

# How can I use the INDIRECT function in Excel to reference the contents of a cell and use it as a reference in a formula?

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## RECOMMENDED CITATION

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The INDIRECT function in Excel allows the user to reference the contents of a cell and use it as a reference in a formula. This means that instead of manually typing in a cell reference in a formula, the user can use the INDIRECT function to dynamically retrieve the cell reference from another cell. This can be useful for creating dynamic and flexible formulas that can easily be applied to multiple cells without the need for manual adjustments. By using the INDIRECT function, the user can save time and ensure accuracy in their calculations.

## Description

Returns the reference specified by a text string. References are immediately evaluated to display their contents. Use INDIRECT when you want to change the reference to a cell within a formula without changing the formula itself.

## Syntax

INDIRECT(ref\_text, )

The INDIRECT function syntax has the following arguments:

**Ref\_text** Required. A reference to a cell that contains an A1-style reference, an R1C1-style reference, a name defined as a reference, or a reference to a cell as a text string. If ref\_text is not a valid cell reference, INDIRECT returns the #REF! error value.

If ref\_text refers to another workbook (an external reference), the other workbook must be open. If the source workbook is not open, INDIRECT returns the #REF! error value.

**Note:** External references are not supported in Excel Web App.

If ref\_text refers to a cell range outside the row limit of 1,048,576 or the column limit of 16,384 (XFD), INDIRECT returns a #REF! error.

**A1** Optional. A logical value that specifies what type of reference is contained in the cell ref\_text.

If a1 is TRUE or omitted, ref\_text is interpreted as an A1-style reference.

If a1 is FALSE, ref\_text is interpreted as an R1C1-style reference.

## Example

Copy the example data in the following table, and paste it in cell A1 of a new Excel worksheet. For formulas to show results, select them, press F2, and then press Enter. If you need to, you can

adjust the column widths to see all the data.

<b>Data</b>		
B2	1.333	
B3	45	
George	10	
5	62	
<b>Formula</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Result</b>
=INDIRECT(A2)	Value of the reference in cell A2. The reference is to cell B2, which contains the value 1.333.	1.333
=INDIRECT(A3)	Value of the reference in cell A3. The reference is to cell B3, which contains the value 45.	45
=INDIRECT(A4)	Because cell B4 has the defined name "George," the reference to that defined name is to cell B4, which contains the value 10.	10
=INDIRECT("B"&A5)	Combines "B" with the value in A5, which is 5. This, in turn, refers to cell B5, which contains the value 62.	62