

# Entity-Relationship Model

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E/R DIAGRAMS

WEAK ENTITY SETS

CONVERTING E/R DIAGRAMS TO RELATIONS

# Purpose of E/R Model

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The E/R model allows us to sketch database schema designs.

- Includes some constraints but not operations.

Designs are pictures called *entity-relationship diagrams*.

**Later:** convert E/R diagrams to relations.

# Framework for E/R

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Design is a serious business.

The “boss” knows they want a database, but they do not know what they want in it.

Sketching the key components is an efficient way to develop a working database.

# Entity Sets

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*Entity* = “thing” or object.

*Entity set* = collection of similar entities.

*Attribute* = property of an entity set.

- Attributes are simple values, e.g. integers or character strings, not structs, sets, etc.

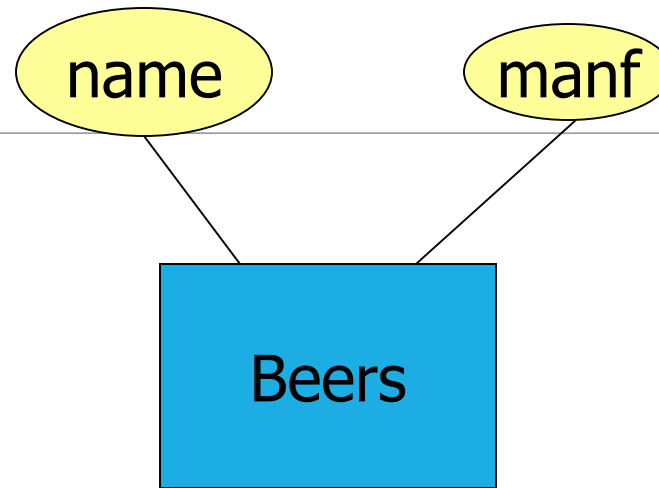
# E/R Diagrams

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In an entity-relationship diagram:

- Entity set = rectangle.
- Attribute = oval, with a line to the rectangle representing its entity set.

# Example:



Entity set **Beers** has two attributes, **name** and **manf** (manufacturer).

Each **Beers** entity has values for these two attributes, e.g. (Bud, Anheuser-Busch)

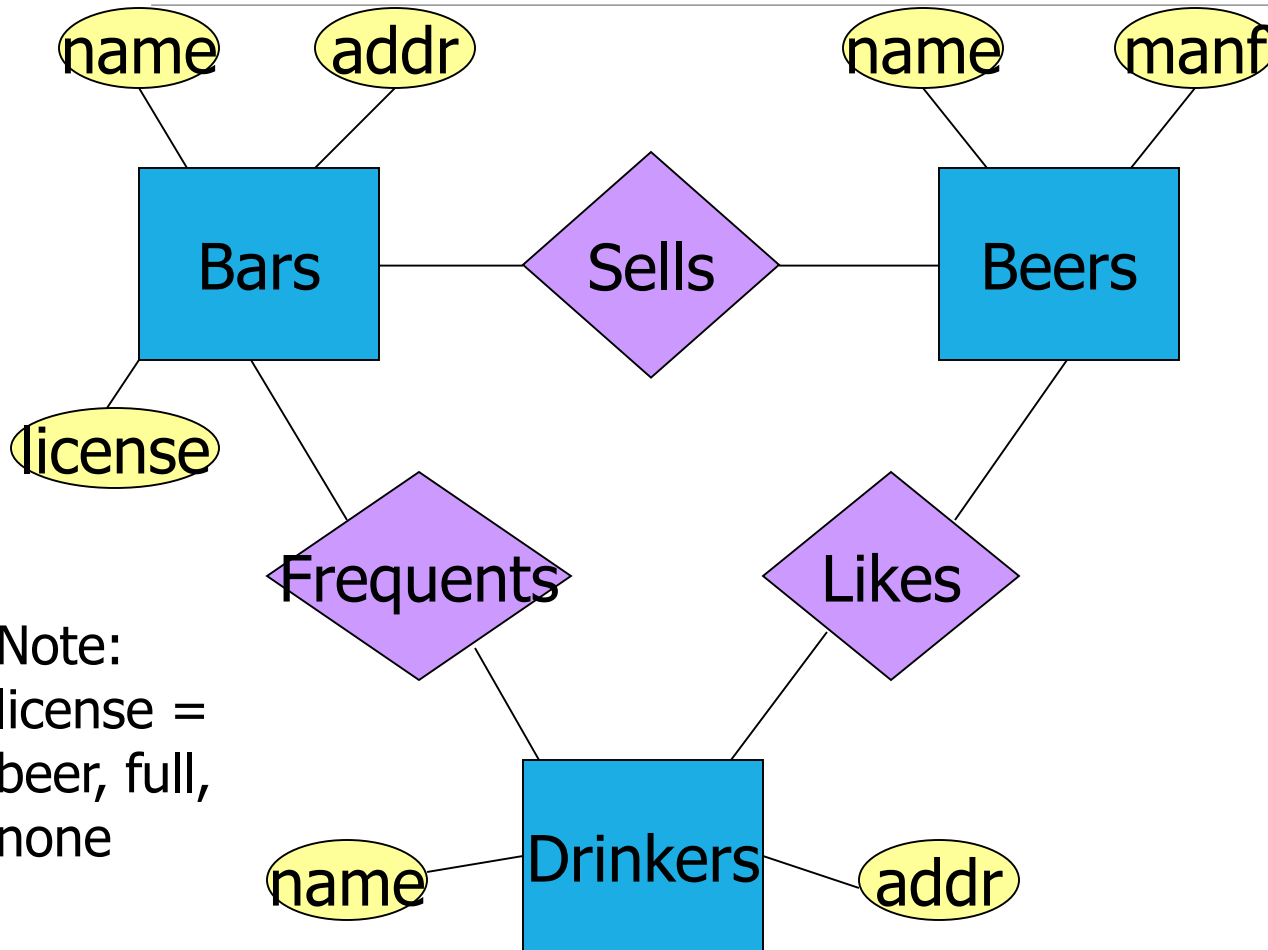
# Relationships

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A **relationship** connects two or more entity sets.

It is represented by a diamond, with lines to each of the entity sets involved.

# Example: Relationships



Bars sell some beers.

Drinkers like some beers.

Drinkers frequent some bars.

Note:  
license =  
beer, full,  
none



# Relationship Set

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The current “value” of an entity set is the set of entities that belong to it.

- **Example:** the set of all bars in our database.

The “value” of a relationship is a *relationship set*, a set of tuples with one component for each related entity set.

# Example: Relationship Set

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For the relationship **Sells**, we might have a relationship set like:

| Bar       | Beer       |
|-----------|------------|
| Joe's Bar | Bud        |
| Joe's Bar | Miller     |
| Sue's Bar | Bud        |
| Sue's Bar | Pete's Ale |
| Sue's Bar | Bud Lite   |

# Multiway Relationships

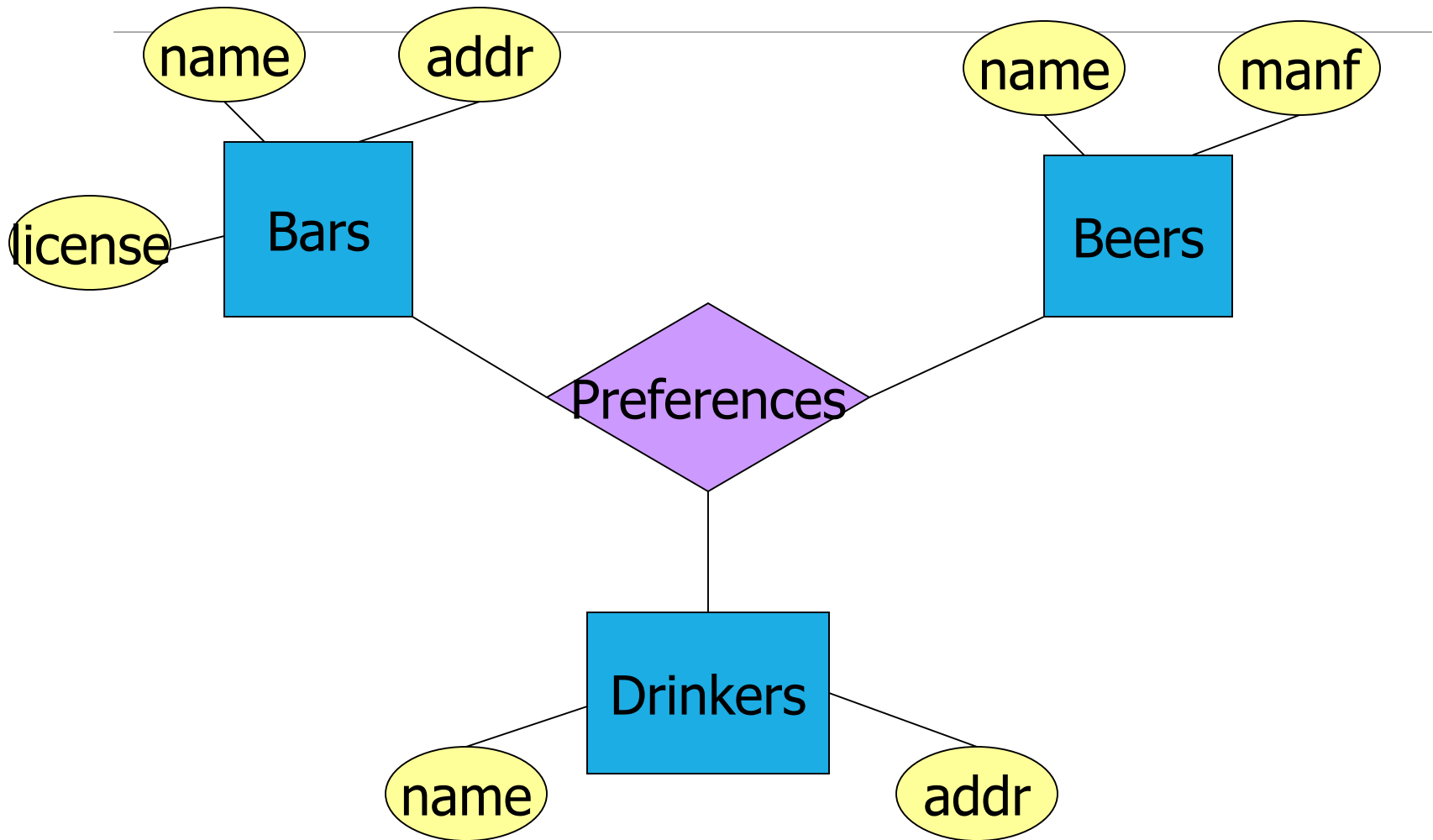
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Sometimes, we need a relationship that connects more than two entity sets.

Suppose that drinkers will only drink certain beers at certain bars.

- Our three binary relationships **Likes**, **Sells**, and **Frequents** do not allow us to make this distinction.
- But a 3-way relationship would.

# Example: 3-Way Relationship



# A Typical Relationship Set

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| Bar       | Drinker | Beer       |
|-----------|---------|------------|
| Joe's Bar | Ann     | Miller     |
| Sue's Bar | Ann     | Bud        |
| Sue's Bar | Ann     | Pete's Ale |
| Joe's Bar | Bob     | Bud        |
| Joe's Bar | Bob     | Miller     |
| Joe's Bar | Cal     | Miller     |
| Sue's Bar | Cal     | Bud Lite   |

# Many-Many Relationships

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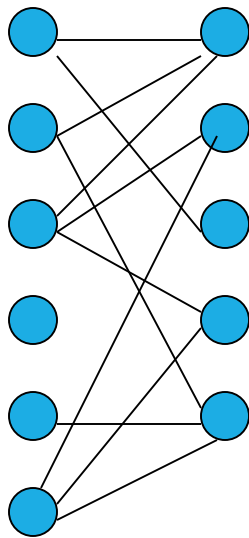
Focus: **binary** relationships, such as **Sells** between **Bars** and **Beers**.

In a **many-many relationship**, an entity of either set can be connected to many entities of the other set.

- E.g., a bar sells many beers; a beer is sold by many bars.

# In Pictures:

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many-many

# Many-One Relationships

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Some binary relationships are *many-one* from one entity set to another.

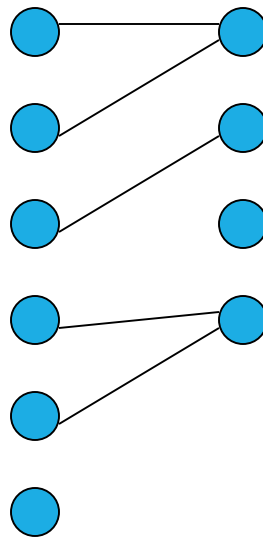
Each entity of the first set is connected to at most one entity of the second set.

But an entity of the second set can be connected to zero, one, or many entities of the first set.



# In Pictures:

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many-one

# Example: Many-One Relationship

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**Favorite**, from **Drinkers** to **Beers** is many-one.

A drinker has at most one favorite beer.

But a beer can be the favorite of any number of drinkers, including zero.

# One-One Relationships

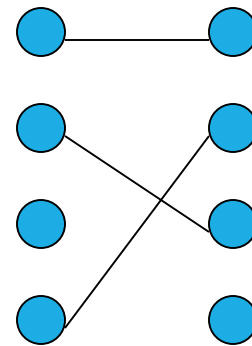
In a *one-one relationship*, each entity of either entity set is related to at most one entity of the other set.

**Example:** Relationship **Best-seller** between entity sets **Manfs** (manufacturer) and **Beers**.

- A beer cannot be made by more than one manufacturer, and no manufacturer can have more than one best-seller (assume no ties).

# In Pictures:

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one-one

# Representing “Multiplicity”

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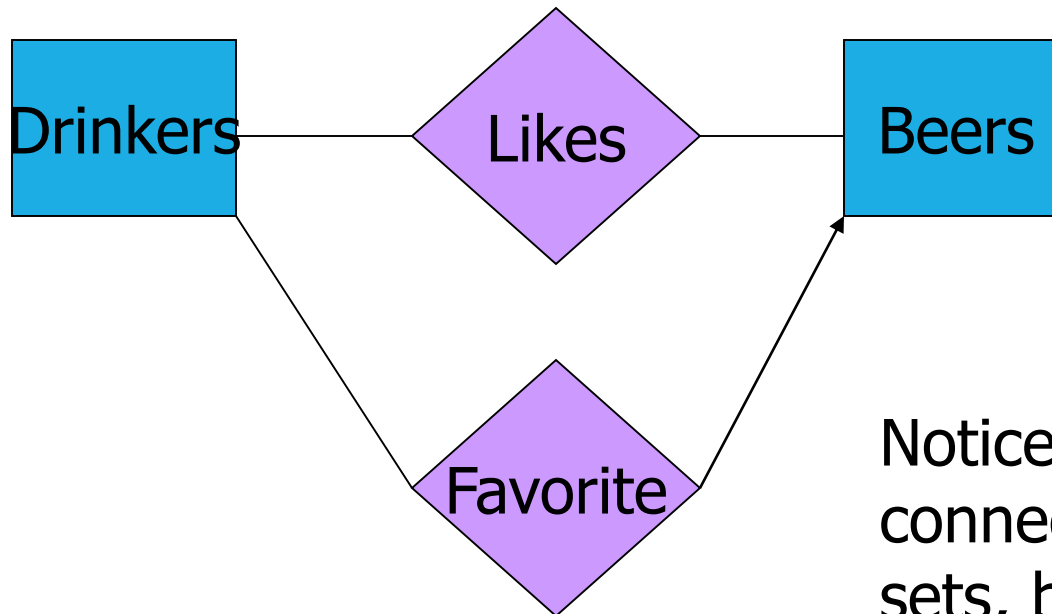
Show a many-one relationship by an arrow entering the “one” side.

