

Excel is a powerful tool to help you analyze and interpret data, but many people fear it because it's ... numbers. Don't sweat. Every beginning user can make Excel do these 10 things with ease. Check out the attached screenshots if you feel confused.

Excel consists of a series of cells in columns (labeled with letters) and rows (labeled with numbers).

Function	When you might use it	How to do it
Sort information	alphabetize a list by people's last names or order your data by a certain demographic (males vs. females)	highlight all the cells you want to sort data/sort if you have a header row, select that button choose what you want to sort by and whether it's ascending or descending you also can sort by one thing (gender) and then another (favorite fruit)
Calculate sums	total the revenues coming into your organization	enter each piece of revenue into a separate cell in a column at the bottom of the list, click on an empty cell click the AutoSum button in the toolbar make sure Excel is choosing the right range of numbers to total and if not, change the range in the formula or drag the handles to move the range hit return
Total one value and another	subtract expenses from revenue to determine if you're making a profit	enter each piece of revenue in a cell in a column and sum enter each expense in a cell in a column and sum in a separate empty cell, type the equals sign (=) click on the cell with the revenue total type the minus sign (-) click on the cell with the expenses total hit return the formula will look something like this: <b>=B11-E11</b>
Multiply values	determine the total cost of food at your fundraising dinner for the participants who have RSVP'ed	in first column cell, enter number of people coming in second column cell, enter cost of each dinner in third column cell, type equals sign (=) click on the cell with number of people type an asterisk (*) click on the cell with the cost of dinner the formula will look something like this: <b>=B2*E2</b> the beauty is that as you change the number of people who are coming, Excel will update the total
Calculate a mean	figure out the average age of your respondents	enter ages in contiguous cells in a column

		<p>at the bottom of the list, click on an empty cell</p> <p>in the toolbar, click the black arrow next to the AutoSum button (this will bring up more function options)</p> <p>select Average</p> <p>make sure Excel is choosing the right range of numbers to total and if not, change the range in the formula or drag the handles to move the range</p> <p>hit return</p> <p>your formula will look like this:  <b>=AVERAGE(A2:A15)</b></p> <p>if Excel is showing too few or too many decimal places, use the increase/decrease decimal button in the toolbar to adjust</p>
Calculate a median	determine whether an outlier is affecting your average	<p>at the bottom of the list, click on an empty cell</p> <p>in the toolbar, click the black arrow next to the AutoSum button (this will bring up more function options)</p> <p>in the formula box, search for Median and click it</p> <p>make sure Excel is choosing the right range of numbers to total and if not, change the range in the formula or drag the handles to move the range (be especially careful that it's not selecting any previous calculations, such as the mean)</p> <p>hit return</p> <p>your formula will look like this:  <b>=MEDIAN(B2:B15)</b></p>
Calculate a mean or median by a demographic or psychographic	determine how strongly women agree with a statement vs. men	<p>sort all your data by the desired demographic</p> <p>follow the steps for calculating the mean (or median) but set the range only to encompass your first demographic</p> <p>then repeat for the second demographic</p> <p>compare the two means (but be careful not to draw conclusions about causality)</p>
Count items	determine how many respondents gave a particular answer	<p>enter all responses in contiguous counts in a column</p> <p>at the bottom of the list, click on an empty cell</p> <p>in the toolbar, click the black arrow next to the AutoSum button (this will bring up more function options)</p> <p>in the formula box, search for "Countif" and click it</p> <p>drag around the whole range of values you want to count</p> <p>in the function builder box, look for the entry for "criteria"</p> <p>in that box, enter the value you want to count and hit return</p> <p>your formula will look like this:  <b>=COUNTIF(B2:B25,"XXX")</b></p> <p>where XXX is the value you identified to count</p>
Fill formulas down	complete counts for other answers	<p>rather than rerunning the above steps for each different response, you can use a function called "fill down"</p> <p>click on the formula you want to copy</p> <p>hover the cursor over the lower right corner until you see a cross pop up</p> <p>click and drag to fill into the cells you want to fill</p>

		<p>change the “criteria” for each of those cells to be a different value</p> <p><b>BUT NOTICE</b> when you dragged down, it changed the range of cells covered</p> <p>for instance, if you started your range at B1 and filled down one space, the new formula would start at B2</p> <p>if you want the range to stay at the original, put a dollar sign (\$) in the formula before each element you want to lock</p> <p>for instance, if you have a formula that reads:</p> <pre>=COUNTIF(B\$2:B\$25,"XXX")</pre> <p>it will always count within the range from row 2 to row 25, no matter where you fill it</p> <p>similarly, this formula:</p> <pre>=COUNTIF(\$B2:\$B25,"XXX")</pre> <p>will always count in column B, no matter where you put it</p> <p>be sure to check your range to ensure you’re counting or calculating what you mean to be</p>
Working efficiently	keep yourself from messing up	<p>a few tricks:</p> <p>if you want to keep your labels in view (e.g. the first column with respondent info and the first row with question titles), put your cursor on the cell immediately below and to the right of what you want to keep and choose window/freeze panes</p> <p>use the plus sign next to the sheet tabs at the bottom of the window to add new worksheets – keep the original data in the first sheet and then copy it to new sheets as you start running calculations, so you always have something to go back to if you screw up</p> <p>you can highlight a whole column by clicking on its letter and a whole row by clicking on its number</p> <p>you can wrap text in a cell by choosing format/cells/alignment and putting a check next to wrap text</p>

