most examples in the following sections assume that you are connected to the server. They indicate this by the `mysql>` prompt.

Chapter 2. Entering Queries

Make sure that you are connected to the server, as discussed in the previous section. Doing so does not in itself select any database to work with, but that is okay. At this point, it is more important to find out a little about how to issue queries than to jump right in creating tables, loading data into them, and retrieving data from them. This section describes the basic principles of entering commands, using several queries you can try out to familiarize yourself with how `mysql` works.

Here is a simple command that asks the server to tell you its version number and the current date. Type it in as shown here following the `mysql>` prompt and press Enter:

```
mysql> SELECT VERSION(), CURRENT_DATE;
+-----+-----+
| VERSION() | CURRENT_DATE |
+-----+-----+
| 5.1.2-alpha-log | 2005-10-11 |
+-----+-----+
1 row in set (0.01 sec)
mysql>
```

This query illustrates several things about `mysql`:

- A command normally consists of an SQL statement followed by a semicolon. (There are some exceptions where a semicolon may be omitted. `QUIT`, mentioned earlier, is one of them. We'll get to others later.)
- When you issue a command, `mysql` sends it to the server for execution and displays the results, then prints another `mysql>` prompt to indicate that it is ready for another command.
- `mysql` displays query output in tabular form (rows and columns). The first row contains labels for the columns. The rows following are the query results. Normally, column labels are the names of the columns you fetch from database tables. If you're retrieving the value of an expression rather than a table column (as in the example just shown), `mysql` labels the column using the expression itself.
- `mysql` shows how many rows were returned and how long the query took to execute, which gives you a rough idea of server performance. These values are imprecise because they represent wall clock time (not CPU or machine time), and because they are affected by factors such as server load and network latency. (For brevity, the "rows in set" line is sometimes not shown in the remaining examples in this chapter.)

Keywords may be entered in any lettercase. The following queries are equivalent:

```
mysql> SELECT VERSION(), CURRENT_DATE;
mysql> select version(), current_date;
mysql> SeLeCt vErSiOn(), current_DATE;
```

Here is another query. It demonstrates that you can use `mysql` as a simple calculator:

```
mysql> SELECT SIN(PI()/4), (4+1)*5;
+-----+-----+
| SIN(PI()/4) | (4+1)*5 |
+-----+-----+
| 0.70710678118655 | 25 |
+-----+-----+
1 row in set (0.02 sec)
```

The queries shown thus far have been relatively short, single-line statements. You can even enter multiple statements on a single line. Just end each one with a semicolon:

```
mysql> SELECT VERSION(); SELECT NOW();
+-----+
| VERSION() |
+-----+
| 5.1.2-alpha-log |
+-----+
1 row in set (0.00 sec)
+-----+
| NOW() |
+-----+
| 2005-10-11 15:15:00 |
+-----+
1 row in set (0.00 sec)
```

A command need not be given all on a single line, so lengthy commands that require several lines are not a problem. `mysql` determines where your statement ends by looking for the terminating semicolon, not by looking for the end of the input line. (In other words, `mysql` accepts free-format input: it collects input lines but does not execute them until it sees the semicolon.)

Here is a simple multiple-line statement:

```
mysql> SELECT
-> USER()
-> ,
-> CURRENT_DATE;
+-----+-----+
| USER() | CURRENT_DATE |
+-----+-----+
| jon@localhost | 2005-10-11 |
+-----+-----+
```

In this example, notice how the prompt changes from `mysql>` to `->` after you enter the first line of a multiple-line query. This is how `mysql` indicates that it has not yet seen a complete statement and is waiting for the rest. The prompt is your friend, because it provides valuable feedback. If you use that feedback, you can always be aware of what `mysql` is waiting for.

If you decide you do not want to execute a command that you are in the process of entering, cancel it by typing `\c`:

```
mysql> SELECT
-> USER()
-> \c
mysql>
```

Here, too, notice the prompt. It switches back to `mysql>` after you type `\c`, providing feedback to indicate that `mysql` is ready for a new command.

The following table shows each of the prompts you may see and summarizes what they mean about the state that `mysql` is in.

Prompt	Meaning
<code>mysql></code>	Ready for new command.
<code>-></code>	Waiting for next line of multiple-line command.
<code>'></code>	Waiting for next line, waiting for completion of a string that began with a single quote (“'”).
<code>"></code>	Waiting for next line, waiting for completion of a string that began with a double quote (“”).
<code>`></code>	Waiting for next line, waiting for completion of an identifier that began with a backtick (“`”).
<code>/*></code>	Waiting for next line, waiting for completion of a comment that began with <code>/*</code> .

Multiple-line statements commonly occur by accident when you intend to issue a command on a single line, but forget the terminating semicolon. In this case, `mysql` waits for more input:

```
mysql> SELECT USER()
->
```

If this happens to you (you think you've entered a statement but the only response is a `->` prompt), most likely `mysql` is waiting for the semicolon. If you don't notice what the prompt is telling you, you might sit there for a while before realizing what you need to do. Enter a semicolon to complete the statement, and `mysql` executes it:

```
mysql> SELECT USER()
-> ;
+-----+
| USER() |
+-----+
| jon@localhost |
+-----+
```

The `'>` and `">` prompts occur during string collection (another way of saying that MySQL is waiting for completion of a string). In MySQL, you can write strings surrounded by either `'` or `"` characters (for example, `'hello'` or `"goodbye"`), and `mysql` lets you enter strings that span multiple lines. When you see a `'>` or `">` prompt, it means that you have entered a line containing a string that begins with a `'` or `"` quote character, but have not yet entered the matching quote that terminates the string. This often indicates that you have inadvertently left out a quote character. For example:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM my_table WHERE name = 'Smith AND age < 30;  
'>
```

If you enter this `SELECT` statement, then press **Enter** and wait for the result, nothing happens. Instead of wondering why this query takes so long, notice the clue provided by the `'>` prompt. It tells you that `mysql` expects to see the rest of an unterminated string. (Do you see the error in the statement? The string `'Smith` is missing the second single quotation mark.)

At this point, what do you do? The simplest thing is to cancel the command. However, you cannot just type `\c` in this case, because `mysql` interprets it as part of the string that it is collecting. Instead, enter the closing quote character (so `mysql` knows you've finished the string), then type `\c`:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM my_table WHERE name = 'Smith AND age < 30;  
'> '\c  
mysql>
```

The prompt changes back to `mysql>`, indicating that `mysql` is ready for a new command.

The ``>` prompt is similar to the `'>` and `">` prompts, but indicates that you have begun but not completed a backtick-quoted identifier.

It is important to know what the `'>`, `">`, and ``>` prompts signify, because if you mistakenly enter an unterminated string, any further lines you type appear to be ignored by `mysql`—including a line containing `QUIT`. This can be quite confusing, especially if you do not know that you need to supply the terminating quote before you can cancel the current command.

Chapter 3. Creating and Using a Database

Once you know how to enter commands, you are ready to access a database.

Suppose that you have several pets in your home (your menagerie) and you would like to keep track of various types of information about them. You can do so by creating tables to hold your data and loading them with the desired information. Then you can answer different sorts of questions about your animals by retrieving data from the tables. This section shows you how to perform the following operations:

- Create a database
- Create a table
- Load data into the table
- Retrieve data from the table in various ways
- Use multiple tables

The menagerie database is simple (deliberately), but it is not difficult to think of real-world situations in which a similar type of database might be used. For example, a database like this could be used by a farmer to keep track of livestock, or by a veterinarian to keep track of patient records. A menagerie distribution containing some of the queries and sample data used in the following sections can be obtained from the MySQL Web site. It is available in both compressed `tar` file and Zip formats at <http://dev.mysql.com/doc/>.

Use the `SHOW` statement to find out what databases currently exist on the server:

```
mysql> SHOW DATABASES;  
+-----+  
| Database |  
+-----+  
| mysql    |  
| test     |  
| tmp      |  
+-----+
```

The `mysql` database describes user access privileges. The `test` database often is available as a workspace for users to try things out.

