

How can I use the LEFT function in Excel to extract text before a space?

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The LEFT function in Excel allows users to extract text from a cell before a specified character, such as a space. This can be useful when working with data that includes both text and numbers, as it allows users to isolate and extract specific parts of the data. By utilizing the LEFT function, users can easily manipulate and analyze data in a more efficient and precise manner. This function is particularly useful for organizing and formatting data, making it an essential tool for any Excel user.

Excel: Use LEFT to Extract Text Before Space

You can use the following formula with the LEFT and FIND function to extract all of the text before a space is encountered in some cell in Excel:

=LEFT(A2, FIND(" ", A2)-1)

This particular formula extracts all of the text in cell A2 that occurs before the first space is encountered.

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

Example: Using LEFT to Extract Text Before Space

Suppose we have the following list in Excel that provides a brief description of different basketball players including their team, position, and ranking:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Player Description				
2	Mavs Guard Great				
3	Hornets Forward Good				
4	Rockets Forward Bad				
5	Nets Center Good				
6	Warriors Guard Great				
7	Nuggets Forward Great				
8	Bucks Forward Great				
9	Kings Guard Bad				
10	Spurs Guard Good				
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					

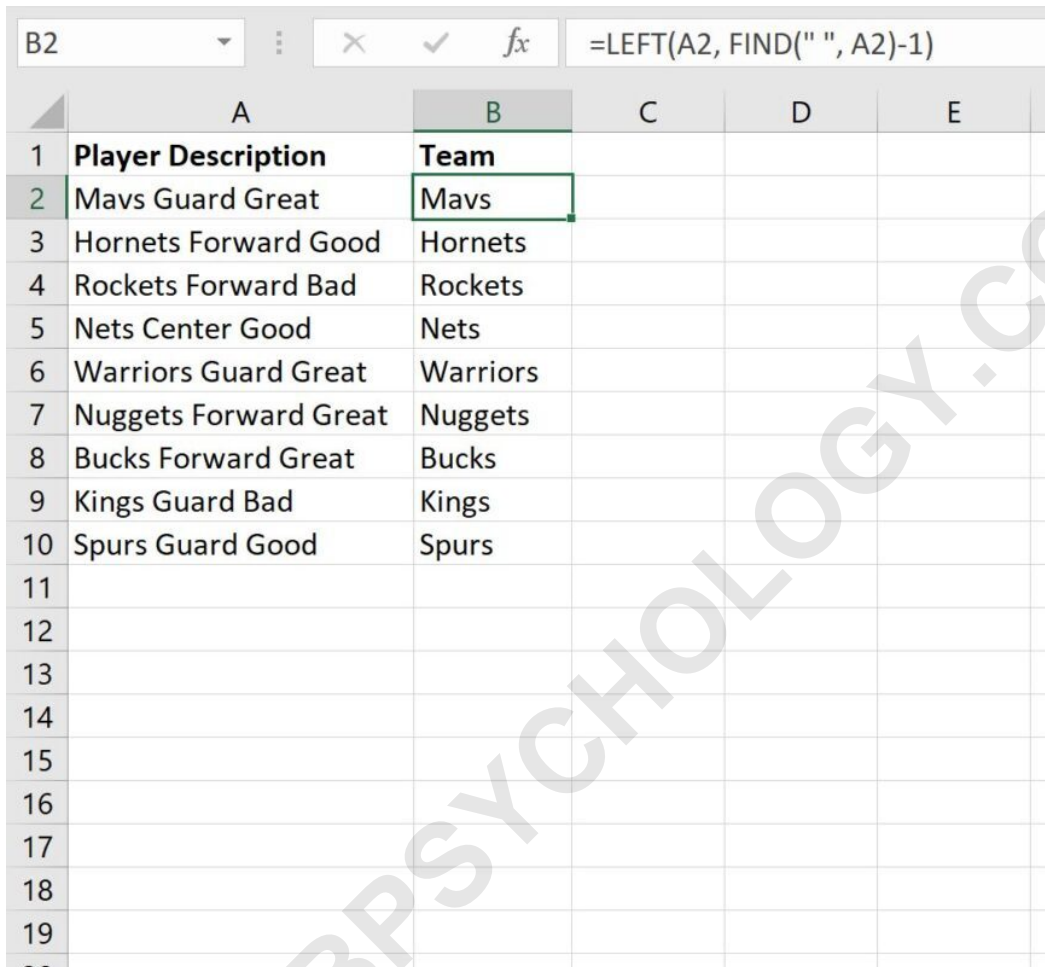
Now suppose that we would like to extract only the team name for each player.

To do so, we can use the following formula with the LEFT and FIND functions in Excel to extract the text from the left side of each cell until a space is encountered:

=LEFT(A2, FIND(" ", A2)-1)

We can type this formula into cell B2 and then click and

drag this formula down to each remaining cell in column B:



The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with the following data:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Player Description	Team			
2	Mavs Guard Great	Mavs			
3	Hornets Forward Good	Hornets			
4	Rockets Forward Bad	Rockets			
5	Nets Center Good	Nets			
6	Warriors Guard Great	Warriors			
7	Nuggets Forward Great	Nuggets			
8	Bucks Forward Great	Bucks			
9	Kings Guard Bad	Kings			
10	Spurs Guard Good	Spurs			
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					

The formula bar at the top shows the formula: `=LEFT(A2, FIND(" ", A2)-1)`

Column B now displays only the team name for each player in column A.

It's worth noting that if no space is found in the Player Description column, the formula will return #VALUE! as a result.

To return a different value, simply use the IFERROR() function.

For example, we can use the following IFERROR() function to return "No space" if a space is not found in a given player description:

=IFERROR(LEFT(A2, FIND(" ", A2)-1), "No space")

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Player Description	Team					
2	Mavs Guard Great	Mavs					
3	Hornets Forward Good	Hornets					
4	Rockets Forward Bad	Rockets					
5	Nets Center Good	Nets					
6	Warriors Guard Great	Warriors					
7	Nuggets Forward Great	Nuggets					
8	Bucks Forward Great	Bucks					
9	Kings Guard Bad	Kings					
10	SpursGuardGood	No space					
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							
22							

Note that you can also return a different value by simply

replacing "No space" with some other value in the IFERROR() function.

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

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