

18.1.2 Data Entry Forms

Syllabus 2026 - 2028

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Create and use a data entry form, including specified fields, font styles and sizes, spacing between fields, character spacing, white space, radio buttons, check boxes and drop-down menus
- Characteristics of good form design

What a data entry form is

A **data entry form** is a screen layout used to enter, edit and view records in a table. It is easier and less error-prone than typing directly into the table, because the layout guides the user and can limit what they enter.

Figure 102: A data entry form

Student Registration

First name 1

Surname

Gender 2

Class 3

Fees paid 4

Save 6

Form features

1 Text boxes for typed data

2 Radio buttons: choose one

3 Drop-down menu: pick from a list

4 Check box: yes or no

5 Clear labels and good spacing

6 Consistent fonts and sizes

Control	Use	Example
Text box	Type text or numbers	First name
Radio buttons	Choose one option from a small set	Gender: Female or Male
Check box	Select or clear a yes/no (Boolean) value; several can be chosen	Fees paid
Drop-down menu (combo box)	Pick one value from a list, which reduces typing errors	Class: 4A, 4B, 4C
Command button	Run an action	Save record

Creating a form

- Choose the table or query the form is based on, and add the **specified fields** only
- Use clear **labels** beside each control, with suitable **font styles and sizes** (for example 12 pt sans-serif for labels)
- Set the **spacing between fields** and the **character spacing** or width of each field so the data fits
- Align controls and labels in columns, and use **white space** to separate groups of fields
- Add radio buttons, check boxes and drop-down menus where they suit the data
- Test the form by entering data, and check it is stored correctly

Characteristics of good form design

Figure 103: Good and poor form design

Poor design	Good design
cramped fields, tiny text, mixed fonts, no white space, unclear labels	clear labels, readable sizes, even spacing, white space, logical order

- A clear **title** and clear **labels** that say what to enter
- A logical **order** of fields, usually top to bottom and matching the source document
- Consistent **fonts, sizes and colours** that are easy to read
- Enough **white space** and spacing so the form does not look crowded
- Fields of a **suitable size** for the data
- Use of **drop-down menus, radio buttons and check boxes** to limit choices and prevent errors
- Simple instructions, and validation where possible

EXAM TIP

Link each form feature to its **benefit**: 'a drop-down menu for Class stops a user mistyping a class name, so data is more accurate'. Radio buttons allow **one** choice; check boxes allow **several**.

Key terms

Term	Meaning
Form	A screen layout for entering and viewing records.
Control	An item on a form, such as a text box.
Label	Text that says what to enter in a field.
Radio button	A control that lets one option be chosen.
Check box	A control that is ticked or not ticked.
Drop-down menu	A list from which a value is picked.
White space	Empty areas that make a layout clear.
Data entry	Putting data into a system.

Practice questions

Answer each question in full sentences. Command words used: State (give a short answer), Describe (say what it is like), Explain (give reasons), Analyse (break it down and examine it), Suggest (apply your knowledge to a situation), Compare and contrast (similarities and differences), Evaluate (weigh up and reach a judgement).

No.	Question	Marks
1	State two controls that can be used on a data entry form.	[2]
2	Describe the difference between a radio button and a check box.	[3]
3	Explain why a drop-down menu can improve the accuracy of data entered.	[3]
4	Suggest four features of a well-designed data entry form for a school library.	[4]
5	Analyse the advantages of using a form instead of typing data directly into a table.	[4]

Total: 16 marks