

How can I use wildcard characters in a Google Sheets query?

Authored by
stats writer

May 15, 2024

RECOMMENDED CITATION

stats writer (2024). *How can I use wildcard characters in a Google Sheets query?*.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=144319>

Wildcard characters are special symbols that can be used in a Google Sheets query to represent one or more unknown characters in a search term. These characters can be used to make your search more flexible and inclusive, as they can match a variety of different values. To use wildcard characters in a Google Sheets query, you can simply add an asterisk (*) as a placeholder for any unknown characters in your search term. This will allow you to search for patterns or partial matches within your data, making your query more efficient and effective. Additionally, you can also use a question mark (?) to represent a single unknown character. By utilizing wildcard characters in your Google Sheets query, you can easily filter and sort through large sets of data to find the specific information you need.

Use Wildcard Characters in Google Sheets Query

You can use the % sign as a wildcard character in Google Sheets queries:

Method 1: Return Cells That Start with Certain Characters

```
=QUERY(A1:A10, "Select A where A like 'hello%')"
```

Method 2: Return Cells That End with Certain Characters

```
=QUERY(A1:A10, "Select A where A like '%hello')"
```

Method 3: Return Cells That Contain Certain Characters

```
=QUERY(A1:A10, "Select A where A like '%hello%')"
```

The following examples show how to use each method in practice.

Method 1: Return Cells That Start with Certain Characters

We can use the following formula to return every cell in column A that starts with 'We':

=QUERY(A1:A10, "Select A where A like 'We%'")

The following screenshot shows how to use this formula:

ARABPSYCHOLOGY.COM

D1 fx =query(A2:A13,"Select A where A like 'We%'")

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Conference	Wins		West	
2	West	42		West	
3	North	38		West	
4	East	55		West	
5	North	59			
6	West	38			
7	South	45			
8	East	49			
9	South	60			
10	West	47			
11	North	50			
12	West	34			
13	North	31			
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					

Method 2: Return Cells That End with Certain Characters

We can use the following formula to return every cell in column A that ends with 'th':

=QUERY(A1:A10, "Select A where A like '%th'")

The following screenshot shows how to use this formula:

D1 fx =query(A2:A13,"Select A where A like '%th'")

	A	B	C	D
1	Conference	Wins		North
2	West	42		North
3	North	38		South
4	East	55		South
5	North	59		North
6	West	38		North
7	South	45		
8	East	49		
9	South	60		
10	West	47		
11	North	50		
12	West	34		
13	North	31		
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

Method 3: Return Cells That Contain Certain Characters

We can use the following formula to return every cell in column A that contains 'ou' somewhere within the string:

=QUERY(A1:A10, "Select A where A like '%ou%'")

The following screenshot shows how to use this formula:

D1 *fx* =query(A2:A13,"Select A where A like '%ou%'")

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Conference	Wins		South	
2	West	42		South	
3	North	38			
4	East	55			
5	North	59			
6	West	38			
7	South	45			
8	East	49			
9	South	60			
10	West	47			
11	North	50			
12	West	34			
13	North	31			
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					

The following tutorials explain how to perform other common queries in Google Sheets: