SQL - WILDCARD OPERATORS

We already have discussed SQL **LIKE** operator, which is used to compare a value to similar values using wildcard operators.

SQL supports following two wildcard operators in conjunction with the LIKE operator:

Wildcards	Description
The percent sign	Matches one or more characters. Note that MS Access uses the asterisk ∗ wildcard character instead of the percent sign wildcard character.
The underscore _	Matches one character. Note that MS Access uses a question mark ? instead of the underscore _ to match any one character.

The percent sign represents zero, one, or multiple characters. The underscore represents a single number or character. The symbols can be used in combinations.

Syntax:

The basic syntax of '%' and '_' is as follows:

```
SELECT FROM table_name
WHERE column LIKE 'XXXX%'

or

SELECT FROM table_name
WHERE column LIKE '%XXXX%'

or

SELECT FROM table_name
WHERE column LIKE 'XXXX_'

or

SELECT FROM table_name
WHERE column LIKE '_XXXX'

or

SELECT FROM table_name
WHERE column LIKE '_XXXX_'
```

You can combine N number of conditions using AND or OR operators. Here, XXXX could be any numeric or string value.

Example:

Here are number of examples showing WHERE part having different LIKE clause with '%' and '_' operators:

Statement	Description
WHERE SALARY LIKE '200%'	Finds any values that start with 200

WHERE SALARY LIKE '%200%'	Finds any values that have 200 in any position
WHERE SALARY LIKE '_00%'	Finds any values that have 00 in the second and third positions
WHERE SALARY LIKE '2_%_%'	Finds any values that start with 2 and are at least 3 characters in length
WHERE SALARY LIKE '%2'	Finds any values that end with 2
WHERE SALARY LIKE '_2%3'	Finds any values that have a 2 in the second position and end with a 3
WHERE SALARY LIKE '2___3'	Finds any values in a five-digit number that start with 2 and end with 3

Let us take a real example, consider the CUSTOMERS table having the following records:

```
+----+----------+-----+-----------+----------+
| ID | NAME     | AGE | ADDRESS   | SALARY   |
+----+----------+-----+-----------+----------+
|  1 | Ramesh   |  32 | Ahmedabad |  2000.00 |
|  2 | Khilan   |  25 | Delhi     |  1500.00 |
|  3 | kaushik  |  23 | Kota      |  2000.00 |
|  4 | Chaitali |  25 | Mumbai    |  6500.00 |
|  5 | Hardik   |  27 | Bhopal    |  8500.00 |
|  6 | Komal    |  22 | MP        |  4500.00 |
|  7 | Muffy    |  24 | Indore    | 10000.00 |
+----+----------+-----+-----------+----------+
```

Following is an example, which would display all the records from CUSTOMERS table where SALARY starts with 200:

```
SQL> SELECT * FROM CUSTOMERS
WHERE SALARY LIKE '200%';
```

This would produce the following result:

```
+----+----------+-----+-----------+----------+
| ID | NAME     | AGE | ADDRESS   | SALARY   |
+----+----------+-----+-----------+----------+
|  1 | Ramesh   |  32 | Ahmedabad |  2000.00 |
|  3 | kaushik  |  23 | Kota      |  2000.00 |
+----+----------+-----+-----------+----------+
```