T-SQL Language

The language used to program SQL Server is called Transact-SQL or T-SQL for short. The first version of T-SQL that Microsoft shipped was a port of side bases database engine to OS2, and Transact-SQL is the language that Sybase developed for their database engine. Now, since then Microsoft and Sybase have split their code bases completely and gone in completely different directions. T-SQL is mostly ANSI compliant. There's some stuff hanging around in it from the old version that isn't ANSI compliant at all and some of the new stock has a few things that aren't quite the way they should be in the ANSI spec but that's pretty much true for almost all relational database engines today.

Now one of the requirements of a relational database is that the metadata that defines what's in the database for example, the data that tells it what tables are in the server has to be defined in tables in the database itself. You're not allowed to have a little side file that defines all the log-ins in another side file that defines the tables. Everything has to be defined in the database itself. And originally there wasn't any spec that said, "What tables should be used to store the metadata? " But now there is, the ANSI spec standards back defines something called the INFORMATION_SCHEMA. And for the most part T-SQL supports that and we'll see it shortly. In addition there's a far richer schema to define the metadata that defines the database and it's a proprietary schema that's also in SQL Server that you can use to explore and find out how things are put together in the database.

And lastly when you need to know information about something, documentation about something there's a document affectionately known as the BOL, the Books Online, and that's where you look things up. In fact, let's take a quick look at the Books Online and where you go and find them. You can access the Books Online from the Start button. Just go to All Programs, look for Microsoft SQL Sever 2008 then go down to Documentation and Tutorials, and this is the SQL Server Books Online.