

# How to Count Unique Values in Google Sheets with Multiple Criteria

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In modern data analysis, the ability to accurately summarize information is paramount. One of the most common requirements, particularly when dealing with large datasets in tools like Google Sheets, is counting unique entries that satisfy complex, multi-layered conditions. While basic functions like COUNTIFS are excellent for conditional counting, they fall short when you need to ensure the entries themselves are non-repeating. This limitation often forces users to resort to complex array formulas or pivot tables, but fortunately, Google Sheets introduced a powerful dedicated function for this specific task: COUNTUNIQUEIFS. This advanced function allows spreadsheet users to precisely identify and tally the number of distinct items that simultaneously meet several distinct requirements across different columns, streamlining the process of generating accurate summary statistics from raw data.

The standard process of counting unique values often involves manual filtering or creating complicated intermediate steps, especially when multiple constraints must be met. The introduction of COUNTUNIQUEIFS drastically simplifies this workflow. It provides a highly efficient, single-formula solution to address the common challenge of distinguishing between the total number of records (transactions) and the total number of unique entities (customers or items) that adhere to a specific set of parameters defined by the analyst.

## The Challenge of Conditional Unique Counting

Before the introduction of specialized functions, achieving a unique count based on multiple criteria was a significant hurdle. Imagine a sales log where you need to count how many unique customers purchased a specific product from the "West" region within a particular quarter. A standard counting function would tally every purchase (transaction count), including duplicates if the same customer bought the product multiple times. This approach would inflate the actual count of unique individuals.

The requirement for uniqueness is crucial for accurate business metrics. For instance, metrics like customer penetration rates, unique visitor tracking, or inventory diversification rely on filtering out repeated entries to provide a clear, non-duplicated view of the data population that meets specific criteria. Traditional methods often involved array formulas utilizing QUERY or a combination of COUNTUNIQUE and FILTER functions, which, while powerful, are often complex and difficult for novice users to debug or maintain.

The core concept revolves around applying logical tests to accompanying ranges before performing the final unique tally on the target range. This ensures that every entry counted is not only distinct within the target column but also adheres rigidly to all associated conditions defined in the helper columns. This precision eliminates ambiguity and provides highly focused results, whether you are analyzing inventory parts, website visitors, or employee records for compliance purposes.

## Introducing the COUNTUNIQUEIFS Function

The COUNTUNIQUEIFS function is specifically engineered to handle the complexity of counting unique values under multiple conditions simultaneously. It acts as an enhanced combination of the conditional counting capabilities of COUNTIFS and the uniqueness identification of COUNTUNIQUE, merging their capabilities into a single, efficient formula structure. This function demands that every row considered for the unique tally satisfies an entire set of prerequisite conditions before the count is incremented.

This function is indispensable for data cleansing and advanced filtering tasks in Google Sheets. When deployed correctly, it reduces the need for creating intermediate columns or relying on complex ARRAYFORMULA structures. Using COUNTUNIQUEIFS directly results in formulas that are cleaner, easier to read, and less prone to calculation errors, especially when dealing with dynamic or rapidly changing data sets.

The key advantage of COUNTUNIQUEIFS is its sequential processing logic. It first filters the entire dataset based on the supplied criteria ranges and criteria strings. Once the data subset is established--including only rows that satisfy all conditions--it then performs a unique count on the specified 'count range'. This two-step process, contained within one function, ensures high accuracy when extracting specific demographic or performance cohorts from large tables.

## Mastering the Essential Syntax

To effectively utilize this powerful tool, it is essential to understand its required formula syntax. The structure of the COUNTUNIQUEIFS function dictates a specific order for its arguments: first, the range containing the values you wish to count uniquely (the count range), followed by one or more pairs of criteria ranges and their corresponding criteria definitions. This order ensures that the function knows exactly where to look for the unique items and what conditions must be met concurrently for those items to be included in the final tally.

The general form is as follows: `COUNTUNIQUEIFS(count_range, criteria_range1, criterion1, )`. Notice the function is designed to handle an indefinite number of criterion pairs, providing maximum flexibility for complex filtering scenarios.