Show a one-one relationship by arrows entering both entity sets.

**Rounded arrow** = “exactly one,” i.e., each entity of the first set is related to exactly one entity of the target set.

# Example: Many-One Relationship

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Notice: two relationships connect the same entity sets, but are different.

# Example: One-One Relationship

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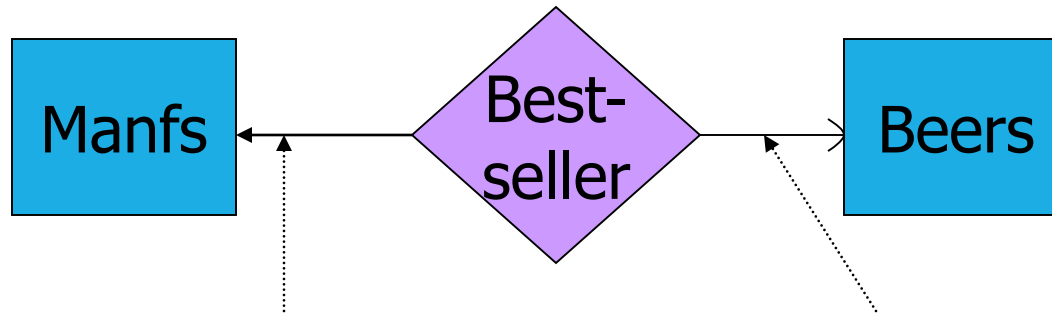
Consider **Best-seller** between **Manfs** and **Beers**.

Some beers are not the best-seller of any manufacturer, so a rounded arrow to **Manfs** would be inappropriate.

But a beer manufacturer has to have a best-seller.

# In the E/R Diagram

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A beer is the best-seller for 0 or 1 manufacturer.

A manufacturer has exactly one best seller.



# Attributes on Relationships

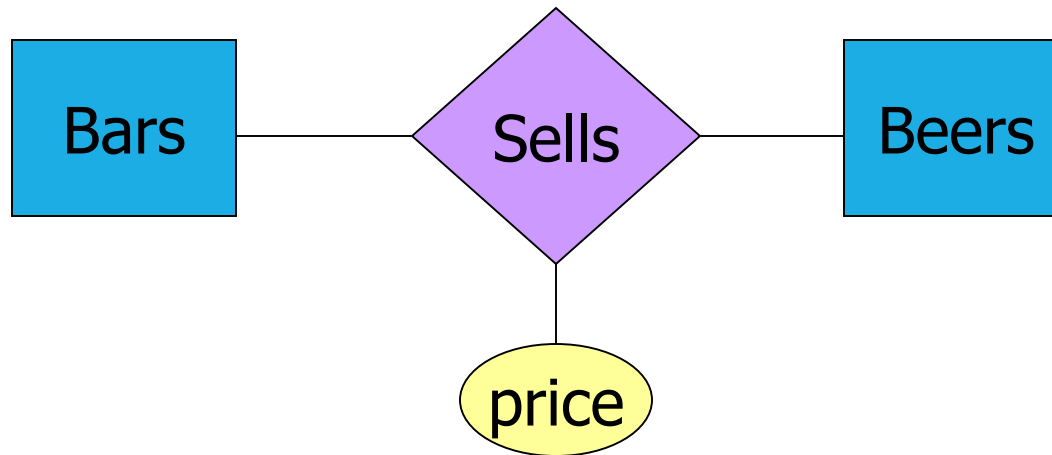
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Sometimes it is useful to attach an attribute to a relationship.

Think of this attribute as a property of tuples in the relationship set.

# Example: Attribute on Relationship

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Price is a function of both the bar and the beer, not of one alone.

# Equivalent Diagrams Without Attributes on Relationships

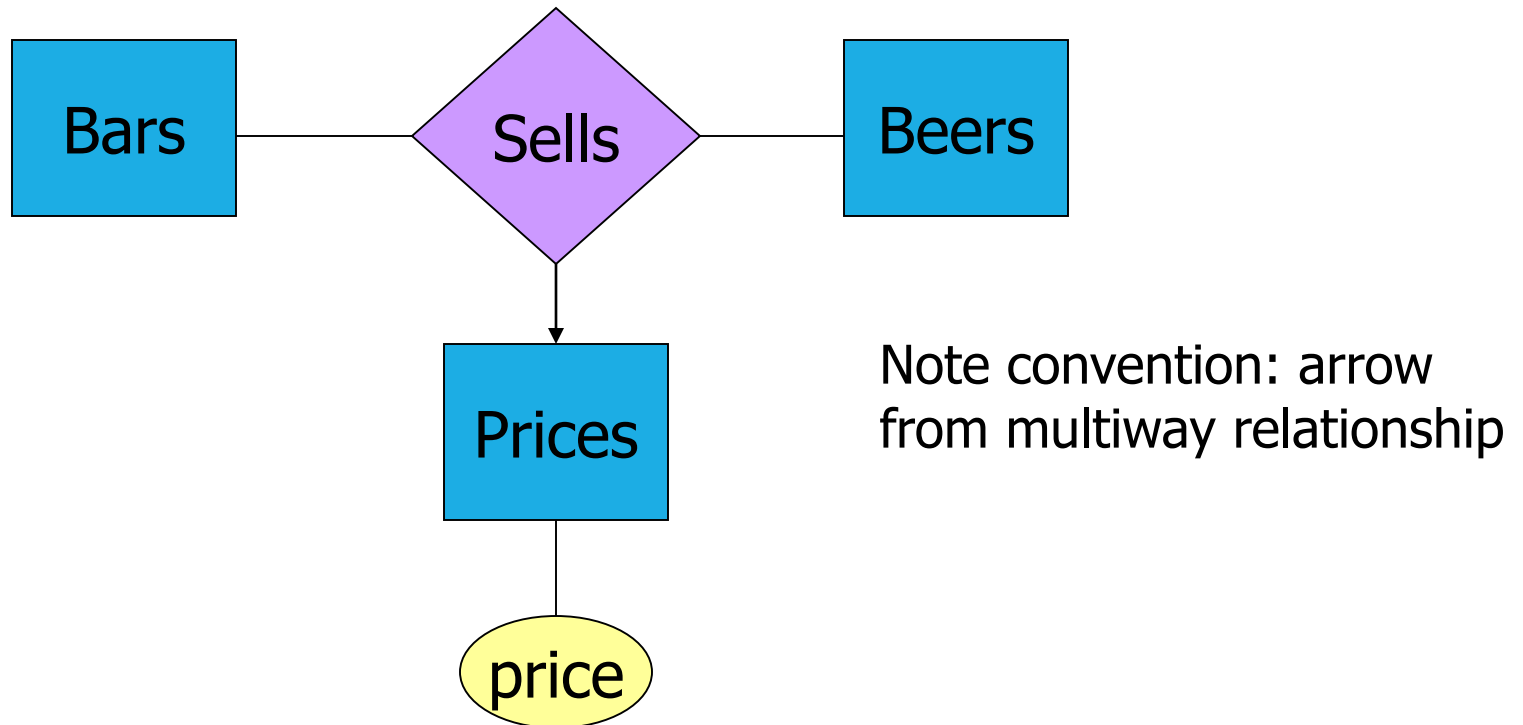
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Create an entity set representing values of the attribute.

Make that entity set participate in the relationship.

# Example: Removing an Attribute from a Relationship

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# Roles

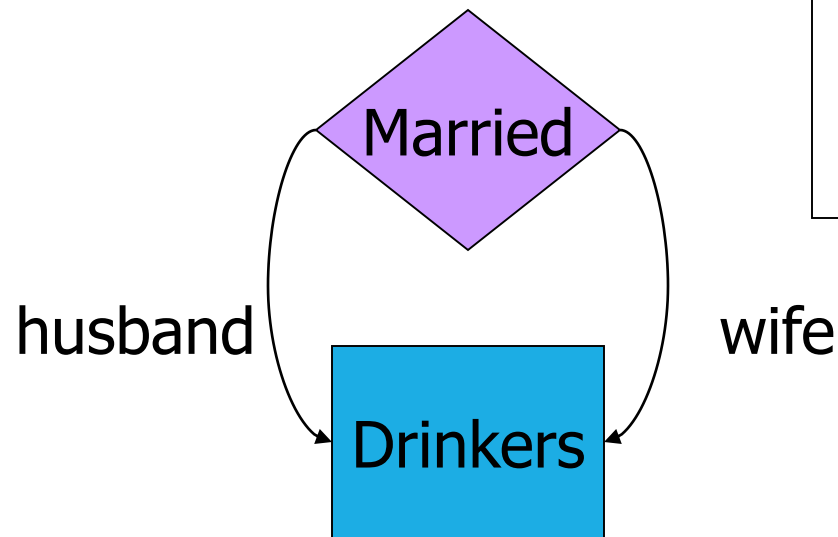
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Sometimes an entity set appears more than once in a relationship.

Label the edges between the relationship and the entity set with names called *roles*.

# Example: Roles

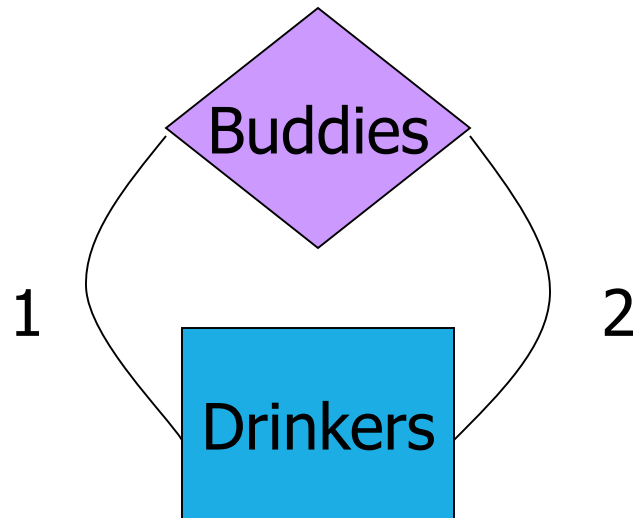
Relationship Set



| Husband | Wife |
|---------|------|
| Bob     | Ann  |
| Joe     | Sue  |
| ...     | ...  |

# Example: Roles

## Relationship Set



| Buddy1 | Buddy2 |
|--------|--------|
| Bob    | Ann    |
| Joe    | Sue    |
| Ann    | Bob    |
| Joe    | Moe    |
| ...    | ...    |

# Subclasses

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*Subclass* = special case = more properties.

**Example:** Ales are a kind of beer.

- Not every beer is an ale, but some are.
- Let us suppose that in addition to all the *properties* (attributes and relationships) of beers, ales also have the attribute **color**.



# Subclasses in E/R Diagrams

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Assume subclasses form a tree.

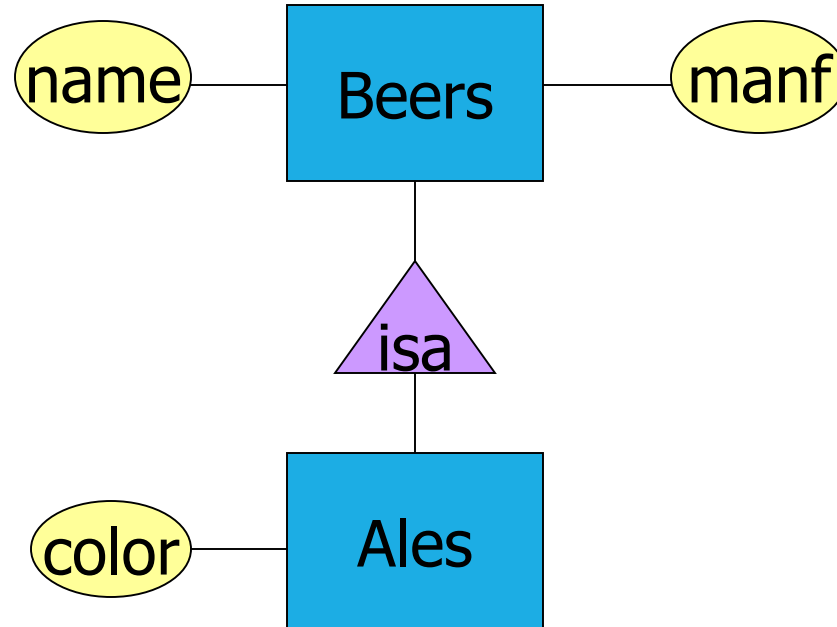
- I.e., no multiple inheritance.

Isa triangles indicate the subclass relationship.

- Point to the superclass.

# Example: Subclasses

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# E/R Vs. Object-Oriented Subclasses

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In OO, objects are in one class only.

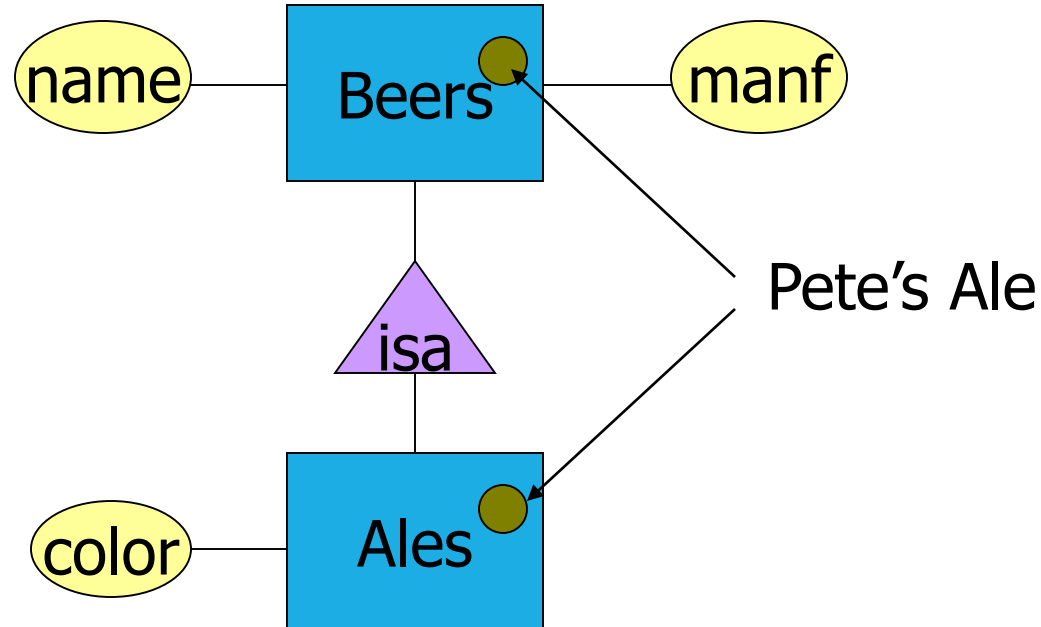
- Subclasses inherit from superclasses.

In contrast, E/R entities have *representatives* in all subclasses to which they belong.

- **Rule:** if entity  $e$  is represented in a subclass, then  $e$  is represented in the superclass (and recursively up the tree).

# Example: Representatives of Entities

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# Keys

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A *key* is a set of attributes for one entity set such that no two entities in this set agree on all the attributes of the key.

- It is allowed for two entities to agree on some, but not all, of the key attributes.

We must designate a key for every entity set.

# Keys in E/R Diagrams

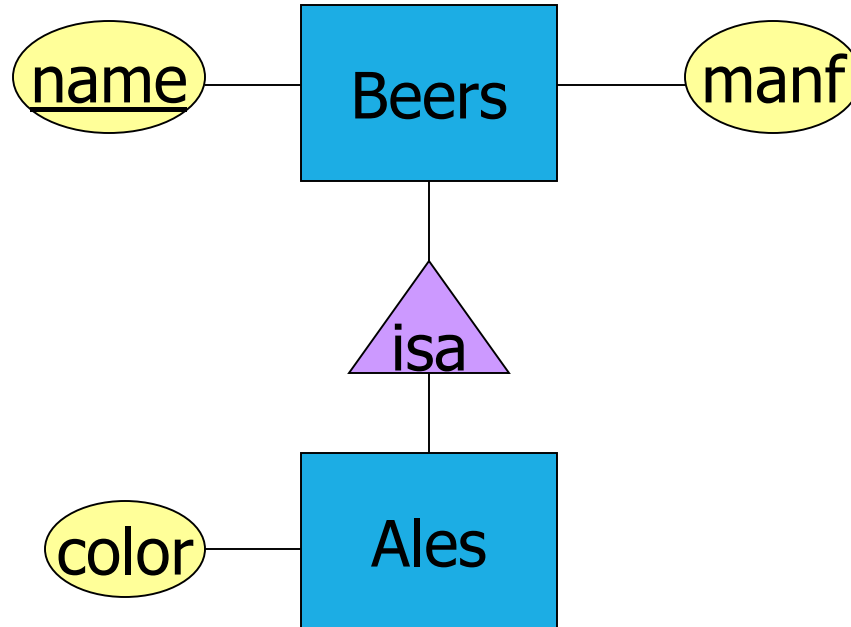
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Underline the key attribute(s).

In an Isa hierarchy, only the root entity set has a key, and it must serve as the key for all entities in the hierarchy.

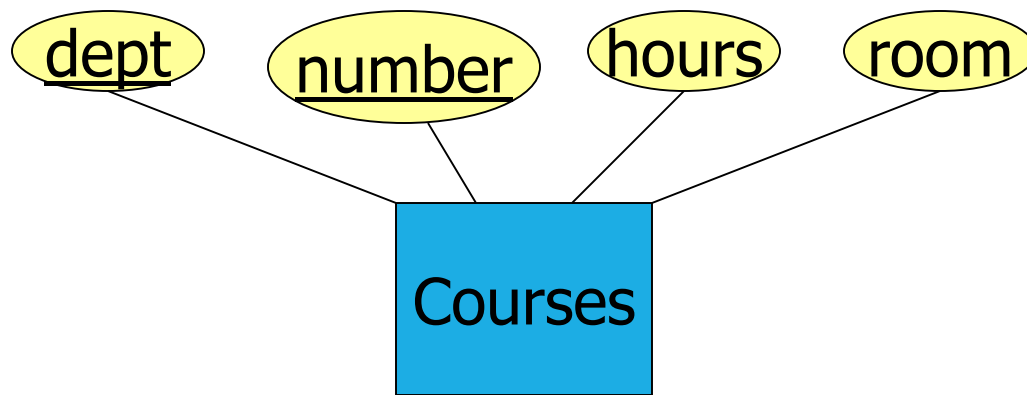
# Example: name is Key for Beers

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# Example: a Multi-attribute Key

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- Note that **hours** and **room** could also serve as a key, but we must select only one key.



# Weak Entity Sets

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Occasionally, entities of an entity set need “help” to identify them uniquely.

Entity set  $E$  is said to be *weak* if in order to identify entities of  $E$  uniquely, we need to follow one or more many-one relationships from  $E$  and include the key of the related entities from the connected entity sets.

# Example: Weak Entity Set

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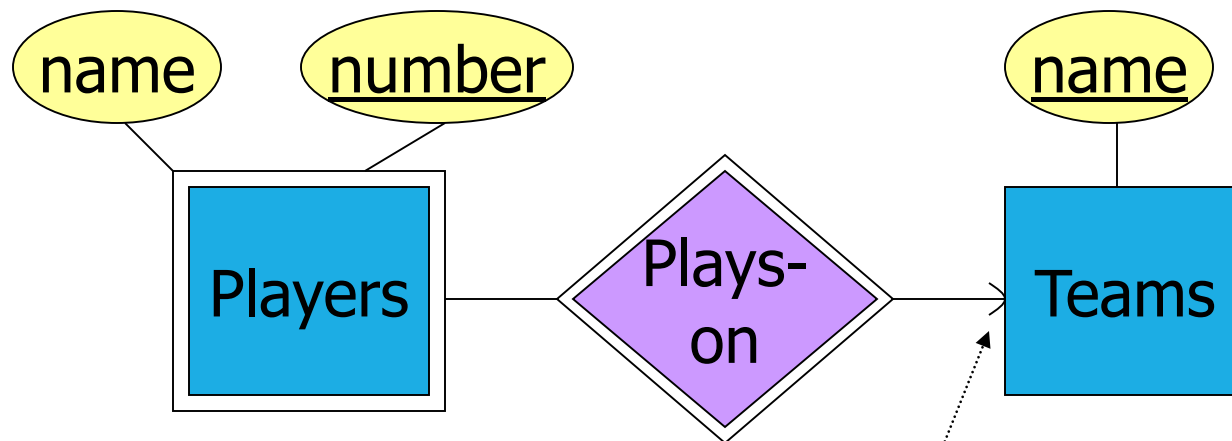
**name** is almost a key for football players, but there might be two with the same name.

**number** is certainly not a key, since players on two teams could have the same number.

But **number**, together with the team **name** related to the player by **Plays-on** should be unique.

# In E/R Diagrams

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Note: must be rounded because each player needs a team to help with the key.

- Double diamond for *supporting* many-one relationship.
- Double rectangle for the weak entity set.

# Weak Entity-Set Rules

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A weak entity set has one or more many-one relationships to other (supporting) entity sets.

- Not every many-one relationship from a weak entity set need be supporting.
- But supporting relationships must have a rounded arrow (entity at the “one” end is guaranteed).

# Weak Entity-Set Rules – (2)

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The key for a weak entity set is its own underlined attributes and the keys for the supporting entity sets.

- E.g., (player) number and (team) name is a key for Players in the previous example.

# Design Techniques

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1. Avoid redundancy.
2. Limit the use of weak entity sets.
3. Do not use an entity set when an attribute will do.

# Avoiding Redundancy

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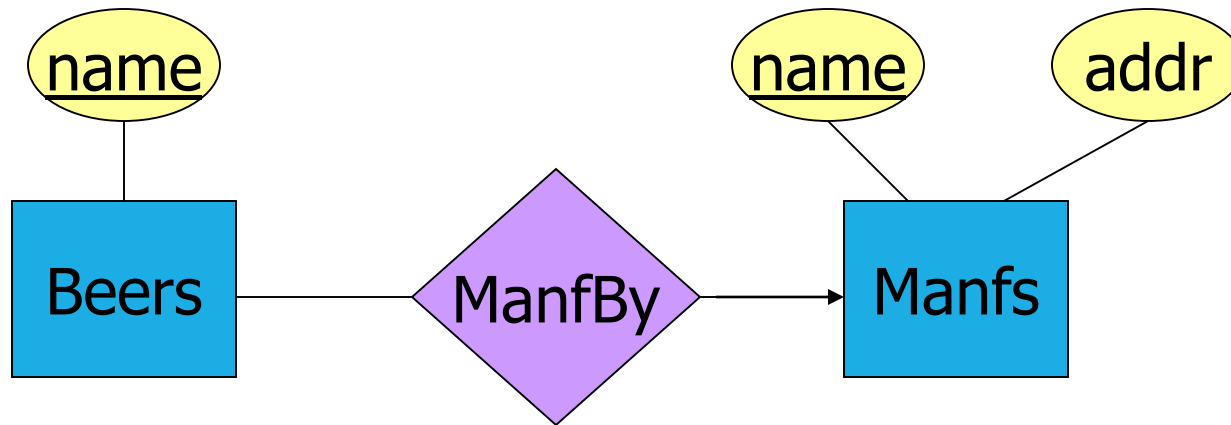
*Redundancy* = saying the same thing in two (or more) different ways.

Wastes space and (more importantly) encourages inconsistency.

- Two representations of the same fact become inconsistent if we change one and forget to change the other.

# Example: Good

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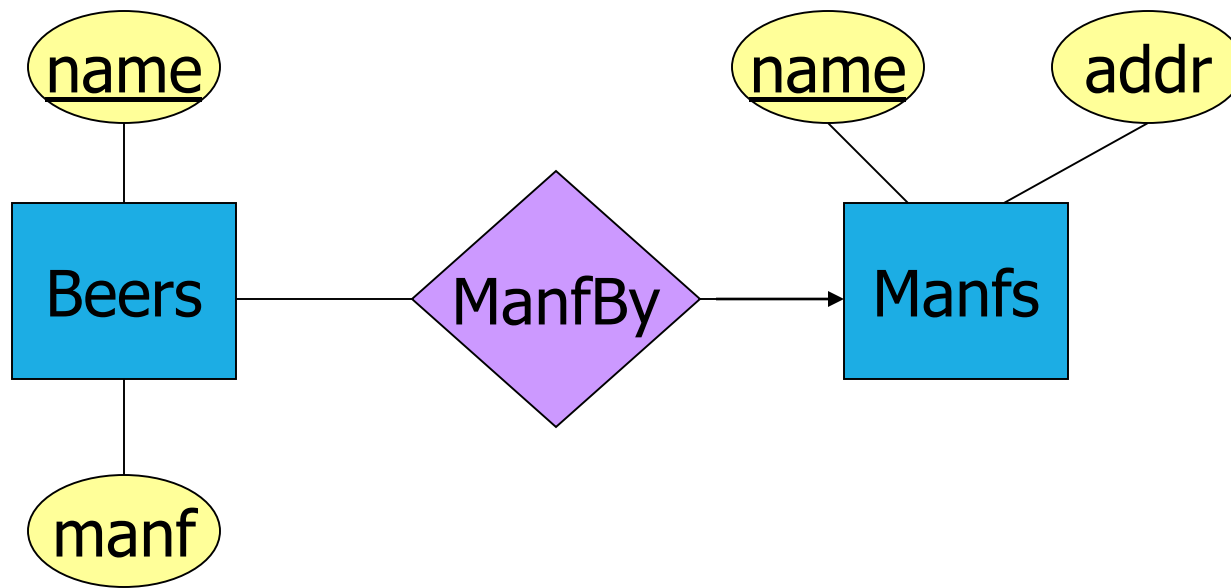


This design gives the address of each manufacturer exactly once.



# Example: Bad

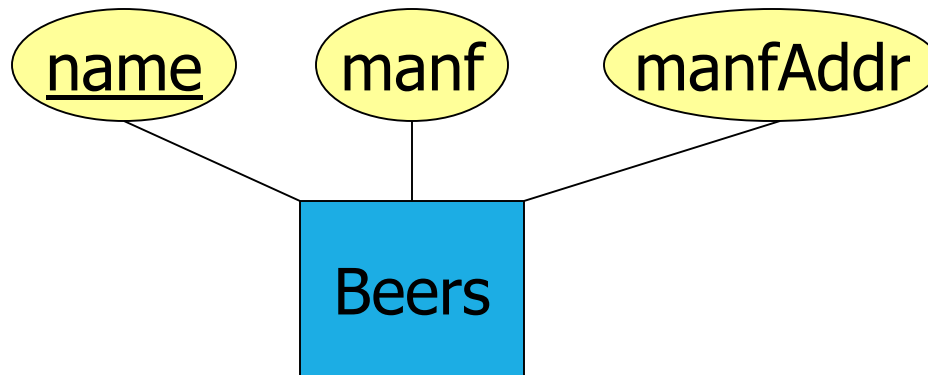
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This design states the manufacturer of a beer twice: as an attribute and as a related entity.

# Example: Bad

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This design repeats the manufacturer's address once for each beer and loses the address if there are temporarily no beers for a manufacturer.

# Entity Sets Versus Attributes

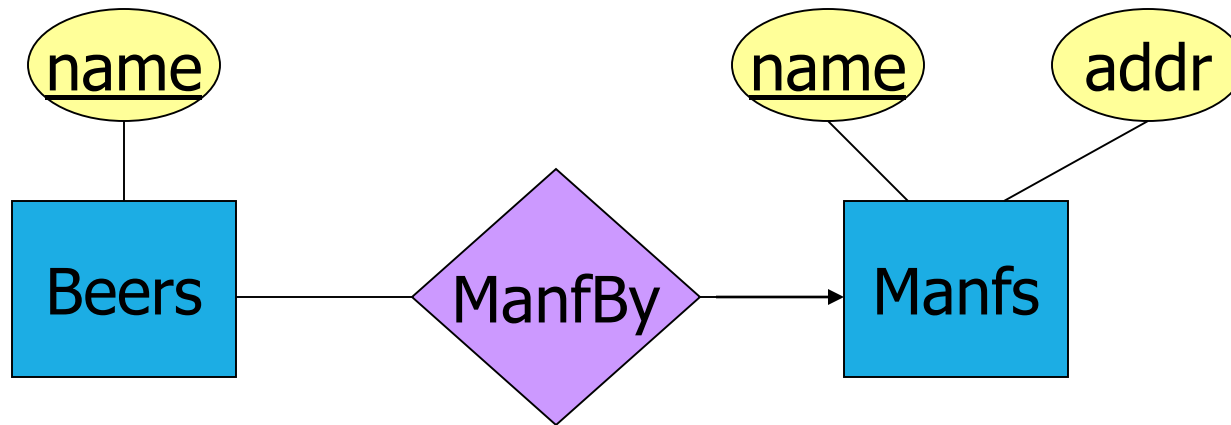
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An entity set should satisfy at least one of the following conditions:

- It is more than the name of something; it has at least one nonkey attribute.
- or
- It is the “many” in a many-one or many-many relationship.

# Example: Good

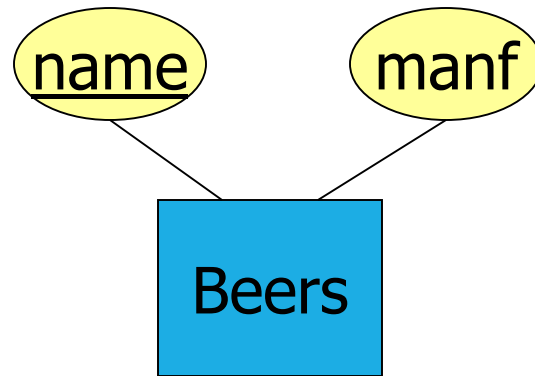
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- **Manfs** deserves to be an entity set because of the nonkey attribute **addr**.
- **Beers** deserves to be an entity set because it is the “many” of the many-one relationship **ManfBy**.

# Example: Good

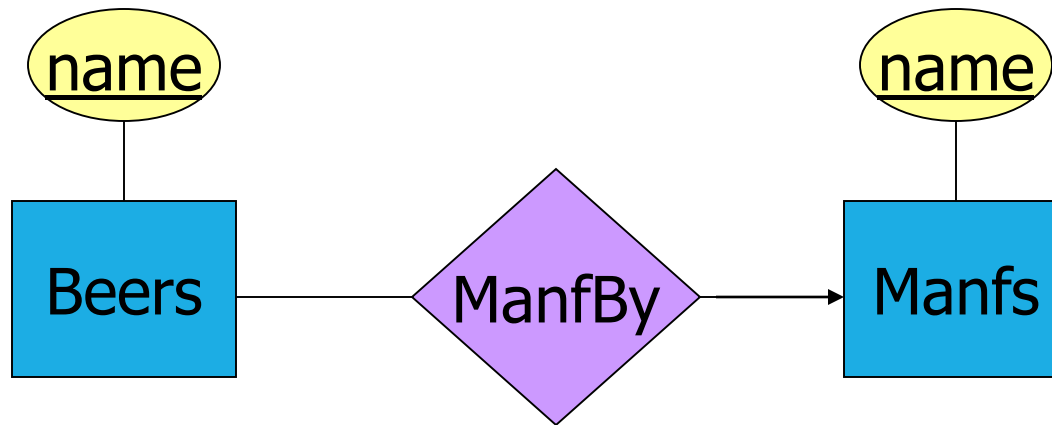
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There is no need to make the manufacturer an entity set, because we record nothing about manufacturers besides their name.

# Example: Bad

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Since the manufacturer is nothing but a name, and is not at the “many” end of any relationship, it should not be an entity set.

# Don't Overuse Weak Entity Sets

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Beginning database designers often doubt that anything could be a key by itself.

- They make all entity sets weak, supported by all other entity sets to which they are linked.

In reality, we usually create unique ID's for entity sets.

- Examples include social-security numbers, automobile VIN's etc.

# When Do We Need Weak Entity Sets?

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The usual reason is that there is no global authority capable of creating unique ID's.

**Example:** it is unlikely that there could be an agreement to assign unique player numbers across all football teams in the world.



# From E/R Diagrams to Relations

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Entity set -> relation.

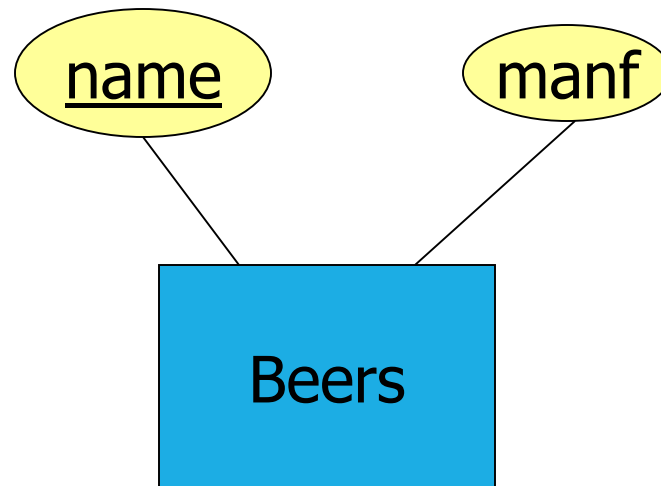
- Attributes -> attributes.

Relationships -> relations whose attributes are only:

- The keys of the connected entity sets.
- Attributes of the relationship itself.

