MASTERING ABAP

A COMPLETE JOURNEY
FROM ABAP BEGINNER TO S/4HANA PROFESSIONAL

- MASTER ABAP FUNDAMENTALS
- INTERNAL TABLES & DATABASE ACCESS
- OBJECT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT
- MODERN DEVELOPMENT WITH CDS VIEWS & RAP
- INTEGRATION WITH APIS
- PERFORMANCE OPTIMIZATION
- CLEAN ABAP BEST PRACTICES

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Steve Publications

This book is available at https://leanpub.com/masteringabap

This version was published on 2026-08-16

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Contents

A Complete Journey from ABAP Beginner to S/4HANA Professional

This book takes you from absolute beginner to advanced professional in ABAP development for SAP S/4HANA. You will learn the language fundamentals, master internal tables and database access, build object-oriented applications, work with modern development models like CDS views and RAP, integrate systems via APIs, optimize performance, and follow Clean ABAP principles used by top SAP teams worldwide. Every concept is explained with complete, runnable code examples grounded in a realistic enterprise scenario, so you can apply what you learn immediately in real projects.

Introduction

It is 2026, and the world's most critical business processes still run on ABAP.

Every time someone books an airline seat, processes a purchase order at a Fortune 500 company, manages inventory across global warehouses, or generates a financial statement for a multinational corporation, there is a very good chance that ABAP code is executing behind the scenes. This language, created in 1983 by Gerd Rodé and his team at SAP, has quietly become one of the most important programming languages on the planet – even though most people outside the SAP ecosystem have never heard of it.

That obscurity is both ABAP's greatest strength and its biggest barrier to entry. Unlike JavaScript or Python, there are no endless YouTube tutorials, no Stack Overflow answers for every edge case, and no casual weekend projects you can build with it. ABAP lives inside enterprise systems that cost millions of dollars to implement and require specialized training to work with. This creates a high barrier to becoming an ABAP developer – but also a powerful career moat once you cross it.

Why This Book Exists

When I started writing this book, I looked for a single resource that could take someone from zero ABAP knowledge to professional-level competency in the modern S/4HANA era. What I found fell into two categories: quick reference guides that assumed you already knew the basics, or outdated tutorials still teaching legacy syntax from the 1990s. Neither served the developer who actually needs to build production systems today.

This book fills that gap. It is designed as a complete learning path and professional reference in one volume. If you are new to ABAP, you can read it cover to cover and emerge ready for real-world development work. If you are already an experienced ABAP developer transitioning to S/4HANA, you can jump to the advanced chapters on CDS views, RAP, AMDP, and Clean ABAP principles while still finding value in the refresher material.

What You Will Learn

The book is organized into sixteen chapters that build progressively from foundation to mastery:

Chapters 1 through 4 establish the fundamentals. You will understand what ABAP is and where it runs in the SAP technology stack, then learn the language basics: syntax rules, data types, variables, operators, control structures, and internal tables – the most important data structure in all of ABAP programming.

Chapters 5 through 8 cover core development skills. You will master code modularization using procedures and function modules, transition to object-oriented ABAP with classes and interfaces, implement robust exception handling, and access databases efficiently using Open SQL.

Chapters 9 through 12 focus on modern S/4HANA development. You will learn CDS views for declarative data modeling, the RESTful Application Programming Model (RAP) for building Fiori-enabled business applications, system integration patterns using RFCs and OData services, and enhancement frameworks for customizing standard SAP functionality without modifying delivered code.

Chapters 13 through 16 bring everything together with professional practices. You will build user interfaces with ALV grids and reports, manage background jobs and transport requests, write unit tests, debug complex issues, analyze performance bottlenecks, implement authorization checks, and follow Clean ABAP principles that make your code maintainable for the long term.

How This Book Is Structured

Every chapter follows a consistent pattern. Concepts are introduced with clear explanations of what they are and why they matter, followed by complete code examples that you can run in a standard S/4HANA system. Each example includes line-by-line commentary explaining not just what the code does but why it is written that way – including common mistakes to avoid, performance implications, and alternatives you might consider.

Throughout the book, I use a consistent running scenario: Nordic Trading, a fictional industrial equipment supplier. You will see the same customer

management tables, order processing logic, and product catalog referenced across multiple chapters. This continuity helps you connect concepts and see how different ABAP features work together in a real enterprise application rather than as isolated syntax exercises.

Prerequisites

This book assumes general programming familiarity — you should understand what variables, loops, functions, and data structures are from working with any other language. You do not need prior SAP or ABAP experience. If you have never used an IDE before, that is fine too; I explain the development tools as we go.

To run the code examples yourself, you will need access to an ABAP development environment. SAP offers a free trial system that includes both the classic SAP GUI and Eclipse ADT development tools. Many training organizations also provide sandbox systems for learning purposes. If you are reading this book as part of professional SAP work, your employer likely already has development systems available.

A Note on Modern vs Legacy ABAP

ABAP has evolved dramatically since its creation in 1983. The syntax and patterns used in the early 2000s look alien to developers who learned ABAP after version 7.40, when SAP introduced modern features like inline declarations, constructor expressions, table operations, and functional programming constructs.

This book prioritizes modern ABAP syntax and current S/4HANA development practices throughout. Where legacy approaches remain relevant — for example, maintaining existing codebases or working with older function modules — I explain them briefly and clearly mark them as such. My goal is to teach you the ABAP that matters today while giving you enough context to understand what you might encounter in real-world systems.

The journey ahead takes about 16 chapters, but each one builds directly on what came before. Let us begin.

Chapter 1: The ABAP Landscape and SAP Ecosystem

Before writing a single line of code, you need to understand where ABAP lives and why it matters. This chapter sets the stage by explaining what ABAP is, how it fits into the broader SAP technology stack, what tools you will use to develop with it, and how enterprise development actually works in practice.

What Is ABAP and Why It Exists

ABAP stands for Advanced Business Application Programming. Despite the name sounding like marketing speak, it is a real programming language with its own syntax, runtime environment, compiler, and ecosystem — not just a configuration tool or scripting language bolted onto something else.

The story begins in 1983 at SAP, a German software company founded in 1972 to build enterprise resource planning systems. At the time, SAP was developing R/2, a mainframe-based ERP system. They faced a problem: their customers needed to customize reports and business logic, but they did not want to hand over source code written in COBOL or PL/I that customers might break. The solution was to create a fourth-generation language (4GL) specifically designed for business users to write reports against SAP data — something simpler than traditional programming languages but powerful enough to be genuinely useful.

That language was ABAP/4, and it changed everything. By giving customers the ability to extend SAP software themselves, SAP created an ecosystem where partners and end users built thousands of custom applications on top of the core product. This extensibility became one of SAP's competitive advantages and remains central to its business model today.

Over four decades, ABAP evolved from a simple reporting language into a full-featured programming language supporting:

- Procedural programming with functions and includes

- Object-oriented programming with classes, interfaces, inheritance, and polymorphism
- Database access through Open SQL (database-independent) and Native SQL
- Web services, OData APIs, and RESTful interfaces
- Integration with Java, .NET, and cloud platforms
- Modern functional programming constructs

Today, ABAP runs on the SAP NetWeaver Application Server alongside Java as one of two primary languages for SAP development. It powers everything from classic ERP transactions to modern Fiori applications in S/4HANA – SAP's current flagship product built entirely on the SAP HANA in-memory database.

The SAP Technology Stack: From Kernel to Fiori

Understanding where ABAP fits requires understanding the layers of an SAP system. A typical S/4HANA deployment has three architectural tiers:

Database Layer: At the bottom sits SAP HANA, an in-memory relational database that stores all business data – customers, materials, orders, financial documents, and everything else. Unlike traditional databases that read data from disk for every query, HANA keeps data in RAM, enabling real-time analytics on massive datasets. S/4HANA requires HANA; there is no option to run it on Oracle, SQL Server, or other databases.

Application Layer: This is where ABAP lives. The SAP NetWeaver Application Server for ABAP (AS ABAP) provides the runtime environment for executing ABAP programs. Key components include:

- **Work processes:** Individual execution threads that handle user requests. Different types exist for dialog interactions, background jobs, update tasks, and enqueue operations.
- **Message server:** Coordinates communication between application servers in a distributed system and handles load balancing.
- **Enqueue server:** Manages data locks to prevent conflicting updates when multiple users access the same records simultaneously.
- **Internet Communication Manager (ICM):** Handles web requests using HTTP, HTTPS, and SMTP protocols – this is how Fiori apps and OData services reach ABAP code.

Presentation Layer: This is what users actually see. Historically, SAP GUI was the primary interface – a thick client application with its own windowing system. Today, Fiori represents the modern standard: web-based applications built on SAP UI5 that run in any browser and consume data from ABAP through OData services.

When you write ABAP code, you are working in the application layer. Your programs read and write data stored in the HANA database at the bottom, and they serve interfaces displayed in either SAP GUI or Fiori at the top. Understanding this three-tier architecture helps explain why certain design patterns exist – for example, why ABAP emphasizes pushing processing to the database layer (to reduce data transfer between tiers) and why modern development favors OData services over direct screen rendering.

ABAP Environments: Eclipse ADT, SAP GUI, and the Cloud

You write ABAP code using an integrated development environment (IDE). For decades, that IDE was SAP GUI itself – specifically transaction SE80 (Object Navigator), which provided editing, debugging, activation, and transport management all in one interface. It worked, but it looked like software from 1995 and lacked modern features like intelligent code completion, refactoring tools, or version control integration.

That changed with ABAP Development Tools (ADT) for Eclipse, introduced around 2010 and now the recommended development environment for all new work. ADT brings ABAP development into the same category as Java or C# development: syntax highlighting, code completion powered by semantic analysis, integrated debugging, unit testing frameworks, Git integration, and support for modern development artifacts like CDS views and RAP business objects that simply cannot be created in SAP GUI.

The industry has largely made its choice. If you are starting ABAP development today, learn Eclipse ADT first. You will still need to know SAP GUI for testing transactions and accessing certain administrative functions, but your primary coding work should happen in Eclipse.

SAP also offers cloud-based development options through the SAP Business Technology Platform (BTP). The BTP ABAP Environment – formerly known by the codename "Steampunk" – provides a cloud-optimized ABAP platform

where you can develop applications that run side-by-side with your S/4HANA system without modifying its core. This enables what SAP calls "side-by-side extensibility": building new functionality on BTP while keeping the ERP system upgradeable and clean.

For on-premise and private cloud customers, a similar model called "Embedded Steampunk" brings ABAP Cloud capabilities directly into S/4HANA itself, allowing upgrade-stable custom extensions built with modern RAP patterns. Both approaches use the same underlying ABAP Platform technology and development tools – you will see Eclipse ADT connecting to either environment with nearly identical workflows.

Your First Look at an ABAP Program

Let us look at what actual ABAP code looks like. This is a simple report program that reads customer data from a database table and displays it:

```
REPORT znt_customer_list.

" Type definition for customer data
TYPES: BEGIN OF ty_customer,
         kunnr TYPE kna1-kunnr,    " Customer number
         name1 TYPE kna1-name1,    " Customer name
         ort01 TYPE kna1-ort01,    " City
       END OF ty_customer.

" Internal table to hold results
DATA: lt_customers TYPE STANDARD TABLE OF ty_customer WITH EMPTY KEY.

" Read customer data from database
SELECT kunnr, name1, ort01
  FROM kna1
  INTO TABLE @lt_customers
  UP TO 50 ROWS
  WHERE land1 = @'US'.

" Display results using ALV grid
TRY.
    DATA(lo_alv) = cl_salv_table=>factory(
      IMPORTING r_salv_table = DATA(lo_grid)
      CHANGING  t_table      = lt_customers ).

    lo_grid->get_functions( )->set_all( abap_true ).
    lo_grid->get_columns( )->set_optimize( abap_true ).

```

```
    " Set a meaningful title
    lo_grid->set_title( |Nordic Trading - US Customers| ).

    lo_grid->display( ).

  CATCH cx_salv_msg INTO DATA(lx_error).
    MESSAGE lx_error->get_text( ) TYPE 'E'.
ENDTRY.
```

Even if you have never seen ABAP before, several things should be recognizable: there is a type definition (similar to structs in C or records in other languages), a variable declaration for storing data, a database query using SQL-like syntax, and a loop-free display mechanism using an ALV grid component. The pipe characters around the title string represent string templates – a modern ABAP feature that lets you embed expressions directly in text.

This program demonstrates several patterns we will explore in depth:

- Using standard SAP tables (KNA1 is the customer master table)
- Modern inline data declarations with DATA(...)
- Open SQL with host variable references (@ prefix)
- Object-oriented component usage (CL_SALV_TABLE class)
- Exception handling with TRY/CATCH

We will revisit and expand each of these concepts in upcoming chapters. For now, note that ABAP code is structured, readable, and follows conventions similar to other enterprise languages you may know.

How Enterprise Development Actually Works

Writing ABAP differs from writing code for personal projects or startups in several important ways. Understanding these differences will help you write better code from the start.

Longevity: SAP systems are built to last decades, not months. A well-designed ABAP program written today might still be running and being maintained in twenty years. This means your code must be readable by people who were not involved in its creation, maintainable through multiple system upgrades, and robust enough to handle edge cases you cannot anticipate now.

