**Lecture five**

INPUT MASK

By

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INPUT MASK

The **input mask** sets rules for how non-calculated numbers such as dates and phone numbers are entered in a field. For instance, to display 9/25/1925, you might require users to type it as 09/25/1925. If a value is entered incorrectly, Access rejects it.

To select an input mask for a field
- In Design view, click in the **Data Type** window for the field to which you want to apply the input mask.
- In the **Field Properties** window below, click on Input Mask and then click on the Build button ⊡ that now appears.
- The **Input Mask Wizard** appears. Scroll through the list of input masks.
- Select the appropriate one and click **Finish**.
- The input mask field now displays a series of characters representing how text/numbers are to be entered. The default syntax for entering a phone number, for instance, is**:**
!\(999") "000\-0000;;_
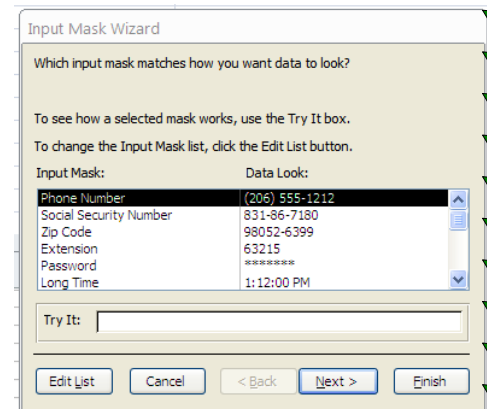
Syntax
Here is a list of common characters used to create masks, borrowed from *Microsoft Office Access 2007 Inside Out (pp170-171)*:

Character	Description
0	Required digit (0 through 9).
9	Optional digit or space.
#	Optional digit or space; blank positions are converted to spaces; plus and minus signs are allowed.
L	Required letter (A through Z).
?	Optional letter (A through Z).
A	Required letter or digit.

a	Optional letter or digit.
&	Required character (any kind) or a space.
C	Optional character (any kind) or a space.
.	Decimal placeholder

,	Thousands separator
: ; - /	Date and time separators
<	All characters that follow are converted to lowercase.
>	All characters that follow are converted to uppercase.
!	Characters typed into the mask fill it from left to right. You can include the exclamation point anywhere in the input mask.
\	Character that follows is displayed as a literal character.
"literal"	Everything inside double quotation marks is displayed literally.

It is not necessary to know what each bit of syntax means, since Access creates masks automatically for you. But it can be useful to understand the syntax behind a mask. For example, one of the date mask defaults is: **99/99/0000;0;_**   In this mask the year, represented by **0000**, must be entered using all four digits. If you wanted the year to be configured so that you'd only need to enter the last two digits, you could delete two of the zeroes in the year portion of the mask. The mask would now look like this: **99/99/00;0;_** and a date would change in its appearance from, say, 10/29/1960 to 10/29/60.

To insert a new field name between rows
- Position the mouse pointer on the light blue cell (row selector) in front of the row above which you want to add a new field name.
- Click with the right mouse button and select **Insert Rows** (with the left mouse button).
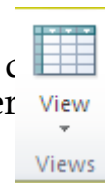- Click inside the **Field Name** cell for that new row and enter the new field name.

Save the table
Before moving ahead, you will be prompted to save your table. Go ahead and do so.
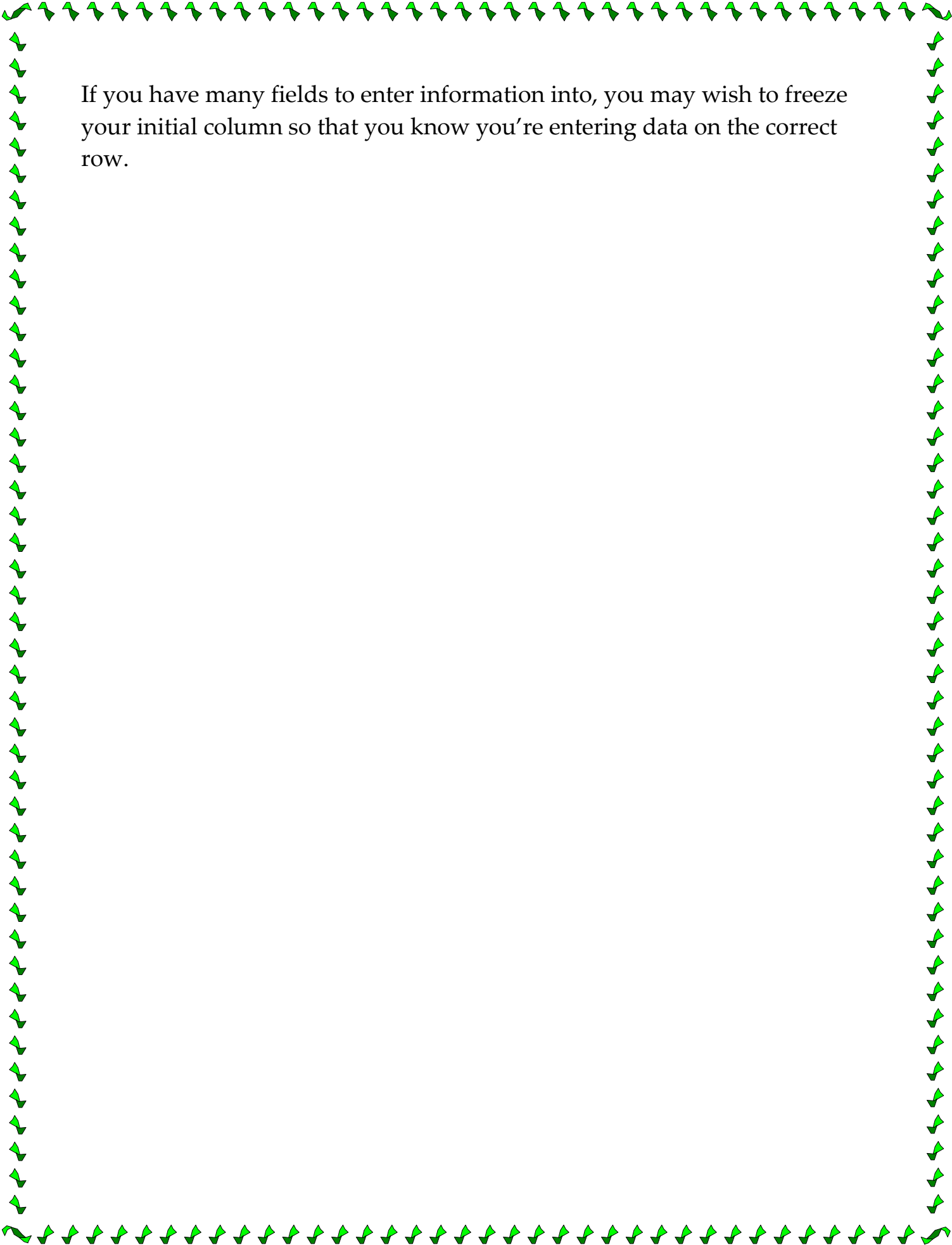
To enter data in your table
You will need to return to datasheet view in order to fill in your
- Click on the **Datasheet View** icon from the **View** group under **Design** tab.