The list of databases displayed by the statement may be different on your machine; `SHOW DATABASES` does not show databases that you have no privileges for if you do not have the `SHOW DATABASES` privilege. See [SHOW DATABASES Syntax](#).

If the `test` database exists, try to access it:

```
mysql> USE test  
Database changed
```

`USE`, like `QUIT`, does not require a semicolon. (You can terminate such statements with a semicolon if you like; it does no harm.) The `USE` statement is special in another way, too: it must be given on a single line.

You can use the `test` database (if you have access to it) for the examples that follow, but anything you create in that database can be removed by anyone else with access to it. For this reason, you should probably ask your MySQL administrator for permission to use a database of your own. Suppose that you want to call yours `menagerie`. The administrator needs to execute a command like this:

```
mysql> GRANT ALL ON menagerie.* TO 'your_mysql_name'@'your_client_host';
```

where `your_mysql_name` is the MySQL user name assigned to you and `your_client_host` is the host from which you connect to the server.

3.1. Creating and Selecting a Database

If the administrator creates your database for you when setting up your permissions, you can begin using it. Otherwise, you need to create it yourself:

```
mysql> CREATE DATABASE menagerie;
```

Under Unix, database names are case sensitive (unlike SQL keywords), so you must always refer to your database as `menagerie`, not as `Menagerie`, `MENAGERIE`, or some other variant. This is also true for table names. (Under Windows, this restriction does not apply, although you must refer to databases and tables using the same lettercase throughout a given query. However, for a variety of reasons, the recommended best practice is always to use the same lettercase that was used when the database was created.)

Note

If you get an error such as `ERROR 1044 (42000): ACCESS DENIED FOR USER 'MONTY'@'LOCALHOST' TO DATABASE 'MENAGERIE'` when attempting to create a database, this means that your user account does not have the necessary privileges to do so. Discuss this with the administrator or see [The MySQL Access Privilege System](#).

Creating a database does not select it for use; you must do that explicitly. To make `menagerie` the current database, use this command:

```
mysql> USE menagerie
Database changed
```

Your database needs to be created only once, but you must select it for use each time you begin a `mysql` session. You can do this by issuing a `USE` statement as shown in the example. Alternatively, you can select the database on the command line when you invoke `mysql`. Just specify its name after any connection parameters that you might need to provide. For example:

```
shell> mysql -h host -u user -p menagerie
Enter password: *****
```

Important

`menagerie` in the command just shown is **not** your password. If you want to supply your password on the command line after the `-p` option, you must do so with no intervening space (for example, as `-pmypassword`, not as `-p mypassword`). However, putting your password on the command line is not recommended, because doing so exposes it to snooping by other users logged in on your machine.

Note

You can see at any time which database is currently selected using `SELECT DATABASE()`.

3.2. Creating a Table

Creating the database is the easy part, but at this point it is empty, as `SHOW TABLES` tells you:

```
mysql> SHOW TABLES;
Empty set (0.00 sec)
```

The harder part is deciding what the structure of your database should be: what tables you need and what columns should be in each of them.

You want a table that contains a record for each of your pets. This can be called the `pet` table, and it should contain, as a bare minimum, each animal's name. Because the name by itself is not very interesting, the table should contain other information. For example, if more than one person in your family keeps pets, you might want to list each animal's owner. You might also want to record some basic descriptive information such as species and sex.

How about age? That might be of interest, but it is not a good thing to store in a database. Age changes as time passes, which means you'd have to update your records often. Instead, it is better to store a fixed value such as date of birth. Then, whenever you need age, you can calculate it as the difference between the current date and the birth date. MySQL provides functions for doing date arithmetic, so this is not difficult. Storing birth date rather than age has other advantages, too:

- You can use the database for tasks such as generating reminders for upcoming pet birthdays. (If you think this type of query is somewhat silly, note that it is the same question you might ask in the context of a business database to identify clients to whom you need to send out birthday greetings in the current week or month, for that computer-assisted personal touch.)
- You can calculate age in relation to dates other than the current date. For example, if you store death date in the database, you can easily calculate how old a pet was when it died.

You can probably think of other types of information that would be useful in the `pet` table, but the ones identified so far are sufficient: name, owner, species, sex, birth, and death.

Use a `CREATE TABLE` statement to specify the layout of your table:

```
mysql> CREATE TABLE pet (name VARCHAR(20), owner VARCHAR(20),
-> species VARCHAR(20), sex CHAR(1), birth DATE, death DATE);
```

`VARCHAR` is a good choice for the `name`, `owner`, and `species` columns because the column values vary in length. The lengths in those column definitions need not all be the same, and need not be `20`. You can normally pick any length from `1` to `65535`, whatever seems most reasonable to you. If you make a poor choice and it turns out later that you need a longer field, MySQL provides an `ALTER TABLE` statement.

Several types of values can be chosen to represent sex in animal records, such as `'m'` and `'f'`, or perhaps `'male'` and `'female'`. It is simplest to use the single characters `'m'` and `'f'`.

The use of the `DATE` data type for the `birth` and `death` columns is a fairly obvious choice.

Once you have created a table, `SHOW TABLES` should produce some output:

```
mysql> SHOW TABLES;
+-----+
| Tables in menagerie |
+-----+
| pet                |
+-----+
```

To verify that your table was created the way you expected, use a `DESCRIBE` statement:

```
mysql> DESCRIBE pet;
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Field | Type | Null | Key | Default | Extra |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| name  | varchar(20) | YES |  | NULL |  |
| owner | varchar(20) | YES |  | NULL |  |
| species | varchar(20) | YES |  | NULL |  |
| sex   | char(1) | YES |  | NULL |  |
| birth | date | YES |  | NULL |  |
| death | date | YES |  | NULL |  |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
```

You can use `DESCRIBE` any time, for example, if you forget the names of the columns in your table or what types they have.

For more information about MySQL data types, see [Data Types](#).

3.3. Loading Data into a Table

After creating your table, you need to populate it. The `LOAD DATA` and `INSERT` statements are useful for this.

Suppose that your pet records can be described as shown here. (Observe that MySQL expects dates in `'YYYY-MM-DD'` format; this may be different from what you are used to.)

name	owner	species	sex	birth	death
Fluffy	Harold	cat	f	1993-02-04	
Claws	Gwen	cat	m	1994-03-17	
Buffy	Harold	dog	f	1989-05-13	
Fang	Benny	dog	m	1990-08-27	
Bowser	Diane	dog	m	1979-08-31	1995-07-29
Chirpy	Gwen	bird	f	1998-09-11	
Whistler	Gwen	bird		1997-12-09	
Slim	Benny	snake	m	1996-04-29	

Because you are beginning with an empty table, an easy way to populate it is to create a text file containing a row for each of your an-

imals, then load the contents of the file into the table with a single statement.

You could create a text file `pet.txt` containing one record per line, with values separated by tabs, and given in the order in which the columns were listed in the `CREATE TABLE` statement. For missing values (such as unknown sexes or death dates for animals that are still living), you can use `NULL` values. To represent these in your text file, use `\N` (backslash, capital-N). For example, the record for Whistler the bird would look like this (where the whitespace between values is a single tab character):

```
Whistler      Gwen      bird      \N      1997-12-09      \N
```

To load the text file `pet.txt` into the `pet` table, use this statement:

```
mysql> LOAD DATA LOCAL INFILE '/path/pet.txt' INTO TABLE pet;
```

If you created the file on Windows with an editor that uses `\r\n` as a line terminator, you should use this statement instead:

```
mysql> LOAD DATA LOCAL INFILE '/path/pet.txt' INTO TABLE pet
-> LINES TERMINATED BY '\r\n';
```

(On an Apple machine running OS X, you would likely want to use `LINES TERMINATED BY '\r'`.)

You can specify the column value separator and end of line marker explicitly in the `LOAD DATA` statement if you wish, but the defaults are tab and linefeed. These are sufficient for the statement to read the file `pet.txt` properly.

If the statement fails, it is likely that your MySQL installation does not have local file capability enabled by default. See [Security Issues with LOAD DATA LOCAL](#), for information on how to change this.

When you want to add new records one at a time, the `INSERT` statement is useful. In its simplest form, you supply values for each column, in the order in which the columns were listed in the `CREATE TABLE` statement. Suppose that Diane gets a new hamster named “Puffball.” You could add a new record using an `INSERT` statement like this:

```
mysql> INSERT INTO pet
-> VALUES ('Puffball','Diane','hamster','f','1999-03-30',NULL);
```

String and date values are specified as quoted strings here. Also, with `INSERT`, you can insert `NULL` directly to represent a missing value. You do not use `\N` like you do with `LOAD DATA`.

From this example, you should be able to see that there would be a lot more typing involved to load your records initially using several `INSERT` statements rather than a single `LOAD DATA` statement.

3.4. Retrieving Information from a Table

The `SELECT` statement is used to pull information from a table. The general form of the statement is:

```
SELECT what_to_select
FROM which_table
WHERE conditions_to_satisfy;
```

`what_to_select` indicates what you want to see. This can be a list of columns, or `*` to indicate “all columns.” `which_table` indicates the table from which you want to retrieve data. The `WHERE` clause is optional. If it is present, `conditions_to_satisfy` specifies one or more conditions that rows must satisfy to qualify for retrieval.

3.4.1. Selecting All Data

The simplest form of `SELECT` retrieves everything from a table:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet;
```

name	owner	species	sex	birth	death
Fluffy	Harold	cat	f	1993-02-04	NULL
Claws	Gwen	cat	m	1994-03-17	NULL
Buffy	Harold	dog	f	1989-05-13	NULL
Fang	Benny	dog	m	1990-08-27	NULL
Bowser	Diane	dog	m	1979-08-31	1995-07-29
Chirpy	Gwen	bird	f	1998-09-11	NULL
Whistler	Gwen	bird	NULL	1997-12-09	NULL
Slim	Benny	snake	m	1996-04-29	NULL

```
| Puffball | Diane | hamster | f | 1999-03-30 | NULL |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
```

This form of `SELECT` is useful if you want to review your entire table, for example, after you've just loaded it with your initial data set. For example, you may happen to think that the birth date for Bowser doesn't seem quite right. Consulting your original pedigree papers, you find that the correct birth year should be 1989, not 1979.

There are at least two ways to fix this:

- Edit the file `pet.txt` to correct the error, then empty the table and reload it using `DELETE` and `LOAD DATA`:

```
mysql> DELETE FROM pet;
mysql> LOAD DATA LOCAL INFILE 'pet.txt' INTO TABLE pet;
```

However, if you do this, you must also re-enter the record for Puffball.

- Fix only the erroneous record with an `UPDATE` statement:

```
mysql> UPDATE pet SET birth = '1989-08-31' WHERE name = 'Bowser';
```

The `UPDATE` changes only the record in question and does not require you to reload the table.

3.4.2. Selecting Particular Rows

As shown in the preceding section, it is easy to retrieve an entire table. Just omit the `WHERE` clause from the `SELECT` statement. But typically you don't want to see the entire table, particularly when it becomes large. Instead, you're usually more interested in answering a particular question, in which case you specify some constraints on the information you want. Let's look at some selection queries in terms of questions about your pets that they answer.

You can select only particular rows from your table. For example, if you want to verify the change that you made to Bowser's birth date, select Bowser's record like this:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE name = 'Bowser';
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| name | owner | species | sex | birth | death |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Bowser | Diane | dog | m | 1989-08-31 | 1995-07-29 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
```

The output confirms that the year is correctly recorded as 1989, not 1979.

String comparisons normally are case-insensitive, so you can specify the name as `'bowser'`, `'BOWSER'`, and so forth. The query result is the same.

You can specify conditions on any column, not just `name`. For example, if you want to know which animals were born during or after 1998, test the `birth` column:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE birth >= '1998-1-1';
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| name | owner | species | sex | birth | death |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Chirpy | Gwen | bird | f | 1998-09-11 | NULL |
| Puffball | Diane | hamster | f | 1999-03-30 | NULL |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
```

You can combine conditions, for example, to locate female dogs:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE species = 'dog' AND sex = 'f';
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| name | owner | species | sex | birth | death |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Buffy | Harold | dog | f | 1989-05-13 | NULL |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
```

The preceding query uses the `AND` logical operator. There is also an `OR` operator:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE species = 'snake' OR species = 'bird';
```

name	owner	species	sex	birth	death
Chirpy	Gwen	bird	f	1998-09-11	NULL
Whistler	Gwen	bird	NULL	1997-12-09	NULL
Slim	Benny	snake	m	1996-04-29	NULL

AND and **OR** may be intermixed, although **AND** has higher precedence than **OR**. If you use both operators, it is a good idea to use parentheses to indicate explicitly how conditions should be grouped:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE (species = 'cat' AND sex = 'm')
-> OR (species = 'dog' AND sex = 'f');
```

name	owner	species	sex	birth	death
Claws	Gwen	cat	m	1994-03-17	NULL
Buffy	Harold	dog	f	1989-05-13	NULL

3.4.3. Selecting Particular Columns

If you do not want to see entire rows from your table, just name the columns in which you are interested, separated by commas. For example, if you want to know when your animals were born, select the **name** and **birth** columns:

```
mysql> SELECT name, birth FROM pet;
```

name	birth
Fluffy	1993-02-04
Claws	1994-03-17
Buffy	1989-05-13
Fang	1990-08-27
Bowser	1989-08-31
Chirpy	1998-09-11
Whistler	1997-12-09
Slim	1996-04-29
Puffball	1999-03-30

To find out who owns pets, use this query:

```
mysql> SELECT owner FROM pet;
```

owner
Harold
Gwen
Harold
Benny
Diane
Gwen
Gwen
Benny
Diane

Notice that the query simply retrieves the **owner** column from each record, and some of them appear more than once. To minimize the output, retrieve each unique output record just once by adding the keyword **DISTINCT**:

```
mysql> SELECT DISTINCT owner FROM pet;
```

owner
Benny
Diane
Gwen
Harold

You can use a **WHERE** clause to combine row selection with column selection. For example, to get birth dates for dogs and cats only, use this query:

```
mysql> SELECT name, species, birth FROM pet
-> WHERE species = 'dog' OR species = 'cat';
```

name	species	birth
------	---------	-------

Fluffy	cat	1993-02-04
Claws	cat	1994-03-17
Buffy	dog	1989-05-13
Fang	dog	1990-08-27
Bowser	dog	1989-08-31

3.4.4. Sorting Rows

You may have noticed in the preceding examples that the result rows are displayed in no particular order. It is often easier to examine query output when the rows are sorted in some meaningful way. To sort a result, use an `ORDER BY` clause.

Here are animal birthdays, sorted by date:

```
mysql> SELECT name, birth FROM pet ORDER BY birth;
```

name	birth
Buffy	1989-05-13
Bowser	1989-08-31
Fang	1990-08-27
Fluffy	1993-02-04
Claws	1994-03-17
Slim	1996-04-29
Whistler	1997-12-09
Chirpy	1998-09-11
Puffball	1999-03-30

On character type columns, sorting—like all other comparison operations—is normally performed in a case-insensitive fashion. This means that the order is undefined for columns that are identical except for their case. You can force a case-sensitive sort for a column by using `BINARY` like so: `ORDER BY BINARY col_name`.

The default sort order is ascending, with smallest values first. To sort in reverse (descending) order, add the `DESC` keyword to the name of the column you are sorting by:

```
mysql> SELECT name, birth FROM pet ORDER BY birth DESC;
```

name	birth
Puffball	1999-03-30
Chirpy	1998-09-11
Whistler	1997-12-09
Slim	1996-04-29
Claws	1994-03-17
Fluffy	1993-02-04
Fang	1990-08-27
Bowser	1989-08-31
Buffy	1989-05-13

You can sort on multiple columns, and you can sort different columns in different directions. For example, to sort by type of animal in ascending order, then by birth date within animal type in descending order (youngest animals first), use the following query:

```
mysql> SELECT name, species, birth FROM pet
-> ORDER BY species, birth DESC;
```

name	species	birth
Chirpy	bird	1998-09-11
Whistler	bird	1997-12-09
Claws	cat	1994-03-17
Fluffy	cat	1993-02-04
Fang	dog	1990-08-27
Bowser	dog	1989-08-31
Buffy	dog	1989-05-13
Puffball	hamster	1999-03-30
Slim	snake	1996-04-29

The `DESC` keyword applies only to the column name immediately preceding it (`birth`); it does not affect the `species` column sort order.