Team development: No single developer owns an entire SAP implementation. You will work with functional consultants who translate business requirements into technical specifications, basis administrators who manage the infrastructure, security teams who define authorization rules, and other ABAP developers whose code your programs must integrate with. Clear naming conventions, documented interfaces, and consistent design patterns are not optional niceties – they are practical necessities for collaboration.

Change management: In most SAP environments, you cannot simply deploy code to production whenever you want. Changes move through a formal transport process: development in DEV systems, testing in Quality Assurance (QAS) systems, approval workflows, and controlled imports into Production (PRD). This transport management system ensures traceability but also means your code must be testable before it leaves development – there is no continuous deployment culture where you can fix issues live.

Performance at scale: SAP systems often process millions of business documents per day across thousands of concurrent users. An inefficient ABAP program that takes two seconds to run might seem acceptable during testing with sample data, but when scheduled as a nightly batch job processing ten million records or called by hundreds of users simultaneously, it becomes a system-wide bottleneck. Performance considerations are not an afterthought in ABAP development – they are central to good design.

Standard code respect: SAP delivers thousands of standard programs, function modules, and business processes with every system installation. Your custom code should extend and integrate with these standards rather than reinventing them or breaking upgrade paths. This discipline – often called "clean core" in modern S/4HANA terminology – separates professional ABAP developers from amateurs who treat the system as a blank canvas.

These enterprise realities shape everything about how we write ABAP. The Clean ABAP principles, design patterns, and best practices covered later in this book all exist to help you navigate these constraints while still building systems that are elegant, efficient, and a pleasure to work with.

With this foundation in place, let us move into the language itself.

Chapter 2: ABAP Fundamentals — Syntax, Types, and Variables

This chapter teaches you the absolute basics of writing ABAP code: how statements are structured, what data types exist, how to declare variables and constants, how operators work, and how to manipulate structures and field symbols. Every concept includes runnable examples using our Nordic Trading scenario so you can see immediately how these fundamentals apply in practice.

Statements, Keywords, and Statement Blocks

ABAP is a statement-based language where each instruction ends with a period (.). This is one of the most distinctive syntactic features – unlike many modern languages that use semicolons or newlines to terminate statements, ABAP requires periods. Missing a period is one of the most common syntax errors beginners make.

Here is the simplest possible ABAP program:

```
1  REPORT znt_hello_world.
2
3  WRITE: / 'Hello from Nordic Trading'.
```

This program does exactly one thing: it writes text to the output screen. Let us break down what each line means:

- `REPORT znt_hello_world.` declares this as an executable report program named ZNT_HELLO_WORLD. The Z prefix indicates this is a custom object created by your organization rather than delivered by SAP. All custom ABAP objects must start with Z or Y to avoid naming conflicts with standard SAP code.
- `WRITE: / 'Hello from Nordic Trading'.` outputs the text string to the screen. The slash (/) tells ABAP to start on a new line.

ABAP keywords are reserved words that have special meaning to the language – REPORT, WRITE, DATA, TYPES, SELECT, IF, LOOP, and many others. You cannot use these as variable or program names. Keywords are case-insensitive in ABAP; WRITE, write, and Write all mean the same thing. By convention, most ABAP developers write keywords in uppercase for readability.

ABAP supports several statement block structures that group related statements together:

```
REPORT znt_statement_blocks.

" Conditional block
IF sy-datum = '20260101'.
  WRITE: / 'Happy New Year from Nordic Trading'.
ELSE.
  WRITE: / |Today is { sy-datum }|.
ENDIF.

" Loop block
DO 5 TIMES.
  WRITE: / |Iteration { sy-index }|.
ENDDO.

" Case block
DATA: lv_priority TYPE c VALUE 'H'.

CASE lv_priority.
  WHEN 'H'.
    WRITE: / 'High priority - process immediately'.
  WHEN 'M'.
    WRITE: / 'Medium priority - process today'.
  WHEN OTHERS.
    WRITE: / 'Low priority - process when available'.
ENDCASE.
```

Notice how each block has a clear opening keyword (IF, DO, CASE) and matching closing keyword (ENDIF, ENDDO, ENDCASE). The ABAP compiler enforces proper nesting – you cannot have an ENDIF without a matching IF.

The SY system field structure contains runtime information about the current session. SY-DATUM holds today's date in YYYYMMDD format, and SY-INDEX is automatically incremented during DO loops to track iteration count. System fields beginning with SY- are available in every ABAP program without declaration.

Comments in ABAP start with a double quote ("), which causes everything after it on that line to be ignored by the compiler. For multi-line comments, you can use parentheses around asterisks:

```
* This is a single-line comment using asterisk
" This is also a single-line comment using quote
(* This is a
   multi-line comment *)
```

Elementary Data Types and Declarations

ABAP has three categories of data types: elementary (atomic values like numbers and text), complex (structures and tables composed of other types), and reference types (pointers to objects). We start with elementary types.

ABAP provides thirteen built-in elementary types for fixed-length data:

Type	Description	Length	Example Use
C	Character	Variable	Names, text fields
N	Numeric character	Variable	Phone numbers, IDs stored as text
D	Date	8	Dates in YYYYMMDD format
T	Time	6	Times in HHMMSS format
X	Byte	Variable	Binary data, hexadecimal values
P	Packed number	Variable	Precise decimal calculations
I	Integer	4 bytes	Whole numbers -2B to +2B
F	Floating point	8 bytes	Scientific calculations

Plus two variable-length types: STRING for text and XSTRING for binary data.

Here is how you declare variables using these types in a Nordic Trading context:

```
REPORT znt_data_types_demo.

" Traditional declaration block at program level
DATA: lv_customer_id TYPE n LENGTH 10,      " Customer number as numeric text
      lv_customer_name TYPE c LENGTH 80,    " Customer name
      lv_order_date TYPE d,                 " Order date
      lv_delivery_time TYPE t,              " Scheduled delivery time
      lv_quantity TYPE i,                   " Quantity ordered
      lv_unit_price TYPE p DECIMALS 2,      " Price with 2 decimal places
      lv_total_amount TYPE p DECIMALS 2,    " Total amount
      lv_note TYPE string,                  " Variable-length text note
      lv_status_flag TYPE x LENGTH 1.       " Single byte status indicator

" Assign values using literals
lv_customer_id = '1000543'.
lv_customer_name = 'Acme Manufacturing AB'.
lv_order_date = sy-datum.                    " Today's date from system
lv_delivery_time = '143000'.                 " 2:30 PM
lv_quantity = 250.
lv_unit_price = '45.50'.                     " Packed numbers assigned as text
lv_total_amount = lv_quantity * lv_unit_price.
lv_note = 'Rush order - expedited shipping requested for Q4 production run'.
lv_status_flag = 'A'.                        " Active status

" Display using string templates (modern syntax)
WRITE: / |Customer: { lv_customer_id }|.
WRITE: / |Name: { lv_customer_name }|.
WRITE: / |Order Date: { lv_order_date DATE = USER }|.    " User-friendly format
WRITE: / |Delivery Time: { lv_delivery_time TIME = USER }|.
WRITE: / |Quantity: { lv_quantity }| units.
WRITE: / |Unit Price: { lv_unit_price DECIMALS 2 }| EUR.
WRITE: / |Total Amount: { lv_total_amount DECIMALS 2 }| EUR.
WRITE: / |Note: { lv_note }|.
```

Several important concepts appear in this example:

First, the LENGTH addition specifies how many characters or bytes a field can hold. For type C (character), LENGTH determines the maximum string length. For type N (numeric character), it determines digit count. For types D and T, the length is fixed at 8 and 6 respectively.

Second, packed numbers (type P) require a DECIMALS specification that determines how many digits appear after the decimal point. The remaining length holds integer digits. Packed numbers are essential for financial calculations because they provide exact precision without floating-point rounding errors. Never use type F (floating point) for monetary values.

Third, string templates using pipe characters (|...) replace the older CON-

CATENATE statement and make formatted output much more readable. Expressions inside curly braces can include formatting directives like DATE = USER to display dates in the user's local format rather than raw YYYYMMDD.

Modern ABAP also supports inline declarations – defining variables at the point where they are first used rather than in a declaration block at the top of the program:

```
REPORT znt_inline_declarations.

" Inline declaration with type inference from right-hand side
DATA(lv_greeting) = |Welcome to Nordic Trading portal|.

" Inline declaration with explicit type
DATA(lv_order_count) TYPE i VALUE 42.

" Inline declaration directly in a SELECT statement (covered in detail later)
SELECT COUNT( * )
  FROM kna1
  INTO @DATA(lv_customer_count)
  WHERE land1 = @'SE'.

WRITE: / |{ lv_greeting }|.
WRITE: / |Open orders: { lv_order_count }|.
WRITE: / |Swedish customers in system: { lv_customer_count }|.
```

Inline declarations use the DATA(...) syntax and are one of the most impactful modern ABAP features. They reduce boilerplate code, keep variable definitions close to their usage (improving readability), and automatically infer types from initialization expressions when possible. The Clean ABAP guidelines strongly recommend inline declarations over traditional declaration blocks for local variables.