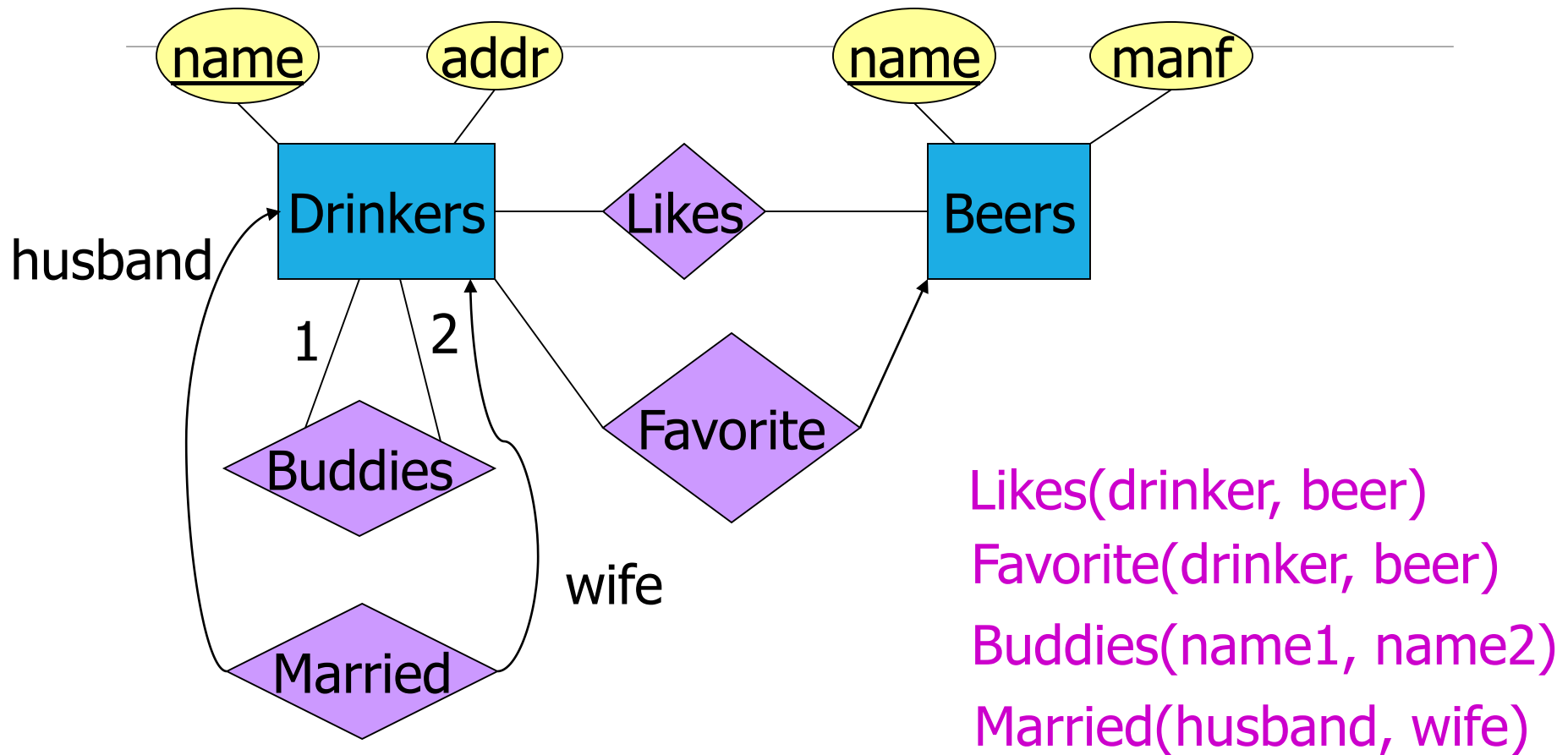
# Entity Set $\rightarrow$ Relation

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Relation:  $\text{Beers}(\text{name}, \text{manf})$

# Relationship -> Relation



# Combining Relations

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OK to combine into one relation:

1. The relation for an entity-set  $E$
2. The relations for many-one relationships of which  $E$  is the “many.”

**Example:** `Drinkers(name, addr)` and `Favorite(drinker, beer)`  
combine to make `Drinker1(name, addr, favBeer)`.

# Risk with Many-Many Relationships

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Combining Drinkers with Likes would be a mistake. It leads to redundancy, as:

| name  | addr      | beer   |
|-------|-----------|--------|
| Sally | 123 Maple | Bud    |
| Sally | 123 Maple | Miller |

Redundancy



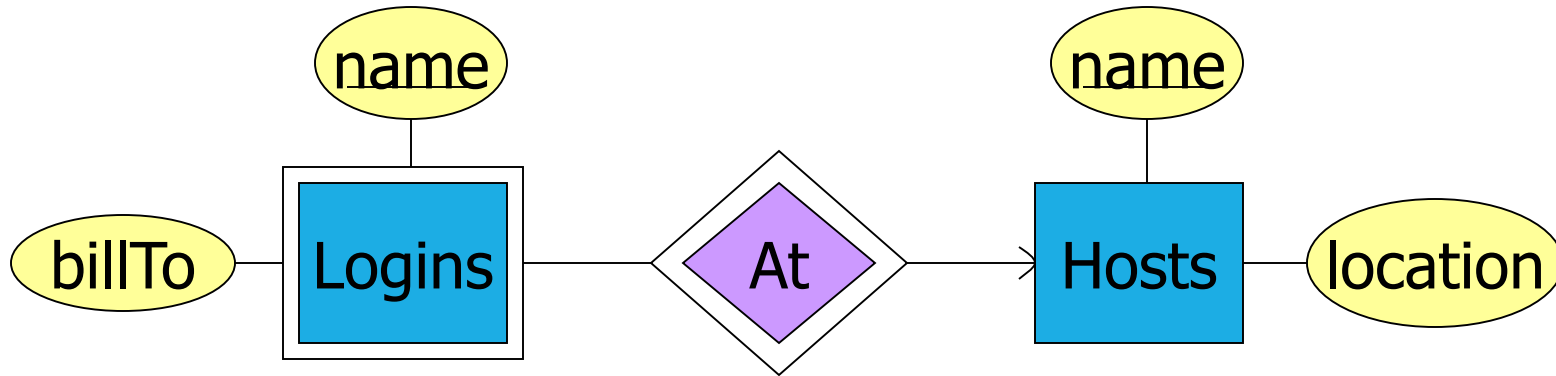
# Handling Weak Entity Sets

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Relation for a weak entity set must include attributes for its complete key (including those belonging to other entity sets), as well as its own, nonkey attributes.

A supporting relationship is redundant and yields no relation (unless *it* has attributes).

# Example: Weak Entity Set -> Relation



Hosts(hostName, location)  
Logins(loginName, hostName, billTo)  
~~At(loginName, hostName, hostName2)~~

At becomes part of Logins

Must be the same

# Subclasses: Three Approaches

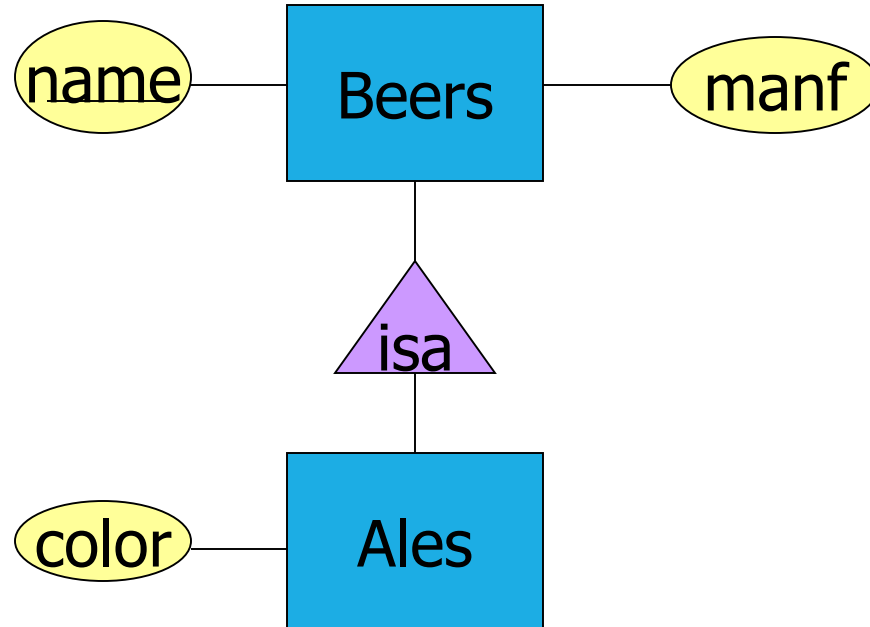
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1. *Object-oriented* : One relation per subset of subclasses, with all relevant attributes.
2. *Use nulls* : One relation; entities have NULL in attributes that don't belong to them.
3. *E/R style* : One relation for each subclass:
  - Key attribute(s).
  - Attributes of that subclass.



# Example: Subclass -> Relations

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# Object-Oriented

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| name | manf           |
|------|----------------|
| Bud  | Anheuser-Busch |

Beers

| name       | manf   | color |
|------------|--------|-------|
| Summerbrew | Pete's | dark  |

Ales

Good for queries like "find the color of ales made by Pete's."

# E/R Style

| name       | manf           |
|------------|----------------|
| Bud        | Anheuser-Busch |
| Summerbrew | Pete's         |

Beers

| name       | color |
|------------|-------|
| Summerbrew | dark  |

Ales

Good for queries like  
"find all beers (including  
ales) made by Pete's."

# Using Nulls

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| name              | manf                     | color        |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Bud<br>Summerbrew | Anheuser-Busch<br>Pete's | NULL<br>dark |

Beers

Saves space unless there are *lots* of attributes that are usually NULL.

# Actions

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- Read chapter about E/R model from course book (4.1-4.6).