

How can I use “Contains” in Excel Advanced Filter?

Authored by
stats writer

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RECOMMENDED CITATION

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"Contains" in Excel Advanced Filter is a useful function that allows users to filter data based on partial matches of a specific criteria. This feature is particularly helpful when dealing with large datasets that contain multiple variations of a keyword or phrase. By using "Contains", users can easily narrow down their search and extract only the relevant data that meets their specified criteria. This advanced filtering technique can save time and effort in sorting through extensive data, making it a valuable tool for data analysis and organization in Excel.

Excel Advanced Filter: Use "Contains"

You can use the following syntax to filter for rows that contain specific text in an Excel Advanced Filter:

sometext

The following examples show how to use this function in two different scenarios:

Filter for rows that contain one specific text
Filter for rows that contain one of multiple text

Example 1: Filter for Rows that Contain One Specific Text

Suppose we have the following dataset that shows the total sales of certain products in certain regions for a company:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Region	Product	Revenue			
2	East	A	10			
3	East	A	6			
4	East	B	8			
5	East	C	14			
6	West	A	10			
7	West	B	19			
8	West	B	22			
9	West	C	14			
10	North	A	18			
11	North	B	8			
12	North	C	4			
13	North	C	7			
14	South	A	7			
15	South	B	11			
16	South	B	13			
17	South	C	8			
18						
19						
20						

Now suppose we'd like to filter for rows where the Region contains "st" in the name.

To do so, we can define a criteria range:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Region	Product	Revenue			Region	
2	East	A	10			*st*	
3	East	A	6				
4	East	B	8				
5	East	C	14				
6	West	A	10				
7	West	B	19				
8	West	B	22				
9	West	C	14				
10	North	A	18				
11	North	B	8				
12	North	C	4				
13	North	C	7				
14	South	A	7				
15	South	B	11				
16	South	B	13				
17	South	C	8				
18							
19							
20							

Next, we can click the Data tab and then click the Advanced Filter button:

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel interface with the 'Data' tab selected. The 'Advanced' filter option is highlighted with a red box. The spreadsheet below shows a table with columns for Region, Product, and Revenue, and a criteria range in column F with the text '*st*'.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Region	Product	Revenue			Region			
2	East	A	10			*st*			
3	East	A	6						
4	East	B	8						
5	East	C	14						
6	West	A	10						
7	West	B	19						
8	West	B	22						
9	West	C	14						
10	North	A	18						
11	North	B	8						
12	North	C	4						
13	North	C	7						
14	South	A	7						
15	South	B	11						
16	South	B	13						
17	South	C	8						
18									

We'll choose A1:C17 as the list range and F1:F2 as the criteria range:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Region	Product	Revenue			Region	
2	East	A	10			*st*	
3	East	A	6				
4	East	B	8				
5	East	C	14				
6	West	A	10				
7	West	B	19				
8	West	B	22				
9	West	C	14				
10	North	A	18				
11	North	B	8				
12	North	C	4				
13	North	C	7				
14	South	A	7				
15	South	B	11				
16	South	B	13				
17	South	C	8				
18							
19							
20							
21							
22							
23							

Advanced Filter ? X

Action

Filter the list, in-place

Copy to another location

List range: Sheet1!\$A\$1:\$C\$17 ↑

Criteria range: Sheet1!\$F\$1:\$F\$2 ↑

Copy to: ↑

Unique records only

OK Cancel

Once we click OK, the dataset will be filtered to only show rows where the Region contains the text "st":

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Region	Product	Revenue			Region	
2	East	A	10			*st*	
3	East	A	6				
4	East	B	8				
5	East	C	14				
6	West	A	10				
7	West	B	19				
8	West	B	22				
9	West	C	14				
18							
19							
20							
21							
22							
23							
24							
25							
26							
27							

Example 2: Filter for Rows that Contain One of Multiple Text

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Region	Product	Revenue			
2	East	A	10			
3	East	A	6			
4	East	B	8			
5	East	C	14			
6	West	A	10			
7	West	B	19			
8	West	B	22			
9	West	C	14			
10	North	A	18			
11	North	B	8			
12	North	C	4			
13	North	C	7			
14	South	A	7			
15	South	B	11			
16	South	B	13			
17	South	C	8			
18						
19						
20						

Now suppose we'd like to filter for rows where the Region contains "st" or "Nor."

To do so, we can define a criteria range:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
1	Region	Product	Revenue			Region	Region	
2	East	A	10			*st*		
3	East	A	6				*Nor*	
4	East	B	8					
5	East	C	14					
6	West	A	10					
7	West	B	19					
8	West	B	22					
9	West	C	14					
10	North	A	18					
11	North	B	8					
12	North	C	4					
13	North	C	7					
14	South	A	7					
15	South	B	11					
16	South	B	13					
17	South	C	8					
18								
19								

Next, we can click the Data tab and then click the Advanced Filter button.

We'll choose A1:C17 as the list range and F1:G3 as the criteria range:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Region	Product	Revenue			Region	Region	
2	East	A	10			*st*		
3	East	A	6				*Nor*	
4	East	B	8					
5	East	C	14					
6	West	A	10					
7	West	B	19					
8	West	B	22					
9	West	C	14					
10	North	A	18					
11	North	B	8					
12	North	C	4					
13	North	C	7					
14	South	A	7					
15	South	B	11					
16	South	B	13					
17	South	C	8					
18								
19								
20								
21								

Advanced Filter ? X

Action

Filter the list, in-place

Copy to another location

List range: Sheet1!\$A\$1:\$C\$17 ↑

Criteria range: \$F\$1:\$G\$3 ↑

Copy to: ↑

Unique records only

OK Cancel

Once we click OK, the dataset will be filtered to only show rows where the Region contains "st" or "Nor":

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Region	Product	Revenue			Region	Region
2	East	A	10			*st*	
3	East	A	6				*Nor*
4	East	B	8				
5	East	C	14				
6	West	A	10				
7	West	B	19				
8	West	B	22				
9	West	C	14				
10	North	A	18				
11	North	B	8				
12	North	C	4				
13	North	C	7				
18							
19							
20							
21							

Additional Resources

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