

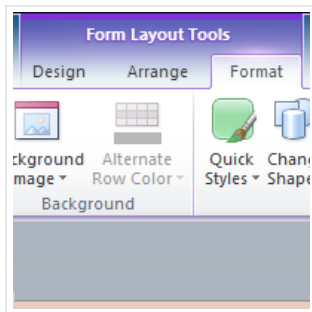
Access 2010

Formatting Forms



Page 1

Introduction



After creating a form, you might want to modify its appearance. **Formatting** your forms can help make your database look consistent and professional. Some formatting changes can even make your forms easier to use. With Access 2010's formatting tools, you can customize your forms to look exactly the way you want.

In this lesson, you will learn how to **add command buttons**, **modify form layouts**, add **logos** and **other images**, and change form **colors** and **fonts**.

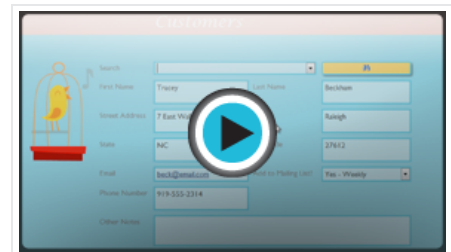
We will be showing you how to modify forms with examples from our sample bakery database. If you would like to follow along, [download our example](#) and use it to follow the procedures demonstrated in this lesson.

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Formatting forms

Access offers many options that let you make your forms look exactly the way you want. While some of these options, like **command buttons**, are unique to forms, others may be familiar to you.

Video: Formatting Forms in Access 2010



Command buttons

If you want to create a way for users of your form to quickly perform specific actions and tasks, consider adding **command buttons**. When you create a command button, you specify an action for it to carry out when clicked. By including commands for common tasks right in your form, you're making the form easier to use.

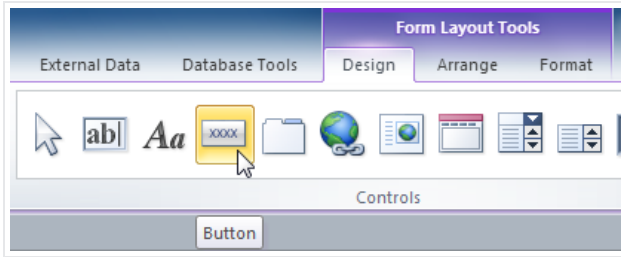
Access offers many different types of command buttons, but they can be divided into a few main categories, including:

- **Record Navigation** command buttons, which easily allow your user to move among the records in your database.
- **Record Operation** command buttons, which let your user do things like save or print a record.
- **Form Operation** command buttons, which give your user the ability to quickly open or close a form, print the current form, and complete other actions.
- **Report Operation** command buttons, which offer the user a quick way to do things such as preview or mail a report from the current record.

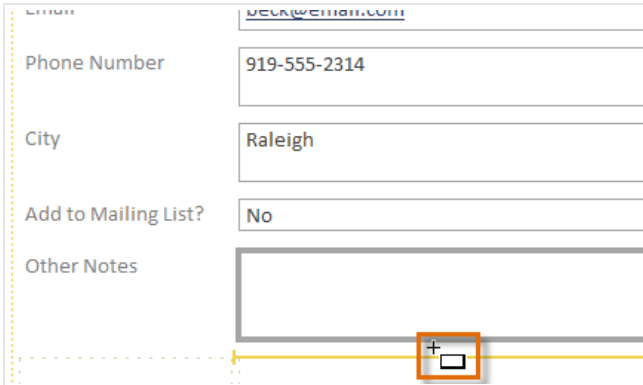
To add a command button to a form:

