

E-COURSE REVIEWS

Highly Recommended

★★★★1/2 *Microsoft Access 2000: End User Fundamentals*: 5 hours, US\$49.95 for 1 year of course access. Publisher: Knowledge Quest

This course offers helpful information on designing and creating databases. It emphasizes that the most important step in creating a database is planning. The course is divided into 18 short lessons; each covers the fundamentals of Access in an easy-to-understand format. The chapters on creating calculations in queries and on sorting and filtering are particularly worthy.

★★★★1/2 *Office 2000: Introduction to Access*: 3 hours, US\$48 for 1 year of course access. Publisher: MindLeaders

This course emerged as a favorite because of a feature found in no other course reviewed here. After guiding you through a simulation, you open Access on your computer and practice the operations you've just learned. But some of the test questions are vague, frustrating, and poorly conceived. All in all, however, this is a good course.

★★★★1/2 *Microsoft Access 2000: Introduction*: 7 hours, US\$75 for 90 days of course access. Publisher: ActiveEducation

This is a great course with some terrific depth and writing. ActiveEducation provides interactive practice opportunities, but we would still like to see more. Content coverage is broad and deep, from basic information to issues such as database compression and repair. The pace is fast, so plan on repeating sections if you're using the course to learn new functions. The easy-to-access instructional design makes it an ideal reference.

Adequate

★★★ *Access 2000 Level 1*: 2 hours, US\$199 for 1 year of access to Element K's Office Productivity Library. Publisher: Element K

This course covers the basics to get you started, and wastes no time with flashy graphics or sound. Element K includes an excellent Access simulation, so it's not necessary to have your own copy. Don't expect to learn all of the features with this course alone. If you're looking for an overview, however, there's enough information.

★★★ *Microsoft Access 2000: Fundamentals*: 7 hours, US\$74.95 for 1 year of course access. Publisher: NETg

The best feature of this course is its focus on making Access work for you. It generally offers several methods to complete tasks, including keystrokes, toolbars, and menus. The downside is that the assessments aren't

constructed to test more than one method at a time. If you usually save data by using the CTRL+S keystroke, you may not find it useful to be tested on saving through the file menu.

Not Recommended

★★ *Access 2000: Fundamentals*: 5 hours, US\$74.95 for 1 year of course access. Publisher: Catapult

This course offers a terrific user interface and guides you step-by-step through complex operations, which you get to perform just as you would when using the program. But this course also contains many substantial flaws. The greatest problem is the lack of context within individual lessons. It's easy to find yourself clicking along, following directions, and suddenly realizing you have no idea what you're doing or why. No title or caption gives you a clue. You're left to finish the lesson, look at the outcome, and ponder what you've learned. Also, be aware that even on a fast Internet connection, the download times for this course can be excruciatingly slow.

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At a Glance

Microsoft Access 2000: End User Fundamentals: Only course in sampling to adequately stress planning.

Office 2000: Introduction to Access: Good practice opportunities in your desktop copy of Access. Occasionally vague assessment questions.

Microsoft Access 2000: Introduction: Excellent reference tool. Not enough practice opportunities.

Microsoft 2000 Level 1: Good overview. Leaves gaps in basic knowledge of the application.

Microsoft 2000: Fundamentals: Demonstrates multiple methods of accomplishing tasks. Frustrating assessments.

Access 2000: Fundamentals: Good user interface. Lack of context within individual lessons; extremely long download times.