

# How can I match two columns in Excel and return a third column?

Authored by  
**stats writer**

May 15, 2024

## RECOMMENDED CITATION

stats writer (2024). *How can I match two columns in Excel and return a third column?*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=144285>

In Excel, there is a function called "VLOOKUP" that can be used to match two columns and return a third column. This function allows you to search for a specific value in one column and return a corresponding value from another column. By using this function, you can easily compare data from two columns and retrieve relevant information from a third column, making data analysis and management more efficient and accurate. Simply input the necessary parameters, such as the lookup value and the range of data, and the function will automatically return the desired value. This feature is particularly useful in organizing and comparing large sets of data in a spreadsheet.

## Match Two Columns and Return a Third in Excel

Often you may want to match the values in two columns and output a third column in Excel.

Fortunately this is easy to do using the **VLOOKUP()** function, which uses the following syntax:

**VLOOKUP(lookup\_value, table\_array, col\_index\_num, )**

where:

**lookup\_value:** The value you want to look up.

**table\_array:** The range of cells to look in.

**col\_index\_num:** The column number in the range that contains the return value.

**range\_lookup:** Whether to find an approximate match (default) or exact match.

The following example shows how to use this function to match two columns and return a third in Excel.

### Example: Match Two Columns and Return Third in Excel

Suppose we have the following datasets in Excel:

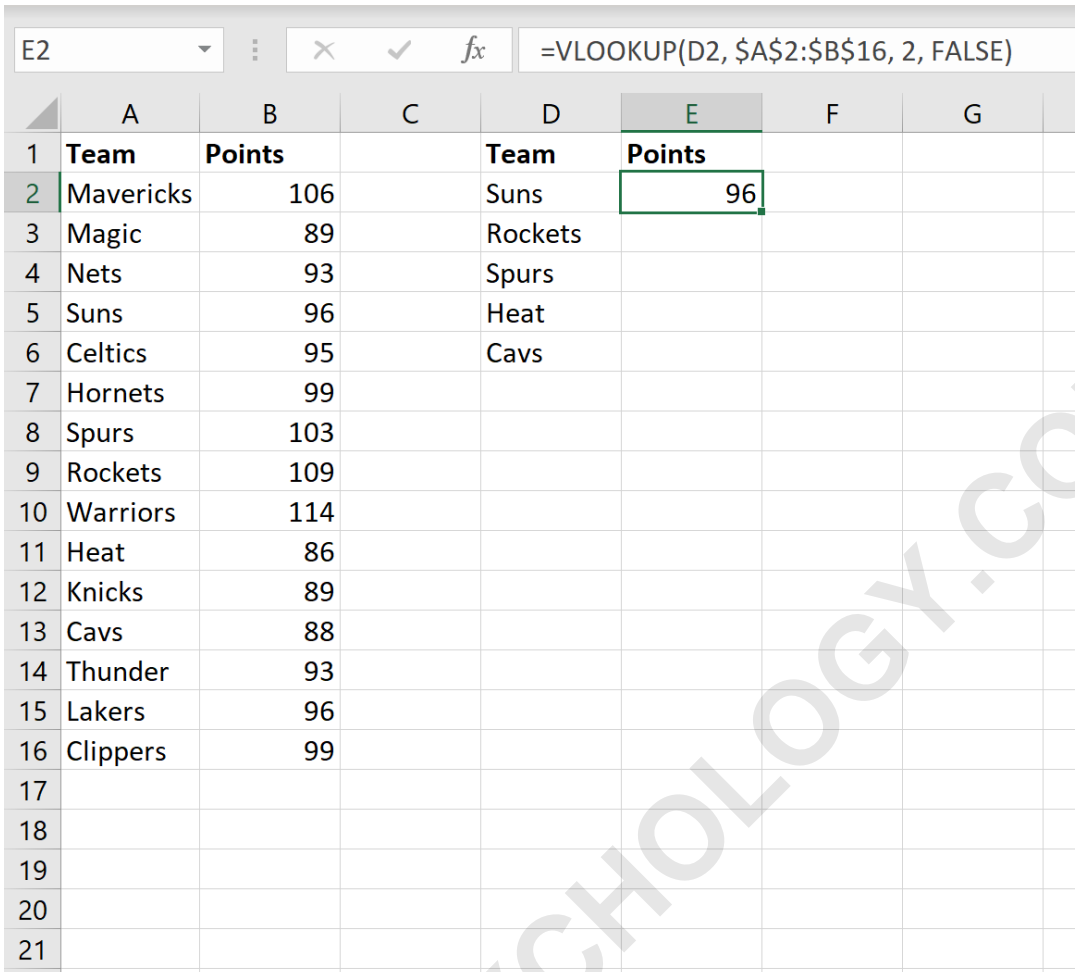
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	<b>Team</b>	<b>Points</b>		<b>Team</b>	<b>Points</b>		
2	Mavericks	106		Suns			
3	Magic	89		Rockets			
4	Nets	93		Spurs			
5	Suns	96		Heat			
6	Celtics	95		Cavs			
7	Hornets	99					
8	Spurs	103					
9	Rockets	109					
10	Warriors	114					
11	Heat	86					
12	Knicks	89					
13	Cavs	88					
14	Thunder	93					
15	Lakers	96					
16	Clippers	99					
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							
22							

Suppose we would like to match the team values in column A and column D and return the points values in column B into column E.

We can use the following VLOOKUP syntax to match the first value in column A:

**=VLOOKUP(D2, \$A\$2:\$B\$16, 2, FALSE)**

The following screenshot shows how to use this syntax in practice:



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	<b>Team</b>	<b>Points</b>		<b>Team</b>	<b>Points</b>		
2	Mavericks	106		Suns	96		
3	Magic	89		Rockets			
4	Nets	93		Spurs			
5	Suns	96		Heat			
6	Celtics	95		Cavs			
7	Hornets	99					
8	Spurs	103					
9	Rockets	109					
10	Warriors	114					
11	Heat	86					
12	Knicks	89					
13	Cavs	88					
14	Thunder	93					
15	Lakers	96					
16	Clippers	99					
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							

Notice that the 'points' value in column B that corresponds to 'Suns' is **96**, which is why this value is returned in column E.

We can then drag this formula down to every remaining cell in column E:

E2							
=VLOOKUP(D2, \$A\$2:\$B\$16, 2, FALSE)							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	<b>Team</b>	<b>Points</b>		<b>Team</b>	<b>Points</b>		
2	Mavericks	106		Suns	96		
3	Magic	89		Rockets	109		
4	Nets	93		Spurs	103		
5	Suns	96		Heat	86		
6	Celtics	95		Cavs	88		
7	Hornets	99					
8	Spurs	103					
9	Rockets	109					
10	Warriors	114					
11	Heat	86					
12	Knicks	89					
13	Cavs	88					
14	Thunder	93					
15	Lakers	96					
16	Clippers	99					
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							
22							

The following tutorials explain how to perform other common operations in Excel: