



*Teach Yourself*

# **dBASE IV<sup>TM</sup>**

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**Mary Campbell**

# Teach Yourself dBASE IV

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### **Teach Yourself dBASE IV<sup>™</sup>**

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## •Preface•

dBASE IV is an exciting new product that can be used for managing all types of data. It is a major revision to the dBASE product and as such provides many new features and enhancements for existing options. Although dBASE IV is easier to use than earlier releases, its sheer size and power can cause frustration for a novice user that is uncertain where to begin and how far to explore each of its major areas. *Teach Yourself dBASE* is designed to provide you the benefits of an expert tutor to guide your learning process and point out important commands without having to leave your office.

The short easy-to-follow lessons in *Teach Yourself dBASE IV* present all the dBASE basics step by step. Each new objective builds on the skills you have already learned. You will find yourself creating databases, reports, and custom forms in a short time.

The book uses a learning-by-example approach, eliminating lengthy feature discussions. The chapters are organized by lessons, with each lesson focusing on a particular learning objective. You will master each objective by working through examples and completing exercises. Each exercise is designed to be accomplished in 15 minutes or less and in many cases a complete lesson can be accomplished in this time frame.

Each chapter (except the first) begins with a Skills Check. The Skills Check exercises test your readiness to begin a new chapter. The sequence of keystrokes needed to complete an exercise is provided in Appendix C, along with the number of the section where the skills were initially introduced. If you experience difficulty with an exercise, you will want to go back to the referenced section and work through the examples to improve your skill level before proceeding with the new material.

Once you have mastered the Skills Check, you are ready to tackle the first learning objective. A brief description of the skill is followed by the steps required to accomplish it and one or more practical applications. You will want to enter the keystrokes for these applications at your keyboard if at all possible, since it will provide a more effective learning experience than reading about the feature. By trying out the keystrokes you will also create the application. The examples are followed by a set of exercises that test your ability to use the feature covered in the learning objective. Answers for these exercises are in Appendix C.

Each chapter concludes with two additional sets of exercises: the Mastery Skills Check and the Integrating New Skills Check. Unlike the section exercises, which focus on one learning objective, the Mastery Skills Check tests your skill with all the chapter's objectives. The Integrating New Skills Check brings together your new skills with those mastered in earlier chapters. Appendix C provides the keystrokes and section references to the location where the material was introduced.

As you complete a chapter, you will find that you can apply these new skills to your own dBASE applications. By the time you finish the last chapter you will have a set of beginning and intermediate dBASE skills. Although hard work and repetition were needed to reach this point, you were spared the frustration normally associated with learning a new package.

## How This Book Is Organized

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*Teach Yourself dBASE* is organized into 3 parts and 19 chapters. Parts I and II are designed to be covered in sequential order. Part I covers the basic skills needed to create and use dBASE databases. Part II covers intermediate level skills that enhance your ability to work with your new databases. Part III focuses on special topics. You may choose to complete Part III in sequence or just work through a particular chapter. The topics in Part III assume that you have completed Parts I and II but are not dependent on other topics in Part III.

Appendix A covers the procedures for installation. Appendix B provides a reference to the databases used in this book. You can trace the history of a database by following all the steps from its creation to the addition of custom forms or reports. Appendix C contains the answers to all the exercises.

## Conventions Used in This Book

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**USER INPUT**—Text to be typed into the computer is shown in bold. When entering text, type continuously without pressing ENTER unless directed to do so.

**KEYS**—Keyboard keys are represented by SMALL CAPS. When two keys must be pressed simultaneously, they are separated by hyphens. For example, ALT-L indicates that you should press the ALT key along with the L key.

**ANSWER KEY**—Appendix C provides the answers to the exercises in the form of keystroke sequences. Although other sequences may produce the same result, these are intended to provide one workable solution. The keystroke sequences may differ slightly from the ones provided for commands that require you to specify the disk drive or directory. Throughout this book, D:DBASE is used although you may elect to use another drive and directory.

Function keys and other special keys sequences are shown in [SMALL CAPS] in the answers. A set of braces {} is

used to encase descriptive information and directions. For example: {Move to the top record in the database}. Section references for the Skills Checks, Mastery Skills Checks, and Integrating New Skills Checks are found at the outer edge of the page.

Please send me the disks that accompany *Teach Yourself dBASE IV*. My payment of \$8.95 (\$12.95 for 3 1/4 disk or foreign orders) is enclosed. All foreign orders must be payable in U.S. dollars.

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## **CHAPTER OBJECTIVES**

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After completing this chapter you should be able to

- 1.1 Define a database
- 1.2 Define a field
- 1.3 Define a record

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