1. In **Form Layout** view, select the **Form Layout Tools Design** tab, and locate the **Controls** group.

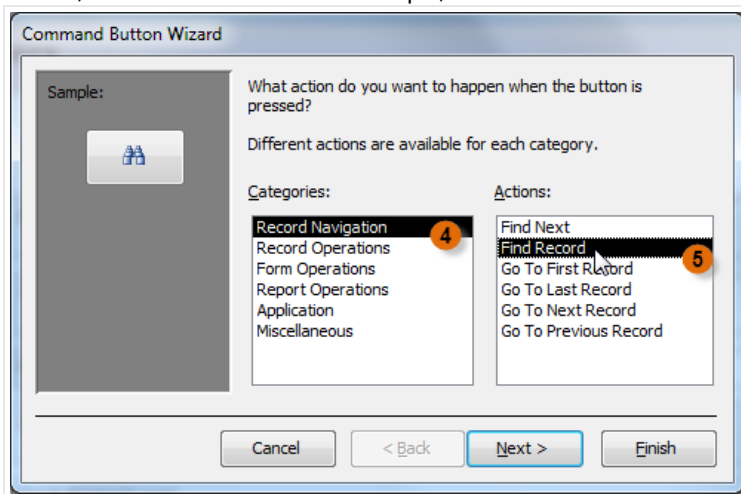
2. Select the **Button** command.



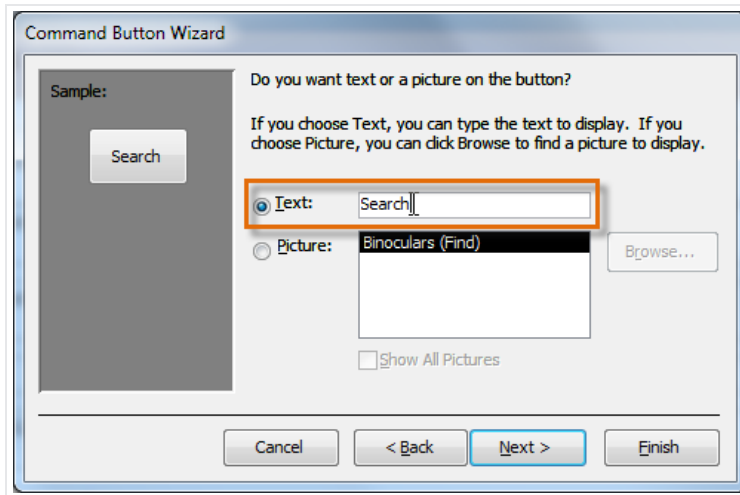
3. Your cursor will turn into a tiny **crosshairs with a button** icon . Place it in the spot where you would like your command button to be, and click.



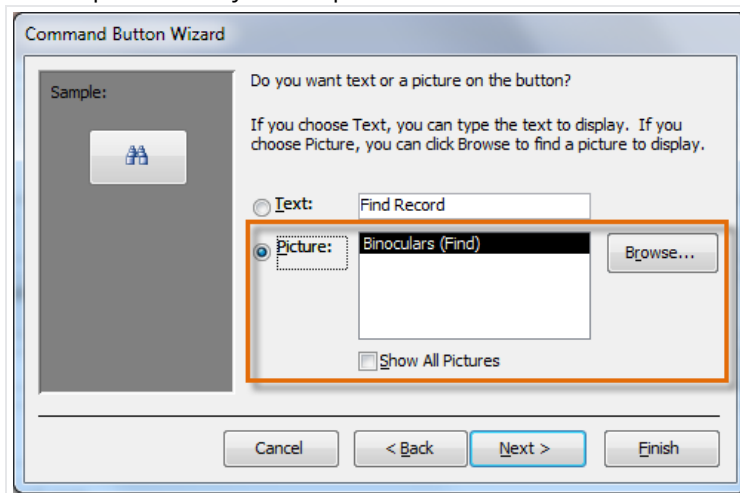
4. The **Command Button Wizard** will appear. In the **Categories** pane, select the category of button you want to add. We want to find a way to move more quickly to specific records, so we'll choose the **Record Navigation** category.
5. The list in the **Actions** pane will update to reflect your chosen category. Select the action you would like the button to perform, then click **Next**. For our example, we'll choose **Find Record**.



