# What are the wildcards in Access query filters?

**Copilot**

In **Microsoft Access**, you can use wildcards to create flexible query filters. These wildcards allow you to match patterns within your data. Here are some common wildcard characters and how to use them:

1. **Asterisk (\*)**: Matches zero or more characters. You can use it as the first or last character in a character string. For example:
   * wh\* finds “wh,” “what,” “white,” and “why.”
   * \*owner\* matches any value containing “owner.”
2. **Question Mark (?)**: Matches any single alphabetic character. For instance:
   * b?ll finds “ball,” “bell,” and “bill.”
3. **Square Brackets ([])**: Matches any single character within the brackets. For example:
   * b[ae]ll matches “ball” and “bell” but not “bill.”
4. **Exclamation Mark (!)**: Matches any character not in the brackets. For instance:
   * b[!ae]ll finds “bill” and “bull” but not “ball” or “bell.”
5. **Hyphen (-)**: Matches any one of a range of characters. Specify the range in ascending order (A to Z, not Z to A). For example:
   * b[a-c]d matches “bad,” “bbd,” and “bcd.”
6. **Number Sign (#)**: Matches any single numeric character. For instance:
   * 1#3 finds “103,” “113,” and “123.”

Here are some examples of using wildcards:

* If your data lists some people as “owner” and others as “owner/operator,” you can use:
  + Like "\*owner\*" or Like "owner\*"
* To find customers whose last name starts with A through H (for bulk mailing, perhaps):
  + Like "[a-h]\*"
* If you want to find part numbers that have all but the second and third digit in common:
  + Like "R??083930"

Remember that Access supports two sets of wildcard characters because it adheres to two standards for Structured Query Language (SQL): ANSI-89 and ANSI-92. [You’ll typically use the ANSI-89 wildcards when running queries and find-and-replace operations against Access databases (.mdb and .accdb files) 1](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/use-wildcards-in-queries-and-parameters-in-access-ec057a45-78b1-4d16-8c20-242cde582e0b). [If you’re working with VBA code, you can also use wildcards to filter records dynamically 2](https://stackoverflow.com/questions/54319337/how-do-i-write-vba-filter-with-wildcard).