

# The Entity-Relationship Model (ER Model) - Part 1

By Michael Hahsler

Based on slides for CS145 Introduction to Databases (Stanford)



# Introduction to Database Design

# Database Design

- **Database design: Why do we need it?**
  - Agree on structure of the database before deciding on a particular implementation
- **Consider issues such as:**
  - What entities to model
  - How entities are related
  - What constraints exist in the domain
  - How to achieve good designs
- **Several formalisms exist**
  - We discuss one flavor of ER diagrams

# Database Design Process

1. Requirements Analysis

2. Conceptual Design

3. Logical, Physical, Security, etc.

## 1. Requirements analysis

- What is going to be stored?
- How is it going to be used?
- What are we going to do with the data?
- Who should access the data?

# Database Design Process

1. Requirements Analysis

2. Conceptual Design

3. Logical, Physical, Security, etc.

## 2. Conceptual Design

- A high-level description of the database
- Sufficiently precise that technical people can understand it
- But, not so precise that non-technical people cannot participate

# Database Design Process

1. Requirements Analysis

2. Conceptual Design

3. Logical, Physical, Security, etc.

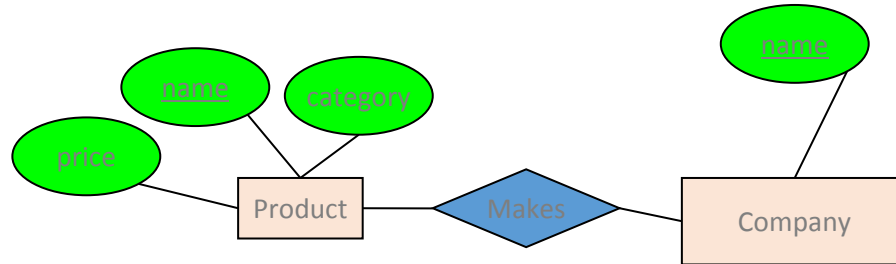
## 3. Implementation:

- Logical Database Design
- Physical Database Design
- Security Design

# Database Design Process



## ER Model & Diagrams



ER is a *visual syntax* for DB design which is ***precise enough*** for technical points, but ***abstracted enough*** for non-technical people.

# Impact of the ER model

- The ER model is one of the most cited articles in Computer Science
  - *“The Entity-Relationship model – toward a unified view of data”*  
Peter Chen, 1976
- Used by companies big and small





# 1. ER Basics: Entities & Relations

# Entities and Entity Sets

- **Entities & entity types** are the primitive units of the ER model
  - Entities are the individual objects (instances), which are members of entity types
  - Entity type are the *classes* or *types* of objects in our model
  - Example: Person is an entity type while Michael is an entity.
  - *We use entity types in ER models*

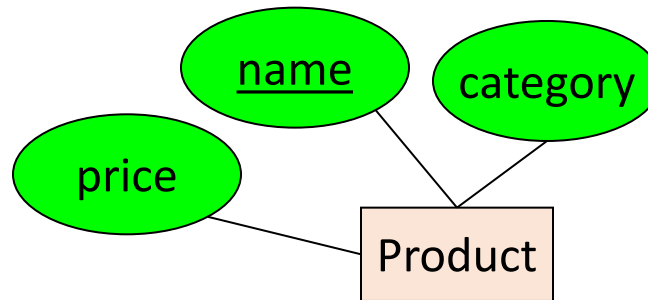
Product

Person



# Entities and Entity Types

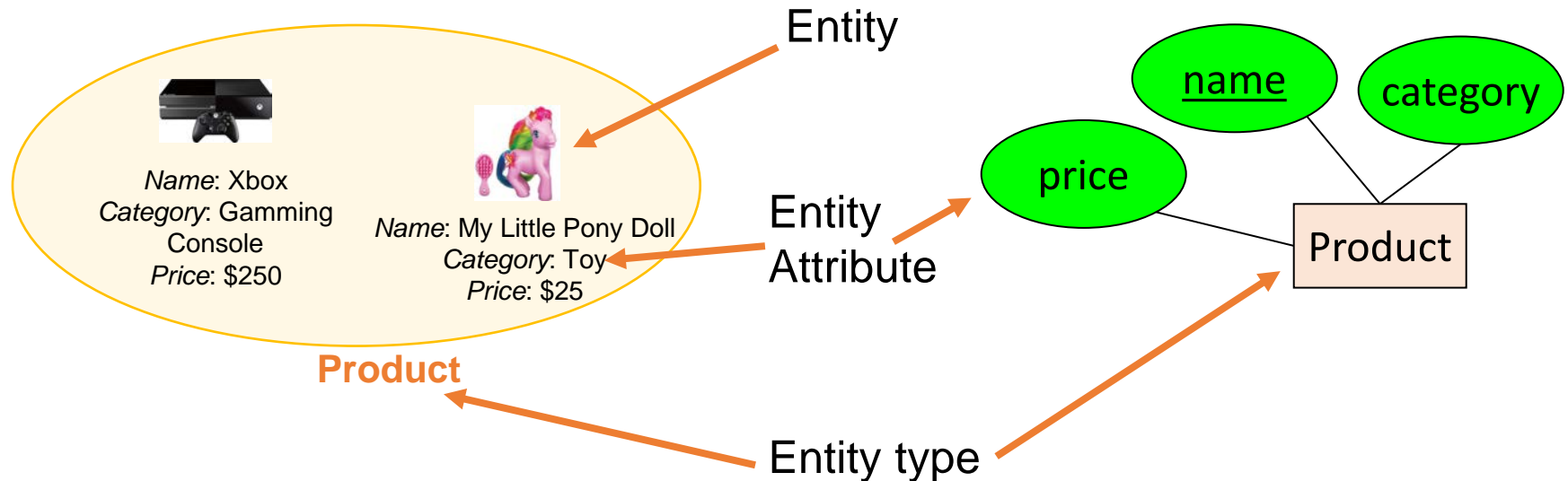
- An entity type has **attributes** represented by ovals attached to an entity type



Shapes **are** important. Colors used here **are not**.

# Entities vs. Entity Sets

Example:

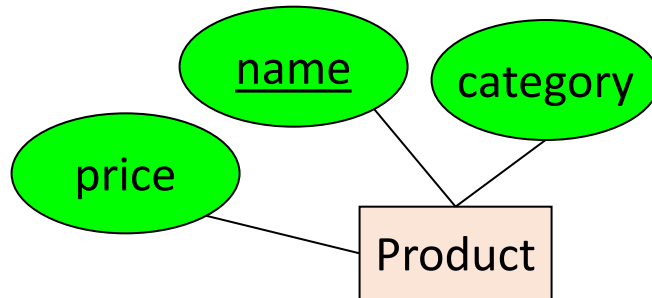


Entities are **not** explicitly represented in ER diagrams!

# Keys

A key is a **minimal** set of attributes that uniquely identifies an entity.

Denote elements of the primary key by underlining.

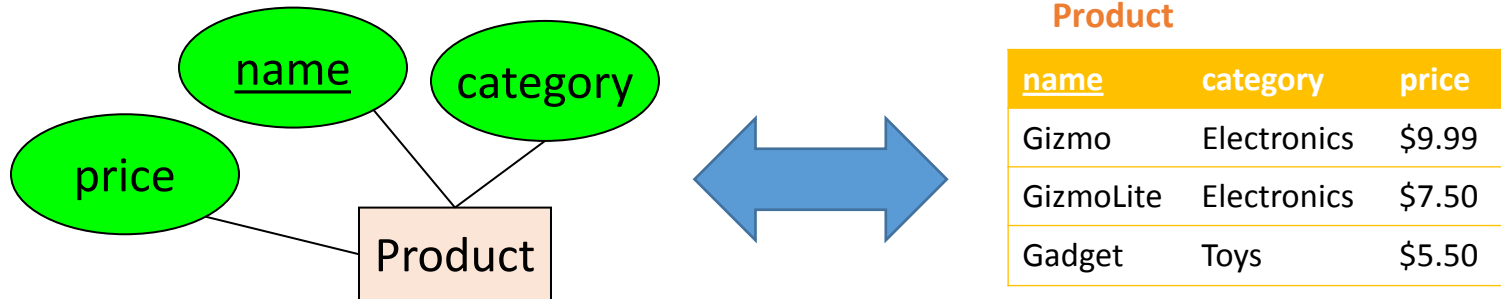


Here, {name, category} is **not** a key (it is not *minimal*).

*If it were, what would it mean?*

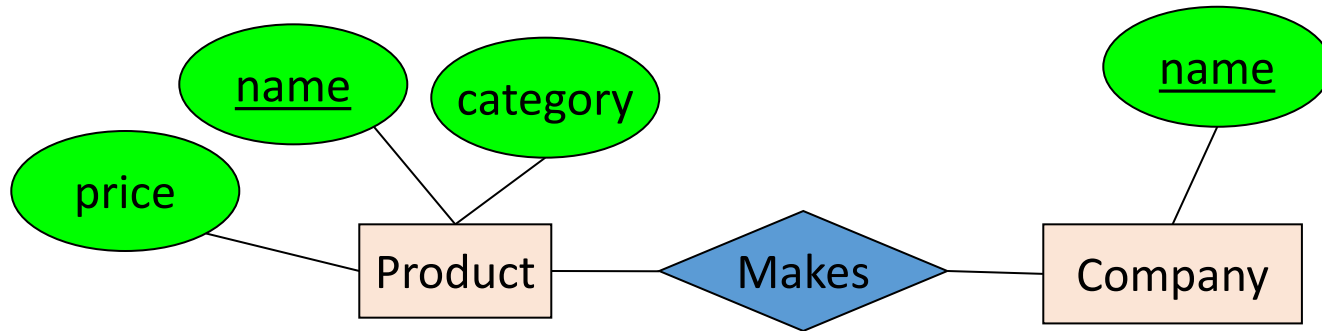
The ER model forces us to designate a single **primary key**, though there may be multiple candidate keys. Often, we introduce an **artificial key** attribute (also called a **synthetic or surrogate key**).

# Entity Types Define Relations



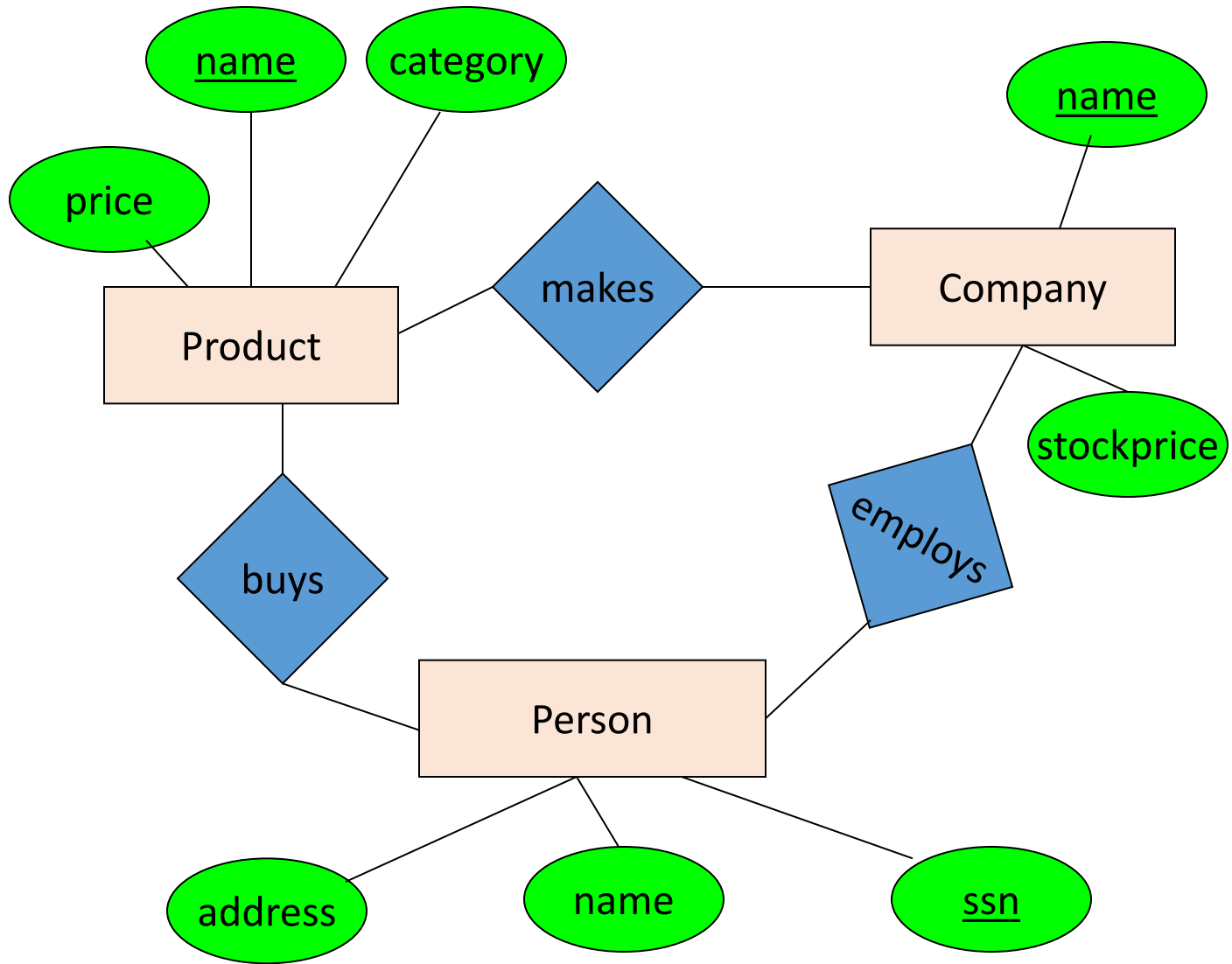
# The R in ER: Relationships

- A **relationship type** is between two entity types



**How to read a relationship in both directions:**

1. A product is made by a company
2. A company makes a product

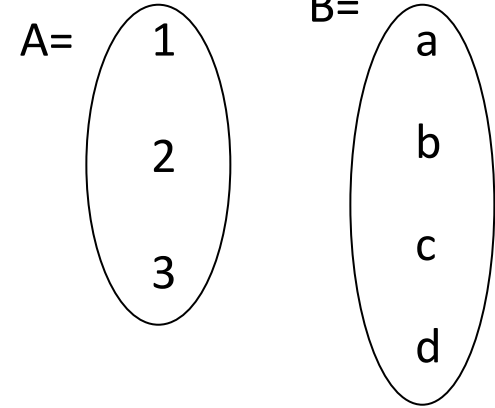




# What is a Relationship?

- ***A mathematical definition:***

- Let A, B be sets
  - $A=\{1,2,3\}$ ,  $B=\{a,b,c,d\}$



# What is a Relationship?

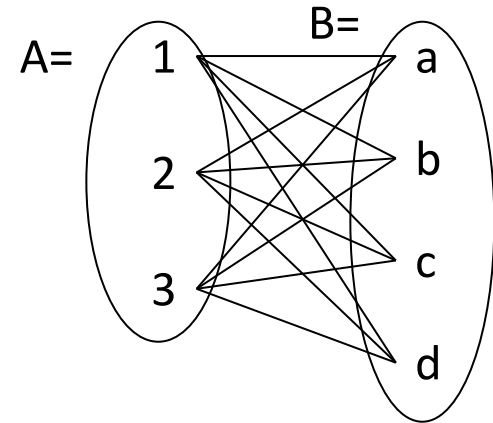
- ***A mathematical definition:***

- Let A, B be sets

- $A=\{1,2,3\}$ ,  $B=\{a,b,c,d\}$