Constants, Literals, and Type Modifiers

Constants are values that cannot change during program execution. They improve code clarity by replacing magic numbers and strings with meaningful names:

```
REPORT znt_constants_demo.

" Traditional constant declarations
CONSTANTS: c_company_name TYPE string VALUE 'Nordic Trading AB',
           c_max_order_lines TYPE i VALUE 999,
           c_currency_eur TYPE currcode VALUE 'EUR',
           c_tax_rate_se TYPE p DECIMALS 4 VALUE '0.25'.   " Swedish VAT

" Modern inline constant declaration (ABAP 7.50+)
CONSTANTS c_minimum_stock_level TYPE i VALUE 50.

" Using constants in logic
DATA: lv_order_lines TYPE i VALUE 1200,
      lv_net_price TYPE p DECIMALS 2 VALUE '1000',
      lv_tax_amount TYPE p DECIMALS 2.

lv_tax_amount = lv_net_price * c_tax_rate_se.

IF lv_order_lines > c_max_order_lines.
  WRITE: / |Warning: Order exceeds maximum of { c_max_order_lines } lines|.
ELSE.
  WRITE: / |Order accepted for { c_company_name }|.
ENDIF.

WRITE: / |Net Price: { lv_net_price DECIMALS 2 }| { c_currency_eur }.
WRITE: / |VAT (25%): { lv_tax_amount DECIMALS 2 }| { c_currency_eur }.
```

Constants serve multiple purposes beyond readability. They centralize configuration values so changing one business rule requires modifying only one line of code. They prevent accidental modification of critical values during program execution. And they document intent – seeing C_TAX_RATE_SE in code is immediately clearer than seeing the literal 0.25.

Literals are fixed values written directly into code without variable names:

```
DATA(lv_name) = 'Nordic Trading'.        " Character literal in quotes
DATA(lv_number) = 42.                    " Integer literal
DATA(lv_date) = '20260115'.              " Date literal (YYYYMMDD format)
DATA(lv_time) = '093000'.                " Time literal (HHMMSS format)
DATA(lv_hex) = x'FF00AA'.                " Hexadecimal literal with x prefix
```

ABAP also supports typed literals in SQL contexts, which explicitly specify the data type:

```
" Typed literals for database operations
SELECT SINGLE name1
  FROM kna1
  INTO @DATA(lv_customer)
  WHERE kunnr = @'1000543N'.            " N suffix = numeric character literal

SELECT SINGLE *
  FROM mara
  INTO @DATA(ls_material)
  WHERE matnr = @'40001CN'              " Material number as char
    AND erdat >= @20260101D.            " D suffix = date typed literal
```

The FINAL keyword creates immutable variables – values that can be set once but never changed afterward:

```
REPORT znt_final_demo.

" Final variable - can only be assigned once
FINAL(lv_company_id) = 'NT001'.

lv_company_id = 'NT002'.    " This causes a compile error!
```

Final variables are useful when you need to compute a value at runtime but want the compiler to guarantee it will not change later in the code. This is particularly valuable for method parameters and class attributes where immutability improves both safety and documentation.

Operators: Arithmetic, Logical, Comparison, String

ABAP supports standard operators for calculations, comparisons, and string manipulation. Modern ABAP syntax has simplified many operations that previously required verbose statements.

Arithmetic operators work as expected:

```
REPORT znt_arithmetic_operators.

DATA: lv_quantity TYPE i VALUE 150,
      lv_unit_price TYPE p DECIMALS 2 VALUE '34.50',
      lv_discount_percent TYPE p DECIMALS 2 VALUE '10',
      lv_net_amount TYPE p DECIMALS 2,
      lv_tax TYPE p DECIMALS 2,
      lv_gross_amount TYPE p DECIMALS 2.

" Basic arithmetic
lv_net_amount = lv_quantity * lv_unit_price.              " Multiplication
lv_net_amount = lv_net_amount - ( lv_net_amount * lv_discount_percent / 100 ).
↪  " Discount

" Using EXACT for precise calculations without intermediate rounding
lv_tax = EXACT #( lv_net_amount * '0.25' ).               " Swedish VAT
lv_gross_amount = EXACT #( lv_net_amount + lv_tax ).

WRITE: / |Net Amount (after 10% discount): { lv_net_amount DECIMALS 2 }| EUR.
WRITE: / |VAT: { lv_tax DECIMALS 2 }| EUR.
WRITE: / |Gross Amount: { lv_gross_amount DECIMALS 2 }| EUR.
```

The EXACT operator ensures calculations are performed with full precision and rounded only at the final assignment, preventing cumulative rounding errors in financial computations. This is critical for accounting applications where even small rounding differences can cause reconciliation problems.

