

Users access the values of object attributes through database applications that provide data entry forms, reports and queries. In most cases, such forms, reports, and queries do not require access to all of an objects attributes.

The portion of an object that is visible to a particular application is called the **semantic object view** or simply the **view**. A view consists of the name of the object plus a list of all the attributes visible from that view.

Views are used in two ways. When you are developing a database, you can use them to develop a data model. When developing the data model, the database and application developers work backward. That is, they begin with the forms, reports and queries that the users say they need and then work backward to the database design. To do this, the team selects a required form, report or query and determines the view that must exist in order for the form, report, or query to be created. Then the team selects the next form, report, or query and does the same. These two views are then integrated. This process is repeated until the structure of the entire database has been created. The second way in which views are used occurs after the database structure has been created. At this point views are constructed to support new forms, reports, and queries based on the existing database structure.