- $A \times B$  (the ***cross-product***) is the set of all pairs (a,b)

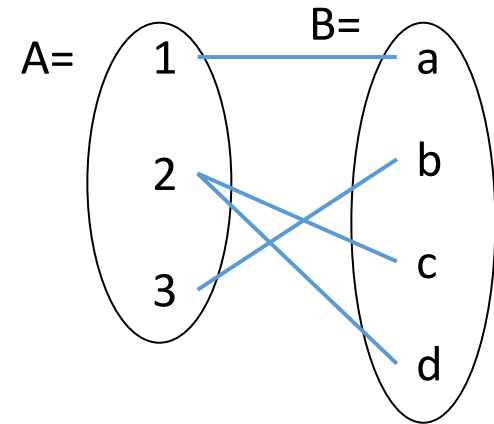
- $A \times B = \{(1,a), (1,b), (1,c), (1,d), (2,a), (2,b), (2,c), (2,d), (3,a), (3,b), (3,c), (3,d)\}$



# What is a Relationship?

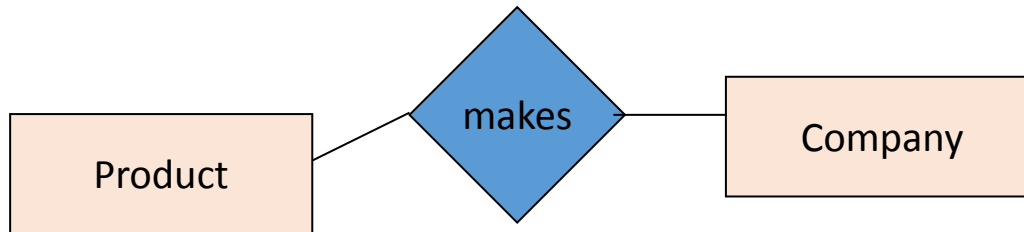
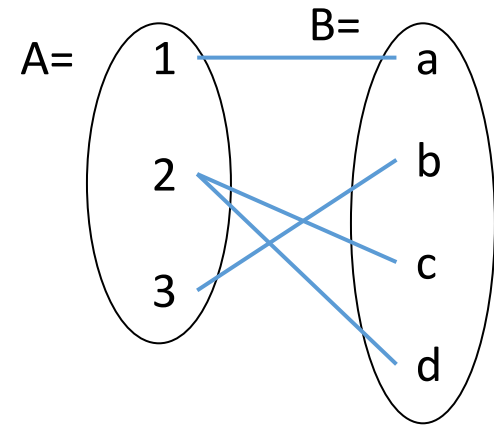
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  - $A \times B = \{(1,a), (1,b), (1,c), (1,d), (2,a), (2,b), (2,c), (2,d), (3,a), (3,b), (3,c), (3,d)\}$
- We define a **relationship** to be a subset of  $A \times B$   
 $R = \{(1,a), (2,c), (2,d), (3,b)\}$



# What is a Relationship?

- **A mathematical definition:**
  - Let A, B be sets
  - $A \times B$  (the **cross-product**) is the set of all pairs
  - A relationship is a subset of  $A \times B$
- **Example: Makes** is a relationship. It is a **subset** of **Product**  $\times$  **Company**:



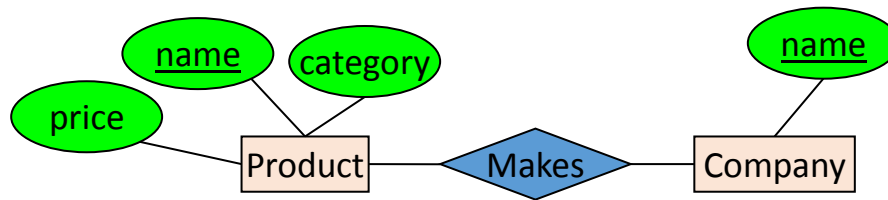
# What is a Relationship?

## Company

<u>name</u>
GizmoWorks
GadgetCorp

## Product

<u>name</u>	category	price
Gizmo	Electronics	\$9.99
GizmoLite	Electronics	\$7.50
Gadget	Toys	\$5.50



A **relationship** between **entity sets P and C** is a ***subset of all possible pairs of entities in P and C***, with tuples uniquely identified by ***P and C's keys***

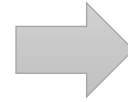
# What is a Relationship?

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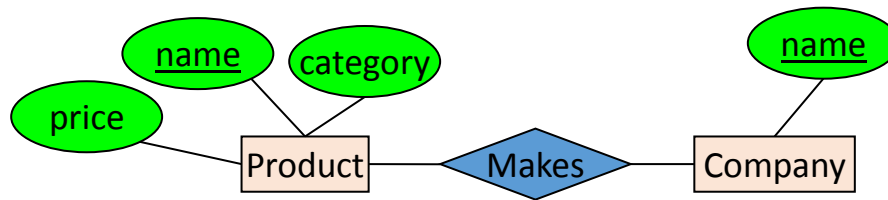
Product

<u>name</u>	category	price
Gizmo	Electronics	\$9.99
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Company C × Product P

<u>C.name</u>	<u>P.name</u>	P.category	P.price
GizmoWorks	Gizmo	Electronics	\$9.99
GizmoWorks	GizmoLite	Electronics	\$7.50
GizmoWorks	Gadget	Toys	\$5.50
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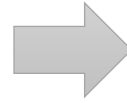
# What is a Relationship?

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<u>name</u>
GizmoWorks
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Product

<u>name</u>	category	price
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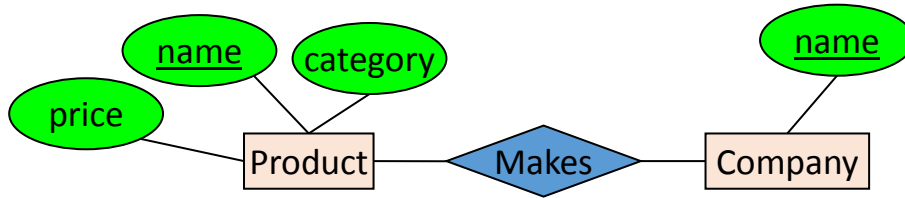
Company C × Product P

<u>C.name</u>	<u>P.name</u>	P.category	P.price
GizmoWorks	Gizmo	Electronics	\$9.99
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GadgetCorp	GizmoLite	Electronics	\$7.50
GadgetCorp	Gadget	Toys	\$5.50



Makes

<u>C.name</u>	<u>P.name</u>
GizmoWorks	Gizmo
GizmoWorks	GizmoLite
GadgetCorp	Gadget

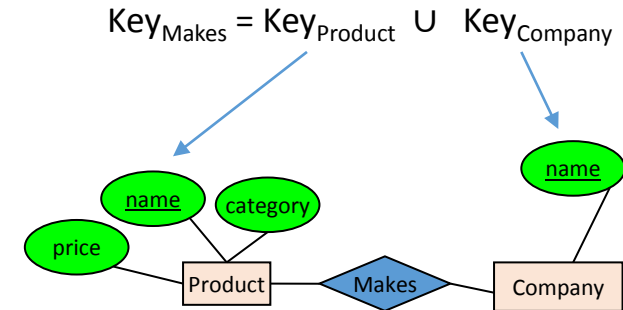


A **relationship** between entity sets **P** and **C** is a **subset of all possible pairs of entities in P and C**, with tuples uniquely identified by **P and C's keys**

# What is a Relationship?

- There can only be **one relationship for every unique combination of entities**
- This also means that **the relationship is uniquely determined by the keys of its entities**
- *Example: the key for Makes (to right) is  $\{Product.name, Company.name\}$*

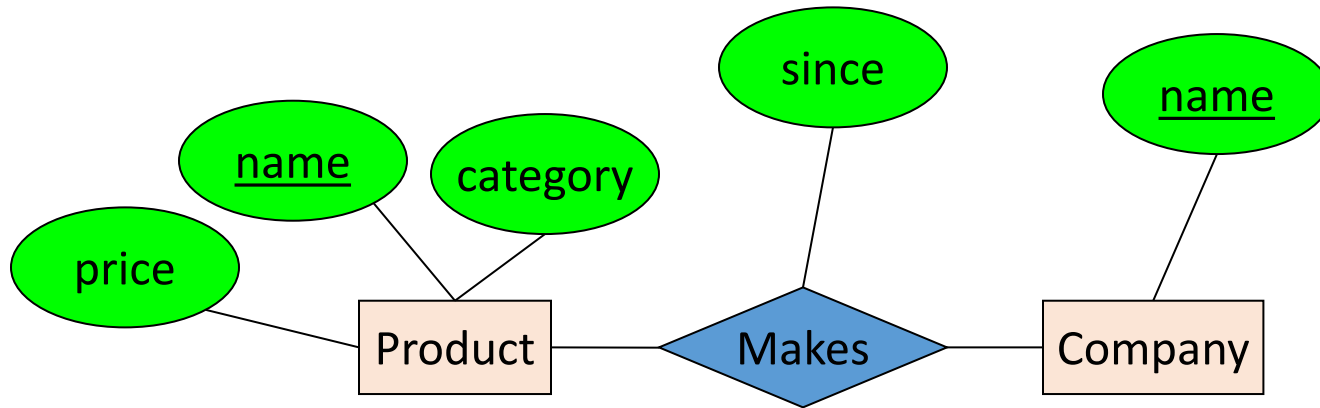
This follows from our mathematical definition of a relationship (it is a set)





# Relationships and Attributes

Relationships may have attributes as well.

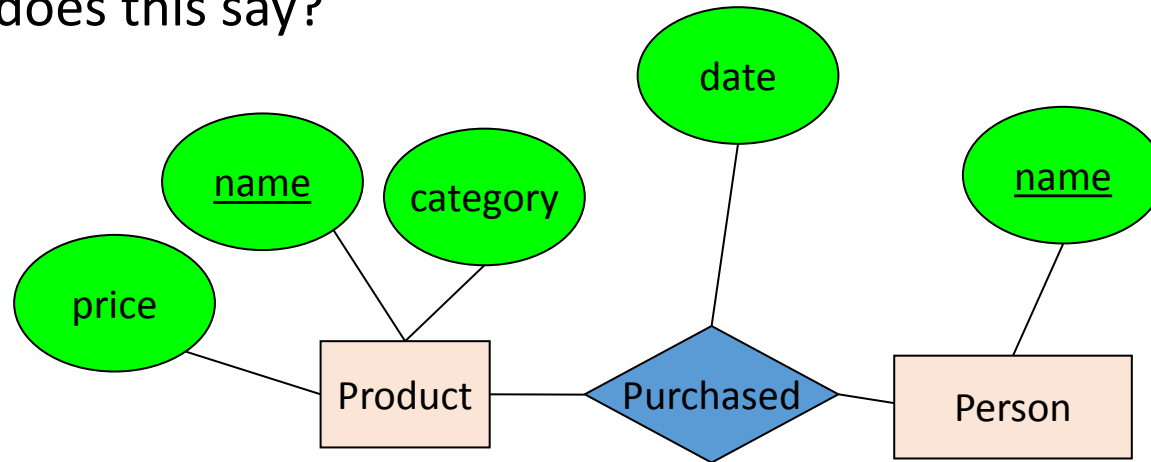


For example: “since” records when company started making a product

Note: For each product/company pair there is automatically only a single since value since there can only be one unique product/company pair in makes.

# Decision: Relationship vs. Entity?

Q: What does this say?

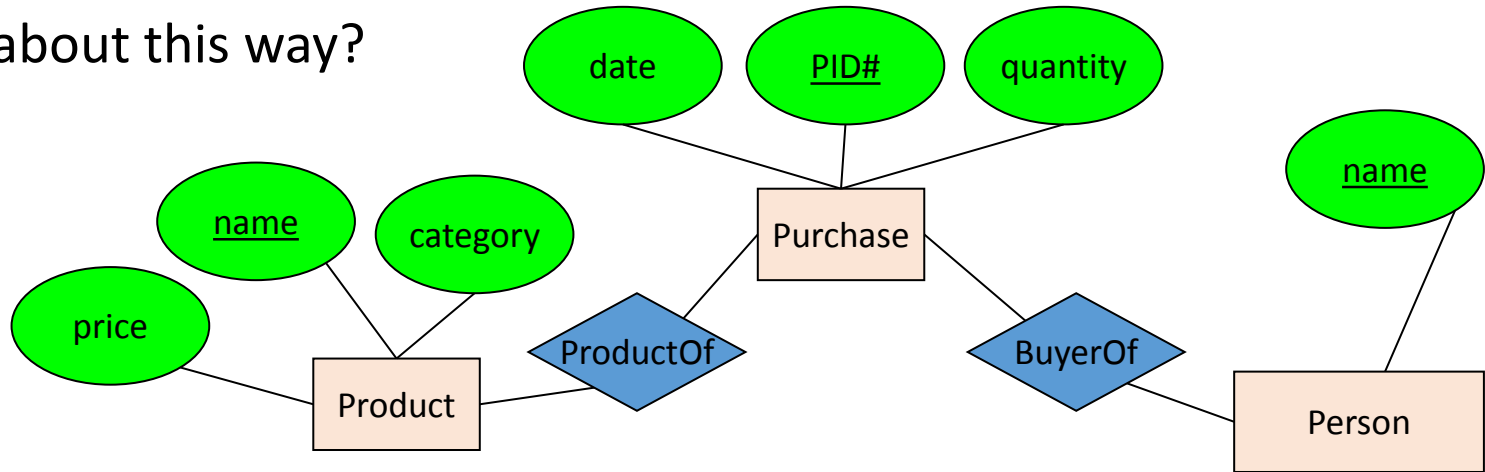


A: A person can only buy a specific product once (on one date)

Modeling something as a relationship makes it unique.  
**What if this is not appropriate?**

# Decision: Relationship vs. Entity?

What about this way?



*Now we can have multiple purchases per product, person pair!*

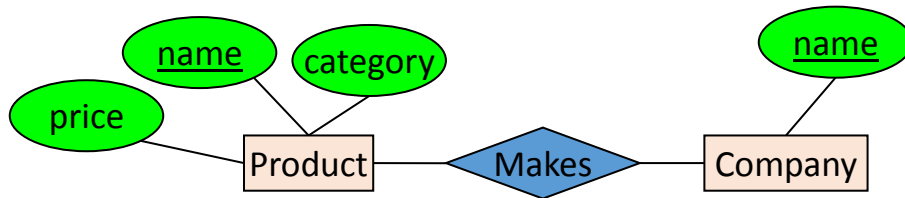
We can always use **a new entity** instead of a relationship.  
For example, to permit multiple instances of each entity combination!

# Note on Relationships vs. Relation

Relationship/Relationship type



Relation



**ER Model:** How do Entity types relate to each other

Product

<u>name</u>	category	price
Gizmo	Electronics	\$9.99
GizmoLite	Electronics	\$7.50
Gadget	Toys	\$5.50

**Relational Algebra:** A table with data  
(a multiset)

Relations are used to implement entity types and certain relationship types!

# How to Create an ER Diagram

“Rules of thumb” for mapping natural language descriptions into ER diagrams:

English grammar structure		ER structure
Common noun	→	Entity type
Proper noun	→	Entity
Verb	→	Relationship type
Adjective	→	Attribute for entity
Adverb	→	Attribute for relationship

# Example: How to Create an ER Diagram

Here is what the person in charge said:

*“Our company is called PowerSeller and we sell health products on Ebay. Our products are made by different manufacturers. Products belong to different product categories (e.g., supplements, cosmetics, etc.) and each product is sold at a fixed price. We use customer IDs for our customers, and we know for all of them the shipping address and name, and for most we also know a phone number.”*

# Example: How to Create an ER Diagram

Here is what the person in charge said:

Noun  
Verb

*“Our company is called PowerSeller and we **sell** health products on Ebay. Our products **are made** by different manufacturers. Products **belong to** different product categories (e.g., supplements, cosmetics, etc.) and each product **is sold** at a fixed price. We **use** customer IDs for our customers, and we **know** for all of them the shipping address and name, and for most we also **know** a phone number.”*

# Example: How to Create an ER Diagram

*Identify entity types and attributes (nouns):*

- company, PowerSeller
- health product, product, product category, price, manufacturer
- customerID , customer, shipping address, name, phone number

*Identify relationship types (verbs):*

- know
- belongs to
- sell
- make



# Example: How to Create an ER Diagram

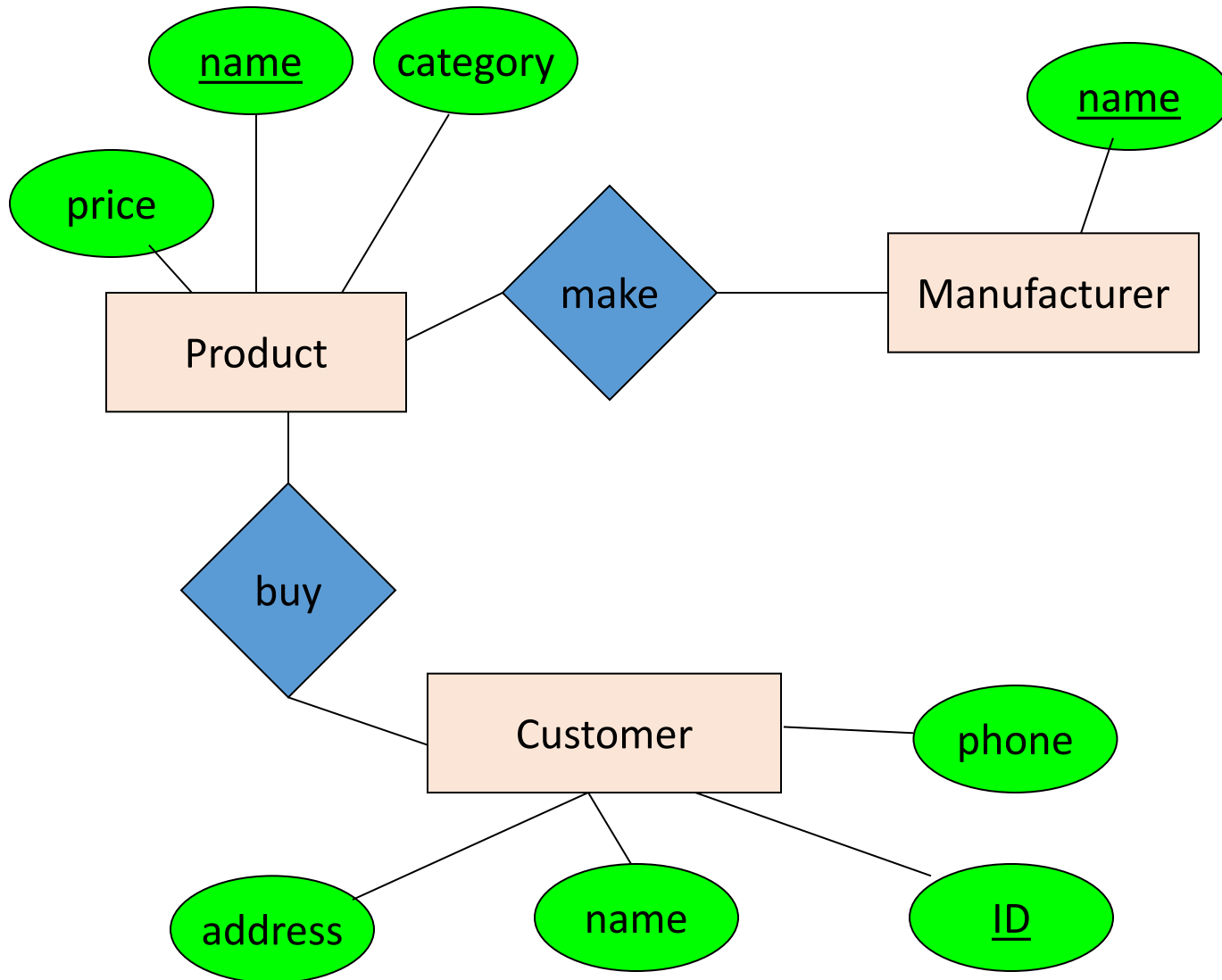
*Identify Entity types (bold) and attributes:*

- ~~company, PowerSeller~~
- ~~health product, product, product category, price, manufacturer~~
- ~~customerID , customer, shipping address, name, phone number~~

Make its own  
entity type

*Identify relationship types:*

- ~~know~~
- ~~belongs to~~
- ~~sell, buy~~
- make



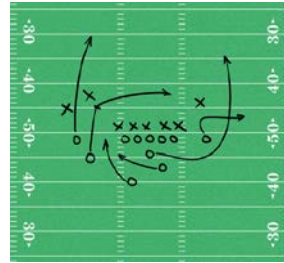
# Draw an ER diagram for football



Teams play each other in Games. Each pair of teams can play each other multiple times



Players belong to Teams (assume no trades / changes)



A Game is made up of Plays that result in a yardage gain/loss, and potentially a touchdown



A Play will contain either a Pass from one player to another, or a Run by one player