

Lesson 2-5: Modifying a Table and Understanding Data Types

Figure 2-8

A table in Design view.

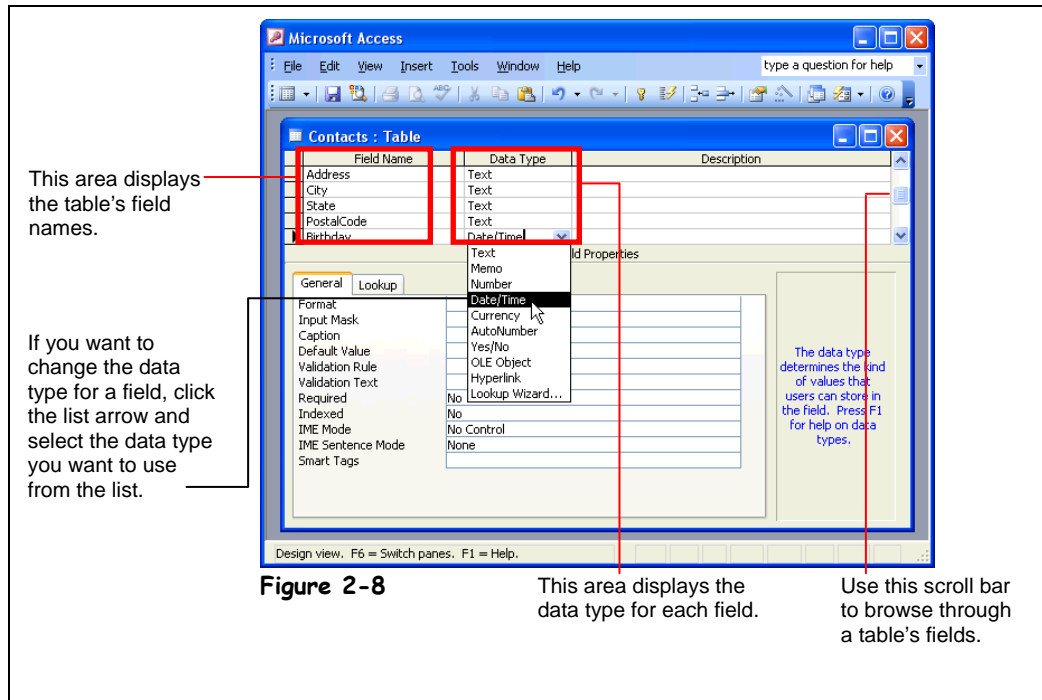


Figure 2-8

Once you have created a table, you can modify it later in *Design View*. Design view allows you to change the structure of a table by adding, deleting, and modifying its fields.


Because there are so many different types of data, Access offers several different types of fields. A field's data type determines the type of information that can be stored in a field. Table 2-3: *Data Types* lists the various data types available in Access. A field's data type restricts what type of information you can enter in a field. For example, you cannot enter text into a number field.

In this lesson you will modify a table by adding a new field and then determining the field's data type.



Design button

Other Ways to Modify a Table:

- Open the table and click the  **Design View button** on the toolbar.
- Open the table and select **View** → **Design View** from the menu.

1. Click the **Contacts table** and click the **Design button** in the Database window.

The Contacts table appears in Design view, which allows you to add, delete, or modify the table's structure and fields.

Here's how to change a field name in Design view:

2. Scroll down, if necessary, and select the **PostalCode field** in the **Field Names column**. Replace the text "PostalCode" with **ZipCode**.

That's how easy it is to change a field name. Now try adding a new field to the table.

3. Press **<Tab>** three times.

The cursor should be located in the blank Field Name box below the ZipCode field. To add a field in Design view, simply type a new field name in any blank Field Name box.

4. Type `Birthday` and press `<Tab>`.

By default, the Text data type is assigned to all new fields. Here's how to change a field's data type:

5. If it is not already selected, click the `Data Type` box next to the `Birthday` field.

A list arrow appears on the right side of the box.

6. Click the  `list arrow` and select `Date/Time` from the list.

The new Birthday field will now only accept date and time information. The new Date/Time data type also makes your database more flexible and powerful because now you can sort birthdays by date or even use them in a calculation—for example, to determine a person's age.

Once you have finished modifying a table, you have to save your changes.

7. Click the `Save button` on the toolbar to save your changes.


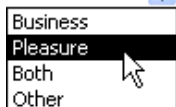
You've finished modifying the table, so...

8. Close the `Contacts` table.**Save button**

Other Ways to Save a Database Object:

- Select **File** → **Save** from the menu.
- Press **<Ctrl> + <S>**.

Table 2-3: Data Types

<i>Data Type</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Description</i>
Text	Legal Name: John Doe	Stores text, numbers, or a combination of both, up to 255 characters long. Text fields are the most common of all data types.
Memo	Notes: Sally displays a high amount of...	Stores long text entries—up to 64,000 characters long (the equivalent of 18 pages of text!). Use memo fields to store notes or anything else that requires a lot of space.
Number	Age: 31	Stores numbers that can be used in calculations.
Date/Time	Birthday: April 7, 1969	Stores dates, times, or both.
Currency	Price: \$84.95	Stores numbers and symbols that represent money.
AutoNumber	Invoice Number: 187001	Automatically fills in a unique number for each record. Many tables often contain an AutoNumber field that is also used as their primary key.
Yes/No	Employed?: Yes	Stores only one of two values, such as Yes or No, True or False, etc.
OLE Object	Photo: 	Stores objects created in other programs such as a graphic, Excel spreadsheet, or Word document.
Hyperlink	Web Site: www.amazon.com	Stores clickable links to files on your computer, on the network, or to Web pages on the Internet.
Lookup Wizard	Purpose of Trip: 	A wizard that helps you create a field whose values are selected from a table, query, or a preset list of values.

Quick Reference

To Display a Table in Design View:

- Open the table and click the **View button** on the toolbar.

Or...

- In the database window, click the **Tables icon** in the Objects bar, select the table, and click the **Design button**.

To Change the Data Type for a Field:

1. Display the table in Design view.
2. Click the field's **Data Type** box, click the list arrow, and select the data type from the list.

To Save Changes to a Database Object:

- Click the **Save button** on the toolbar.

Or...

- Select **File** → **Save** from the menu.

Or...

- Press **<Ctrl> + <S>**.