- Type your data in the table, pressing Enter to move from field to field and then from record to record. (**NOTE:** Access automatically adds additional rows as necessary to accommodate your data.)

To freeze a column or columns so that they remain in view as you type across your datasheet

If you have many fields to enter information into, you may wish to freeze your initial column so that you know you're entering data on the correct row.

- Click inside the column you want to freeze. (**NOTE:** To select multiple columns, click and hold down the left mouse button on the field name—a column selector—and drag the mouse across the other adjacent column selectors. Then release the mouse button.)
- Click on **Home** from the ribbon, select **More** and then choose **Freeze F**
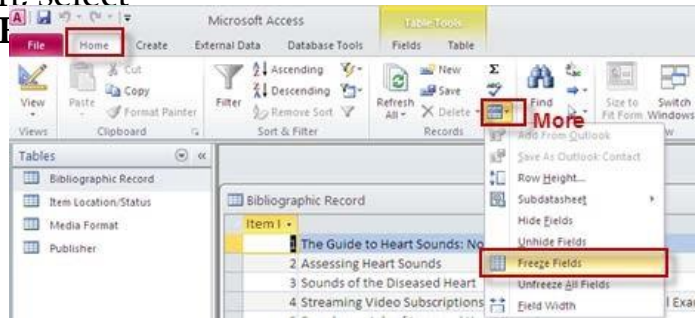
To unfreeze a column or columns
- Click inside the column you want to freeze. (**NOTE:** To select multiple columns, click and hold down the left mouse button on the field name—a column selector—and drag the mouse across the other adjacent column selectors. Then release the mouse button.)
- Click on **Datasheet** from the ribbon, select **More** and then choose **Unfreeze**.
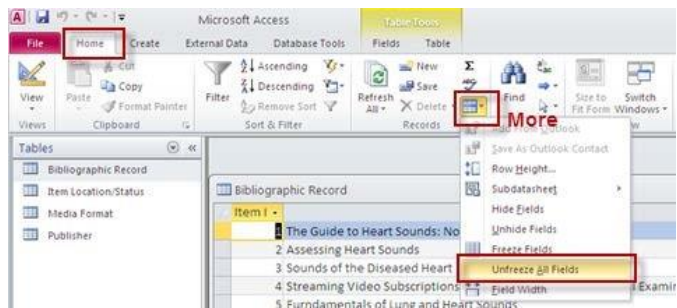
When done creating your table,
- Close the table by clicking on the red x in the table's (not the program's!) upper right corner.

NOTE: You are only prompted to resave the table if you made structural or layout changes to it. Additions, deletions, and changes in data entry are saved automatically.

All tables you've created so far appear in a list on the left hand side beneath the ribbon in the Database window.
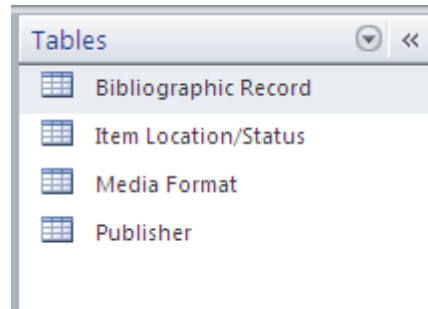
To delete a table
- Right mouse click on the table listing and choose **Delete**.
- Click **Yes** to confirm the deletion.