Screenshots

Sort

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel application window with the 'Data' menu selected. A 'Sort' dialog box is open, displaying the following configuration:

- Sort by:** Column A (selected from a dropdown menu)
- Order:** Ascending (selected radio button)
- Then by:** (empty dropdown menu)
- Order:** Ascending (selected radio button)
- Then by:** (empty dropdown menu)
- Order:** Ascending (selected radio button)
- My list has:** No header row (selected radio button)

The spreadsheet data is as follows:

	A	B
1	Gender	Preferred Fruit
2	f	banana
3	f	orange
4	f	apple
5	f	strawberry
6	f	apple
7	f	banana
8	f	apple
9	m	apple
10	m	orange
11	m	strawberry
12	m	orange
13	m	banana
14	m	strawberry
15	m	apple
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		

Sums

The screenshot shows a spreadsheet with the following data:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Ads sold by	Revenue					
2	Smith	\$ 300.00					
3	Jones	\$ 650.00					
4	Bilton	\$ 150.00					
5	Libby	\$ 775.00					
6	Austin	\$ 800.00					
7	Sawyer	\$ 300.00					
8	Jude	\$ -					
9	Scotton	\$ 550.00					
10		=SUM(B2:B9)					
11							

Total Values

The screenshot shows a spreadsheet with the following data:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Ads sold by	Revenue		Expense	Amount
2	Smith	\$ 300.00		design	\$ 650.00
3	Jones	\$ 650.00		photo	\$ 300.00
4	Bilton	\$ 150.00		courier	\$ 75.00
5	Libby	\$ 775.00			
6	Austin	\$ 800.00			
7	Sawyer	\$ 300.00			
8	Jude	\$ -			
9	Scotton	\$ 550.00			
10					
11	Total	\$ 3,525.00			\$ 1,025.00
12					
13					=B11-E11
14					

### Multiply

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Yes lunch	Yes dinner	Lunch cost	Dinner Cost	Total Lunch	Total Dinner	Total
2	103	210	\$ 7.50	\$ 21.50	\$ 772.50	=B2*D2	
3							
4							

### Mean

	A	B	C
1		Age	
2		22	
3		24	
4		19	
5		23	
6		22	
7		22	
8		26	
9		27	
10		26	
11		19	
12		20	
13		87	
14		23	
15		23	
16			
17	Mean	=AVERAGE(B2:B16)	
18			
19			

### Median

	A	B	C
1		Age	
2		22	
3		24	
4		19	
5		23	
6		22	
7		22	
8		26	
9		27	
10		26	
11		19	
12		20	
13		87	
14		23	
15		23	
16			
17	Mean	27.4	
18			
19	Median	=MEDIAN(B2:B15)	
20			

Mean/Median by Demographic or Psychographic

AVERAGE  =AVERAGE(B9:B15)

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	A	B	C	D
1		Age	Gender	
2		22	f	
3		24	f	
4		19	f	
5		23	f	
6		22	f	
7		22	f	
8		26	f	
9		27	m	
10		26	m	
11		19	m	
12		20	m	
13		87	m	
14		23	m	
15		23	m	
16				
17	Mean	27.4		
18				
19	Median	23		
20				
21	Mean/female	22.6		
22	Mean/male	B9:B15)		
23				

## Count

	A	B
1		How often do you eat Oreos?
2		never
3		never
4		sometimes
5		frequently
6		frequently
7		never
8		sometimes
9		never
10		sometimes
11		frequently
12		never
13		sometimes
14		frequently
15		never
16		sometimes
17		frequently
18		frequently
19		never
20		sometimes
21		frequently
22		frequently
23		never
24		sometimes
25		never
26		
27	Count never	=COUNTIF(B2:B25,never)
28	Count sometimes	
29	Count frequently	

Formula Builder

Search for a function

Most Recently Used

- COUNTIF
- MEDIAN
- AVERAGE
- SUM
- COUNT
- IF
- MIN

Description

criteria is the condition in the form of a number, expression, or text that defines which cells will be counted.

[More help on this function](#)

Arguments

COUNTIF		
range	B2:B25	{"never";"nev
criteria	never	

Result: 0



Fill Down, Change Criteria for Count

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel interface. The formula bar at the top displays the formula `=COUNTIF(B$2:B$25,"sometimes")`. A tooltip for the `COUNTIF` function is shown below the formula bar, indicating the syntax `COUNTIF(range, criteria)`. The ribbon includes the 'Formulas' tab, and the 'COUNTIF' function is selected in the 'Function Library' group. The spreadsheet contains the following data:

	A	B	C	D
1		How often do you eat Oreos?		
2		never		
3		never		
4		sometimes		
5		frequently		
6		frequently		
7		never		
8		sometimes		
9		never		
10		sometimes		
11		frequently		
12		never		
13		sometimes		
14		frequently		
15		never		
16		sometimes		
17		frequently		
18		frequently		
19		never		
20		sometimes		
21		frequently		
22		frequently		
23		never		
24		sometimes		
25		never		
26				
27	Count never		9	
28	Count sometimes	<code>=COUNTIF(B\$2:B\$25,"sometimes")</code>		
29	Count frequently		9	
30				