

Excel: Add Text in the Middle of a Cell

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Microsoft Excel is an indispensable tool, utilized by individuals and corporations globally for organizing, manipulating, and visualizing essential business data. Its flexible user interface and robust analytical capabilities make it the preferred choice for numerous data-driven tasks, enabling users to efficiently store, process, and present information. While Excel is often used for numerical calculations, its power in string manipulation--modifying text within cells--is equally important for tasks like standardizing IDs or creating custom labels. In this comprehensive guide, we will detail a powerful method using built-in formula functions to seamlessly insert custom text into the middle of an existing cell value.

Understanding the Core Formula for Text Insertion

To successfully inject a custom string into the middle of existing cell text in Excel, we must combine several essential text functions: LEFT function, MID function, and LEN function, linked together using the ampersand (&) symbol for concatenation. This approach allows us to divide the original text, insert the new text, and then rejoin the parts seamlessly. The formula effectively splits the original text into three pieces: the start segment, the new insert, and the end segment.

The general syntax presented below demonstrates how to append the text "-Employee-" immediately following the first character of the string found in cell **A2**. This is one of the most common applications for standardizing identifying strings.

=LEFT(A2,1) & "-Employee-" & MID(A2,2,LEN(A2))

This specific formula intelligently splits the original string: the LEFT function extracts the prefix (the first character), the new text is inserted literally, and the MID function retrieves the remainder of the original string. The following sections provide a clear, practical example of how to implement this powerful technique within your worksheets for bulk text modification.

Practical Application: Inserting Text After the First Character

To illustrate the utility of this combined formula, let us consider a scenario involving employee identification numbers. Assume we have a column of raw employee IDs, where each ID consists of a single department code followed by a unique sequence number. Our goal is to enhance the readability and standardization of these IDs by inserting the descriptive text **"-Employee-"** immediately after the department code, which occupies the first character position.

The initial data set, containing the unprocessed employee IDs in column A, appears as follows. Note that all IDs are uniform in structure, starting with one letter followed by three digits:

| | A | B | C | D | E |
|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Employee ID | | | | |
| 2 | A004 | | | | |
| 3 | A005 | | | | |
| 4 | A012 | | | | |
| 5 | A023 | | | | |
| 6 | A025 | | | | |
| 7 | A029 | | | | |
| 8 | A031 | | | | |
| 9 | A032 | | | | |
| 10 | A043 | | | | |
| 11 | A045 | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | |
| 16 | | | | | |

We aim to transform 'A004' into 'A-Employee-004', 'B123' into 'B-Employee-123', and so forth. This standardization requires precise manipulation of the text string based on its character position, necessitating the use of the LEFT function to isolate the prefix and the MID function to retrieve the remaining suffix. This combination allows us to execute the textual insertion without manually editing hundreds of entries.

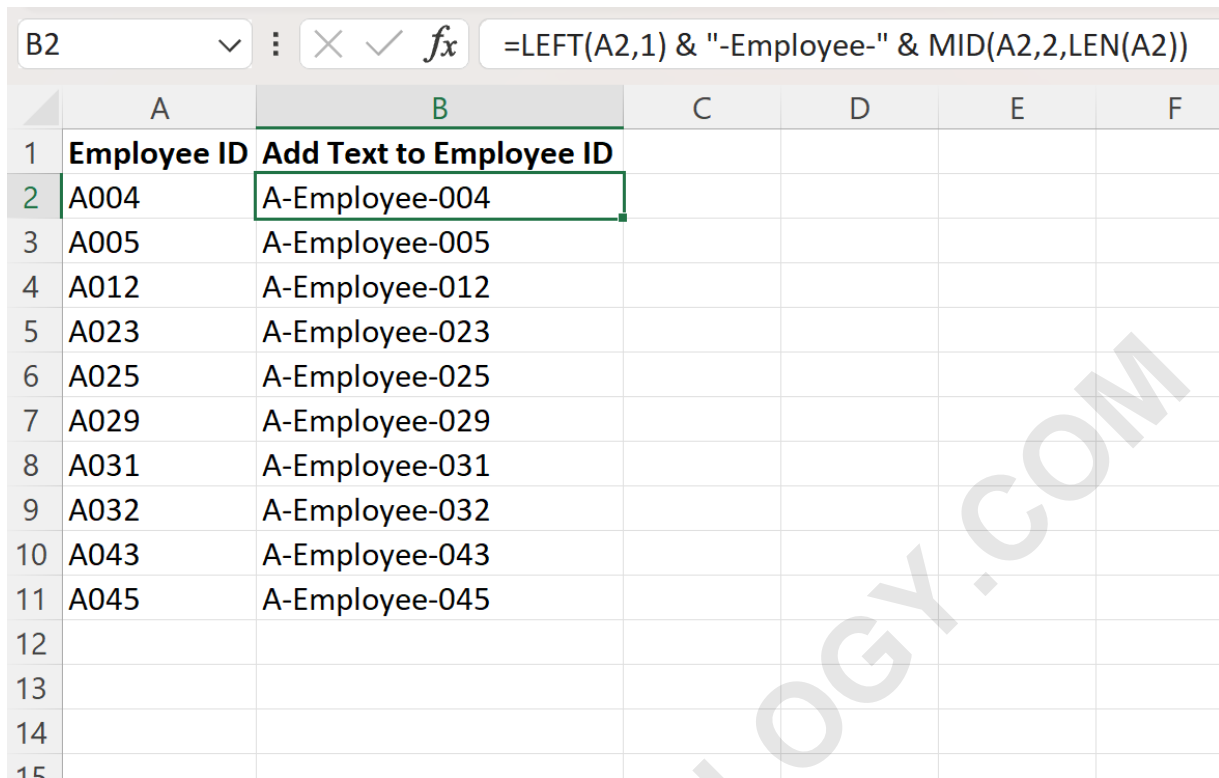
Step-by-Step Execution of the Formula

To achieve the desired result of inserting "-Employee-" after the initial character, we input the core transformation formula into cell **B2**, assuming our first ID is in A2:

```
=LEFT(A2,1) & "-Employee-" & MID(A2,2,LEN(A2))
```

Once the formula is correctly entered and verified in cell B2, we leverage Excel's powerful autofill capability. This involves clicking and dragging the formula down the entire range of column B, ensuring that the relative cell references update automatically (e.g., from A2 to A3, A4, and so on). This action applies the same precise transformation logic to every corresponding employee ID in column A.

The resultant column B, after applying and dragging the formula, clearly displays the standardized employee IDs with the inserted text, achieving the desired readability improvement:



| | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|----|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Employee ID | Add Text to Employee ID | | | | |
| 2 | A004 | A-Employee-004 | | | | |
| 3 | A005 | A-Employee-005 | | | | |
| 4 | A012 | A-Employee-012 | | | | |
| 5 | A023 | A-Employee-023 | | | | |
| 6 | A025 | A-Employee-025 | | | | |
| 7 | A029 | A-Employee-029 | | | | |
| 8 | A031 | A-Employee-031 | | | | |
| 9 | A032 | A-Employee-032 | | | | |
| 10 | A043 | A-Employee-043 | | | | |
| 11 | A045 | A-Employee-045 | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | | |

As demonstrated, column B now contains the original text strings from column A, successfully modified to include "-Employee-" directly after the initial character. This process is highly efficient and reliable for bulk data modification across large datasets.

Modifying Insertion Points: Inserting Text Deeper into the String

The true flexibility of this method is its ability to adapt the insertion point by simply adjusting the arguments within the LEFT function and MID function. If your requirement shifts, and the inserted text must appear deeper within the cell's contents--for instance, after the first three characters instead of the first--you only need to modify the numerical arguments governing the split and splice operation.

Consider a second set of employee IDs where the first three characters consistently represent a site location code, followed by the unique ID number. We now wish to insert "-Employee-" immediately following this three-character site code. The input data set reflecting this different structure is shown below:

| | A | B | C | D | E |
|----|--------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Employee ID | | | | |
| 2 | AAC004 | | | | |
| 3 | AAC005 | | | | |
| 4 | AAC012 | | | | |
| 5 | AAC023 | | | | |
| 6 | AAC025 | | | | |
| 7 | AAC029 | | | | |
| 8 | AAC031 | | | | |
| 9 | AAC032 | | | | |
| 10 | AAC043 | | | | |
| 11 | AAC045 | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | |

In this new context, for the string 'NYC101', we want the resultant output to be 'NYC-Employee-101'. This transformation demands that the LEFT function extracts 3 characters (NYC), and consequently, the MID function must begin its extraction from the fourth character position.

Analyzing the Modified Formula

To implement the three-character insertion point, we update the arguments passed to the primary text functions and enter the following into cell **B2**:

```
=LEFT(A2,3) & "-Employee-" & MID(A2,4,LEN(A2))
```

Observe the critical changes: we now request **3** characters from the LEFT function to capture the site code. Crucially, we instruct the MID function to begin its extraction from the **4th** position, ensuring we skip the three characters already captured by the LEFT function. After entering the formula in B2, we drag it down column B to apply the transformation across the entire range.

| | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|----|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Employee ID | Add Text to Employee ID | | | | |
| 2 | AAC004 | AAC-Employee-004 | | | | |
| 3 | AAC005 | AAC-Employee-005 | | | | |
| 4 | AAC012 | AAC-Employee-012 | | | | |
| 5 | AAC023 | AAC-Employee-023 | | | | |
| 6 | AAC025 | AAC-Employee-025 | | | | |
| 7 | AAC029 | AAC-Employee-029 | | | | |
| 8 | AAC031 | AAC-Employee-031 | | | | |
| 9 | AAC032 | AAC-Employee-032 | | | | |
| 10 | AAC043 | AAC-Employee-043 | | | | |
| 11 | AAC045 | AAC-Employee-045 | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | | |

The resulting column B successfully integrates the "-Employee-" text immediately after the three-character site location code. This demonstrates that by simply adjusting the arguments in the **LEFT** and **MID** functions, this technique is universally applicable for insertion at any specific point within a text string.

Detailed Breakdown: How the String Functions Interact

Mastering text manipulation in Excel requires a clear understanding of the internal mechanisms of this composite concatenation operation. Let's revisit the initial formula used for cell **A2**, which contains the string 'A004', and break down each function's specific contribution to the final result:

=LEFT(A2,1) & "-Employee-" & MID(A2,2,LEN(A2))

The formula achieves the final output by executing three sequential operations and then joining them together using the ampersand (&) operator:

Extraction of the Prefix (LEFT Function): The component `LEFT(A2, 1)` extracts a specified number of characters from the left end of the text string in cell A2. Since we specified '1', this portion evaluates to the value **A**.

Insertion of Custom Text (Literal String): The middle segment, `"-Employee-"`, is the literal text string we intend to insert. This text is connected to the extracted prefix using the ampersand (&)

symbol, which performs string concatenation.

Extraction of the Suffix (MID and LEN Functions): The final segment involves `MID(A2, 2, LEN(A2))`.

The internal `LEN function(A2)` first determines the total length of the string in A2 (which is 4 characters).

The `MID function` then extracts text starting from the specified start position (2) and continues for the number of characters determined by LEN (4). In the string 'A004', starting at position 2 and taking 4 characters (though only 3 remain) extracts **004**.

By joining these three computed parts--**A**, **-Employee-**, and **004**--using the concatenation operator, the final result is the desired modified string: **A-Employee-004**. This highly adaptable method ensures accurate and uniform text placement across variable length strings, making it a cornerstone technique for efficient data formatting in Excel.