

# What are Google Sheets Fills and how do they work?

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## RECOMMENDED CITATION

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Google Sheets Fills are a feature in the Google Sheets program that allows users to quickly fill a series of cells with a specific pattern or data. This can save time and effort for users who need to enter the same information repeatedly. The fill function works by selecting a range of cells to be filled, then choosing the desired fill option, such as copying the contents of a cell to the adjacent cells or creating a series of numbers or dates. The fill can also be customized by dragging the fill handle or using the fill dialog box. This feature is useful for organizing and formatting data in a spreadsheet and can be easily adjusted or removed as needed.

## Google Sheets Fills

### Filling

Filling makes your life easier and is used to fill ranges with values, so that you do not have to manually type the entries.

Filling can be used for:

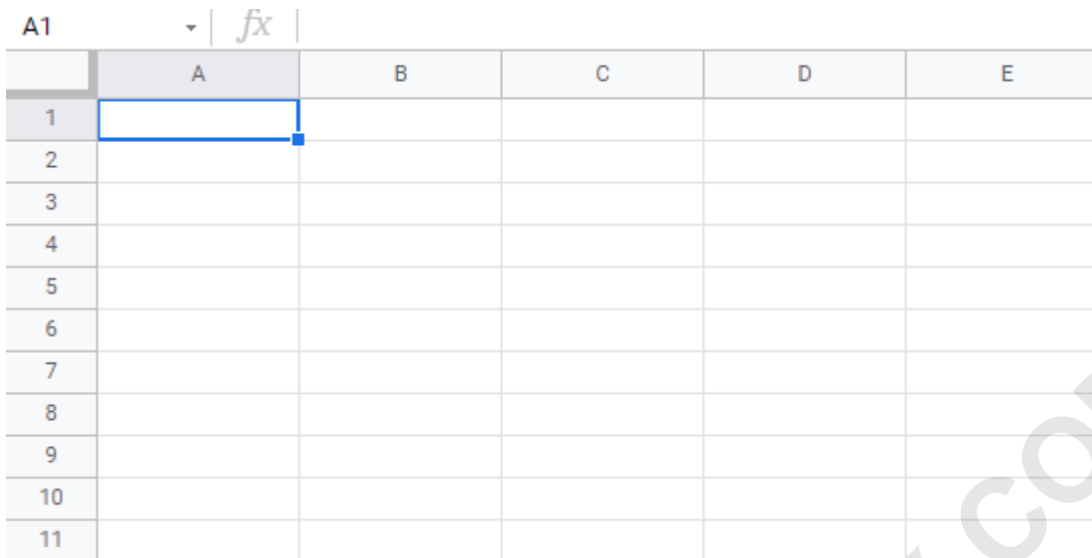
Copying Sequences Dates Functions

**Note:** For now, do not think of functions. We will cover that in a later chapter.

### How To Fill

Filling is done by selecting a cell, clicking the fill icon and selecting the range using drag and mark while holding the left mouse button down.

The fill icon is found in the bottom right corner of the cell and has the icon of a small square. Once you hover over it your mouse pointer will change its icon to a thin cross.

