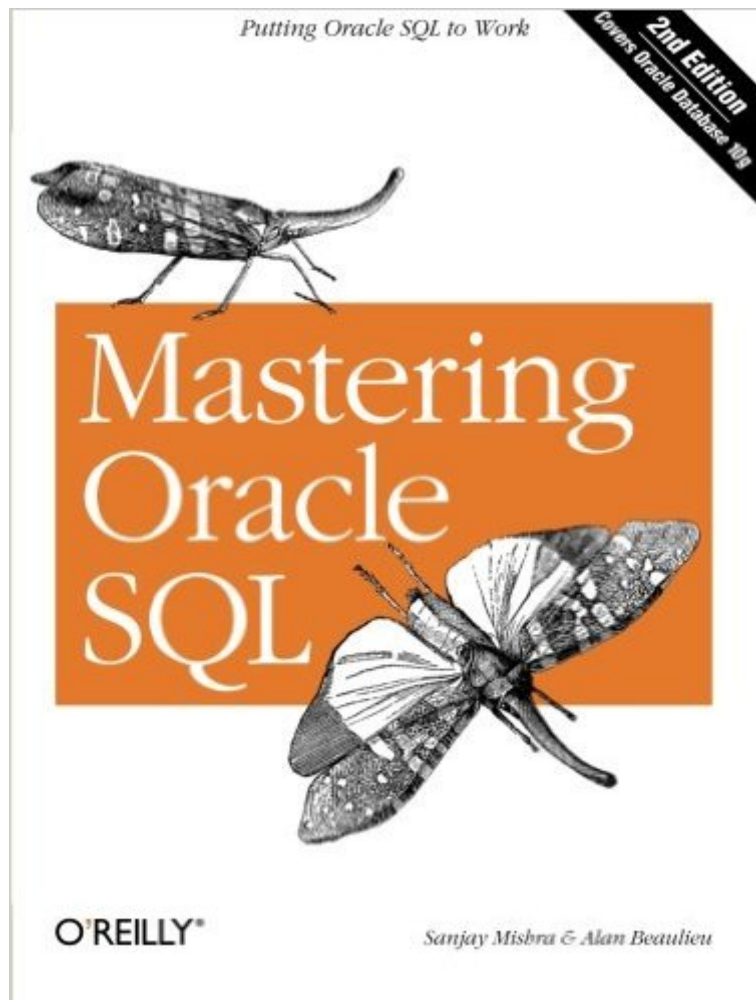


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Mastering Oracle SQL, 2nd Edition



Synopsis

The vast majority of Oracle SQL books discuss some syntax, provide the barest rudiments of using Oracle SQL, and perhaps include a few simple examples. It might be enough to pass a survey course, or give you some buzz words to drop in conversation with real Oracle DBAs. But if you use Oracle SQL on a regular basis, you want much more. You want to access the full power of SQL to write queries in an Oracle environment. You want a solid understanding of what's possible with Oracle SQL, creative techniques for writing effective and accurate queries, and the practical, hands-on information that leads to true mastery of the language. Simply put, you want useful, expert best practices that can be put to work immediately, not just non-vendor specific overview or theory. Updated to cover the latest version of Oracle, Oracle 10g, this edition of the highly regarded *Mastering Oracle SQL* has a stronger focus on technique and on Oracle's implementation of SQL than any other book on the market. It covers Oracle's vast library of built-in functions, the full range of Oracle SQL query-writing features, regular expression support, new aggregate and analytic functions, subqueries in the SELECT and WITH clauses, multiset union operators, enhanced support for hierarchical queries: leaf and loop detection, and the CONNECT_BY_ROOT operator, new partitioning methods (some introduced in Oracle9i Release 2), and the native XML datatype, XMLType. *Mastering Oracle SQL*, 2nd Edition fills the gap between the sometimes spotty vendor documentation, and other books on SQL that just don't explore the full depth of what is possible with Oracle-specific SQL. For those who want to harness the untapped (and often overlooked) power of Oracle SQL, this essential guide for putting Oracle SQL to work will prove invaluable.

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Customer Reviews

[A REVIEW OF THE SECOND EDITION]Those of you dealing with the latest Oracle 10g, and perhaps frustrated with the quality of the Oracle documentation, might want to consult this second edition. Its greatest difference compared to the first edition is simply that it deals with 10g, whereas the latter talks about 9g. Mishra and Beaulieu explain, with extensive detail and examples, the new features. Like support for unix-like regular expressions within SQL statements. Given that many Oracle users probably hail from a unix/C background, they will welcome this. Also, for mapping between XML and SQL data types, 10g now integrates XML. This will reduce the impedance mismatch between the object oriented and relational outlooks that bedevil many programmers who have to deal with both. The only problem I found with this book is its lack of mention of competing databases. Because the authors explicitly assume that you have already committed to using Oracle as your database. Fair enough. But perhaps occasional comments in the text, about how a given command or feature is not possible in another database would be useful and appreciated by Oracle users. Heck, to be fair, on this point, the book is at no relative disadvantage. For example, I have texts on dB2 and MySQL that likewise say zilch about their competitors.

I will agree with other reviewers that cite this book as an excellent resource. It is well organized and easy to follow from topic to topic without getting lost. The examples are well introduced and written with few minor errors. These will be easy to spot for someone who has used any flavor of SQL. Some issues that I did have with the book revolve around what it isn't. Most of the book revolves around features that are new to 10g rather than a solid overview of the Oracle DML. This means that readers will not be properly introduced to string manipulation outside of the regular expression implementation which is new to 10g (Legacy DBs?). Also, you will have to look elsewhere for good information on CAST, CONVERT and case changing functions. These can be crucial as Oracle is much more strongly typed with regards to data than MS SQL Server. As DBAs or reporting analysts aren't always privy to the latest release, I see the concentration on 10g's new features as a flaw. Over all this book will introduce you to Oracle SQL in an easy to follow manner. Experienced SQL users will be able to become functional by using this book but, will scratch their heads when they encounter the DML language gaps.

This book presents complex structures in an easy to follow fashion with practical examples. I was

able to apply new Oracle functions to real reporting problems immediately after reading it. If you ever have written a PL/SQL function purely to manipulate data because you didn't think SQL would be able to do it, you need to read this book! The book covers the spectrum from basics to the new 9i analytical functions. As such anyone can benefit from it. The book is written to help the user understand the power of well structured SQL. It does not contain an exhaustive syntactical list (which can be easily found elsewhere) but rather outlines how to actually use SQL to achieve solid results and optimal performance. In my experience, a high percentage of users who think they know how to write good SQL, actually only know a lot of low-level syntax and are in need of the big picture this book provides. The chapter on Dates however, does go into fascinating and exhaustive detail of the date data type structure, both pre-existing and Oracle 9i. This is an absolute must for anyone who works with a database that contains highly time sensitive data, or for those who are confused by the data type. The new features in Oracle 9i are clearly outlined such as the reporting functions for grouping at multiple levels. This book presents them in a way that opens the user's mind to endless possibilities, leaving the reader wondering how they ever managed without them (or how they will manage without them until their company's next upgrade).

There are a lot of SQL books out there and this one is by no means the "fattest" but if your goal is querying or anything to do with business intelligence, this one is the best. It covers basic queries to advanced queries such as subqueries, CASE statement, and the newer analytic functions. The examples are great.

If you use Oracle SQL on a regular basis, and are looking for more power without turning to procedural SQL, greater understanding of what's possible with Oracle SQL, and overall greater mastery of the language, then this book definitely deserves a place in your library. A beginner might find him/herself a bit overwhelmed with the depth of the book, but with effort, the knowledge gained from it will prove invaluable. Those already familiar with Oracle and SQL, will still find it very enlightening and enabling. One very nice feature in the book is how the authors are very good to point out gotchas you might encounter, and particularly workarounds to limitations in Oracle's implementation of SQL. In this way the book falls squarely into the role for which it was intended, i.e., mastering the topic--knowing the inherent strengths and shortcomings of the product, and how to leverage the strengths while working around the shortcomings. Throughout the book the authors include coverage on new features available in Oracle 9i, and they are very careful to point out which features covered are available in the various older releases of Oracle (as well as which ones are

not). Mastering Oracle SQL passes the practicality and timeliness rating with flying colors. I've already been able to use several tricks I've learned from the book to great advantage in my daily work. In summary, if you want to get beyond the simple examples in most books covering SQL, and a better overall picture than what the references and the Oracle documentation have to offer, Mastering Oracle SQL will be an invaluable tool in your hands. With respect to the lack of an example database mentioned in other reviews, the authors have now posted a zip file in the 'Examples' section of the book's web site ... which includes sql to create and populate the example database used in the book.

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