

How can I use the UNIQUE function in Excel to return a list of unique values from a range of cells?

Authored by
stats writer

July 1, 2024

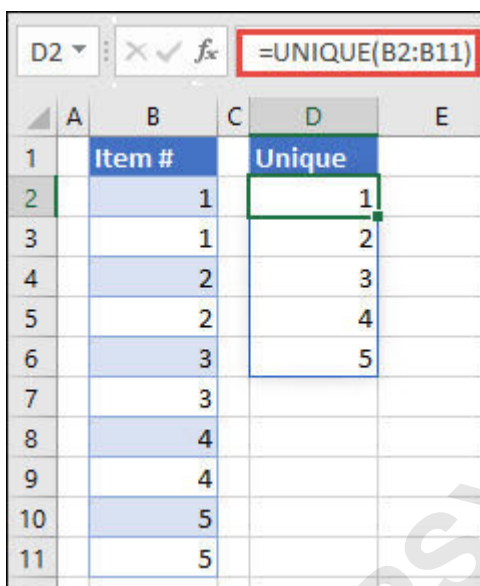
RECOMMENDED CITATION

stats writer (2024). *How can I use the UNIQUE function in Excel to return a list of unique values from a range of cells?*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=164316>

The UNIQUE function in Excel is a powerful tool that allows you to quickly and easily extract a list of unique values from a range of cells. This function eliminates duplicate values and returns only the unique values, making it useful for data analysis and organization. To use the UNIQUE function, simply select the range of cells from which you want to extract unique values and enter the function in a new cell. The result will be a list of unique values from the selected range, without any repeats. This function is particularly helpful when dealing with large datasets, as it saves time and effort in manually identifying and removing duplicate values.

The UNIQUE function returns a list of unique values in a list or range.

Return unique values from a list of values



	A	B	C	D	E
1		Item #		Unique	
2		1		1	
3		1		2	
4		2		3	
5		2		4	
6		3		5	
7		3			
8		4			
9		4			
10		5			
11		5			

Return unique names from a list of names

	A	B	C	D	E
1		Sales Rep		Unique list	
2		Tom		Tom	
3		Fred		Fred	
4		Amy		Amy	
5		Sal		Sal	
6		Fritz		Fritz	
7		Srivan		Srivan	
8		Xi		Xi	
9		Hector		Hector	
10		Tom			
11		Fred			
12		Amy			
13		Sal			
14		Fritz			
15		Srivan			
16		Xi			
17		Hector			

=UNIQUE(array,,)

The UNIQUE function has the following arguments:

Argument	Description
array Required	The range or array from which to return unique rows or columns
Optional	The by_col argument is a logical value indicating how to compare. TRUE will compare columns against each other and return the unique columns FALSE (or omitted) will compare rows against each other and return the unique rows
Optional	The exactly_once argument is a logical value that will return rows or columns that occur exactly once in the range or array. This is the database concept of unique. TRUE will return all distinct rows or columns that occur exactly once from the range or array FALSE (or omitted) will return all distinct rows or columns from the range or array

Notes:

An array can be thought of as a row or column of values, or a combination of rows and columns of values. In the examples above, the arrays for our UNIQUE formulas are range D2:D11, and D2:D17 respectively.

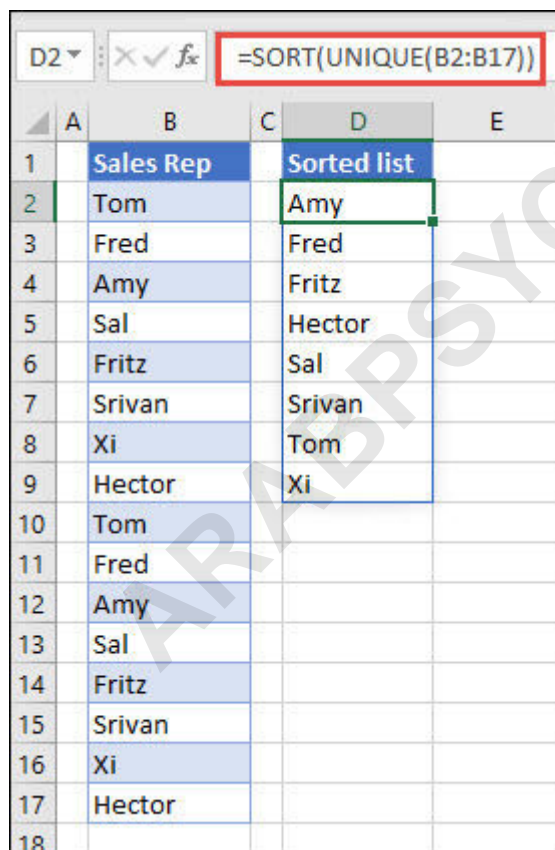
The UNIQUE function will return an array, which will spill if it's the final result of a formula. This means that Excel will dynamically create the appropriate sized array range when you press **ENTER**. If your supporting data is in an [Excel Table](#), then the array will automatically resize as you add or remove data from your array range if you're using [Structured References](#). For more details, see this article on [Spilled Array Behavior](#).

Excel has limited support for dynamic arrays between workbooks, and this scenario is only supported when **both** workbooks are open. If you close the source workbook, any linked dynamic array formulas will return a [#REF! error](#) when they are refreshed.

Examples

Example 1

This example uses SORT and UNIQUE together to return a unique list of names in ascending order.



	A	B	C	D	E
1		Sales Rep		Sorted list	
2		Tom		Amy	
3		Fred		Fred	
4		Amy		Fritz	
5		Sal		Hector	
6		Fritz		Sal	
7		Srivan		Srivan	
8		Xi		Tom	
9		Hector		Xi	
10		Tom			
11		Fred			
12		Amy			
13		Sal			
14		Fritz			
15		Srivan			
16		Xi			
17		Hector			
18					

Example 2

This example has the `exactly_once` argument set to TRUE, and the function returns only those

customers who have had service one time. This can be useful if you want to identify people who have not returned for additional service, so you can contact them.

	A	B	C
1	Customer Name	Service Type	Date
2	Fife, Grant	Tire rotation	01/01/19
3	Pruitt, Barbara	Oil change	03/05/19
4	Horn, Frances	30k mile service	03/08/19
5	Barrett, Alicia	30k mile service	03/10/19
6	Barrett, Alicia	Brake pads	03/15/19
7	Larson, Lynn	Oil change	04/13/19
8	Pruitt, Barbara	Oil change	05/06/19
9	Snook, Anthony	Oil change	05/14/19
10	Snook, Anthony	Transmission flush	05/25/19
11	Horn, Frances	Brake pads	06/29/19
12	Brown, Charity	Tire rotation	09/29/19
13			
14	One-Time Only Customers		
15	Fife, Grant		
16	Larson, Lynn		
17	Brown, Charity		
18			

Example 3

This example uses the ampersand (&) to concatenate last name and first name into a full name. Note that the formula references the entire range of names in A2:A12 and B2:B12. This allows Excel to return an array of all names.

Formula bar: `=UNIQUE(B2:B12&" "&A2:A12)`

	A	B	C	D
1	Last Name	First Name		Full Name
2	Fife	Grant		Grant Fife
3	Pruitt	Barbara		Barbara Pruitt
4	Horn	Frances		Frances Horn
5	Barrett	Alicia		Alicia Barrett
6	Barrett	Alicia		Lynn Larson
7	Larson	Lynn		Anthony Snook
8	Pruitt	Barbara		Charity Brown
9	Snook	Anthony		
10	Snook	Anthony		
11	Horn	Frances		
12	Brown	Charity		
13				

Tips:

If you format the range of names as an Excel table, then the formula will automatically update when you add or remove names.

If you want to sort the list of names, you can add the SORT function: `=SORT(UNIQUE(B2:B12&" "&A2:A12))`

Example 4

This example compares two columns and returns only the unique values between them.

Formula bar: `=UNIQUE(A2:B13)`

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Region	Sales Person	Product	Month	Sales		Region	Sales Person
2	North	Buchanan	Beverages	Jan	\$468		North	Buchanan
3	North	Davolio	Beverages	Jan	\$944		North	Davolio
4	North	Buchanan	Produce	Jan	\$423			
5	North	Davolio	Produce	Jan	\$822			
6	North	Buchanan	Beverages	Feb	\$339			
7	North	Davolio	Beverages	Feb	\$579			
8	North	Buchanan	Produce	Feb	\$787			
9	North	Davolio	Produce	Feb	\$425			
10	North	Buchanan	Beverages	Mar	\$545			
11	North	Davolio	Beverages	Mar	\$971			
12	North	Buchanan	Produce	Mar	\$835			
13	North	Davolio	Produce	Mar	\$517			

Need more help?

You can always ask an expert in the [Excel Tech Community](#) or get support in [Communities](#).

ARABPSYCHOLOGY.COM