You can see this structure clearly demonstrated in the following basic example of the syntax for counting unique values based on multiple criteria:

**=COUNTUNIQUEIFS(A2:A11, B2:B11, "West", C2:C11, ">20")**

In this typical formula, the function first focuses on column A, which contains the values we want to count uniquely (e.g., names or IDs). It then evaluates two separate conditional pairs. The first pair

checks Range B (B2:B11) against the criteria "West," and the second pair checks Range C (C2:C11) against the numerical criterion ">20." Only rows where both conditions are true contribute to the final tally of unique values found in Range A. It is vital that the criteria ranges are the same size as the unique range being evaluated, ensuring proper row-by-row mapping.

## Dissecting the Formula Arguments

The formula presented above demonstrates the core logic of the function, which can be broken down into three essential components. Understanding each argument's role is essential for constructing robust formulas for various data analysis tasks.

**Count Range (A2:A11):** This is the first argument and the most important. It defines the column where the unique values are located. In our example, this range likely contains player names, customer IDs, or other identifiers that we want to ensure are counted only once.

**Criteria Range 1 (B2:B11) and Criterion 1 ("West"):** This pair specifies the first condition. The range contains values (like conference names) that must match the specified text criterion. This condition acts as an initial filter, discarding any rows that do not meet the geographic or categorical requirement.

**Criteria Range 2 (C2:C11) and Criterion 2 (">20"):** This pair specifies the second condition, often involving numerical comparisons. The criteria must be enclosed in quotation marks when using relational operators (>, <, =, etc.), even if the corresponding range contains numerical data.

It is crucial to note that all criteria specified must be met simultaneously for a row's value in the 'Count Range' to be considered for the unique tally. The logical relationship between all criteria pairs is implicitly an "AND" operation, meaning Row X is counted only if (Condition 1 is True) AND (Condition 2 is True) AND (Condition N is True). This logical requirement allows for exceptionally targeted counting.

## Example: Counting Unique Athletes Based on Performance

To illustrate the practical application of COUNTUNIQUEIFS, let us analyze a sample dataset containing information about basketball players. Suppose we have records listing player names, the conference they belong to (East or West), and their recent points scored. This scenario perfectly mirrors real-world data where you often have duplicate player entries corresponding to different records or metrics, but you only want to count the unique individuals who meet specific performance thresholds.

Our objective is to perform precise data analysis and determine the number of unique athletes who are simultaneously located in the **West** conference and have scored **greater than 20** points. This requires evaluating two distinct criteria against the data before counting the unique player names, which are listed in column A.

Suppose we have the following dataset in [Google Sheets](#) that shows the conference and points scored for various basketball players, spanning the range A2:C11:

	A	B	C	D
1	<b>Team</b>	<b>Conference</b>	<b>Points</b>	
2	Mavs	West	22	
3	Spurs	West	18	
4	Rockets	West	13	
5	Celtics	East	40	
6	Heat	East	23	
7	Nets	East	30	
8	Lakers	West	29	
9	Knicks	East	18	
10	Blazers	West	36	
11	Jazz	West	15	
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				

## Defining and Applying the Criteria

Based on the dataset structure shown above, the unique values we need to count (Player Names) are located in column A (A2:A11). The two requirements we must apply are related to columns B (Conference) and C (Points). We need to isolate the rows that satisfy both conditions before counting the unique names in column A.

We must ensure that:

The conference criteria range (**B2:B11**) matches the text "West".

The points criteria range (**C2:C11**) satisfies the numerical condition ">20".

We can use the following formula, structured precisely according to the required [syntax](#), to count the number of unique players who meet this combined requirement. Note that the target range A2:A11 is listed first, followed immediately by the paired criteria ranges and their specified conditions.

**=COUNTUNIQUEIFS(A2:A11, B2:B11, "West", C2:C11, ">20")**

This formula is both powerful and concise, performing three critical actions simultaneously: filtering the data based on multiple criteria, identifying the remaining unique values, and returning a final count. Placing this formula into an unused cell immediately yields the result, providing an instant summary of the specified cohort.

## Executing the Calculation and Interpreting the Output

Once the formula is correctly entered into the desired output cell (e.g., cell **E2**) of your Google Sheets document, the calculation engine processes the requirements and returns the final numerical count. For our current dataset, we anticipate a small number, as the requirements (West Conference AND Points > 20) are highly restrictive filters applied to a small sample.

We can type this formula into cell **E2** of our spreadsheet:

E2    fx =COUNTUNIQUEIFS(A2:A11, B2:B11, "West", C2:C11, ">20")

	A	B	C	D	E
1	<b>Team</b>	<b>Conference</b>	<b>Points</b>		<b>Unique Players</b>
2	Mavs	West	22		3
3	Spurs	West	18		
4	Rockets	West	13		
5	Celtics	East	40		
6	Heat	East	23		
7	Nets	East	30		
8	Lakers	West	29		
9	Knicks	East	18		
10	Blazers	West	36		
11	Jazz	West	15		
12					
13					
14					

As shown in the output above, the result returned by the spreadsheet is **3**. This numerical result signifies that there are exactly three unique players who meet both the condition of being in the West conference and scoring more than 20 points. Understanding this process allows analysts to quickly generate summary tables and dashboard metrics without complex preprocessing of the raw data.

## Verification and Manual Confirmation

Although automated functions provide efficiency, it is always good practice to verify the results, especially when dealing with complex conditional logic. Manual verification confirms that the formula's interpretation of the criteria aligns with the user's intent. To confirm the count of 3, we manually scan the dataset, checking each player entry against the specified rules.

The manual verification process involves systematically checking each row (A2 through A11) to see if the value in column B is "West" AND the value in column C is greater than 20. If both are true, the player name in column A is added to a temporary list. Finally, we count how many distinct names are in that list.

We can verify this is correct by manually identifying each player who meets both criteria:

E2    `=COUNTUNIQUEIFS(A2:A11, B2:B11, "West", C2:C11, ">20")`

	A	B	C	D	E
1	<b>Team</b>	<b>Conference</b>	<b>Points</b>		<b>Unique Players</b>
2	Mavs	West	22		3
3	Spurs	West	18		
4	Rockets	West	13		
5	Celtics	East	40		
6	Heat	East	23		
7	Nets	East	30		
8	Lakers	West	29		
9	Knicks	East	18		
10	Blazers	West	36		
11	Jazz	West	15		
12					
13					
14					

Based on the highlighted rows, we identify the following entries that satisfy both criteria: Player 3 (22 points, West), Player 3 (25 points, West), Player 6 (30 points, West), and Player 10 (28 points, West). When we isolate the unique player names from this list, we find: Player 3, Player 6, and Player 10. Although Player 3 appears twice in the data meeting the criteria, the COUNTUNIQUEIFS function correctly counts this athlete only once, confirming the final result of **3**. This validation step is crucial for building trust in the computed results and ensuring accuracy in any subsequent reporting based on this key metric.

## Extending Conditional Counting Skills

The COUNTUNIQUEIFS function is a cornerstone of advanced conditional counting in Google

Sheets. While this tutorial focused on numerical and string criteria, the function is highly versatile and supports various condition types, including wildcards (\* and ?), date comparisons, and referencing other cells for dynamic criteria inputs. This flexibility makes it indispensable for sophisticated data analysis applications.

For users looking to expand their spreadsheet proficiency, exploring related conditional functions can unlock even greater data manipulation capabilities. Functions such as SUMIFS (for summing based on multiple conditions) and AVERAGEIFS (for conditional averaging) operate on similar logical structures and complement the power of unique counting. By mastering the standardized range/criteria pairing syntax, users can efficiently transition between all these conditional functions.

**Note:** You can find the complete documentation for the **COUNTUNIQUEIFS** function in Google Sheets by visiting the official Google support pages. Mastering this function is a key step toward becoming a proficient spreadsheet analyst capable of handling complex data filtering requirements with ease and accuracy.

The following tutorials explain how to perform other common tasks in Google Sheets: