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Using Conversion Functions and Conditional Expressions

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Objectives

After completing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Describe the various types of conversion functions that are available in SQL
- Use the `TO_CHAR`, `TO_NUMBER`, and `TO_DATE` conversion functions
- Apply conditional expressions in a `SELECT` statement

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This lesson focuses on functions that convert data from one type to another (for example, conversion from character data to numeric data) and discusses the conditional expressions in SQL `SELECT` statements.

Lesson Agenda

- Implicit and explicit data type conversion
- TO_CHAR, TO_DATE, TO_NUMBER functions
- Nesting functions
- General functions:
  - NVL
  - NVL2
  - NULLIF
  - COALESCE
- Conditional expressions:
  - CASE
  - DECODE

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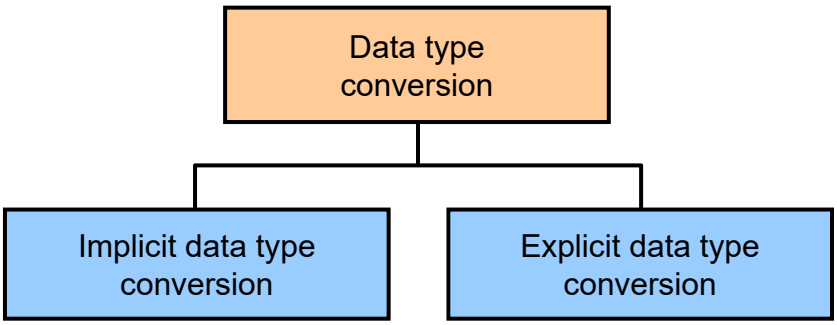
Conversion Functions



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In addition to Oracle data types, columns of tables in an Oracle Database can be defined by using the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), DB2, and SQL/DS data types. However, the Oracle server internally converts such data types to Oracle data types.

In some cases, the Oracle server receives data of one data type where it expects data of a different data type. When this happens, the Oracle server can automatically convert the data to the expected data type. This data type conversion can be done *implicitly* by the Oracle server or *explicitly* by the user.

Implicit data type conversions work according to the rules explained in the following slides.

Explicit data type conversions are performed by using the conversion functions. Conversion functions convert a value from one data type to another. Generally, the form of the function names follows the convention *`data type`* `TO` *`data type`*. The first data type is the input data type and the second data type is the output.

Note: Although implicit data type conversion is available, it is recommended that you do the explicit data type conversion to ensure the reliability of your SQL statements.

Implicit Data Type Conversion

In expressions, the Oracle server can automatically convert the following:

From	To
VARCHAR2 or CHAR	NUMBER
VARCHAR2 or CHAR	DATE

Oracle server can automatically perform data type conversion in an expression. For example, the expression `hire_date > '01-JAN-90'` results in the implicit conversion from the string `'01-JAN-90'` to a date. Therefore, a `VARCHAR2` or `CHAR` value can be implicitly converted to a number or date data type in an expression.

Implicit Data Type Conversion

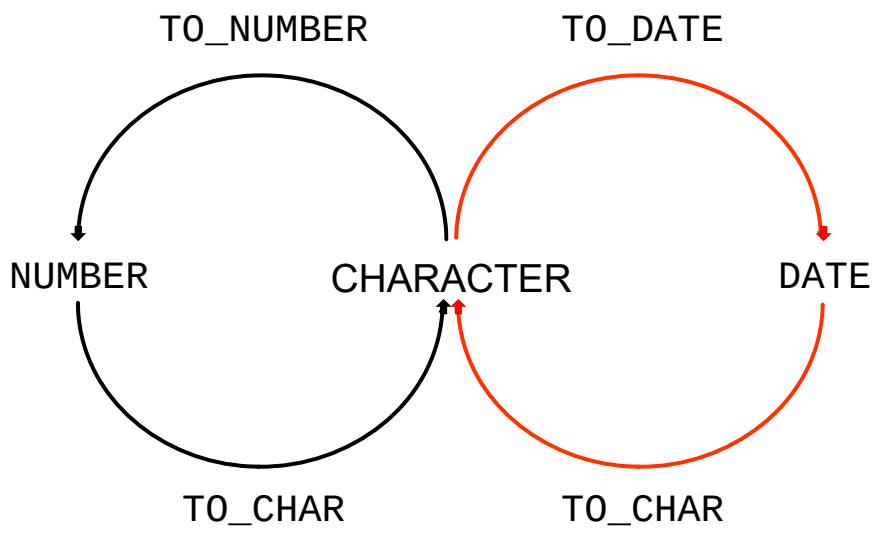
For expression evaluation, the Oracle server can automatically convert the following:

From	To
NUMBER	VARCHAR2 or CHAR
DATE	VARCHAR2 or CHAR

In general, the Oracle server uses the rule for expressions when a data type conversion is needed. For example, the expression `grade = 2` results in the implicit conversion of the number 2 to the string “2” because grade is a `CHAR(2)` column.

Note: `CHAR` to `NUMBER` conversions succeed only if the character string represents a valid number.

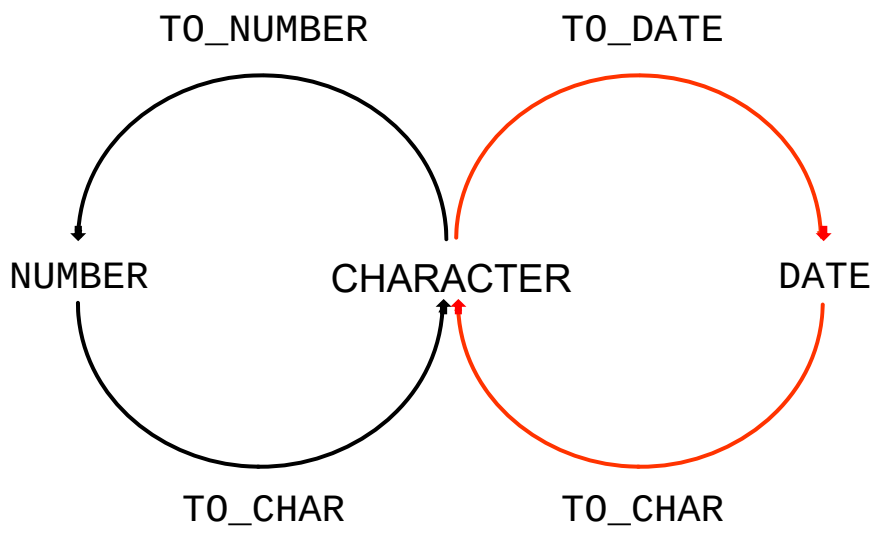
Explicit Data Type Conversion



SQL provides three functions to convert a value from one data type to another:

Function	Purpose
`TO_CHAR(`*`number`*`|`*`date`*`,[ `*`fmt`*`], [`*`nlsparams`*`])`	Converts a number or date value to a `VARCHAR2` character string with the format model *`fmt`* **Number conversion:** The `nlsparams` parameter specifies the following characters, which are returned by number format elements: • Decimal character • Group separator • Local currency symbol • International currency symbol If `nlsparams` or any other parameter is omitted, this function uses the default parameter values for the session.

Explicit Data Type Conversion



Function	Purpose
TO_CHAR(*number*|*date*,[*fmt*], [*nlsparams*])	**Date conversion:** The nlsparams parameter specifies the language in which the month and day names, and abbreviations are returned. If this parameter is omitted, this function uses the default date languages for the session.
TO_NUMBER(*char*,[*fmt*], [*nlsparams*])	Converts a character string containing digits to a number in the format specified by the optional format model *fmt*. The nlsparams parameter has the same purpose in this function as in the TO_CHAR function for number conversion.
TO_DATE(*char*,[*fmt*],[*nlsparams*])	Converts a character string representing a date to a date value according to *fmt* that is specified. If *fmt* is omitted, the format is DD-MON-YY. The nlsparams parameter has the same purpose in this function as in the TO_CHAR function for date conversion.

Note: The list of functions mentioned in this lesson includes only some of the available conversion functions.

For more information, see the “Conversion Functions” section in *Oracle Database SQL Language Reference* for 10*g* or 11*g* database.

Lesson Agenda

- Implicit and explicit data type conversion
- TO_CHAR, TO_DATE, TO_NUMBER functions
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  - NULLIF
  - COALESCE
- Conditional expressions:
  - CASE
  - DECODE

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Using the TO_CHAR Function with Dates

```
TO_CHAR(date, 'format_model')
```

The format model:

- Must be enclosed with single quotation marks
- Is case-sensitive
- Can include any valid date format element
- Has an `fm` element to remove padded blanks or suppress leading zeros
- Is separated from the date value by a comma

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`TO_CHAR` converts a datetime data type to a value of `VARCHAR2` data type in the format specified by the *format_model*. A format model is a character literal that describes the format of datetime stored in a character string. For example, the datetime format model for the string `'11-Nov-1999'` is `'DD-Mon-YYYY'`. You can use the `TO_CHAR` function to convert a date from its default format to the one that you specify.

Guidelines

- The format model must be enclosed with single quotation marks and is case-sensitive.
- The format model can include any valid date format element. But be sure to separate the date value from the format model with a comma.
- The names of days and months in the output are automatically padded with blanks.
- To remove padded blanks or to suppress leading zeros, use the fill mode *fm* element.

```
SELECT employee_id, TO_CHAR(hire_date, 'MM/YY') Month_Hired
FROM   employees
WHERE  last_name = 'Higgins';
```

	EMPLOYEE_ID	MONTH_HIRED
1	205	06/94

Elements of the Date Format Model

Element	Result
YYYY	Full year in numbers
YEAR	Year spelled out (in English)
MM	Two-digit value for the month
MONTH	Full name of the month
MON	Three-letter abbreviation of the month
DY	Three-letter abbreviation of the day of the week
DAY	Full name of the day of the week
DD	Numeric day of the month

Element	Description
SCC or CC	Century; server prefixes B.C. date with -
Years in dates YYYY or SYYYY	Year; server prefixes B.C. date with -
YYY or YY or Y	Last three, two, or one digit of the year
Y,YYY	Year with comma in this position
IYYY, IYY, IY, I	Four-, three-, two-, or one-digit year based on the ISO standard
SYEAR or YEAR	Year spelled out; server prefixes B.C. date with -
BC or AD	Indicates B.C. or A.D. year
B.C. or A.D.	Indicates B.C. or A.D. year using periods
Q	Quarter of year
MM	Month: two-digit value
MONTH	Name of the month padded with blanks to a length of nine characters
MON	Name of the month, three-letter abbreviation
RM	Roman numeral month
WW or W	Week of the year or month
DDD or DD or D	Day of the year, month, or week
DAY	Name of the day padded with blanks to a length of nine characters
DY	Name of the day; three-letter abbreviation
J	Julian day; the number of days since December 31, 4713 B.C.
IW	Weeks in the year from ISO standard (1 to 53)

Elements of the Date Format Model

- Time elements format the time portion of the date:

`HH24:MI:SS AM`	`15:45:32 PM`

- Add character strings by enclosing them with double quotation marks:

`DD "of" MONTH`	`12 of OCTOBER`

- Number suffixes spell out numbers:

`ddspth`	`fourteenth`

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Use the formats that are listed in the following tables to display time information and literals, and to change numerals to spelled numbers.

Element	Description
AM or PM	Meridian indicator
A.M. or P.M.	Meridian indicator with periods
HH or HH12	12 hour format
HH24	24 hour format
MI	Minute (0–59)
SS	Second (0–59)
SSSSS	Seconds past midnight (0–86399)

Other Formats

Element	Description
/ . ,	Punctuation is reproduced in the result.
“of the”	Quoted string is reproduced in the result.

Specifying Suffixes to Influence Number Display

Element	Description
TH	Ordinal number (for example, DDTH for 4TH)
SP	Spelled-out number (for example, DDSP for FOUR)
SPTH or THSP	Spelled-out ordinal numbers (for example, DDSPTH for FOURTH)

Using the TO_CHAR Function with Dates

```
SELECT last_name,
       TO_CHAR(hire_date, 'fmDD Month YYYY')
       AS HIREDATE
FROM   employees;
```

	LAST_NAME	HIREDATE
1	Whalen	17 September 1987
2	Hartstein	17 February 1996
3	Fay	17 August 1997
4	Higgins	7 June 1994
5	Gietz	7 June 1994
6	King	17 June 1987
7	Kochhar	21 September 1989
8	De Haan	13 January 1993
9	Hunold	3 January 1990
10	Ernst	21 May 1991

...

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The SQL statement in the slide displays the last names and hire dates for all the employees. The hire date appears as 17 June 1987.

Example

Modify the example in the slide to display the dates in a format that appears as “Seventeenth of June 1987 12:00:00 AM.”

```
SELECT  last_name,
 TO_CHAR(hire_date,
       'fmDdspth "of" Month YYYY fmHH:MI:SS AM')
 HIREDATE
FROM    employees;
```

	LAST_NAME	HIREDATE
1	Whalen	Seventeenth of September 1987 12:00:00 AM
2	Hartstein	Seventeenth of February 1996 12:00:00 AM

...

Notice that the month follows the format model specified; in other words, the first letter is capitalized and the rest are in lowercase.

Using the TO_CHAR Function with Numbers

```
TO_CHAR(number, 'format_model')
```

These are some of the format elements that you can use with the TO_CHAR function to display a number value as a character:

Element	Result
9	Represents a number
0	Forces a zero to be displayed
$	Places a floating dollar sign
L	Uses the floating local currency symbol
.	Prints a decimal point
,	Prints a comma as a thousands indicator

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When working with number values, such as character strings, you should convert those numbers to the character data type using the TO_CHAR function, which translates a value of NUMBER data type to VARCHAR2 data type. This technique is especially useful with concatenation.

Number Format Elements

If you are converting a number to the character data type, you can use the following format elements:

Element	Description	Example	Result
9	Numeric position (number of 9s determine display width)	999999	1234
0	Display leading zeros	099999	001234
$	Floating dollar sign	$999999	$1234
L	Floating local currency symbol	L999999	FF1234
D	Returns the decimal character in the specified position. The default is a period (.).	9999D99	1234.00
.	Decimal point in position specified	999999.99	1234.00
G	Returns the group separator in the specified position. You can specify multiple group separators in a number format model.	9G999	1,234
,	Comma in position specified	999,999	1,234
MI	Minus signs to right (negative values)	999999MI	1234-
PR	Parenthesize negative numbers	999999PR	<1234>
EEEE	Scientific notation (format must specify four Es)	99.999EEEE	1.234E+03
U	Returns in the specified position the “Euro” (or other) dual currency	U9999	€1234
V	Multiply by 10 *n* times (*n* = number of 9s after V)	9999V99	123400
S	Returns the negative or positive value	S9999	-1234 or +1234
B	Display zero values as blank, not 0	B9999.99	1234.00

Using the TO_CHAR Function with Numbers

```
SELECT TO_CHAR(salary, '$99,999.00') SALARY
FROM   employees
WHERE  last_name = 'Ernst';
```

	SALARY
1	$6,000.00

- The Oracle server displays a string of number signs (#) in place of a whole number whose digits exceed the number of digits provided in the format model.
- The Oracle server rounds the stored decimal value to the number of decimal places provided in the format model.

Using the TO_NUMBER and TO_DATE Functions

- Convert a character string to a number format using the TO_NUMBER function:

```
TO_NUMBER(char[, 'format_model'])
```

- Convert a character string to a date format using the TO_DATE function:

```
TO_DATE(char[, 'format_model'])
```

- These functions have an fx modifier. This modifier specifies the exact match for the character argument and date format model of a TO_DATE function.

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You may want to convert a character string to either a number or a date. To accomplish this task, use the TO_NUMBER or TO_DATE functions. The format model that you select is based on the previously demonstrated format elements.

The fx modifier specifies the exact match for the character argument and date format model of a TO_DATE function:

- Punctuation and quoted text in the character argument must exactly match (except for case) the corresponding parts of the format model.
- The character argument cannot have extra blanks. Without fx, the Oracle server ignores extra blanks.
- Numeric data in the character argument must have the same number of digits as the corresponding element in the format model. Without fx, the numbers in the character argument can omit leading zeros.

Example

Display the name and hire date for all employees who started on May 24, 1999. There are two spaces after the month *May* and before the number *24* in the following example. Because the `fx` modifier is used, an exact match is required and the spaces after the word *May* are not recognized:

```
SELECT last_name, hire_date
FROM   employees
WHERE  hire_date = TO_DATE('May  24, 1999', 'fxMonth DD, YYYY');
```

The resulting error output looks like this:

```
ORA-01858: a non-numeric character was found where a numeric was expected
01858. 00000 - "a non-numeric character was found where a numeric was expected"
*Cause:   The input data to be converted using a date format model was
          incorrect. The input data did not contain a number where a number was
          required by the format model.
*Action:  Fix the input data or the date format model to make sure the
          elements match in number and type. Then retry the operation.
```

To see the output, correct the query by deleting the extra space between ‘May’ and ‘24’.

```
SELECT last_name, hire_date
FROM   employees
WHERE  hire_date = TO_DATE('May 24, 1999', 'fxMonth DD, YYYY');
```

	LAST_NAME	HIRE_DATE
1	Grant	24-MAY-99

Using the TO_CHAR and TO_DATE Function with the RR Date Format

To find employees hired before 1990, use the RR date format, which produces the same results whether the command is run in 1999 or now:

```
SELECT last_name, TO_CHAR(hire_date, 'DD-Mon-YYYY')
FROM  employees
WHERE hire_date < TO_DATE('01-Jan-90','DD-Mon-RR');
```

	LAST_NAME	TO_CHAR(HIRE_DATE,'DD-MON-YYYY')
1	Whalen	17-Sep-1987
2	King	17-Jun-1987
3	Kochhar	21-Sep-1989

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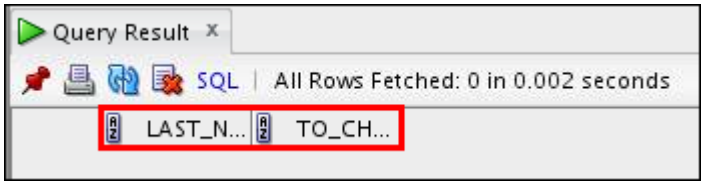
To find employees who were hired before 1990, the RR format can be used. Because the current year is greater than 1999, the RR format interprets the year portion of the date from 1950 to 1999.

Alternatively, the following command, results in no rows being selected because the YY format interprets the year portion of the date in the current century (2090).

```
SELECT last_name, TO_CHAR(hire_date, 'DD-Mon-yyyy')
FROM   employees
WHERE  TO_DATE(hire_date, 'DD-Mon-yy') < '01-Jan-90';
```



Notice that no rows are retrieved from the above query.

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- Implicit and explicit data type conversion
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Nesting Functions

- Single-row functions can be nested to any level.
- Nested functions are evaluated from the deepest level to the least deep level.

```
F3(F2(F1(col,arg1),arg2),arg3)
```

Step 1 = Result 1

Step 2 = Result 2

Step 3 = Result 3

Single-row functions can be nested to any depth. Nested functions are evaluated from the innermost level to the outermost level. Some examples follow to show you the flexibility of these functions.

Nesting Functions: Example 1

```
SELECT last_name,
  UPPER(CONCAT(SUBSTR (LAST_NAME, 1, 8), '_US'))
FROM   employees
WHERE  department_id = 60;
```

	LAST_NAME	UPPER(CONCAT(SUBSTR(LAST_NAME,1,8),'_US'))
1	Hunold	HUNOLD_US
2	Ernst	ERNST_US
3	Lorentz	LORENTZ_US

The example in the slide displays the last names of employees in department 60. The evaluation of the SQL statement involves three steps:

1. The inner function retrieves the first eight characters of the last name.

   `Result1 = SUBSTR (LAST_NAME, 1, 8)`

2. The outer function concatenates the result with _US.

   `Result2 = CONCAT(Result1, '_US')`

3. The outermost function converts the results to uppercase.

The entire expression becomes the column heading because no column alias was given.

Example

Display the date of the next Friday that is six months from the hire date. The resulting date should appear as Friday, August 13th, 1999. Order the results by hire date.

```
SELECT   TO_CHAR(NEXT_DAY(ADD_MONTHS
         (hire_date, 6), 'FRIDAY'),
         'fmDay, Month ddth, YYYY')
         "Next 6 Month Review"
FROM      employees
```

```
ORDER BY  hire_date;
```

Nesting Functions: Example 2

```
SELECT   TO_CHAR(ROUND((salary/7), 2),'99G999D99',
         'NLS_NUMERIC_CHARACTERS = '',.'' ')
         "Formatted Salary"
FROM employees;
```

	Formatted Salary
1	628,57
2	1.857,14
3	857,14
4	1.714,29
5	1.185,71
6	3.428,57

...

The example in the slide displays the salaries of employees divided by 7 and rounded to two decimals. The result is then formatted to display the salary in Danish notation. That is, comma is used for decimal point and a period for thousands.

First, the inner `ROUND` function is executed to round off the value of salary divided by 7 to two decimal places. The `TO_CHAR` function is then used to format the result of the `ROUND` function.

Note: D and G specified in the `TO_CHAR` function parameter are number format elements. D returns a decimal character in the specified position. G is used as a group separator.

The NLS_NUMERIC_CHARACTERS function shown in the example above is used to identify the characters to use for the decimal and thousands separators. In this example, it is specifying to use the ',' as the decimal separator and the '.' for the thousands separator. Without using the NLS_NUMERIC_CHARACTERS function, these separators would default to values that are set at the database level.

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General Functions

The following functions work with any data type and pertain to using nulls:

- `NVL (expr1, expr2)`
- `NVL2 (expr1, expr2, expr3)`
- `NULLIF (expr1, expr2)`
- `COALESCE (expr1, expr2, ..., exprn)`

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These functions work with any data type and pertain to the use of null values in the expression list.

Function	Description
`NVL`	Converts a null value to an actual value
`NVL2`	If `expr1` is not null, `NVL2` returns `expr2`. If `expr1` is null, `NVL2` returns `expr3`. The argument `expr1` can have any data type.
`NULLIF`	Compares two expressions and returns null if they are equal; returns the first expression if they are not equal
`COALESCE`	Returns the first non-null expression in the expression list

Note: For more information about the hundreds of functions available, see the “Functions” section in *Oracle Database SQL Language Reference* for 10*g* or 11*g* database.

NVL Function

Converts a null value to an actual value:

- Data types that can be used are date, character, and number.
- Data types must match:
  - `NVL(commission_pct,0)`
  - `NVL(hire_date,'01-JAN-97')`
  - `NVL(job_id,'No Job Yet')`

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To convert a null value to an actual value, use the `NVL` function.

Syntax

`NVL (expr1, expr2)`

In the syntax:

- *expr1* is the source value or expression that may contain a null
- *expr2* is the target value for converting the null

You can use the `NVL` function with any data type, but the return value is always the same as the data type of *expr1*.

NVL Conversions for Various Data Types

Data Type	Conversion Example
NUMBER	NVL(*number_column*,9)
DATE	NVL(*date_column*, '01-JAN-95')
CHAR or VARCHAR2	NVL(*character_column*, 'Unavailable')

Using the NVL Function

```
SELECT last_name, salary, NVL(commission_pct, 0),
   (salary*12) + (salary*12*NVL(commission_pct, 0)) AN_SAL
FROM employees;
```

	LAST_NAME	SALARY	NVL(COMMISSION_PCT,0)	AN_SAL
1	Whalen	4400	0	52800
2	Hartstein	13000	0	156000
3	Fay	6000	0	72000
4	Higgins	12000	0	144000
5	Gietz	8300	0	99600
6	King	24000	0	288000
7	Kochhar	17000	0	204000
8	De Haan	17000	0	204000
9	Hunold	9000	0	108000
10	Ernst	6000	0	72000

...

To calculate the annual compensation of all employees, you need to multiply the monthly salary by 12 and then add the commission percentage to the result:

```
SELECT last_name, salary, commission_pct,
 (salary*12) + (salary*12*commission_pct) AN_SAL
FROM   employees;
```

	LAST_NAME	SALARY	COMMISSION_PCT	AN_SAL
1	Whalen	4400	(null)	(null)

...

16	Vargas	2500	(null)	(null)
17	Zlotkey	10500	0.2	151200
18	Abel	11000	0.3	171600
19	Taylor	8600	0.2	123840
20	Grant	7000	0.15	96600

Notice that the annual compensation is calculated for only those employees who earn a commission. If any column value in an expression is null, the result is null. To calculate values for all employees, you must convert the null value to a number before applying the arithmetic operator. In the example in the slide, the NVL function is used to convert null values to zero.

Using the NVL2 Function

```
SELECT last_name,  salary, commission_pct,
       NVL2(commission_pct,
            'SAL+COMM', 'SAL') income
FROM   employees WHERE department_id IN (50, 80);
```

	LAST_NAME	SALARY	COMMISSION_PCT	INCOME
1	Mourgos	5800	(null)	SAL
2	Rajs	3500	(null)	SAL
3	Davies	3100	(null)	SAL
4	Matos	2600	(null)	SAL
5	Vargas	2500	(null)	SAL
6	Zlotkey	10500	0.2	SAL+COMM
7	Abel	11000	0.3	SAL+COMM
8	Taylor	8600	0.2	SAL+COMM

The NVL2 function examines the first expression. If the first expression is not null, the NVL2 function returns the second expression. If the first expression is null, the third expression is returned.

Syntax

NVL2(*expr1, expr2, expr3*)

In the syntax:

- *expr1* is the source value or expression that may contain a null
- *expr2* is the value that is returned if *expr1* is not null
- *expr3* is the value that is returned if *expr1* is null

In the example shown in the slide, the COMMISSION_PCT column is examined. If a value is detected, the text literal value of SAL+COMM is returned. If the COMMISSION_PCT column contains a null value, the text literal value of SAL is returned.

Note: The argument *expr1* can have any data type. The arguments *expr2* and *expr3* can have any data types except LONG.

Using the NULLIF Function

```
SELECT first_name, LENGTH(first_name) "expr1",
       last_name,  LENGTH(last_name)  "expr2",
       NULLIF(LENGTH(first_name), LENGTH(last_name)) result
FROM   employees;
```

	FIRST_NAME	expr1	LAST_NAME	expr2	RESULT
1	Ellen	5	Abel	4	5
2	Curtis	6	Davies	6	(null)
3	Lex	3	De Haan	7	3
4	Bruce	5	Ernst	5	(null)
5	Pat	3	Fay	3	(null)
6	William	7	Gietz	5	7
7	Kimberely	9	Grant	5	9
8	Michael	7	Hartstein	9	7
9	Shelley	7	Higgins	7	(null)

...

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The NULLIF function compares two expressions.

Syntax

NULLIF (*expr1*, *expr2*)

In the syntax:

- NULLIF compares *expr1* and *expr2*. If they are equal, the function returns null. If they are not, the function returns *expr1*. However, you cannot specify the literal NULL for *expr1*.

In the example shown in the slide, the length of the first name in the EMPLOYEES table is compared to the length of the last name in the EMPLOYEES table. When the lengths of the names are equal, a null value is displayed. When the lengths of the names are not equal, the length of the first name is displayed.

Using the COALESCE Function

- The advantage of the COALESCE function over the NVL function is that the COALESCE function can take multiple alternate values.
- If the first expression is not null, the COALESCE function returns that expression; otherwise, it does a COALESCE of the remaining expressions.

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The COALESCE function returns the first non-null expression in the list.

Syntax

```
COALESCE (expr1, expr2, ... exprn)
```

In the syntax:

- *expr1* returns this expression if it is not null
- *expr2* returns this expression if the first expression is null and this expression is not null
- *exprn* returns this expression if the preceding expressions are null

Note that all expressions must be of the same data type.

Using the COALESCE Function

```
SELECT last_name, employee_id,
COALESCE(TO_CHAR(commission_pct),TO_CHAR(manager_id),
         'No commission and no manager')
FROM employees;
```

	LAST_NAME	EMPLOYEE_ID	COALESCE(TO_CHAR(COMMISSI...
1	Whalen	200	101
2	Hartstein	201	100
3	Fay	202	201
4	Higgins	205	101
5	Gietz	206	205
6	King	100	No commission and no manager

...

17	Zlotkey	149	.2
18	Abel	174	.3
19	Taylor	176	.2
20	Grant	178	.15

In the example shown in the slide, if the `manager_id` value is not null, it is displayed. If the `manager_id` value is null, the `commission_pct` is displayed. If the `manager_id` and `commission_pct` values are null, “No commission and no manager” is displayed. Note that `TO_CHAR` function is applied so that all expressions are of the same data type.

Example

For the employees who do not get any commission, your organization wants to give a salary increment of $2,000 and for employees who get commission, the query should compute the new salary that is equal to the existing salary added to the commission amount.

```
SELECT last_name, salary, commission_pct,
 COALESCE((salary+(commission_pct*salary)), salary+2000, salary)
  "New Salary"
FROM   employees;
```

Note: Examine the output. For employees who do not get any commission, the New Salary column shows the salary incremented by $2,000 and for employees who get commission, the New Salary column shows the computed commission amount added to the salary.

	LAST_NAME	SALARY	COMMISSION_PCT	New Salary
1	Whalen	4400	(null)	6400
2	Hartstein	13000	(null)	15000
3	Fay	6000	(null)	8000
4	Higgins	12000	(null)	14000
5	Gietz	8300	(null)	10300
6	King	24000	(null)	26000

. . .

17	Zlotkey	10500	0.2	12600
18	Abel	11000	0.3	14300
19	Taylor	8600	0.2	10320
20	Grant	7000	0.15	8050

Lesson Agenda

- Implicit and explicit data type conversion
- TO_CHAR, TO_DATE, TO_NUMBER functions
- Nesting functions
- General functions:
  - NVL
  - NVL2
  - NULLIF
  - COALESCE
- Conditional expressions:
  - CASE
  - DECODE

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Conditional Expressions

- Provide the use of the `IF-THEN-ELSE` logic within a SQL statement.
- Use two methods:
  - `CASE` expression
  - `DECODE` function

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The two methods that are used to implement conditional processing (`IF-THEN-ELSE` logic) in a SQL statement are the `CASE` expression and the `DECODE` function.

Note: The `CASE` expression complies with the ANSI SQL. The `DECODE` function is specific to Oracle syntax.

CASE Expression

Facilitates conditional inquiries by doing the work of an `IF-THEN-ELSE` statement:

```
CASE expr WHEN comparison_expr1 THEN return_expr1
         [WHEN comparison_expr2 THEN return_expr2
          WHEN comparison_exprn THEN return_exprn
          ELSE else_expr]
END
```


`CASE` expressions allow you to use the `IF-THEN-ELSE` logic in SQL statements without having to invoke procedures.

In a simple `CASE` expression, the Oracle server searches for the first `WHEN ... THEN` pair for which `expr` is equal to `comparison_expr` and returns `return_expr`. If none of the `WHEN ... THEN` pairs meet this condition, and if an `ELSE` clause exists, the Oracle server returns `else_expr`. Otherwise, the Oracle server returns a null. You cannot specify the literal `NULL` for all the `return_exprs` and the `else_expr`.

The expressions `expr` and `comparison_expr` must be of the same data type, which can be `CHAR`, `VARCHAR2`, `NCHAR`, or `NVARCHAR2`, `NUMBER`, `BINARY_FLOAT`, or `BINARY_DOUBLE` or must all have a numeric datatype. All of the return values (`return_expr`) must be of the same data type.

If all expressions have a numeric datatype, then Oracle determines the argument with the highest numeric precedence, implicitly converts the remaining arguments to that datatype, and returns that datatype.

Using the CASE Expression

Facilitates conditional inquiries by doing the work of an `IF-THEN-ELSE` statement:

```
SELECT last_name, job_id, salary,
       CASE job_id WHEN 'IT_PROG'  THEN  1.10*salary
                   WHEN 'ST_CLERK' THEN  1.15*salary
                   WHEN 'SA_REP'   THEN  1.20*salary
       ELSE      salary END     "REVISED_SALARY"
FROM   employees;
```

	LAST_NAME	JOB_ID	SALARY	REVISED_SALARY
1	Whalen	AD_ASST	4400	4400
...				
9	Hunold	IT_PROG	9000	9900
10	Ernst	IT_PROG	6000	6600
11	Lorentz	IT_PROG	4200	4620
12	Mourgos	ST_MAN	5800	5800
13	Rajs	ST_CLERK	3500	4025
14	Davies	ST_CLERK	3100	3565
...				
19	Taylor	SA_REP	8600	10320
20	Grant	SA_REP	7000	8400

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In the SQL statement in the slide, the value of `JOB_ID` is decoded. If `JOB_ID` is `IT_PROG`, the salary increase is 10%; if `JOB_ID` is `ST_CLERK`, the salary increase is 15%; if `JOB_ID` is `SA_REP`, the salary increase is 20%. For all other job roles, there is no increase in salary.

The same statement can be written with the `DECODE` function.

The following code is an example of the searched `CASE` expression. In a searched `CASE` expression, the search occurs from left to right until an occurrence of the listed condition is found, and then it returns the return expression. If no condition is found to be true, and if an `ELSE` clause exists, the return expression in the `ELSE` clause is returned; otherwise, a `NULL` is returned.

```
SELECT last_name,salary,
(CASE WHEN salary<5000 THEN 'Low'
      WHEN salary<10000 THEN 'Medium'
      WHEN salary<20000 THEN 'Good'
      ELSE 'Excellent'
END) qualified_salary
FROM employees;
```

DECODE Function

Facilitates conditional inquiries by doing the work of a CASE expression or an IF-THEN-ELSE statement:

```
DECODE(col|expression, search1, result1
                       [, search2, result2,...,]
                       [, default])
```


The DECODE function decodes an expression in a way similar to the IF-THEN-ELSE logic that is used in various languages. The DECODE function decodes *expression* after comparing it to each *search* value. If the expression is the same as *search*, *result* is returned.

If the default value is omitted, a null value is returned where a search value does not match any of the result values.

Using the DECODE Function

```
SELECT last_name, job_id, salary,
       DECODE(job_id, 'IT_PROG',  1.10*salary,
                      'ST_CLERK', 1.15*salary,
                      'SA_REP',   1.20*salary,
              salary)
       REVISED_SALARY
FROM   employees;
```

	LAST_NAME	JOB_ID	SALARY	REVISED_SALARY
...				
10	Ernst	IT_PROG	6000	6600
11	Lorentz	IT_PROG	4200	4620
12	Mourgos	ST_MAN	5800	5800
13	Rajs	ST_CLERK	3500	4025
...				
19	Taylor	SA_REP	8600	10320
20	Grant	SA_REP	7000	8400

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In the SQL statement in the slide, the value of `JOB_ID` is tested. If `JOB_ID` is `IT_PROG`, the salary increase is 10%; if `JOB_ID` is `ST_CLERK`, the salary increase is 15%; if `JOB_ID` is `SA_REP`, the salary increase is 20%. For all other job roles, there is no increase in salary.

The same statement can be expressed in pseudocode as an `IF-THEN-ELSE` statement:

```
IF job_id = 'IT_PROG'     THEN  salary = salary*1.10
IF job_id = 'ST_CLERK'    THEN  salary = salary*1.15
IF job_id = 'SA_REP'      THEN  salary = salary*1.20
ELSE salary = salary
```

Using the DECODE Function

Display the applicable tax rate for each employee in department 80:

```
SELECT last_name, salary,
       DECODE (TRUNC(salary/2000, 0),
                         0, 0.00,
                         1, 0.09,
                         2, 0.20,
                         3, 0.30,
                         4, 0.40,
                         5, 0.42,
                         6, 0.44,
                            0.45) TAX_RATE
FROM   employees
WHERE  department_id = 80;
```


This slide shows another example using the DECODE function. In this example, you determine the tax rate for each employee in department 80 based on the monthly salary. The tax rates are as follows:

Monthly Salary Range	*Tax Rate*
$0.00–1,999.99	00%
$2,000.00–3,999.99	09%
$4,000.00–5,999.99	20%
$6,000.00–7,999.99	30%
$8,000.00–9,999.99	40%
$10,000.00–11,999.99	42%
$12,200.00–13,999.99	44%
$14,000.00 or greater	45%

	LAST_NAME	SALARY	TAX_RATE
1	Zlotkey	10500	0.42
2	Abel	11000	0.42
3	Taylor	8600	0.4

Quiz

The `TO_NUMBER` function converts either character strings or date values to a number in the format specified by the optional format model.

a. True
b. False

Answer: b

Summary

In this lesson, you should have learned how to:

- Alter date formats for display using functions
- Convert column data types using functions
- Use NVL functions
- Use IF-THEN-ELSE logic and other conditional expressions in a SELECT statement

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Remember the following:

- Conversion functions can convert character, date, and numeric values: TO_CHAR, TO_DATE, TO_NUMBER
- There are several functions that pertain to nulls, including NVL, NVL2, NULLIF, and COALESCE.
- The IF-THEN-ELSE logic can be applied within a SQL statement by using the CASE expression or the DECODE function.

Practice 5: Overview

This practice covers the following topics:

- Creating queries that use TO_CHAR, TO_DATE, and other DATE functions
- Creating queries that use conditional expressions such as DECODE and CASE

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This practice provides a variety of exercises using TO_CHAR and TO_DATE functions, and conditional expressions such as DECODE and CASE. Remember that for nested functions, the results are evaluated from the innermost function to the outermost function.