

# How to Become a Database Engineer

A career in database engineering can be rewarding and lucrative. Most companies require a bachelor's degree in computer science or a related field, but it's possible to land a job with a two-year degree. Either way, gaining professional...

Part 1 of 4:

## Getting an Education

1.



**Take classes at a two-year technical training school.** While most database engineers have bachelor's degrees, it's possible to get a job with a two-year degree or technical certifications. Search online for keywords like 'technical training school computer science' to find a vocational or technical school in your area.<sup>[1]</sup>

1. While it's possible to get a job in database engineering without a bachelor's degree, keep in mind you'll be competing with many applicants who have earned a four-year degree.
2. Having strong professional experience, such as completing several internships and having a long list of freelance client referrals, will help make your application stronger, especially if you don't have a bachelor's degree.

2.



**Enroll in a four-year computer science degree program.** Most companies hire database engineers who have a bachelor's degree. Look for a college or university that offers a degree in computer science or information technology. While these are the most popular degree programs, you could also enroll in a more specific program, such as information systems, data management, or systems engineering.<sup>[2]</sup>

1. Computer science and information technology programs are popular, so you should be able to research programs by searching online. If you know anyone in related industries, ask them for advice about finding the right degree program.

3.



**Find a program in your budget that fits your needs.** If you're still in high school, work with your guidance counselor and teachers during the college application process. If you're going back to school after spending time in another field, your best option might be to enroll in an online degree program.

1. In either case, decide whether you're willing to relocate or if you'd prefer a program online or near your current location.

2. Make sure you can afford your school's tuition and, if necessary, apply for grants and loans to fund your education.

4.



**Complete core information technology courses as early as possible.** Your core coursework will include topics in information technology, including programming language and software design. Enroll in these core classes as soon as you can. You'll most likely have to take other courses, like history or philosophy classes, but try to complete your major coursework as early as possible.<sup>[3]</sup>

1. Your major coursework will help you gain the knowledge needed for internships and freelance work, which will help make your future job applications stronger.
2. You'll need to finish your secondary coursework in order to earn your degree, but you can build your professional experience while you finish up your required non-major courses.

5.



**Continue to educate yourself throughout your career.** Continuing your education will be essential, whether you pursue a graduate degree, specialist certifications, or simply train yourself using free online

resources. There are constant new developments in industries related to information technology, so staying up to date as your field evolves will make you a better employee and stronger job applicant.

1. ComputerScience.org includes an exhaustive list of professional development resources.<sup>[4]</sup>
2. IEEE Computer Society is the world's leading professional organization, and you can find plenty of resources on their website.<sup>[5]</sup>
3. Code Conquest offers a long list of training resources and recommendations.<sup>[6]</sup> You can also further your coding knowledge for free using Code Academy.<sup>[7]</sup>

Part 2 of 4:

## Gaining Experience



**Apply for internships.** Your degree program will help you secure internships while you're enrolled. You can also find postings on your own by searching online and browsing the websites of professional organizations.<sup>[8]</sup>

1. For the best shot of landing a good job after you graduate, you'll need to have at least one internship under your belt.
2. Even though you'll most likely work without being paid, treat your internship as if it were a six figure job. The better your performance, the stronger chance that your internship will lead to a good job in the future.

2.



**Try to get freelance gigs.** Freelance work will help you develop your hard skills related to programming and database maintenance. Further, you'll hone your soft skills, like communication and client relations. You can also use your clients as references when you apply to a job in your field.

1. You can post and search for freelance opportunities on professional sites like Guru.<sup>[9]</sup> You can also offer your services on Craigslist.

3.



**Look for junior analyst and other entry-level job postings.** When you're fresh out of school and looking for your first job, keep your options wide open. Apply to postings for help desks, junior database analysts, and other entry-level positions. While a junior position might not be your dream job, it'll help you gain the professional experience required to land your first database engineer title.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Applying for Jobs

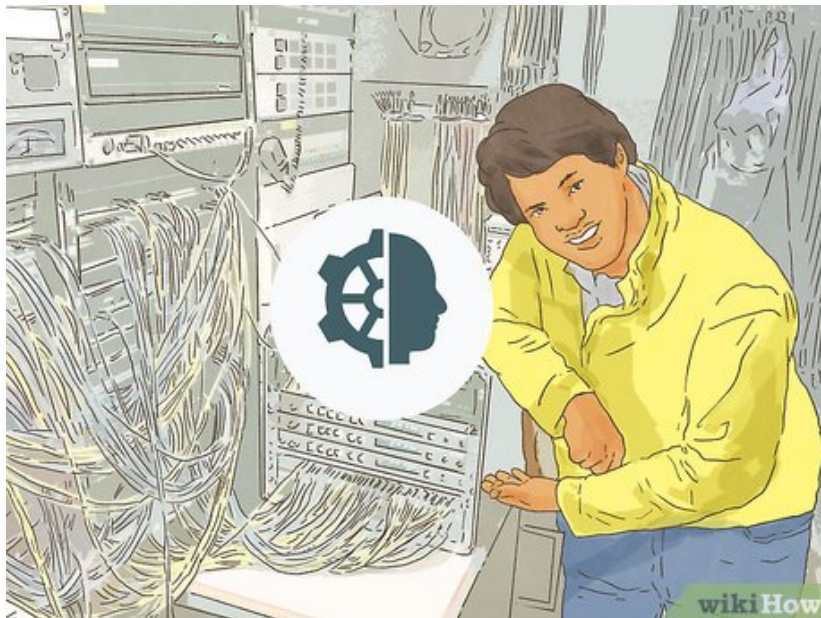
1.



**Take advantage of networking opportunities.** Networking is an integral part of any job search. Your internships and entry-level jobs will present you with opportunities to meet and seek advice from people who have earned your dream job.<sup>[11]</sup>

1. While you're interning with a company, find out who their database engineers are. Reach out to them, such as by writing a friendly email.
2. Say something like, 'I'm interested in becoming a database engineer, and would love to pick your brain about your career journey. I would be deeply grateful for any advice you could offer. Do you have time to grab a coffee or meet for lunch some time?'

2.



**Highlight specific hard skills in your resume.** A well-crafted resume lets your potential employer know what you bring to the table. A database engineer needs specific hard skills, so include your education and

professional experience that demonstrates how you've developed programming and data maintenance abilities.<sup>[12]</sup>

1. List the programming languages, network systems, and platforms that you've worked with in the past.
2. Give examples of how you've independently solved problems to show you can handle the responsibility of maintaining a database.
3. You could mention how you spotted a coding error before it became a system wide dilemma as an example of your attention to detail.



**Include your soft skills in your resume.** In addition, a database engineer should be able to think originally, solve problems independently, satisfy a client, and work with a team. Show that you possess these skills by describing how you've balanced independence and teamwork through internships, past jobs, and freelance experience.<sup>[13]</sup>

1. For example, discuss how you found unexpected solutions for a freelance client in a timely manner to demonstrate your original thinking and time management skills.
2. You could show how you developed communication skills by highlighting a team project at a past job that required cooperation between multiple departments.

4.



**Look for postings online and on industry networking sites.** Use search engines and sites like LinkedIn to find postings for database engineer positions. In addition, set up profiles and search for postings on professional computer science networking websites.<sup>[14]</sup>

1. Search the jobs board at the IEEE Computer Society website.<sup>[15]</sup>
2. Set up a profile and search for tech job postings on Dice.<sup>[16]</sup>
3. Create a profile and find links to other job search sites on Stackoverflow.<sup>[17]</sup>

Part 4 of 4:

## Nailing the Interview

1.



**Research a company before your interview.** Read their website closely, and learn about their values and culture. The most important aspect of preparing for an interview is to become as familiar as possible with your potential employer.<sup>[18]</sup>

1. If you see specific buzzwords repeated throughout their website, mention them in your interview.
2. You could say, 'I know your company deeply values innovative thinking. I've never accepted technical limitations in the past, and am eager to join a team that shares the drive to break boundaries to achieve their goals.'

2.



**Demonstrate your skills.** In your interview, show off your skills, but don't exaggerate them. Describe to your interviewer how you've excelled in the past. You could include a digital portfolio of your work with your resume, or describe a time you went above and beyond to solve a complex problem.<sup>[19]</sup>

1. Coding challenges, in which a company tests your skills on the spot, are also a standard part of interviews in computer science fields.

3.



**Acknowledge your limitations.** Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know every programming language. Just let your interviewer know that you're a fast learner and love to master new skills.<sup>[20]</sup>

1. Don't worry if they ask about a specific language that you don't know. When it comes to computer science, it's impossible to know everything.



4.

**Show that your personality fits their needs.** Researching the company's values and culture will help you learn what they define as their ideal worker. Using that knowledge, show your interviewer that you're a great fit personally and professionally.<sup>[21]</sup>

1. For example, if they value a balance between professionalism and having a life outside of work, discuss how you've achieved a work/life balance in the past. You could mention how an outside hobby gave you the inspiration you needed to complete a past project in an original, highly successful way.

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