## Like and Wildcards

A “wildcard” is a special symbol that takes the place of a unknown character or set of characters—it is used in criteria in order to match several items.

In Access queries, wildcards are used with the special operator **Like**, which indicates that instead of an *exact* match, you’re looking to match items that fit a certain pattern. The pattern is stated by using wildcards. **Like** statements always take the form:

**Like “**<<criteria with **wildcards**>>”

Where the criteria with wildcards are enclosed in “double-quotes”.

### Wildcards:

Wildcards used in Access include:

**\*** (the asterisk): matches **any number** of characters (including zero characters!)

**?** (the question mark): matches exactly one character

**[a-l]** : matches any letter from a to l. (In Access, this is NOT case-sensitive.)

**[a,d,l]** : matches the letter a, the letter d, or the letter l. (In Access, this is NOT case-sensitive)

Examples:

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| **Criteria Statement** | **Matches** |
| Like “\*” | Anything |
| Like “B\*” | Anything that begins with B, e.g. **Bob, Bill, B, Breakfast** |
| Like “\*red” | Anything that ends with red, e.g. **tired, Fred, red, Winnifred** |
| Like “1/1/\*” (for a date field) | Dates on January 1st of any year |
| Like “C??” | Any three letter word starting with c, e.g. **cat, car, cot**. Each match MUST have three letters. |
| Like “[a-c]\*” | Anything that begins with A, B, or C, e.g. **Acrobat, Bottle, Chant** |
| Like “[d,l]\*” | Anything that begins with D or L, e.g. **Donut, Lake, Discount** |