

How can I use VLOOKUP in Excel to return a blank cell instead of zero?

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VLOOKUP is a useful function in Microsoft Excel that allows users to search for a value in a specific column and return a corresponding value from a different column. However, in certain cases, the function may return a zero instead of a blank cell, which can be undesirable. To avoid this, users can add an additional parameter to the VLOOKUP function that specifies what value should be returned if a match is not found. By setting this parameter to an empty string ("") instead of zero, users can ensure that the function will return a blank cell instead of zero, providing a neater and more accurate representation of the data. This simple adjustment can be helpful in various scenarios, such as when working with numerical data or generating reports.

Excel: Use VLOOKUP to Return Blank Instead of Zero

You can use the following formula to return a blank value instead of a zero when using the VLOOKUP function in Excel:

```
=IF(LEN(VLOOKUP(D2,A2:B11,2,0))=0,"",VLOOKUP(D2,A2:B11,2,0))
```

This particular example attempts to look up the value in cell D2 in the range A2:B11 and return the corresponding value in the second column of the range.

If no value is found in the second column, then a blank is returned.

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

Example: Return Blank Instead of Zero in VLOOKUP

Suppose we have the following dataset in Excel that contains information about various basketball players:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Team	Points			
2	Mavs	22			
3	Spurs	30			
4	Rockets	45			
5	Nets				
6	Celtics	50			
7	Kings	19			
8	Heat	23			
9	Warriors	28			
10	Lakers	25			
11	Magic	17			
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					

Suppose we use the following formula with VLOOKUP to look up "Nets" in the dataset and return the corresponding value from the points column:

=VLOOKUP(D2,A2:B11,2,FALSE)

The following screenshot shows how to use this

The following screenshot shows how to use this formula in practice:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Team	Points		Team	Points				
2	Mavs	22		Nets					
3	Spurs	30							
4	Rockets	45							
5	Nets								
6	Celtics	50							
7	Kings	19							
8	Heat	23							
9	Warriors	28							
10	Lakers	25							
11	Magic	17							
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									
18									
19									

How This Formula Works

Recall the formula that we used to return a blank instead of a zero using VLOOKUP:

```
=IF(LEN(VLOOKUP(D2,A2:B11,2,0))=0,"",VLOOKUP(D2,A2:B11,2,0))
```

Here is how this formula works:

The LEN function counts the number of characters in the output of the VLOOKUP function.

Our formula uses an IF function to check if the number of characters in the output of the VLOOKUP function is zero.

If the length is zero, then the formula returns "" - a blank.

If the length is not zero, then the formula simply returns the output from the VLOOKUP function.

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