

# How to Use LEFT to Extract Text Before Comma in Excel?

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November 22, 2025

## RECOMMENDED CITATION

stats writer (2025). *How to Use LEFT to Extract Text Before Comma in Excel?*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=100021>

The LEFT function in Excel can be used to extract a substring from a larger string, before a certain character or delimiter. To use the LEFT function to extract text before a comma, just supply the text in the first argument of the function, followed by the number of characters you want to extract in the second argument, and a comma as the third argument. This will cause the LEFT function to return the desired substring from the original text.

You can use the following formula with the **LEFT** and **FIND** function to extract all of the text before a comma 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 comma is encountered.

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

### **Example: Using LEFT to Extract Text Before Comma**

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  | <b>Player Description</b> |   |   |   |   |
| 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 |                           |   |   |   |   |

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 comma 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:

|    | A                         | B           | C | D | E |
|----|---------------------------|-------------|---|---|---|
| 1  | <b>Player Description</b> | <b>Team</b> |   |   |   |
| 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 |                           |             |   |   |   |
| 20 |                           |             |   |   |   |

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

It's worth noting that if no comma 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 comma" if a comma is not found in a given player description:

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

|    |                           | =IFERROR(LEFT(A2, FIND(",", A2)-1), "No comma") |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|    | A                         | B   | C | D | E | F | G |
| 1  | <b>Player Description</b> | <b>Team</b>                                     |   |   |   |   |   |
| 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          | No comma  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 11 |                           |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 12 |                           |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 13 |                           |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 14 |                           |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 15 |                           |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 16 |                           |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 17 |                           |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 18 |                           |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 19 |                           |   |   |   |   |   |   |

Note that you can also return a different value by simply replacing "No comma" with some other value in the **IFERROR()** function.