3.4.5. Date Calculations

MySQL provides several functions that you can use to perform calculations on dates, for example, to calculate ages or extract parts of dates.

To determine how many years old each of your pets is, compute the difference in the year part of the current date and the birth date, then subtract one if the current date occurs earlier in the calendar year than the birth date. The following query shows, for each pet, the birth date, the current date, and the age in years.

```
mysql> SELECT name, birth, CURDATE(),
-> (YEAR(CURDATE())-YEAR(birth))
-> - (RIGHT(CURDATE(),5)<RIGHT(birth,5))
-> AS age
-> FROM pet;
```

name	birth	CURDATE()	age
Fluffy	1993-02-04	2003-08-19	10
Claws	1994-03-17	2003-08-19	9
Buffy	1989-05-13	2003-08-19	14
Fang	1990-08-27	2003-08-19	12
Bowser	1989-08-31	2003-08-19	13
Chirpy	1998-09-11	2003-08-19	4
Whistler	1997-12-09	2003-08-19	5
Slim	1996-04-29	2003-08-19	7
Puffball	1999-03-30	2003-08-19	4

Here, `YEAR()` pulls out the year part of a date and `RIGHT()` pulls off the rightmost five characters that represent the `MM-DD` (calendar year) part of the date. The part of the expression that compares the `MM-DD` values evaluates to 1 or 0, which adjusts the year difference down a year if `CURDATE()` occurs earlier in the year than `birth`. The full expression is somewhat ungainly, so an *alias* (`age`) is used to make the output column label more meaningful.

The query works, but the result could be scanned more easily if the rows were presented in some order. This can be done by adding an `ORDER BY name` clause to sort the output by name:

```
mysql> SELECT name, birth, CURDATE(),
-> (YEAR(CURDATE())-YEAR(birth))
-> - (RIGHT(CURDATE(),5)<RIGHT(birth,5))
-> AS age
-> FROM pet ORDER BY name;
```

name	birth	CURDATE()	age
Bowser	1989-08-31	2003-08-19	13
Buffy	1989-05-13	2003-08-19	14
Chirpy	1998-09-11	2003-08-19	4
Claws	1994-03-17	2003-08-19	9
Fang	1990-08-27	2003-08-19	12
Fluffy	1993-02-04	2003-08-19	10
Puffball	1999-03-30	2003-08-19	4
Slim	1996-04-29	2003-08-19	7
Whistler	1997-12-09	2003-08-19	5

To sort the output by `age` rather than `name`, just use a different `ORDER BY` clause:

```
mysql> SELECT name, birth, CURDATE(),
-> (YEAR(CURDATE())-YEAR(birth))
-> - (RIGHT(CURDATE(),5)<RIGHT(birth,5))
-> AS age
-> FROM pet ORDER BY age;
```

name	birth	CURDATE()	age
Chirpy	1998-09-11	2003-08-19	4
Puffball	1999-03-30	2003-08-19	4
Whistler	1997-12-09	2003-08-19	5
Slim	1996-04-29	2003-08-19	7
Claws	1994-03-17	2003-08-19	9
Fluffy	1993-02-04	2003-08-19	10
Fang	1990-08-27	2003-08-19	12
Bowser	1989-08-31	2003-08-19	13
Buffy	1989-05-13	2003-08-19	14

A similar query can be used to determine age at death for animals that have died. You determine which animals these are by checking whether the `death` value is `NULL`. Then, for those with non-`NULL` values, compute the difference between the `death` and `birth` values:

```
mysql> SELECT name, birth, death,
-> (YEAR(death)-YEAR(birth)) - (RIGHT(death,5)<RIGHT(birth,5))
-> AS age
-> FROM pet WHERE death IS NOT NULL ORDER BY age;
```

name	birth	death	age
Bowser	1989-08-31	1995-07-29	5

The query uses `death IS NOT NULL` rather than `death <> NULL` because `NULL` is a special value that cannot be compared using the usual comparison operators. This is discussed later. See [Section 3.4.6, “Working with NULL Values”](#).

What if you want to know which animals have birthdays next month? For this type of calculation, year and day are irrelevant; you simply want to extract the month part of the `birth` column. MySQL provides several functions for extracting parts of dates, such as `YEAR()`, `MONTH()`, and `DAYOFMONTH()`. `MONTH()` is the appropriate function here. To see how it works, run a simple query that displays the value of both `birth` and `MONTH(birth)`:

```
mysql> SELECT name, birth, MONTH(birth) FROM pet;
```

name	birth	MONTH(birth)
Fluffy	1993-02-04	2
Claws	1994-03-17	3
Buffy	1989-05-13	5
Fang	1990-08-27	8
Bowser	1989-08-31	8
Chirpy	1998-09-11	9
Whistler	1997-12-09	12
Slim	1996-04-29	4
Puffball	1999-03-30	3

Finding animals with birthdays in the upcoming month is also simple. Suppose that the current month is April. Then the month value is 4 and you can look for animals born in May (month 5) like this:

```
mysql> SELECT name, birth FROM pet WHERE MONTH(birth) = 5;
```

name	birth
Buffy	1989-05-13

There is a small complication if the current month is December. You cannot merely add one to the month number (12) and look for animals born in month 13, because there is no such month. Instead, you look for animals born in January (month 1).

You can write the query so that it works no matter what the current month is, so that you do not have to use the number for a particular month. `DATE_ADD()` enables you to add a time interval to a given date. If you add a month to the value of `CURDATE()`, then extract the month part with `MONTH()`, the result produces the month in which to look for birthdays:

```
mysql> SELECT name, birth FROM pet
-> WHERE MONTH(birth) = MONTH(DATE_ADD(CURDATE(), INTERVAL 1 MONTH));
```

A different way to accomplish the same task is to add 1 to get the next month after the current one after using the modulo function (`MOD`) to wrap the month value to 0 if it is currently 12:

```
mysql> SELECT name, birth FROM pet
-> WHERE MONTH(birth) = MOD(MONTH(CURDATE()), 12) + 1;
```

`MONTH()` returns a number between 1 and 12. And `MOD(something, 12)` returns a number between 0 and 11. So the addition has to be after the `MOD()`, otherwise we would go from November (11) to January (1).

3.4.6. Working with NULL Values

The `NULL` value can be surprising until you get used to it. Conceptually, `NULL` means “a missing unknown value” and it is treated somewhat differently from other values. To test for `NULL`, you cannot use the arithmetic comparison operators such as `=`, `<`, or `<>`. To demonstrate this for yourself, try the following query:

```
mysql> SELECT 1 = NULL, 1 <> NULL, 1 < NULL, 1 > NULL;
```

1 = NULL	1 <> NULL	1 < NULL	1 > NULL
0	1	0	0

NULL	NULL	NULL	NULL
------	------	------	------

Clearly you get no meaningful results from these comparisons. Use the `IS NULL` and `IS NOT NULL` operators instead:

```
mysql> SELECT 1 IS NULL, 1 IS NOT NULL;
+-----+-----+
| 1 IS NULL | 1 IS NOT NULL |
+-----+-----+
| 0 | 1 |
+-----+-----+
```

In MySQL, `0` or `NULL` means false and anything else means true. The default truth value from a boolean operation is `1`.

This special treatment of `NULL` is why, in the previous section, it was necessary to determine which animals are no longer alive using `death IS NOT NULL` instead of `death <> NULL`.

Two `NULL` values are regarded as equal in a `GROUP BY`.

When doing an `ORDER BY`, `NULL` values are presented first if you do `ORDER BY ... ASC` and last if you do `ORDER BY ... DESC`.

A common error when working with `NULL` is to assume that it is not possible to insert a zero or an empty string into a column defined as `NOT NULL`, but this is not the case. These are in fact values, whereas `NULL` means “not having a value.” You can test this easily enough by using `IS [NOT] NULL` as shown:

```
mysql> SELECT 0 IS NULL, 0 IS NOT NULL, '' IS NULL, '' IS NOT NULL;
+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| 0 IS NULL | 0 IS NOT NULL | '' IS NULL | '' IS NOT NULL |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+
```

Thus it is entirely possible to insert a zero or empty string into a `NOT NULL` column, as these are in fact `NOT NULL`. See [Problems with NULL Values](#).

3.4.7. Pattern Matching

MySQL provides standard SQL pattern matching as well as a form of pattern matching based on extended regular expressions similar to those used by Unix utilities such as `vi`, `grep`, and `sed`.

SQL pattern matching enables you to use “`_`” to match any single character and “`%`” to match an arbitrary number of characters (including zero characters). In MySQL, SQL patterns are case-insensitive by default. Some examples are shown here. You do not use `=` or `<>` when you use SQL patterns; use the `LIKE` or `NOT LIKE` comparison operators instead.

To find names beginning with “`b`”:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE name LIKE 'b%';
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| name | owner | species | sex | birth | death |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Buffy | Harold | dog | f | 1989-05-13 | NULL |
| Bowser | Diane | dog | m | 1989-08-31 | 1995-07-29 |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
```

To find names ending with “`fy`”:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE name LIKE '%fy';
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| name | owner | species | sex | birth | death |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Fluffy | Harold | cat | f | 1993-02-04 | NULL |
| Buffy | Harold | dog | f | 1989-05-13 | NULL |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
```

To find names containing a “`w`”:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE name LIKE '%w%';
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| name | owner | species | sex | birth | death |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
```

Claws	Gwen	cat	m	1994-03-17	NULL
Bowser	Diane	dog	m	1989-08-31	1995-07-29
Whistler	Gwen	bird	NULL	1997-12-09	NULL

To find names containing exactly five characters, use five instances of the “_” pattern character:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE name LIKE '_____';
```

name	owner	species	sex	birth	death
Claws	Gwen	cat	m	1994-03-17	NULL
Buffy	Harold	dog	f	1989-05-13	NULL

The other type of pattern matching provided by MySQL uses extended regular expressions. When you test for a match for this type of pattern, use the `REGEXP` and `NOT REGEXP` operators (or `RLIKE` and `NOT RLIKE`, which are synonyms).

The following list describes some characteristics of extended regular expressions:

- “.” matches any single character.
- A character class “[...]” matches any character within the brackets. For example, “[abc]” matches “a”, “b”, or “c”. To name a range of characters, use a dash. “[a-z]” matches any letter, whereas “[0-9]” matches any digit.
- “*” matches zero or more instances of the thing preceding it. For example, “x*” matches any number of “x” characters, “[0-9]*” matches any number of digits, and “. *” matches any number of anything.
- A `REGEXP` pattern match succeeds if the pattern matches anywhere in the value being tested. (This differs from a `LIKE` pattern match, which succeeds only if the pattern matches the entire value.)
- To anchor a pattern so that it must match the beginning or end of the value being tested, use “^” at the beginning or “\$” at the end of the pattern.

To demonstrate how extended regular expressions work, the `LIKE` queries shown previously are rewritten here to use `REGEXP`.

To find names beginning with “b”, use “^” to match the beginning of the name:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE name REGEXP '^b';
```

name	owner	species	sex	birth	death
Buffy	Harold	dog	f	1989-05-13	NULL
Bowser	Diane	dog	m	1989-08-31	1995-07-29

If you really want to force a `REGEXP` comparison to be case sensitive, use the `BINARY` keyword to make one of the strings a binary string. This query matches only lowercase “b” at the beginning of a name:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE name REGEXP BINARY '^b';
```

To find names ending with “fy”, use “\$” to match the end of the name:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE name REGEXP 'fy$';
```

name	owner	species	sex	birth	death
Fluffy	Harold	cat	f	1993-02-04	NULL
Buffy	Harold	dog	f	1989-05-13	NULL

To find names containing a “w”, use this query:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE name REGEXP 'w';
```

name	owner	species	sex	birth	death
Claws	Gwen	cat	m	1994-03-17	NULL
Bowser	Diane	dog	m	1989-08-31	1995-07-29
Whistler	Gwen	bird	NULL	1997-12-09	NULL

Because a regular expression pattern matches if it occurs anywhere in the value, it is not necessary in the previous query to put a wildcard on either side of the pattern to get it to match the entire value like it would be if you used an SQL pattern.

To find names containing exactly five characters, use “^” and “\$” to match the beginning and end of the name, and five instances of “.” in between:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE name REGEXP '^.....$';
```

name	owner	species	sex	birth	death
Claws	Gwen	cat	m	1994-03-17	NULL
Buffy	Harold	dog	f	1989-05-13	NULL

You could also write the previous query using the {n} (“repeat-n-times”) operator:

```
mysql> SELECT * FROM pet WHERE name REGEXP '^.{5}$';
```

name	owner	species	sex	birth	death
Claws	Gwen	cat	m	1994-03-17	NULL
Buffy	Harold	dog	f	1989-05-13	NULL

[Regular Expressions](#), provides more information about the syntax for regular expressions.

3.4.8. Counting Rows

Databases are often used to answer the question, “How often does a certain type of data occur in a table?” For example, you might want to know how many pets you have, or how many pets each owner has, or you might want to perform various kinds of census operations on your animals.

Counting the total number of animals you have is the same question as “How many rows are in the `pet` table?” because there is one record per pet. `COUNT(*)` counts the number of rows, so the query to count your animals looks like this:

```
mysql> SELECT COUNT(*) FROM pet;
```

COUNT(*)
9

Earlier, you retrieved the names of the people who owned pets. You can use `COUNT()` if you want to find out how many pets each owner has:

```
mysql> SELECT owner, COUNT(*) FROM pet GROUP BY owner;
```

owner	COUNT(*)
Benny	2
Diane	2
Gwen	3
Harold	2

The preceding query uses `GROUP BY` to group all records for each `owner`. The use of `COUNT()` in conjunction with `GROUP BY` is useful for characterizing your data under various groupings. The following examples show different ways to perform animal census operations.

Number of animals per species:

```
mysql> SELECT species, COUNT(*) FROM pet GROUP BY species;
```

species	COUNT(*)
bird	2
cat	2
dog	3
hamster	1
snake	1

Number of animals per sex:

```
mysql> SELECT sex, COUNT(*) FROM pet GROUP BY sex;
```

sex	COUNT(*)
NULL	1
f	4
m	4

(In this output, `NULL` indicates that the sex is unknown.)

Number of animals per combination of species and sex:

```
mysql> SELECT species, sex, COUNT(*) FROM pet GROUP BY species, sex;
```

species	sex	COUNT(*)
bird	NULL	1
bird	f	1
cat	f	1
cat	m	1
dog	f	1
dog	m	2
hamster	f	1
snake	m	1

You need not retrieve an entire table when you use `COUNT()`. For example, the previous query, when performed just on dogs and cats, looks like this:

```
mysql> SELECT species, sex, COUNT(*) FROM pet
-> WHERE species = 'dog' OR species = 'cat'
-> GROUP BY species, sex;
```

species	sex	COUNT(*)
cat	f	1
cat	m	1
dog	f	1
dog	m	2

Or, if you wanted the number of animals per sex only for animals whose sex is known:

```
mysql> SELECT species, sex, COUNT(*) FROM pet
-> WHERE sex IS NOT NULL
-> GROUP BY species, sex;
```

species	sex	COUNT(*)
bird	f	1
cat	f	1
cat	m	1
dog	f	1
dog	m	2
hamster	f	1
snake	m	1

If you name columns to select in addition to the `COUNT()` value, a `GROUP BY` clause should be present that names those same columns. Otherwise, the following occurs:

- If the `ONLY_FULL_GROUP_BY` SQL mode is enabled, an error occurs:

```
mysql> SET sql_mode = 'ONLY_FULL_GROUP_BY';
Query OK, 0 rows affected (0.00 sec)
mysql> SELECT owner, COUNT(*) FROM pet;
ERROR 1140 (42000): Mixing of GROUP columns (MIN(),MAX(),COUNT()...)
with no GROUP columns is illegal if there is no GROUP BY clause
```

- If `ONLY_FULL_GROUP_BY` is not enabled, the query is processed by treating all rows as a single group, but the value selected for each named column is indeterminate. The server is free to select the value from any row:

```
mysql> SET sql_mode = '';
Query OK, 0 rows affected (0.00 sec)
mysql> SELECT owner, COUNT(*) FROM pet;
+-----+-----+
| owner | COUNT(*) |
+-----+-----+
| Harold |          8 |
+-----+-----+
1 row in set (0.00 sec)
```

See also [GROUP BY and HAVING with Hidden Columns](#).

3.4.9. Using More Than one Table

The `pet` table keeps track of which pets you have. If you want to record other information about them, such as events in their lives like visits to the vet or when litters are born, you need another table. What should this table look like? It needs to contain the following information:

- The pet name so that you know which animal each event pertains to.
- A date so that you know when the event occurred.
- A field to describe the event.
- An event type field, if you want to be able to categorize events.

Given these considerations, the `CREATE TABLE` statement for the `event` table might look like this:

```
mysql> CREATE TABLE event (name VARCHAR(20), date DATE,
-> type VARCHAR(15), remark VARCHAR(255));
```

As with the `pet` table, it is easiest to load the initial records by creating a tab-delimited text file containing the following information.

name	date	type	remark
Fluffy	1995-05-15	litter	4 kittens, 3 female, 1 male
Buffy	1993-06-23	litter	5 puppies, 2 female, 3 male
Buffy	1994-06-19	litter	3 puppies, 3 female
Chirpy	1999-03-21	vet	needed beak straightened
Slim	1997-08-03	vet	broken rib
Bowser	1991-10-12	kennel	
Fang	1991-10-12	kennel	
Fang	1998-08-28	birthday	Gave him a new chew toy
Claws	1998-03-17	birthday	Gave him a new flea collar
Whistler	1998-12-09	birthday	First birthday

Load the records like this:

```
mysql> LOAD DATA LOCAL INFILE 'event.txt' INTO TABLE event;
```

Based on what you have learned from the queries that you have run on the `pet` table, you should be able to perform retrievals on the records in the `event` table; the principles are the same. But when is the `event` table by itself insufficient to answer questions you might ask?

Suppose that you want to find out the ages at which each pet had its litters. We saw earlier how to calculate ages from two dates. The litter date of the mother is in the `event` table, but to calculate her age on that date you need her birth date, which is stored in the `pet` table. This means the query requires both tables:

```
mysql> SELECT pet.name,
-> (YEAR(date)-YEAR(birth)) - (RIGHT(date,5)<RIGHT(birth,5)) AS age,
-> remark
-> FROM pet INNER JOIN event
-> ON pet.name = event.name
-> WHERE event.type = 'litter';
```

name	age	remark
Fluffy	2	4 kittens, 3 female, 1 male
Buffy	4	5 puppies, 2 female, 3 male
Buffy	5	3 puppies, 3 female

There are several things to note about this query:

- The `FROM` clause joins two tables because the query needs to pull information from both of them.
- When combining (joining) information from multiple tables, you need to specify how records in one table can be matched to records in the other. This is easy because they both have a `name` column. The query uses an `ON` clause to match up records in the two tables based on the `name` values.

The query uses an `INNER JOIN` to combine the tables. An `INNER JOIN` permits rows from either table to appear in the result if and only if both tables meet the conditions specified in the `ON` clause. In this example, the `ON` clause specifies that the `name` column in the `pet` table must match the `name` column in the `event` table. If a name appears in one table but not the other, the row will not appear in the result because the condition in the `ON` clause fails.

- Because the `name` column occurs in both tables, you must be specific about which table you mean when referring to the column. This is done by prepending the table name to the column name.

You need not have two different tables to perform a join. Sometimes it is useful to join a table to itself, if you want to compare records in a table to other records in that same table. For example, to find breeding pairs among your pets, you can join the `pet` table with itself to produce candidate pairs of males and females of like species:

```
mysql> SELECT p1.name, p1.sex, p2.name, p2.sex, p1.species
-> FROM pet AS p1 INNER JOIN pet AS p2
-> ON p1.species = p2.species AND p1.sex = 'f' AND p2.sex = 'm';
```

name	sex	name	sex	species
Fluffy	f	Claws	m	cat
Buffy	f	Fang	m	dog
Buffy	f	Bowser	m	dog

In this query, we specify aliases for the table name to refer to the columns and keep straight which instance of the table each column reference is associated with.

Chapter 4. Getting Information About Databases and Tables

What if you forget the name of a database or table, or what the structure of a given table is (for example, what its columns are called)? MySQL addresses this problem through several statements that provide information about the databases and tables it supports.

You have previously seen `SHOW DATABASES`, which lists the databases managed by the server. To find out which database is currently selected, use the `DATABASE()` function:

```
mysql> SELECT DATABASE();
+-----+
| DATABASE() |
+-----+
| menagerie |
+-----+
```

If you have not yet selected any database, the result is `NULL`.

To find out what tables the default database contains (for example, when you are not sure about the name of a table), use this command:

```
mysql> SHOW TABLES;
+-----+
| Tables_in_menagerie |
+-----+
| event                |
| pet                  |
+-----+
```

The name of the column in the output produced by this statement is always `Tables_in_db_name`, where `db_name` is the name of the database. See `SHOW TABLES Syntax`, for more information.

If you want to find out about the structure of a table, the `DESCRIBE` statement is useful; it displays information about each of a table's columns:

```
mysql> DESCRIBE pet;
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| Field | Type | Null | Key | Default | Extra |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
| name  | varchar(20) | YES |  | NULL |  |
| owner | varchar(20) | YES |  | NULL |  |
| species | varchar(20) | YES |  | NULL |  |
| sex   | char(1) | YES |  | NULL |  |
| birth | date | YES |  | NULL |  |
| death | date | YES |  | NULL |  |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
```

`Field` indicates the column name, `Type` is the data type for the column, `NULL` indicates whether the column can contain `NULL` values, `Key` indicates whether the column is indexed, and `Default` specifies the column's default value. `Extra` displays special information about columns: If a column was created with the `AUTO_INCREMENT` option, the value will be `auto_increment` rather than empty.

`DESC` is a short form of `DESCRIBE`. See `DESCRIBE Syntax`, for more information.

You can obtain the `CREATE TABLE` statement necessary to create an existing table using the `SHOW CREATE TABLE` statement. See `SHOW CREATE TABLE Syntax`.

If you have indexes on a table, `SHOW INDEX FROM tbl_name` produces information about them. See `SHOW INDEX Syntax`, for more about this statement.

Chapter 5. Using `mysql` in Batch Mode

In the previous sections, you used `mysql` interactively to enter queries and view the results. You can also run `mysql` in batch mode. To do this, put the commands you want to run in a file, then tell `mysql` to read its input from the file:

```
shell> mysql < batch-file
```

If you are running `mysql` under Windows and have some special characters in the file that cause problems, you can do this:

```
C:\> mysql -e "source batch-file"
```

If you need to specify connection parameters on the command line, the command might look like this:

```
shell> mysql -h host -u user -p < batch-file
Enter password: *****
```

When you use `mysql` this way, you are creating a script file, then executing the script.

If you want the script to continue even if some of the statements in it produce errors, you should use the `--force` command-line option.

Why use a script? Here are a few reasons:

- If you run a query repeatedly (say, every day or every week), making it a script enables you to avoid retyping it each time you execute it.
- You can generate new queries from existing ones that are similar by copying and editing script files.
- Batch mode can also be useful while you're developing a query, particularly for multiple-line commands or multiple-statement sequences of commands. If you make a mistake, you don't have to retype everything. Just edit your script to correct the error, then tell `mysql` to execute it again.
- If you have a query that produces a lot of output, you can run the output through a pager rather than watching it scroll off the top of your screen:

```
shell> mysql < batch-file | more
```

- You can catch the output in a file for further processing:

