

Author Tip | Concatenate Data Items in a List Column

Wendi Lewis - 2026-04-30 - Comments (0) - Cognos Analytics

Introduction

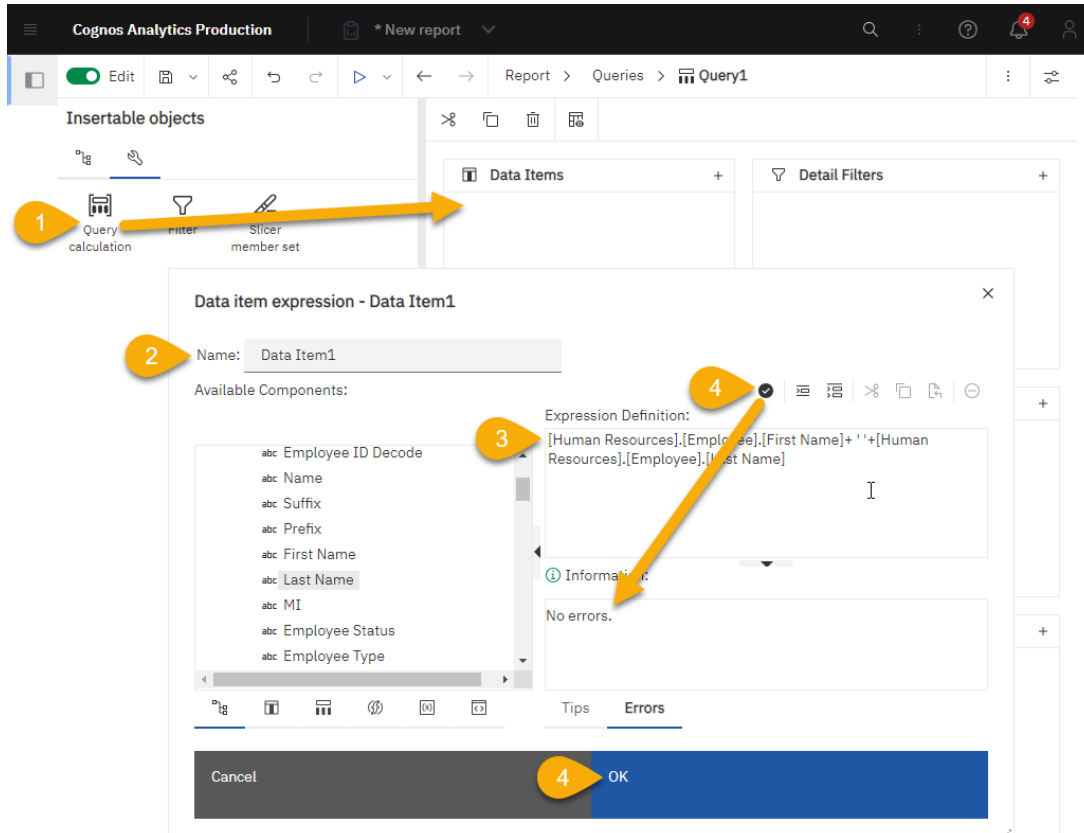
Concatenating in Cognos Analytics allows you to combine 2 data items in a list column.

For example, if you have First Name and Last Name data items, you might want them to appear together in a single "Name" column .

There are 2 methods to concatenate data items in a list column. We'll use the name example above to demonstrate these methods.

1. Use a query calculation
2. Unlock page layout and drag multiple data items to a list column

Method 1: Use a Query Calculation



The screenshot shows the Cognos Analytics Production interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Cognos Analytics Production', a 'New report' button, and search, help, and notification icons. Below the navigation bar, the 'Insertable objects' panel is visible, with a yellow arrow pointing to the 'Query calculation' icon (labeled '1'). The main workspace shows a 'Data Items' panel with a '+' sign and a 'Detail Filters' panel. A 'Data item expression - Data Item1' dialog box is open, showing the 'Name' field set to 'Data Item1' (labeled '2'). The 'Available Components' list includes 'Employee ID Decode', 'Name', 'Suffix', 'Prefix', 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'MI', 'Employee Status', and 'Employee Type'. The 'Expression Definition' field contains the formula: `[Human Resources].[Employee].[First Name]+ '+'+[Human Resources].[Employee].[Last Name]` (labeled '3'). The 'Information' section shows 'No errors.' (labeled '4'). The dialog box has 'Cancel' and 'OK' buttons at the bottom, with a yellow arrow pointing to the 'OK' button (labeled '4').

1. From the **Toolbox** drag a **Query Calculation** to your list.
2. In the **Name** field, give your data item a name.

Since we are creating a concatenation of first and last name, we'll call it 'Name' for this example.

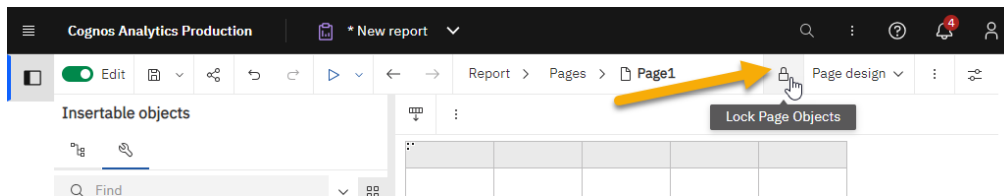
3. Into the **Expression Definition** field:
 1. Drag **First Name**.
 2. Type + ' ' +
That's: plus, single quote, space, single quote, plus. The plus sign combines data items, and the single quotes before and after a single space adds a space between first and last name values.
TIP: Don't copy and paste from this document. Characters from other applications don't always copy in the same format Cognos Analytics expects.
 3. Drag **Last Name**.
4. Validate your expression, and then click **OK**.
5. Run the report to test your results.

Method 2: Unlock Page Layout and Drag Multiple Data Items to a List Column

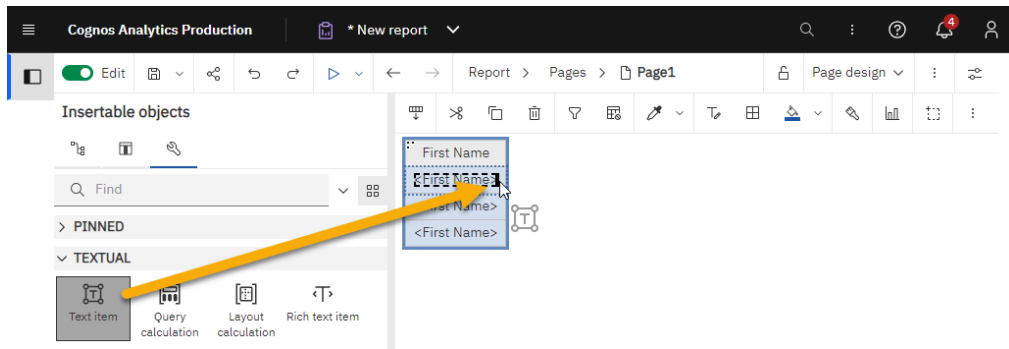
In the reporting tool on a report page, in order to insert multiple objects in a single list column, you must unlock the page objects. The page is locked by default to prevent you from accidentally inserting multiple data items to a column.

1. Click the **Lock Page Objects** icon.

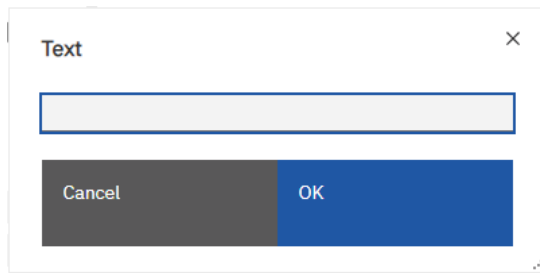
The icon appears unlocked.



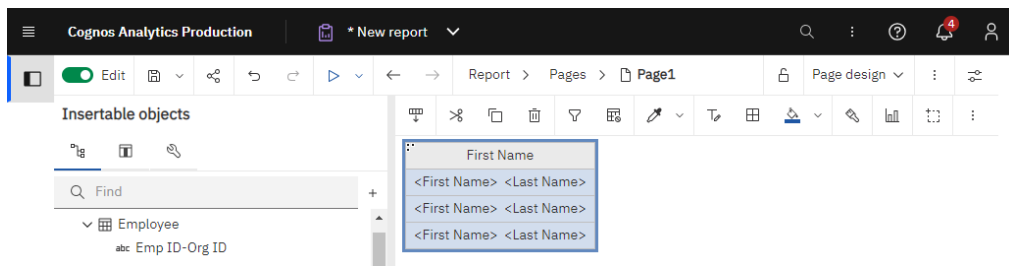
2. Drag the **First Name** data item to your list.
NOTE: If you want to arrange your data items in a table (for example to format a mailing address), insert a table into the list column, and then insert data items into the table.
3. To add a space after **First Name**, from the **Toolbox**, drag a **Text item** to the **First Name** column and drop it to the right of the First Name data item.
NOTE: As an alternative, you can add a space with the Padding property, by adding padding to the right of the First Name data item.



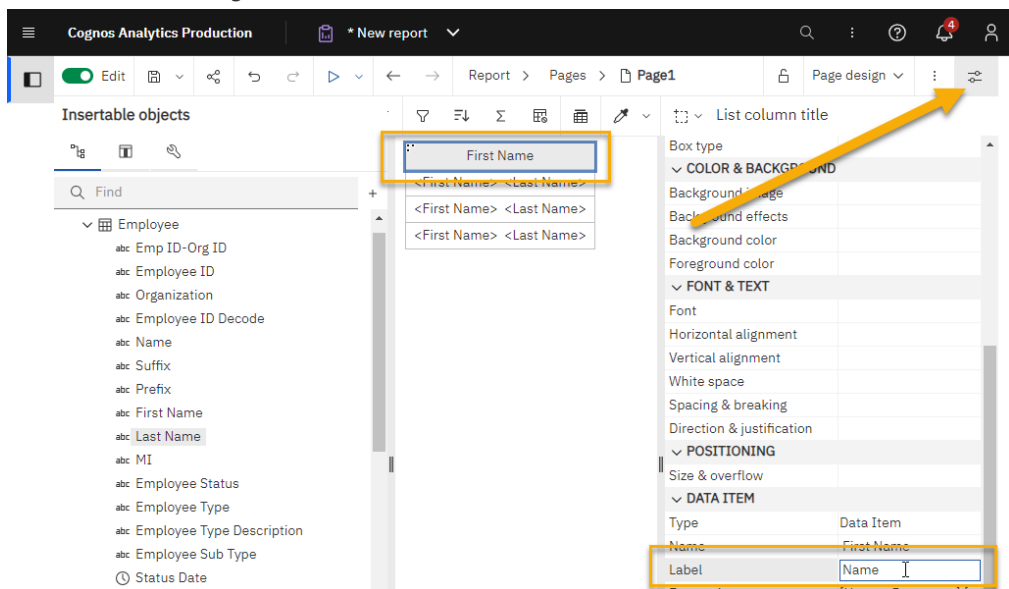
- In the **Text** box, type a space and then click **OK**.



- Click and drag the **Last Name** data item to the right of the space you just added in the First Name list column.



- Select the **First Name** column heading, and then in the **Properties** pane, in the **Label** field, type **Name**.
The column heading is renamed.



- Click the **Lock Page Objects** icon.
The page is locked.

8. Run your report to test the results of your concatenation.