

Microsoft Access

Quick Tips

In the olden days, Access had separate windows for tables and queries. Today, they're in one index on the left. To look at a table double-click on it from the index.



To create a new query (remember, you can only ask questions in a query). Click CREATE tab, then click QUERY DESIGN.

Access will prompt you for the table that you want to query with the SHOW TABLE box. Highlight the table that you want and click add. Then close the SHOW TABLE window.

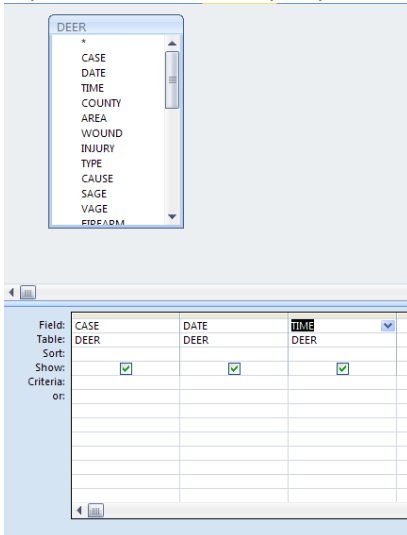
To run your query, click this button:



Click this button to go back to your query design.

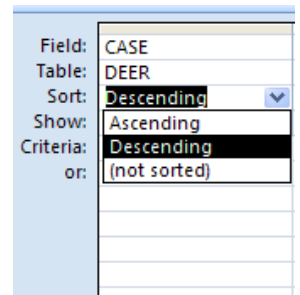
No matter how complicated life gets, every query consists of four basic steps:

1. **SELECT** the fields you want to show. You do this by double-clicking on the item from the table list in the top left corner of the query window.

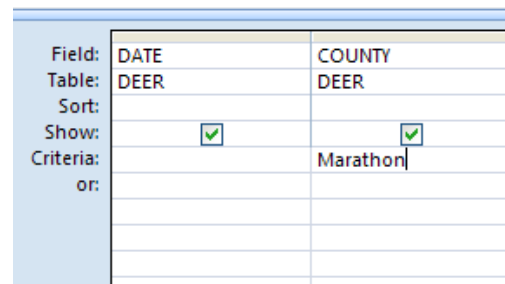


Access will put the field name on the field line of the query grid -- it also checks the SHOW box so you'll see it in the answer.

2. **SORT** the data. On the second line of the query grid is the sort box. If you click on it, it gives you the sort options.



3. **FILTER** the data. If you only want part of your database, you do this with CRITERIA.



You have many criteria options using operators such as greater than > less than < and the wildcard *

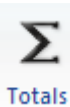
>20 in the SAGE field = all shooters older than 20

<19 in the VAGE field = all victims younger than 19

deer in the cause field = all causes that contain the word "deer"

*deer = all causes that end with "deer"

deer*= all causes that begin with "deer"



4. **SUMMARIZE** your data. If you don't just want to see individual records, click this button:

Access will add a TOTAL line to your query and stick in the nerdy term "GROUP BY." Group by just means you're making piles of certain types of records. Below we've made piles of counties.

Field:	COUNTY
Table:	DEER
Total:	Group By
Sort:	
Show:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Criteria:	

Once you have your piles, you can go back at them and count, sum, average. Here's what you'd do if you wanted to count the number of counties in this database:

Field:	COUNTY	COUNTY
Table:	DEER	DEER
Total:	Group By	Count
Sort:		Descending
Show:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Criteria:		

WARNING: Using this method counts only non-blanks. If you want to include blanks in your list use COUNT(*) and change your total line to EXPRESSION.

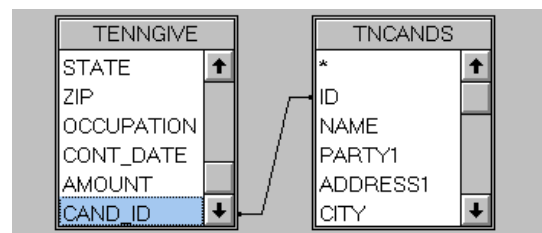
Here's what you'd do to average the ages by county:

Field:	COUNTY	SAGE
Table:	DEER	DEER
Total:	Group By	Avg
Sort:		Descending
Show:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Criteria:		

BIZARRE RULE #57: When you want to filter data that is in a summary query, use WHERE on the TOTAL line:

Field:	COUNTY	SAGE	COUNTY
Table:	DEER	DEER	DEER
Total:	Group By	Avg	Where
Sort:		Descending	
Show:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria:			Marathon

Joining tables: When you need to join two or more tables, they must have some field in common (it doesn't have to have the same name, just the same data) Click and hold on one of the field names and drop it on the other -- Access gives you this great line to illustrate the join:



Putting the results in a table: Most queries are called Select Queries -- that means you just see the answer on the screen, but the results are not saved anywhere. To take the result of a query and put it in a table, **BEFORE YOU RUN THE QUERY**, click QUERY, Make Table -- you won't see the answer. Access will tell you that it copied so many records to the table.

Importing text files: To import a text file, click FILE/IMPORT -- access will prompt you for the type of file you want to import. Most text files are either FIXED or DELIMITED. Access will then ask you for the file name.

If it's a fixed file, you also will have to create a SPEC file -- basically the record layout for the database. If you don't have that information, you can't use the data. Once, you've typed in the spec, save the spec file -- then Access will do the import.

For more tip sheets, go to www.jenster.com/nicar2013