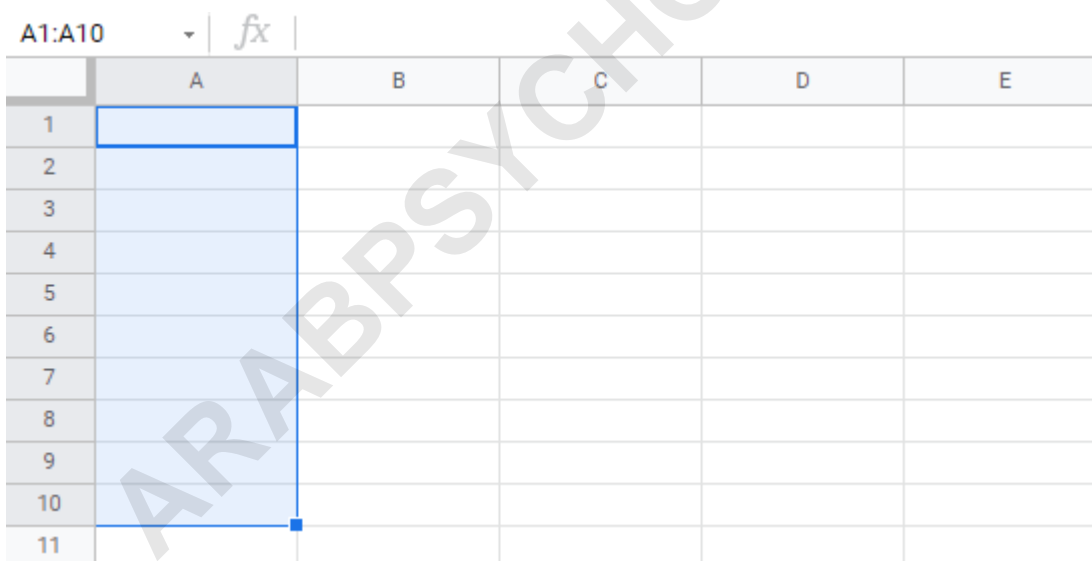


A screenshot of a Google Sheets spreadsheet. The active cell is A1, and the range A1:A10 is highlighted in light blue. The spreadsheet has columns A through E and rows 1 through 11. A watermark 'ARABPSYCHOLOGY.COM' is visible diagonally across the spreadsheet.

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

Click the fill icon and hold down the left mouse button, drag and mark the range that you want to cover.

In this example, cell A1 was selected and the range A1:A10 was marked.



A screenshot of a Google Sheets spreadsheet showing the range A1:A10 filled with a light blue color. The active cell is A1:A10, and the range A1:A10 is highlighted in light blue. The spreadsheet has columns A through E and rows 1 through 11. A watermark 'ARABPSYCHOLOGY.COM' is visible diagonally across the spreadsheet.

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

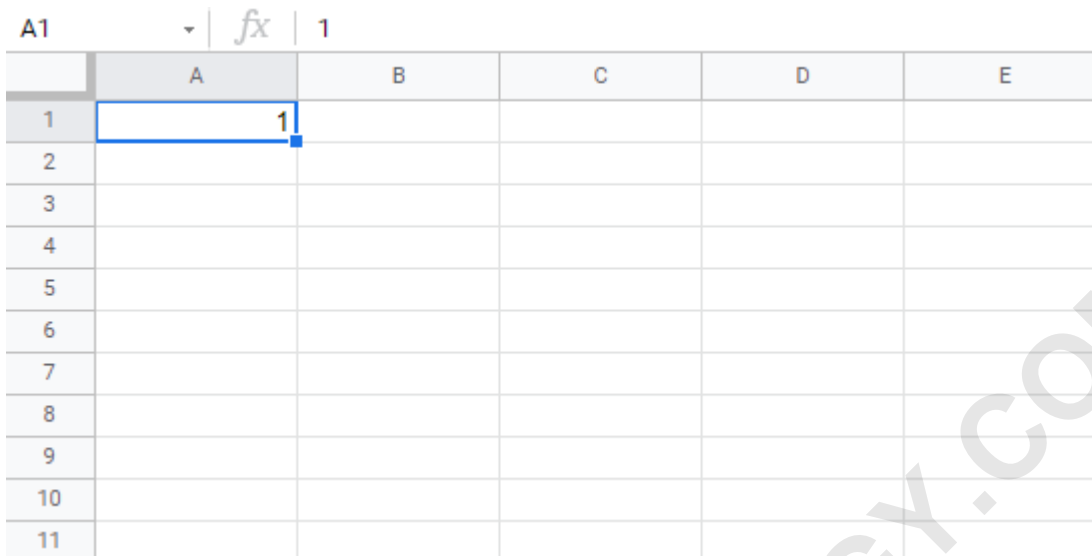
Now that we have learned how to fill. Let's look into how to copy with the fill function.

## Fill Copies

Filling can be used for copying. It can be used for both numbers and words.

Let's have a look at numbers first.

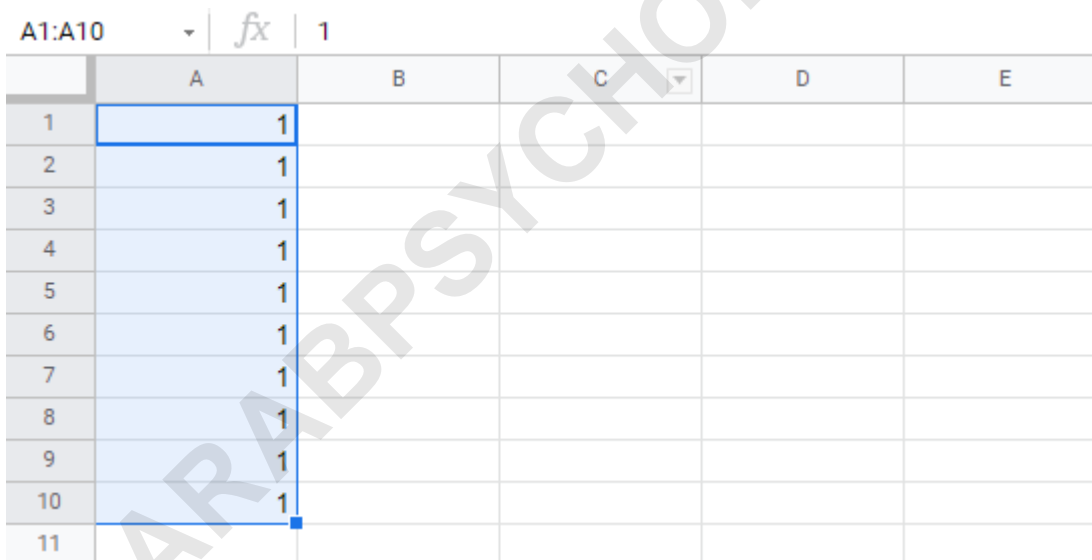
In this example we have typed the value `A1(1)`:



A screenshot of a Google Sheet interface. The active cell is A1, and the formula bar shows the value '1'. The spreadsheet grid shows columns A through E and rows 1 through 11. Only cell A1 contains the number '1'.

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

Filling the range `A1:A10` creates **ten copies** of **1**:



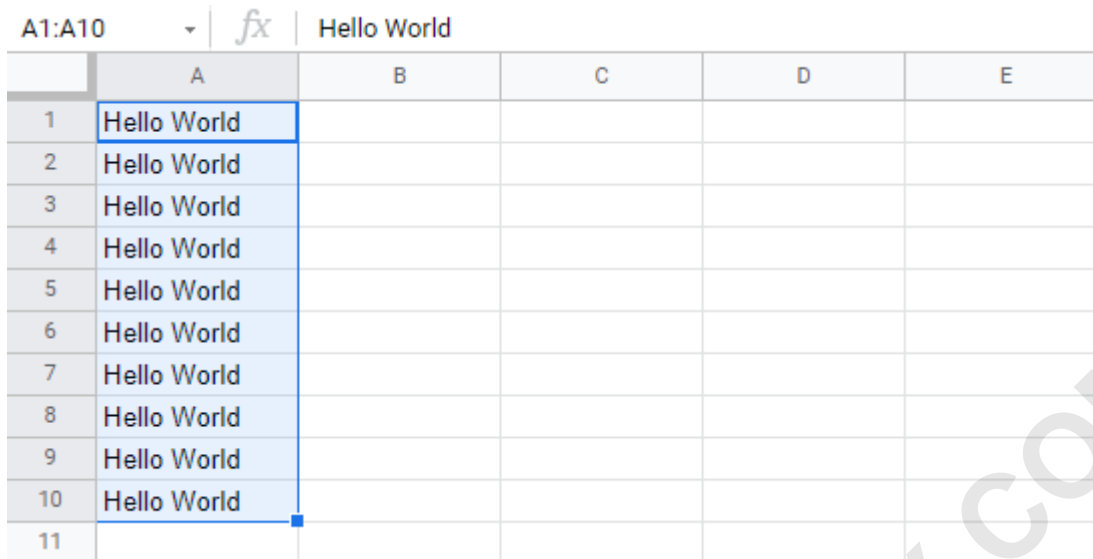
A screenshot of a Google Sheet interface. The active range is A1:A10, and the formula bar shows the value '1'. The spreadsheet grid shows columns A through E and rows 1 through 11. The entire range A1:A10 is highlighted in light blue and contains the number '1' in each cell.

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

The same principle goes for text.

In this example we have typed `A1(Hello World)`.

Filling the range `A1:A10` creates ten copies of "Hello World":



	A	B	C	D	E
1	Hello World				
2	Hello World				
3	Hello World				
4	Hello World				
5	Hello World				
6	Hello World				
7	Hello World				
8	Hello World				
9	Hello World				
10	Hello World				
11					

Now you have learned how to fill and to use it for copying both numbers and words. Let's have a look at sequences.

## Fill Sequences

Filling can be used to create sequences. A sequence is an order or a pattern. We can use the filling function to continue the order that has been set.

Sequences can for example be used on numbers and dates.

Let's start with learning how to count from 1 to 10.

This is different from the last example because this time we do not want to copy, but to count from 1 to 10.

Start with typing `A1(1)`:

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

First we will show an example which does not work, then we will do a working one. Ready?

Lets type the value (1) into the cell A2, which is what we have in A1. Now we have the same values in both A1 and A2.

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

Let's use the fill **function** from A1:A10 to see what happens. Remember to mark both values before you fill the range.

A1:A10		fx	1			
	A	B	C	D	E	
1	1					
2	1					
3	1					
4	1					
5	1					
6	1					
7	1					
8	1					
9	1					
10	1					
11						

What happened is that we got the same values as we did with copying. This is because the fill function assumes that we want to create copies as we had two of the same values in both the cells A1(1) and A2(1).

Change the value of A2(1) to A2(2). We now have two different values in the cells A1(1) and A2(2). Now, fill A1:A10 again. Remember to mark both the values (holding down shift) before you fill the range:

A1:A10		fx	1			
	A	B	C	D	E	
1	1					
2	2					
3	3					
4	4					
5	5					
6	6					
7	7					
8	8					
9	9					
10	10					
11						

**Congratulations!** You have now counted from 1 to 10.

The fill function understands the pattern typed in the cells and continues it for us.

That is why it created copies when we had entered the value (1) in both cells, as it saw no pattern. When we entered (1) and (2) in the cells it was able to understand the pattern and that the next cell A3 should be (3).

Let's create another sequence. Type A1 (2) and A2 (4):

A1:A2    ▾ | fx | 2

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

Now, fill A1:A10:

A1:A10    ▾ | fx | 2

	A	B	C	D	E
1	2				
2	4				
3	6				
4	8				
5	10				
6	12				
7	14				
8	16				
9	18				
10	20				
11					

It counts from 2 to 20 in the range A1:A10.

This is because we created an order with A1 (2) and A2 (4).

Then it fills the next cells, A3(6), A4(8), A5(10) and so on. The fill function understands the pattern and helps us continue it.

## Sequence of Dates

The fill function can also be used to fill dates.

Test it by typing A1(29.07.2021):

A1		fx	29.07.2021			
	A	B	C	D	E	
1	29.07.2021					
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						

And fill the range A1:A10:

A1:A10		fx	29.07.2021			
	A	B	C	D	E	
1	29.07.2021					
2	30.07.2021					
3	31.07.2021					
4	01.08.2021					
5	02.08.2021					
6	03.08.2021					
7	04.08.2021					
8	05.08.2021					
9	06.08.2021					
10	07.08.2021					
11						

The fill function has filled 10 days from A1(29.07.2021) to A10(07.08.2021).

Note that it switched from July to August in cell A4. It knows the calendar and will count real dates.

**Note:** The recognized formats for dates, currencies and functions depends on your Google Sheets location settings.

## Combining Words and Letters

Words and letters can also be combined.

Type A1(Hello 1) and A2(Hello 2):

A1:A2		fx	Hello 1			
	A		B	C	D	E
1	Hello 1					
2	Hello 2					
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						

Next, fill A1:A10 to see what happens:

A1:A10		fx	Hello 1			
	A		B	C	D	E
1	Hello 1					
2	Hello 2					
3	Hello 3					
4	Hello 4					
5	Hello 5					
6	Hello 6					
7	Hello 7					
8	Hello 8					
9	Hello 9					
10	Hello 10					
11						

The result is that it counts from `A1(Hello 1)` to `A10(Hello 10)`. Only the numbers have changed.

It recognised the pattern of the numbers and continued it for us. Words and numbers can be combined, as long as you use a recognizable pattern for the numbers.

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