

Database as an educational tool by Cindy O'Hora

One challenge in integrating technology into the classroom is having a vision of, "What can this do for my class?". I've shown you several ways to use database to manage your classroom and professional life. Here is a super way to get your students using database.

Today, I downloaded a set of education database templates made in ClarisWorks. There was a class database and a library book managing database.

One file, in particular, caught my eye. It was called Insect database.

Nanette Luoma created a super database for her students to use. She has the students enter the basic facts of their work into a class database as part of the project. There are fourteen fields of data requested which include straight forward items like insect group and wings, to habitat and interaction with people.

There were additional layouts in the database which offered research worksheets, information source sheets, and a glossary of terms.

Once the database is filled with information students could compute data based on numeric information or [Sort](#) for fields like: winged as adults.



Okay, Cindy, this is nice but I don't do insects. Here are some ideas right off the tip of my fingers.

Heroes

Famous People of your state - biography

Famous Artists or Writers - biography

Historic Events

Countries of the world report

US State facts report

Native American tribes

Inventors or Inventions

Vocabulary words - class dictionary

Creative writing done in class.

Drugs

Pets

Habitats or Biomes

Elements of the Periodic Table

Organs and/or body parts

Animals of the rain forest

Endangered Animals

Diseases

Dinosaurs

Books I've read this school year

You already give the assignment expectations in a database like format.

Heroes : Date of Birth, place of birth, gender, education, trials and tough times, successes, what are they famous for doing, date of the report and author.

State facts: Capitol, size, State symbols (tree, bird, flower), Governor, population, 2 famous people from that state, resources, and outstanding geographic features.

✦ [Battles of the American Revolution DATABASE Project](#) - Great idea!

To bring the database into the project, all you need to do is [create a database](#) with a field for each fact you expect the students to give. Sometimes it will be to your advantage to have a [pop-up menu](#) for younger students to enter information like endangered vrs non endangered.

Have the students use the [Find](#) feature to retrieve their record when they return to enter more data.

Every student will benefit from the experience of entering into a database.

- They'll learn database navigation
- They'll be exposed to ways of organizing data
- They'll gain a basic understanding of what a database can do.
 - Show them how to [Sort alphabetically](#)
 - Use a [formula](#) to find the occurrence of a single piece of data in the whole database. (How many states have the Cardinal for the state bird? How many heroes are women?)



Another Integration idea is to provide record keeping.

Word of the day or vocabulary -

Doing a vocabulary building activity? Have the students enter the words, parts of speech, definitions and example sentences in a database. At the end of the year they can use **Save As** to change the **database to dif format**. Then let them take it home for future use. Most database programs can open a dif formatted file.

✦ **Class Creative writing:** Title, author, date of writing, kind of writing (expository, poetry, biography, essay, short story), and fiction vrs nonfiction ([pop-up menu!](#)). I included a special layout which reports a student's individual writing for the year.

1. Use [Find](#) to isolate a single student from the whole class database.

2. Switch to the teacher entry layout to add their grades for the assignments. (At the bottom of the Layout menu.)
3. Switch to student report layout and print a list of their writing work for the year. It could be very handy at your next parent/teacher conference! It might even be a meaningful addition to a portfolio or report card. It certainly would be an interesting end of the class gift to your student.


✳️**Reading database!** Have your students enter each book they read this school year.

1. Use Find to isolate a single student from the whole class database.
2. Switch to the annual report layout to print an individual student's report. It includes a [summary field](#) of the number of pages the student has read.
3. Sort by author. Write fractions showing the number of students who read a single author or book. Discuss with the class their favorite authors.
4. Have a reading race. Who has read the most books? Pages? Authors?

✳️**Simply delightful survey:**

I utilized a database to conduct a survey for favorite book with several hundred students. In addition to the winner, I was able to show: the boy's favorite, the girl's favorite, the favorite by grade and even by specific class. I exported the collected data into a spreadsheet. I then made bar graphs and [pie charts](#) for student consideration.

✳️**Graduation Projects** and [database](#) perfect together!

 Here are some more [ideas and lesson plans which present or use databases](#) from the North Carolina Public Schools.

He who really wants to do something, finds a way.
He who doesn't; finds an excuse. S Ross

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