```
shell> mysql < batch-file > mysql.out
```

- You can distribute your script to other people so that they can also run the commands.
- Some situations do not allow for interactive use, for example, when you run a query from a `cron` job. In this case, you must use batch mode.

The default output format is different (more concise) when you run `mysql` in batch mode than when you use it interactively. For example, the output of `SELECT DISTINCT species FROM pet` looks like this when `mysql` is run interactively:

```
+-----+
| species |
+-----+
| bird   |
| cat   |
| dog   |
| hamster |
| snake |
+-----+
```

In batch mode, the output looks like this instead:

```
species
bird
cat
```

```
dog  
hamster  
snake
```

If you want to get the interactive output format in batch mode, use `mysql -t`. To echo to the output the commands that are executed, use `mysql -vvv`.

You can also use scripts from the `mysql` prompt by using the `source` command or `\.` command:

```
mysql> source filename;  
mysql> \. filename
```

See [Executing SQL Statements from a Text File](#), for more information.

Chapter 6. Examples of Common Queries

Here are examples of how to solve some common problems with MySQL.

Some of the examples use the table `shop` to hold the price of each article (item number) for certain traders (dealers). Supposing that each trader has a single fixed price per article, then `(article, dealer)` is a primary key for the records.

Start the command-line tool `mysql` and select a database:

```
shell> mysql your-database-name
```

(In most MySQL installations, you can use the database named `test`).

You can create and populate the example table with these statements:

```
CREATE TABLE shop (
  article INT(4) UNSIGNED ZEROFILL DEFAULT '0000' NOT NULL,
  dealer CHAR(20) DEFAULT '' NOT NULL,
  price DOUBLE(16,2) DEFAULT '0.00' NOT NULL,
  PRIMARY KEY(article, dealer));
INSERT INTO shop VALUES
  (1, 'A', 3.45), (1, 'B', 3.99), (2, 'A', 10.99), (3, 'B', 1.45),
  (3, 'C', 1.69), (3, 'D', 1.25), (4, 'D', 19.95);
```

After issuing the statements, the table should have the following contents:

```
SELECT * FROM shop;
+-----+-----+-----+
| article | dealer | price |
+-----+-----+-----+
| 0001   | A     | 3.45  |
| 0001   | B     | 3.99  |
| 0002   | A     | 10.99 |
| 0003   | B     | 1.45  |
| 0003   | C     | 1.69  |
| 0003   | D     | 1.25  |
| 0004   | D     | 19.95 |
+-----+-----+-----+
```

6.1. The Maximum Value for a Column

“What is the highest item number?”

```
SELECT MAX(article) AS article FROM shop;
+-----+
| article |
+-----+
| 4       |
+-----+
```

6.2. The Row Holding the Maximum of a Certain Column

Task: Find the number, dealer, and price of the most expensive article.

This is easily done with a subquery:

```
SELECT article, dealer, price
FROM shop
WHERE price=(SELECT MAX(price) FROM shop);
+-----+-----+-----+
| article | dealer | price |
+-----+-----+-----+
| 0004   | D     | 19.95 |
+-----+-----+-----+
```

Other solutions are to use a `LEFT JOIN` or to sort all rows descending by price and get only the first row using the MySQL-specific `LIMIT` clause:

```
SELECT s1.article, s1.dealer, s1.price
FROM shop s1
```

```
LEFT JOIN shop s2 ON s1.price < s2.price
WHERE s2.article IS NULL;
SELECT article, dealer, price
FROM shop
ORDER BY price DESC
LIMIT 1;
```

Note

If there were several most expensive articles, each with a price of 19.95, the `LIMIT` solution would show only one of them.

6.3. Maximum of Column per Group

Task: Find the highest price per article.

```
SELECT article, MAX(price) AS price
FROM shop
GROUP BY article;
```

article	price
0001	3.99
0002	10.99
0003	1.69
0004	19.95

6.4. The Rows Holding the Group-wise Maximum of a Certain Column

Task: For each article, find the dealer or dealers with the most expensive price.

This problem can be solved with a subquery like this one:

```
SELECT article, dealer, price
FROM shop s1
WHERE price=(SELECT MAX(s2.price)
             FROM shop s2
             WHERE s1.article = s2.article);
```

article	dealer	price
0001	B	3.99
0002	A	10.99
0003	C	1.69
0004	D	19.95

The preceding example uses a correlated subquery, which can be inefficient (see [Correlated Subqueries](#)). Other possibilities for solving the problem are to use an uncorrelated subquery in the `FROM` clause or a `LEFT JOIN`:

```
SELECT s1.article, dealer, s1.price
FROM shop s1
JOIN (
  SELECT article, MAX(price) AS price
  FROM shop
  GROUP BY article) AS s2
ON s1.article = s2.article AND s1.price = s2.price;
SELECT s1.article, s1.dealer, s1.price
FROM shop s1
LEFT JOIN shop s2 ON s1.article = s2.article AND s1.price < s2.price
WHERE s2.article IS NULL;
```

The `LEFT JOIN` works on the basis that when `s1.price` is at its maximum value, there is no `s2.price` with a greater value and the `s2` rows values will be `NULL`. See [JOIN Syntax](#).

6.5. Using User-Defined Variables

You can employ MySQL user variables to remember results without having to store them in temporary variables in the client. (See [User-Defined Variables](#).)

For example, to find the articles with the highest and lowest price you can do this:

```
mysql> SELECT @min_price:=MIN(price),@max_price:=MAX(price) FROM shop;
mysql> SELECT * FROM shop WHERE price=@min_price OR price=@max_price;
```

article	dealer	price
0003	D	1.25
0004	D	19.95

Note

It is also possible to store the name of a database object such as a table or a column in a user variable and then to use this variable in an SQL statement; however, this requires the use of a prepared statement. See [SQL Syntax for Prepared Statements](#), for more information.

6.6. Using Foreign Keys

In MySQL, [InnoDB](#) tables support checking of foreign key constraints. See [The InnoDB Storage Engine](#), and [Foreign Keys](#).

A foreign key constraint is not required merely to join two tables. For storage engines other than [InnoDB](#), it is possible when defining a column to use a [REFERENCES tbl_name\(col_name\)](#) clause, which has no actual effect, and *serves only as a memo or comment to you that the column which you are currently defining is intended to refer to a column in another table*. It is extremely important to realize when using this syntax that:

- MySQL does not perform any sort of [CHECK](#) to make sure that *col_name* actually exists in *tbl_name* (or even that *tbl_name* itself exists).
- MySQL does not perform any sort of action on *tbl_name* such as deleting rows in response to actions taken on rows in the table which you are defining; in other words, this syntax induces no [ON DELETE](#) or [ON UPDATE](#) behavior whatsoever. (Although you can write an [ON DELETE](#) or [ON UPDATE](#) clause as part of the [REFERENCES](#) clause, it is also ignored.)
- This syntax creates a *column*; it does **not** create any sort of index or key.

You can use a column so created as a join column, as shown here:

```
CREATE TABLE person (
  id SMALLINT UNSIGNED NOT NULL AUTO_INCREMENT,
  name CHAR(60) NOT NULL,
  PRIMARY KEY (id)
);
CREATE TABLE shirt (
  id SMALLINT UNSIGNED NOT NULL AUTO_INCREMENT,
  style ENUM('t-shirt', 'polo', 'dress') NOT NULL,
  color ENUM('red', 'blue', 'orange', 'white', 'black') NOT NULL,
  owner SMALLINT UNSIGNED NOT NULL REFERENCES person(id),
  PRIMARY KEY (id)
);
INSERT INTO person VALUES (NULL, 'Antonio Paz');
SELECT @last := LAST_INSERT_ID();
INSERT INTO shirt VALUES
(NULL, 'polo', 'blue', @last),
(NULL, 'dress', 'white', @last),
(NULL, 't-shirt', 'blue', @last);
INSERT INTO person VALUES (NULL, 'Lilliana Angelovska');
SELECT @last := LAST_INSERT_ID();
INSERT INTO shirt VALUES
(NULL, 'dress', 'orange', @last),
(NULL, 'polo', 'red', @last),
(NULL, 'dress', 'blue', @last),
(NULL, 't-shirt', 'white', @last);
SELECT * FROM person;
```

id	name
1	Antonio Paz
2	Lilliana Angelovska

```
SELECT * FROM shirt;
```

id	style	color	owner
1	polo	blue	1
2	dress	white	1

3	t-shirt	blue	1
4	dress	orange	2
5	polo	red	2
6	dress	blue	2
7	t-shirt	white	2

```

SELECT s.* FROM person p INNER JOIN shirt s
  ON s.owner = p.id
 WHERE p.name LIKE 'Lilliana%'
    AND s.color <> 'white';

```

id	style	color	owner
4	dress	orange	2
5	polo	red	2
6	dress	blue	2

When used in this fashion, the [REFERENCES](#) clause is not displayed in the output of `SHOW CREATE TABLE` or `DESCRIBE`:

```

SHOW CREATE TABLE shirt\G
***** 1. row *****
Table: shirt
Create Table: CREATE TABLE `shirt` (
  `id` smallint(5) unsigned NOT NULL auto_increment,
  `style` enum('t-shirt','polo','dress') NOT NULL,
  `color` enum('red','blue','orange','white','black') NOT NULL,
  `owner` smallint(5) unsigned NOT NULL,
  PRIMARY KEY (`id`)
) ENGINE=MyISAM DEFAULT CHARSET=latin1

```

The use of [REFERENCES](#) in this way as a comment or “reminder” in a column definition works with [MyISAM](#) tables.

6.7. Searching on Two Keys

An [OR](#) using a single key is well optimized, as is the handling of [AND](#).

The one tricky case is that of searching on two different keys combined with [OR](#):

```

SELECT field1_index, field2_index FROM test_table
WHERE field1_index = '1' OR field2_index = '1'

```

This case is optimized. See [Index Merge Optimization](#).

You can also solve the problem efficiently by using a [UNION](#) that combines the output of two separate [SELECT](#) statements. See [UNION Syntax](#).

Each [SELECT](#) searches only one key and can be optimized:

```

SELECT field1_index, field2_index
  FROM test_table WHERE field1_index = '1'
UNION
SELECT field1_index, field2_index
  FROM test_table WHERE field2_index = '1';

```

6.8. Calculating Visits Per Day

The following example shows how you can use the bit group functions to calculate the number of days per month a user has visited a Web page.

```

CREATE TABLE t1 (year YEAR(4), month INT(2) UNSIGNED ZEROFILL,
  day INT(2) UNSIGNED ZEROFILL);
INSERT INTO t1 VALUES(2000,1,1),(2000,1,20),(2000,1,30),(2000,2,2),
  (2000,2,23),(2000,2,23);

```

The example table contains year-month-day values representing visits by users to the page. To determine how many different days in each month these visits occur, use this query:

```

SELECT year,month,BIT_COUNT(BIT_OR(1<<day)) AS days FROM t1
  GROUP BY year,month;

```

Which returns:

year	month	days
2000	01	3
2000	02	2

The query calculates how many different days appear in the table for each year/month combination, with automatic removal of duplicate entries.

6.9. Using `AUTO_INCREMENT`

The `AUTO_INCREMENT` attribute can be used to generate a unique identity for new rows:

```
CREATE TABLE animals (
  id MEDIUMINT NOT NULL AUTO_INCREMENT,
  name CHAR(30) NOT NULL,
  PRIMARY KEY (id)
) ENGINE=MyISAM;
INSERT INTO animals (name) VALUES
  ('dog'),('cat'),('penguin'),
  ('lax'),('whale'),('ostrich');
SELECT * FROM animals;
```

Which returns:

id	name
1	dog
2	cat
3	penguin
4	lax
5	whale
6	ostrich

No value was specified for the `AUTO_INCREMENT` column, so MySQL assigned sequence numbers automatically. You can also explicitly assign `NULL` or `0` to the column to generate sequence numbers.

You can retrieve the most recent `AUTO_INCREMENT` value with the `LAST_INSERT_ID()` SQL function or the `mysql_insert_id()` C API function. These functions are connection-specific, so their return values are not affected by another connection which is also performing inserts.

Use a large enough integer data type for the `AUTO_INCREMENT` column to hold the maximum sequence value you will need. When the column reaches the upper limit of the data type, the next attempt to generate a sequence number fails. For example, if you use `TINYINT`, the maximum permissible sequence number is 127. For `TINYINT UNSIGNED`, the maximum is 255.

Note

For a multiple-row insert, `LAST_INSERT_ID()` and `mysql_insert_id()` actually return the `AUTO_INCREMENT` key from the *first* of the inserted rows. This enables multiple-row inserts to be reproduced correctly on other servers in a replication setup.

For `MyISAM` tables you can specify `AUTO_INCREMENT` on a secondary column in a multiple-column index. In this case, the generated value for the `AUTO_INCREMENT` column is calculated as `MAX(auto_increment_column) + 1 WHERE prefix=given-prefix`. This is useful when you want to put data into ordered groups.

```
CREATE TABLE animals (
  grp ENUM('fish','mammal','bird') NOT NULL,
  id MEDIUMINT NOT NULL AUTO_INCREMENT,
  name CHAR(30) NOT NULL,
  PRIMARY KEY (grp,id)
) ENGINE=MyISAM;
INSERT INTO animals (grp,name) VALUES
  ('mammal','dog'),('mammal','cat'),
  ('bird','penguin'),('fish','lax'),('mammal','whale'),
  ('bird','ostrich');
SELECT * FROM animals ORDER BY grp,id;
```

Which returns:

grp	id	name
fish	1	lax
mammal	1	dog
mammal	2	cat
mammal	3	whale
bird	1	penguin
bird	2	ostrich

In this case (when the `AUTO_INCREMENT` column is part of a multiple-column index), `AUTO_INCREMENT` values are reused if you delete the row with the biggest `AUTO_INCREMENT` value in any group. This happens even for `MyISAM` tables, for which `AUTO_INCREMENT` values normally are not reused.

If the `AUTO_INCREMENT` column is part of multiple indexes, MySQL will generate sequence values using the index that begins with the `AUTO_INCREMENT` column, if there is one. For example, if the `animals` table contained indexes `PRIMARY KEY (grp, id)` and `INDEX (id)`, MySQL would ignore the `PRIMARY KEY` for generating sequence values. As a result, the table would contain a single sequence, not a sequence per `grp` value.

To start with an `AUTO_INCREMENT` value other than 1, you can set that value with `CREATE TABLE` or `ALTER TABLE`, like this:

```
mysql> ALTER TABLE tbl AUTO_INCREMENT = 100;
```

More information about `AUTO_INCREMENT` is available here:

- How to assign the `AUTO_INCREMENT` attribute to a column: [CREATE TABLE Syntax](#), and [ALTER TABLE Syntax](#).
- How `AUTO_INCREMENT` behaves depending on the `NO_AUTO_VALUE_ON_ZERO` SQL mode: [Server SQL Modes](#).
- How to use the `LAST_INSERT_ID()` function to find the row that contains the most recent `AUTO_INCREMENT` value: [Information Functions](#).
- Setting the `AUTO_INCREMENT` value to be used: [Server System Variables](#).
- `AUTO_INCREMENT` and replication: [Replication and AUTO_INCREMENT](#).
- Server-system variables related to `AUTO_INCREMENT` (`auto_increment_increment` and `auto_increment_offset`) that can be used for replication: [Server System Variables](#).

Chapter 7. Using MySQL with Apache

There are programs that let you authenticate your users from a MySQL database and also let you write your log files into a MySQL table.

You can change the Apache logging format to be easily readable by MySQL by putting the following into the Apache configuration file:

```
LogFormat \
    "%h\" , %Y%m%d%H%M%S}t,%>s,\"%b\" , \"%{Content-Type}o\", \
    \"%U\" , \"%{Referer}i\" , \"%{User-Agent}i\" "
```

To load a log file in that format into MySQL, you can use a statement something like this:

```
LOAD DATA INFILE '/local/access_log' INTO TABLE tbl_name
FIELDS TERMINATED BY ',' OPTIONALLY ENCLOSED BY '"' ESCAPED BY '\\'
```

The named table should be created to have columns that correspond to those that the `LogFormat` line writes to the log file.