

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

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The LEFT function in Google Sheets is a useful tool for extracting text before a space in a cell. This function allows users to specify the number of characters they want to extract from the left side of the text, starting from the first character. By using this function, users can easily isolate and extract specific text before a space, making it easier to manipulate and analyze data in their spreadsheets. This feature can be particularly helpful for organizing and sorting data, as well as for creating more visually appealing and organized spreadsheets. To use the LEFT function, simply enter the cell containing the text you want to extract, followed by the number of characters you want to extract. This will automatically extract the desired text before the first space in the cell.

Google Sheets: 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 Google Sheets:

```
=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 Google Sheets that provides a brief description of different basketball players including their team, position, and ranking:

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

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 Google Sheets 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:

B2 fx =LEFT(A2, FIND(" ", A2)-1)

	A	B	C
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 Center Good	Warriors	
7	Spurs Guard Bad	Spurs	
8	Thunder Forward Good	Thunder	
9	Kings Forward Bad	Kings	
10	Pelicans Guard Good	Pelicans	
11	Blazers Guard Bad	Blazers	
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			

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")

B2 | fx =IFERROR(LEFT(A2, FIND(" ", A2)-1), "No space")

	A	B	C	D
1	Player Description	Team		
2	MavsGuardGreat	No space		
3	Hornets Forward Good	Hornets		
4	Rockets Forward Bad	Rockets		
5	Nets Center Good	Nets		
6	Warriors Center Good	Warriors		
7	Spurs Guard Bad	Spurs		
8	Thunder Forward Good	Thunder		
9	Kings Forward Bad	Kings		
10	Pelicans Guard Good	Pelicans		
11	Blazers Guard Bad	Blazers		
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				

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 Google Sheets:

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