Comparison operators return boolean values:

```
DATA: lv_stock TYPE i VALUE 45,
      lv_ordered TYPE i VALUE 100,
      lv_min_stock TYPE i VALUE 50.

IF lv_stock < lv_min_stock.
  WRITE: / 'Stock below minimum threshold'.
ENDIF.

IF lv_stock + lv_ordered >= lv_min_stock.
  WRITE: / 'Total availability meets requirement'.
ENDIF.

IF lv_stock <> 0.                                  " Not equal (also allowed: ~=)
  WRITE: / 'Stock exists in warehouse'.
ENDIF.
```

Logical operators combine conditions:

```
DATA: lv_customer_type TYPE c VALUE 'P',          " P = Premium, R = Regular
      lv_order_value TYPE p DECIMALS 2 VALUE '15000'.

" AND operator - both conditions must be true
IF lv_customer_type = 'P' AND lv_order_value >= '10000'.
  WRITE: / 'Eligible for premium financing'.
ENDIF.

" OR operator - at least one condition must be true
IF lv_customer_type = 'R' OR lv_order_value < '5000'.
  WRITE: / 'Standard payment terms apply'.
ENDIF.

" NOT operator - negates a condition
IF NOT ( lv_stock >= lv_min_stock ).
  WRITE: / 'Reorder required'.
ENDIF.
```

Modern ABAP provides powerful string operators that replace older CONCATENATE and SHIFT statements:

```
REPORT znt_string_operators.

" String concatenation with && operator
DATA(lv_full_name) = 'Anna' && ' ' && 'Lindqvist'.
WRITE: / |Full name: { lv_full_name }|.

" String templates with embedded expressions
DATA(lv_customer_id) = '1000543'.
DATA(lv_message) = |Dear customer { lv_customer_id }, your order has been
↪  confirmed.|.
WRITE: / lv_message.

" Substring extraction using string+offset(length) syntax
DATA(lv_product_code) = 'NT-ELEC-2026-0451'.
DATA(lv_year) = lv_product_code+9(4).             " Characters 9-12: '2026'
DATA(lv_sequence) = lv_product_code+14(4).        " Characters 14-17: '0451'
WRITE: / |Product from year { lv_year }, sequence { lv_sequence }|.

" String replacement
DATA(lv_description) = 'Industrial motor for manufacturing equipment'.
REPLACE ALL OCCURRENCES OF 'manufacturing' IN lv_description WITH 'production'.
WRITE: / |Updated: { lv_description }|.

" Finding substrings
DATA(lv_search_text) = 'The Nordic Trading warehouse is located in Stockholm'.
FIND 'warehouse' IN lv_search_text MATCH OFFSET DATA(lv_offset).
IF sy-subrc = 0.
```

```
  WRITE: / |Word found at position { lv_offset + 1 }|.    " +1 for
  ↪  human-readable index
ENDIF.

" String length
WRITE: / |Description length: { strlen( lv_description ) }| characters.
```

The && operator for concatenation and string templates with pipe characters represent significant improvements over legacy ABAP syntax. They are more readable, less error-prone, and align ABAP with conventions found in modern languages like JavaScript and C#.

Working with Structures and Field Symbols

Structures group related fields into a single composite data type – similar to structs in C or records in Pascal. They are fundamental to ABAP programming because most business data (customers, orders, products) naturally consists of multiple related attributes.

Here is how you define and use structures for Nordic Trading:

```
REPORT znt_structures_demo.

" Define a structure type for order header data
TYPES: BEGIN OF ty_order_header,
         order_id      TYPE n LENGTH 10,       " Order number
         customer_id   TYPE n LENGTH 10,       " Customer reference
         order_date    TYPE d,                 " Date ordered
         delivery_date TYPE d,                 " Requested delivery
         currency      TYPE currcode,          " Transaction currency
         total_value   TYPE p DECIMALS 2,      " Order total
        status       TYPE c LENGTH 1,       " O=Open, P=Processing, C=Complete
       END OF ty_order_header.

" Declare a structure variable
DATA: ls_order TYPE ty_order_header.

" Populate individual fields using component selectors
ls_order-order_id = '5000234'.
ls_order-customer_id = '1000543'.
ls_order-order_date = sy-datum.
ls_order-delivery_date = sy-datum + 14.         " Two weeks from now
ls_order-currency = 'EUR'.
ls_order-total_value = '24500.00'.
ls_order-status = 'O'.
```

```
25
26  " Display structure contents
27  WRITE: / |Order { ls_order-order_id } for customer { ls_order-customer_id }|.
28  WRITE: / |Placed on { ls_order-order_date DATE = USER }|.
29  WRITE: / |Delivery requested: { ls_order-delivery_date DATE = USER }|.
30  WRITE: / |Value: { ls_order-total_value DECIMALS 2 }| { ls_order-currency }.
31  WRITE: / |Status: { ls_order-status }|.
```

Each field in a structure is accessed using the component selector syntax: structure_name-field_name. This is one of the most common operations in ABAP code.

