

How can I perform the TEXTBEFORE function in Excel?

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The TEXTBEFORE function in Excel is a useful tool that allows users to extract a specified number of characters from the beginning of a text string. This function is primarily used for data manipulation and analysis, allowing users to isolate specific portions of text for further processing. To perform the TEXTBEFORE function, users must first identify the cell or range of cells containing the text string, then specify the number of characters to be extracted. This function is particularly helpful for organizing and sorting data, as well as for creating customized reports and summaries. By utilizing the TEXTBEFORE function, users can efficiently manage large sets of data and make informed decisions based on specific text criteria.

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Returns text that occurs before a given character or string. It is the opposite of the [TEXTAFTER](#) function.

Syntax

=TEXTBEFORE(text,delimiter,, ,)

The TEXTBEFORE function syntax has the following arguments:

text The text you are searching within. Wildcard characters are not allowed. If text is an empty string, Excel returns empty text. Required.

delimiter The text that marks the point before which you want to extract. Required.

instance_num The instance of the delimiter after which you want to extract the text. By default, instance_num = 1. A negative number starts searching text from the end. Optional.

match_mode Determines whether the text search is case-sensitive. The default is case-sensitive. Optional. Enter one of the following:

0 Case sensitive.

1 Case insensitive.

match_end Treats the end of text as a delimiter. By default, the text is an exact match. Optional. Enter the following:

0 Don't match the delimiter against the end of the text.

1 Match the delimiter against the end of the text.

if_not_found Value returned if no match is found. By default, #N/A is returned. Optional.

Remarks

When searching with an empty delimiter value, TEXTBEFORE matches immediately. It returns empty text when searching from the front (if instance_num is positive) and the entire text when searching from the end (if instance_num is negative).

Example	Result
=TEXTBEFORE("Red riding hood's, red hood", "hood")	Red riding
=TEXTBEFORE("Red riding hood's, red hood", "")	
=TEXTBEFORE("Red riding hood's, red hood", "", -1)	Red riding hood's, red hood

Errors

Excel returns a #VALUE! error if instance_num = 0 or if instance_num is greater than the length of text.

Excel returns a #N/A error if delimiter isn't contained in text.

Excel returns a #N/A error if instance_num is greater than the number of occurrences of delimiter in text.

Data	
Little Red Riding Hood's red hood	
Little red Riding Hood's red hood	
Formulas	Results
=TEXTBEFORE(A2,"Red")	Little
=TEXTBEFORE(A3,"Red")	#N/A
=TEXTBEFORE(A3,"red",2)	Little red Riding Hood's

=TEXTBEFORE(A3,"red",-2)	Little
=TEXTBEFORE(A3,"Red",,FALSE)	#N/A
=TEXTBEFORE(A3,"red",3)	#N/A

Data	
Marcus Aurelius	
Socrates	
Immanuel Kant	
Formulas	Results
=TEXTBEFORE(A2," ",,1)	Marcus
=TEXTBEFORE(A3," ",,0)	#N/A
=TEXTBEFORE(A3," ",,1)	Socrates
=TEXTBEFORE(A4," ",,1)	Immanuel

See Also

[Text functions \(reference\)](#)

[TEXTSPLIT function](#)

[TEXTAFTER function](#)