

# The SQL LIKE Operator

The **LIKE** operator is used in a **WHERE** clause to search for a specified pattern in a column.

There are two wildcards often used in conjunction with the **LIKE** operator:

- The percent sign (%) represents zero, one, or multiple characters
- The underscore sign (\_) represents one, single character

**Note:** MS Access uses an asterisk (\*) instead of the percent sign (%), and a question mark (?) instead of the underscore (\_).

The percent sign and the underscore can also be used in combinations!

## LIKE Syntax

```
SELECT column1, column2, ...  
FROM table_name  
WHERE columnN LIKE pattern;
```

**Tip:** You can also combine any number of conditions using **AND** or **OR** operators.

Here are some examples showing different **LIKE** operators with '%' and '\_' wildcards:

| LIKE Operator                     | Description  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| WHERE CustomerName<br>LIKE 'a%'   | Finds any values that start with "a"   |
| WHERE CustomerName<br>LIKE '%a'   | Finds any values that end with "a"   |
| WHERE CustomerName<br>LIKE '%or%' | Finds any values that have "or" in any position                              |
| WHERE CustomerName<br>LIKE '_r%'  | Finds any values that have "r" in the second position                        |
| WHERE CustomerName<br>LIKE 'a_%'  | Finds any values that start with "a" and are at least 2 characters in length |

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| WHERE CustomerName<br>LIKE 'a__%' | Finds any values that start with "a" and are at least 3 characters in length |
|-----------------------------------|--|

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| WHERE ContactName LIKE<br>'a%o' | Finds any values that start with "a" and ends with "o" |
|---------------------------------|--|