You can also initialize an entire structure at once using the VALUE operator (modern syntax):

```
1   " Initialize structure with VALUE constructor expression
2   DATA(ls_order2) = VALUE ty_order_header(
3     order_id      = '5000235'
4     customer_id   = '1000789'
5     order_date    = sy-datum
6     delivery_date = sy-datum + 7
7     currency      = 'SEK'
8     total_value   = '125000'
9     status        = 'O'
10  ).
11
12  WRITE: / |Order { ls_order2-order_id }: { ls_order2-total_value DECIMALS 2 }| {
    ↪  ls_order2-currency }.
```

The VALUE constructor is cleaner and less error-prone than assigning each field individually, especially for structures with many components. It also makes the code self-documenting by showing all fields and their values in one place.

Structures can be nested to represent hierarchical data:

```
TYPES: BEGIN OF ty_address,
         street  TYPE c LENGTH 60,
         postal  TYPE n LENGTH 5,
         city    TYPE c LENGTH 40,
         country TYPE land1,                    " Reuse standard SAP country type
       END OF ty_address.

TYPES: BEGIN OF ty_customer_full,
         customer_id TYPE kunnr,                " Standard SAP customer number type
         name        TYPE name1,                " Standard SAP name type
         address     TYPE ty_address,           " Nested structure
         credit_limit TYPE bwart,               " Credit limit in home currency
       END OF ty_customer_full.

DATA(ls_customer) = VALUE ty_customer_full(
  customer_id  = '1000543'
  name         = 'Acme Manufacturing AB'
  address      = VALUE #(
    street  = 'Industriavägen 15'
    postal  = '168 67'
    city    = 'Kista'
    country = 'SE'
  )
  credit_limit = '500000'
).

" Access nested structure fields
WRITE: / |{ ls_customer-name }|.
WRITE: / |{ ls_customer-address-street }|.
WRITE: / |{ ls_customer-address-city }, { ls_customer-address-postal }|.
WRITE: / |Country: { ls_customer-address-country }|.
```

Notice how we reference standard SAP data types like KUNNR (customer number), NAME1 (name), and LAND1 (country code) from the ABAP Dictionary. These global types ensure consistency across all programs in the system – every program that uses KUNNR for customer numbers will use the same length and format.

Field symbols provide a different way to work with data. Rather than being actual variables that store values, field symbols act as aliases or references to existing data objects:

```
REPORT znt_field_symbols_demo.

DATA: lv_value TYPE i VALUE 100.

" Declare a field symbol typed as integer
FIELD-SYMBOLS: <fs_number> TYPE i.

" Assign the field symbol to point to lv_value
ASSIGN lv_value TO <fs_number>.

" Modifying through the field symbol modifies the original variable
<fs_number> = 200.

WRITE: / |lv_value is now: { lv_value }|.    " Outputs: 200
```

Field symbols are particularly valuable when you need to work with data whose type is not known until runtime, or when you want to avoid copying large amounts of data. They are used extensively with internal tables (covered in the next chapter) and dynamic programming scenarios.

A common pattern uses field symbols with inline declaration for cleaner code:

```
DATA(ls_order) = VALUE ty_order_header( order_id = '5000236' total_value =
↪  '5000' ).

" Inline field symbol declaration and assignment
ASSIGN ls_order TO FIELD-SYMBOL(<fs_order>).

IF <fs_order>-total_value > '10000'.
  <fs_order>-status = 'P'.                  " Mark as priority processing
ENDIF.

WRITE: / |Order { <fs_order>-order_id } status: { <fs_order>-status }|.
```

Field symbols use angle brackets (<...>) in their names to distinguish them from regular variables. This visual distinction helps you immediately recognize when code is working through a reference rather than directly with data.

With these fundamentals mastered – statements, types, variables, operators, structures, and field symbols – you have the building blocks for everything else in ABAP. The next chapter applies these concepts to control flow and logic structures.

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