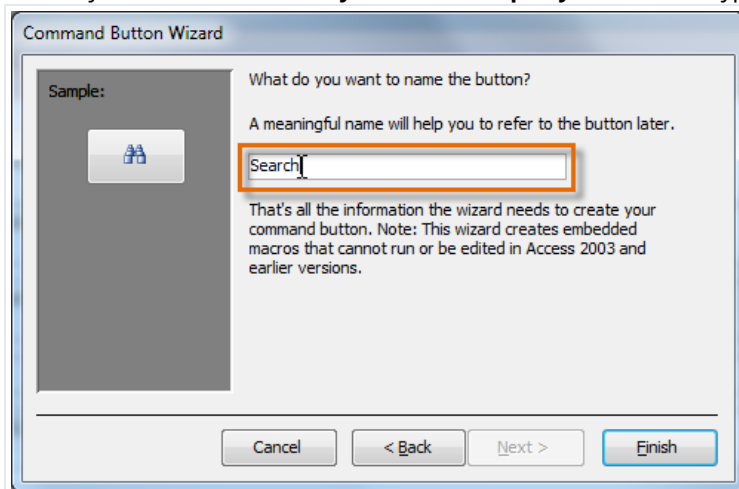
6. You can now decide whether you want your button to include **text** or a **picture**. A live preview of your button appears on the left.
 - To include **text**, select the **Text** option, then type the desired word or phrase into the text box.



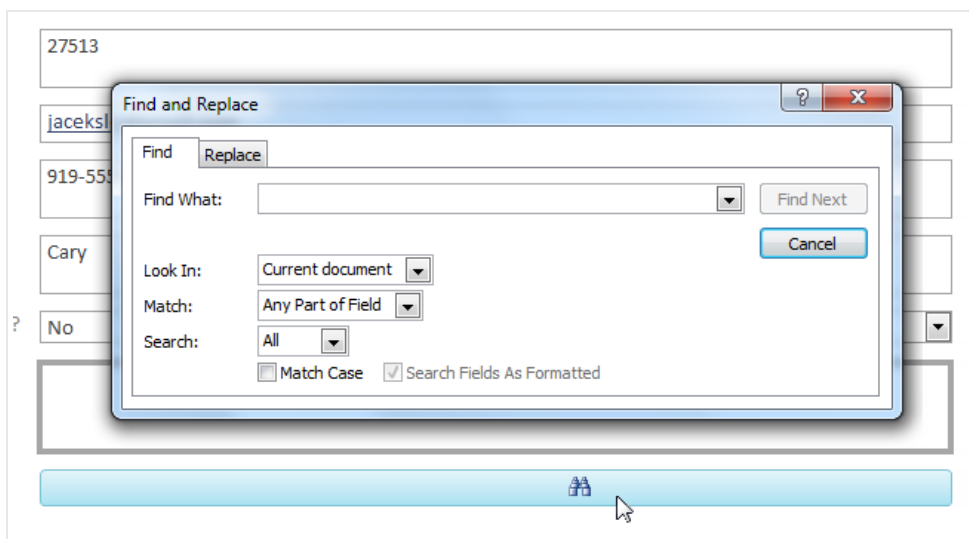
- To include a **picture**, select the **Picture** option. You can decide to keep the default picture for that command button, or you can select another picture. Click **Show All Pictures** to choose from another command button icon, or **Browse...** to choose a picture from your computer.



- When you are satisfied with the appearance of your command button, click **Next**.
- Type a **name** for the button. This name won't appear on the button, but knowing the name will help you quickly identify the button if you ever want to **modify** it with the **Property Sheet**. After typing the button name, click **Finish**.



- Switch to **Form** view to test the new button. Our **Find Record** button opens the **Find and Replace** dialog box.



Some users report that Access malfunctions while formatting forms. If you have a problem performing any of these tasks in Layout view, try switching to Design View.

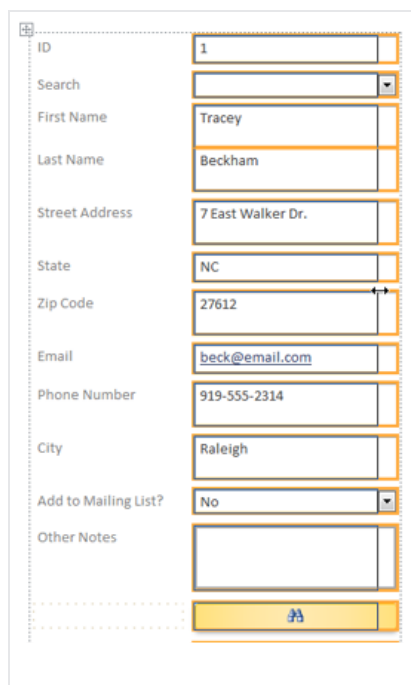
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Modifying form layout

When you create a form, Access arranges the form components in a default layout where the fields are neatly stacked on top of each other, all exactly the same width. While this layout is functional, you might find that it doesn't fit your information in the best way. For instance, in the form below, most of the fields are almost completely empty, since the data stored there doesn't take up much room.

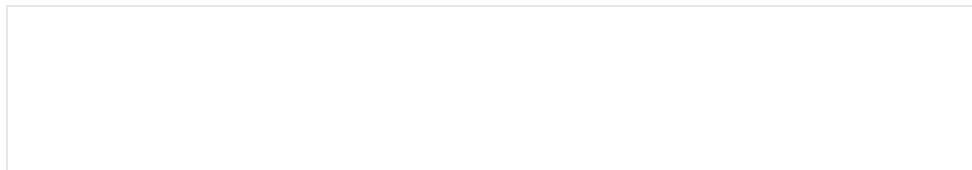
The form would fit the data a little better if we made the fields and command buttons smaller, and if we put some of them side by side. However, with the default layout, you won't be able to put two fields next to each other or resize one field or button without resizing them all. This is because Access lines up form components in rows and columns. When you resize a field, you're really

resizing the column that contains it.



To resize and rearrange our fields the way we want, we'll have to **modify the form layout**. For instance, since the default layout for our form contains only two columns—one for the **field labels** and another for the **fields**—we would have to **create a new column** to put two fields side by side.

We can do this using the command on the **Arrange** tab, which contains all of the tools you need to customize your form's layout. If you've ever built and modified **tables** in Microsoft Word, you already know how to use most of these tools. If you're unfamiliar with tables, review our [Word 2010: Working with Tables](#) lesson.

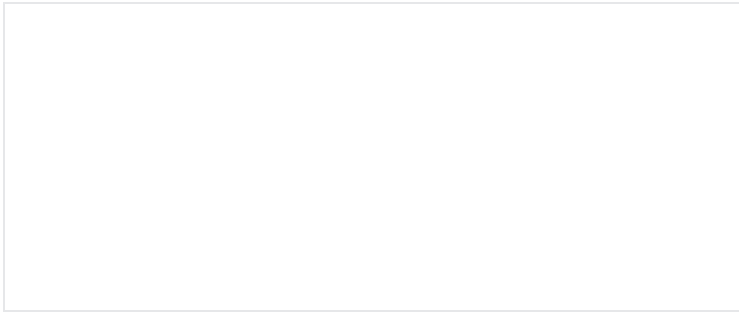


To resize form components:

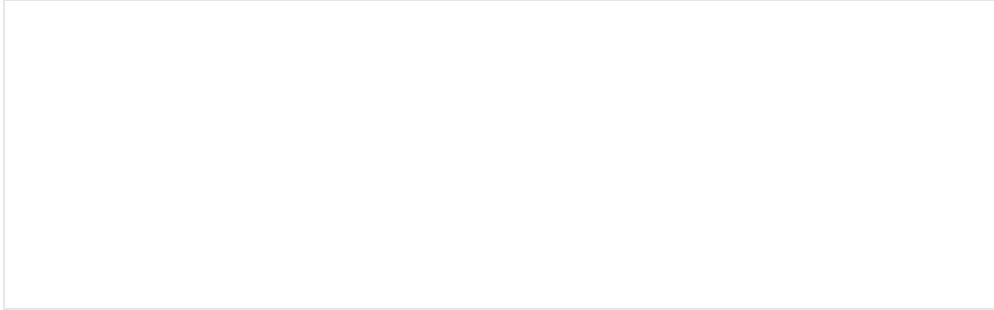
1. Switch to **Layout** view.



2. Select the field or button you would like to resize, and **hover your mouse** over the edge. Your cursor will become a double-sided arrow .



3. **Click** and **drag** the edge to resize, and release when the field or button is the desired size.



4. The field or button, as well as every other item in line with it, will be resized.



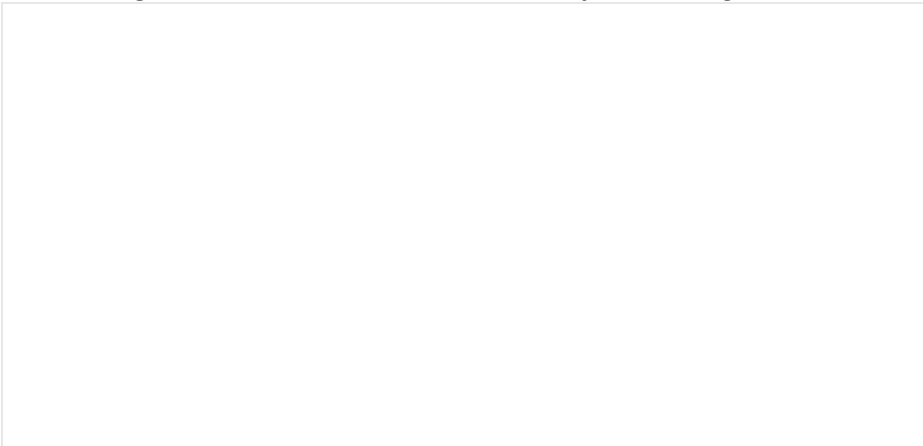
To move form components:

1. If necessary, **add columns or rows** to make room for the field or button you wish to move by using the **Insert** commands in the **Rows & Columns** group.

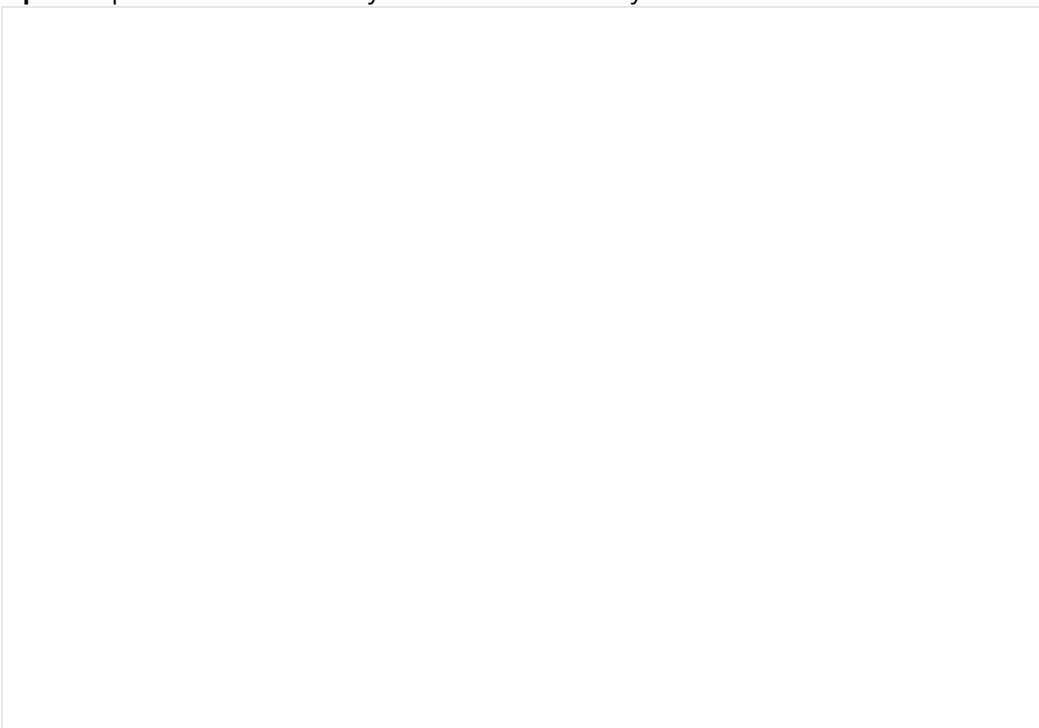
In our example, we want to move the **Last Name** field to the right of the **First Name** field, so we'll have to create two new columns to the right: one for the field label, and one for the field itself. To do this, we'll click the **Insert Right** command twice.



2. **Click** and **drag** the field or button to its new location. If you're moving a field, make sure to move the **field label** as well.



3. **Repeat** steps **one** and **two** with any other fields or buttons you wish to move.

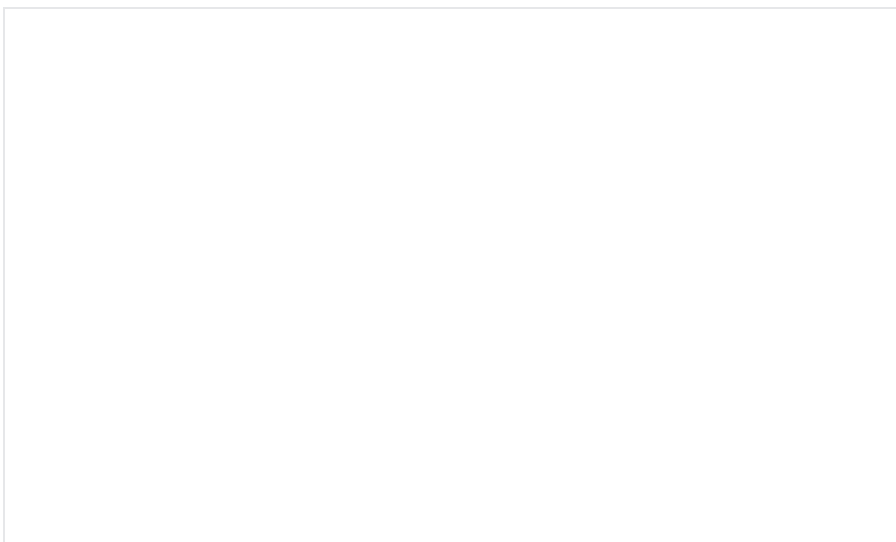


If you would like to make a field take up **more** or **less** space than one column, you can use the **Merge** and **Split** commands. The Merge command **combines** two or more cells, while the **Split** command **divides** a cell.



More formatting options

Adding **logos** and other images to your forms can greatly improve their appearance, as can applying **theme colors and fonts**. To learn how to add images and theme elements to your forms, review our instructions for **Formatting Reports** in our **Advanced Report Options** lesson. The procedures are identical.



Modifying the colors and fonts of form components

To further customize the appearance of your forms, you can apply different **colors** and **fonts** to individual fields, buttons, labels, and other form components. Modifying form appearance this way is useful if you want to use a certain color or font scheme in a form, but don't want those design elements to apply to your entire database.

For instance, in the form below, we modified the **font** of our form **title**. We also applied a new **fill** and **border color** to the form **fields**, and are doing the same with the **command buttons**.



You can make these changes using formatting techniques and tools similar to the ones you would use to modify shapes in Word and other Office programs. Simply select the object you want to modify while in **Layout** or **Design** view, and use the formatting options on the **Format** tab to customize its appearance. For more information on making these types of modifications, review our [Word 2010: Working with Shapes](#) lesson.

Challenge!

1. If you haven't already, download our [sample database](#) and **open** it.
2. Open the **Order Items** form.
3. Add a **command button** that creates a new record.
4. **Format** the newly added command button with the colors and style of your choosing.
5. Change the **theme colors** and **theme fonts**.
6. Add a **logo**.