

Create a simple formula

You can create a simple formula to add, subtract, multiply or divide values in your worksheet. Simple formulas always start with an equal sign (=), followed by constants that are numeric values and calculation operators such as plus (+), minus (-), asterisk(*), or forward slash (/) signs.

For example, when you enter the formula **=5+2*3**, Excel multiplies the last two numbers and adds the first number to the result. Following the standard order of mathematical operations, multiplication is performed before addition.

1. On the worksheet, click the cell in which you want to enter the formula.
2. Type the = (equal sign) followed by the constants and operators that you want to use in the calculation.



You can enter as many constants and operators in a formula as you need, up to 8192 characters.

TIP Instead of typing the constants into your formula, you can select the cells that contain the values that you want to use and enter the operators in between selecting cells.

3. Press Enter.

Create a formula by using a function

You can create a formula to calculate values in your worksheet by using a function. For example, the formulas **=SUM(A1:A2)** and **=SUM(A1,A2)** both use the **SUM** function to add the values in cells A1 and A2. Formulas always start with an equal sign (=).

1. Click the cell in which you want to enter the formula.
2. To start the formula with the function, click **Insert Function**  on the formula bar .

Excel inserts the equal sign (=) for you.



3. In the **Or select a category** box, select **All**.

If you are familiar with the function categories, you can also select a category.

If you're not sure which function to use, you can type a question that describes what you want to do in the **Search for a function** box (for example, "add numbers" returns the **SUM** function).

4. In the **Select a function** box, select the function that you want to use, and then click **OK**.

5. In the argument boxes that are displayed for the function you selected, enter the values, text strings, or cell references you want.

Instead of typing cell references, you can also select the cells that you want to reference. Click  to minimize the dialog box, select the cells you want to reference, and then click  to expand the dialog box again.

TIP For more information about the function and its arguments, click **Help on this function**.

6. After you complete the arguments for the formula, click **OK**.