

# How to Find Partial Matches Between Two Columns in Excel

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Excel is a powerful tool that can be used to efficiently find a partial match between two columns of data. By utilizing the "VLOOKUP" or "INDEX/MATCH" functions, users can compare data in two separate columns and identify any partial matches between them. This feature is particularly useful for analyzing large datasets and identifying common elements between them. With the use of Excel's formula and sorting capabilities, users can easily and accurately identify partial matches, saving time and effort in data analysis.

## Excel: Find Partial Match in Two Columns

You can use the following syntax to find partial matches between two columns in Excel:

```
=IFERROR(VLOOKUP("*"&B2&"*", $A$2:$A$9, 1, 0), "")
```

This particular formula will check if the value in cell B2 has a partial match with any cell in the range A2:A9.

If a partial match is found, then the value in the range A2:A9 is returned.

If no match is found, then a blank is returned.

**Note:** We used asterisks ( \* ) around cell B2 as wildcards to indicate that there may be text before or after the text in cell B2 within the range A2:A9.

The following example shows how to use this formula in practice.

## Example: Find Partial Match in Two Columns in Excel

Suppose we have one column in Excel that shows the full team names of various basketball teams and another column that shows abbreviated names of various basketball teams:

|    | A                     | B                        | C | D | E |
|----|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| 1  | <b>Full Team Name</b> | <b>Team Abbreviation</b> |   |   |   |
| 2  | Dallas Mavericks      | Rockets                  |   |   |   |
| 3  | Cleveland Cavaliers   | Spurs                    |   |   |   |
| 4  | Houston Rockets       | Lakers                   |   |   |   |
| 5  | San Antonio Spurs     | Miami                    |   |   |   |
| 6  | Orlando Magic         | Pacers                   |   |   |   |
| 7  | Miami Heat            | Lakers                   |   |   |   |
| 8  | Indiana Pacers        | Orlando                  |   |   |   |
| 9  | Denver Nuggets        | Jazz                     |   |   |   |
| 10 |                       |                          |   |   |   |
| 11 |                       |                          |   |   |   |
| 12 |                       |                          |   |   |   |
| 13 |                       |                          |   |   |   |
| 14 |                       |                          |   |   |   |
| 15 |                       |                          |   |   |   |
| 16 |                       |                          |   |   |   |
| 17 |                       |                          |   |   |   |
| 18 |                       |                          |   |   |   |
| 19 |                       |                          |   |   |   |
| 20 |                       |                          |   |   |   |

Suppose we would like to check if each team name in the abbreviated column can be partially matched to a team in the full team name column.

We can type the following formula into cell C2 to do so:

**=IFERROR(VLOOKUP("\*"&B2&"\*", \$A\$2:\$A\$9, 1, 0), "")**

**We can then click and drag this formula down to each remaining cell in column C:**

|    | A                     | B                        | C                    | D | E | F |
|----|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---|---|---|
| 1  | <b>Full Team Name</b> | <b>Team Abbreviation</b> | <b>Partial Match</b> |   |   |   |
| 2  | Dallas Mavericks      | Rockets                  | Houston Rockets      |   |   |   |
| 3  | Cleveland Cavaliers   | Spurs                    | San Antonio Spurs    |   |   |   |
| 4  | Houston Rockets       | Lakers                   |                      |   |   |   |
| 5  | San Antonio Spurs     | Miami                    | Miami Heat           |   |   |   |
| 6  | Orlando Magic         | Pacers                   | Indiana Pacers       |   |   |   |
| 7  | Miami Heat            | Lakers                   |                      |   |   |   |
| 8  | Indiana Pacers        | Orlando                  | Orlando Magic        |   |   |   |
| 9  | Denver Nuggets        | Jazz                     |                      |   |   |   |
| 10 |                       |                          |                      |   |   |   |
| 11 |                       |                          |                      |   |   |   |
| 12 |                       |                          |                      |   |   |   |
| 13 |                       |                          |                      |   |   |   |
| 14 |                       |                          |                      |   |   |   |
| 15 |                       |                          |                      |   |   |   |

**If the team name in column B has a partial match with any team name in column A, then the full team name from column A is returned in column C.**

**However, if no partial matches are found then a blank is returned.**

**The "Rockets" had a partial match with "Houston**

**Rockets"**The **"Spurs: had a partial match with "San Antonio Spurs"**The **"Lakers" had no partial match, so a blank was returned.**

**And so on.**

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

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