

## INPUT MASK

An Input Mask is used to control how data looks when it is entered into a table. It also can be used to define the format in which the data is stored. To create an input mask for the Date of Last Order field, complete the steps below:

### Defining an Input Mask

For this document, you will use the Sales Merchandise table that was created from the instructions in the document, **Creating a Table Using Design View**.

- ✦ Click **Input Mask** under the **Field Properties** for the **Date of Last Order** field.
- ✦ Click the **ellipsis** (three dots) at the end of the **Input Mask** box.
- ✦ The first step in the **Input Mask** wizard will appear (see illustrations below).

The left screenshot shows the 'Input Mask Wizard' dialog box with the question 'Which input mask matches how you want data to look?'. It includes instructions to use the 'Try It' box and an 'Edit List' button. A table lists input masks and their corresponding data looks:

Input Mask:	Data Look:
Long Time	1:12:00 PM
Short Date	9/27/1969
Short Time	13:12
Medium Time	01:12 PM
Medium Date	27-Sep-69

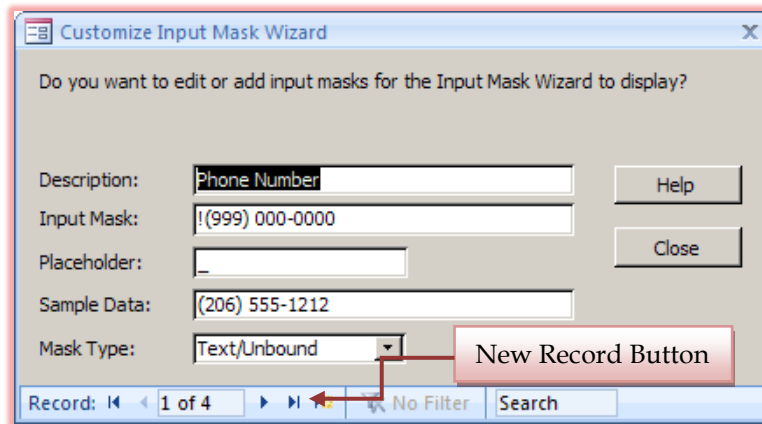
The right screenshot shows the 'Input Mask Wizard' dialog box with the question 'Do you want to change the input mask?'. It includes fields for 'Input Mask Name' (Short Date) and 'Input Mask' (99/99/0000), and a dropdown for 'Placeholder character' ( \_ ).

- ✦ Choose the **Short Date** option for this lesson.
- ✦ Click the **Try It** box to see how this works. Input a date, using a zero before a single digit number.
- ✦ Click the **Next** button to move to the next step. This box allows you to change the Input Mask layout.
- ✦ In the area where it says **99/99/0000**, remove the last two zeros.
- ✦ Click in the **Try It** box again to input the date.
- ✦ Click **Finish**.
  - ✦ The Input Mask criteria will appear in the Input Mask area of the Field Properties.
  - ✦ The number will display as **99/99/00;;\_**.

### Creating a New Input Mask

It is not always possible to use one of the pre-defined Input Masks for a particular field. It then becomes necessary to create an Input Mask. For this exercise, we want to create a new Input Mask for the Stock Number field. To do this:

- ❖ Click the **Stock Number** field in the Design view window.
- ❖ Click the **ellipsis (...)** at the end of the Input Mask box.
- ❖ The **Input Mask Wizard** window will appear (see illustrations above).
- ❖ Click the **Edit List** button at the bottom left side of this window.
- ❖ The **Customize Input Mask Wizard** window will appear (see illustration on next page).



- ❖ Click the **New Record** button at the bottom of the window. It is the last button after the word record, the one with an arrow and an asterisk.
- ❖ The entries in the boxes will clear.
- ❖ In the **Description** box, input **StockNumber**.
- ❖ In the **Input Mask** box, input the **number 9 five times (99999)**, a **hyphen (-)**, and **two more number 9s (99)**.
  - When a series of 9s are inserted, it means that any number between 0 and 9 can be inserted into the field.
  - The entry of these numbers is not required.
  - Plus and/or minus signs are not allowed when information is entered.
- ❖ In the **Placeholder** box, insert a **hyphen (-)**.
- ❖ In the **Sample Data** box, input **13036-55**.
- ❖ Leave the **Mask/Type** as **Text/Unbound**.
- ❖ Click **Close** to exit the **Edit Input Mask Wizard** window.
- ❖ Click the **Stock Number Input Mask** from the list, if necessary.
- ❖ No further changes are necessary for this action, so click the **Finish** button to apply this **Input Mask** to the **Stock Number** field.
- ❖ When data is input into this field, the hyphen will appear automatically. This means that only the numbers have to be input.