COMPUTING AND DIGITAL LITERACY

Formulas in Spreadsheets

Difficulty level: Intermediate

Computing and Digital Literacy

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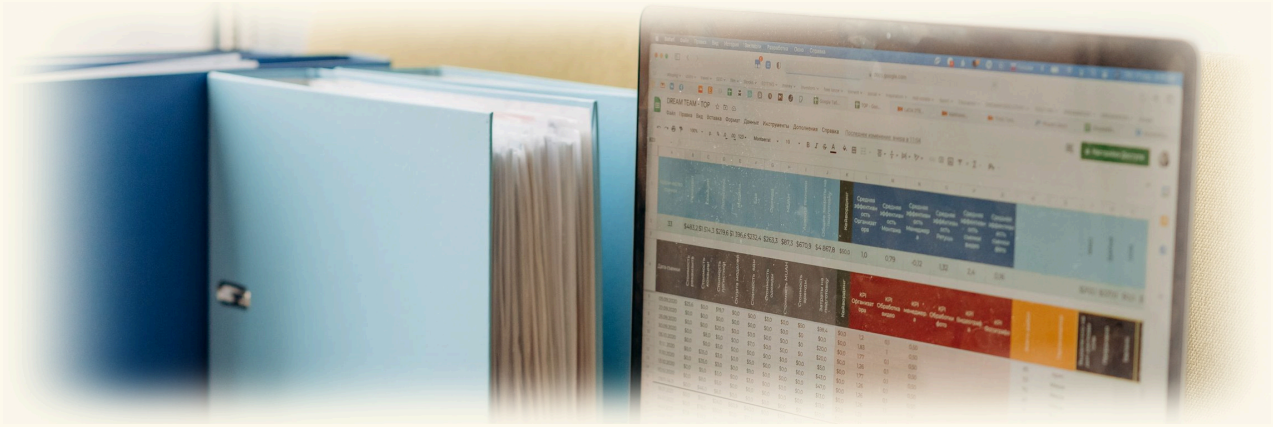
Overview of the concept

This is how a spreadsheet does the maths for you, so a budget or a price list updates itself the moment you change a number. Instead of recalculating everything by hand, you write the rule once and the spreadsheet repeats it for every row. That is how a small business keeps its prices right, how a family budget stays current, and how a coach can total a whole season of scores in seconds.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q Cells B2 to B5 hold 10, 20, 30, 40. What is =SUM(B2:B5)?

	A	B
2		10
3		20
4		30
5		40
6		=SUM(B2:B5)

SOLUTION

B2 = 10, B3 = 20, B4 = 30, B5 = 40

In B6 type: =SUM(B2:B5)

Result shown: 100

Click the cell where the answer should go, here B6.

Type =SUM(B2:B5). The = tells the program a formula follows, and B2:B5 is the range.

Press Enter. The program adds 10 + 20 + 30 + 40 and shows 100.

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EXAMPLE 2

Q Marks in B2 to B5 are 60, 70, 80, 90. What is =AVERAGE(B2:B5)?

	A	B
2		60
3		70
4		80
5		90
6		=AVERAGE(B2:B5)

SOLUTION

Marks: 60, 70, 80, 90

In a cell type: =AVERAGE(B2:B5)

Result shown: 75

Type =AVERAGE(B2:B5) in the answer cell.

The program adds the four marks, 60 + 70 + 80 + 90 = 300

It divides by how many there are, $\frac{300}{4}$ = 75, and shows 75.

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Practice questions

1. Cells B2:B4 hold 5, 10, 15. What does =SUM(B2:B4) show?

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2. Cells C2:C4 hold 2, 4, 6. What does =SUM(C2:C3) show?

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3 Write the formula that adds cells A1 to A10

- **A** =SUM(A1:A5)
- **B** =AVERAGE(A1:A10)
- **C** =SUM(A1:A10)
- **D** =SUM(A1+A10)

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4 Cells D2:D5 hold 1, 2, 3, 4. =SUM(D2:D5) shows 10. If D5 changes from 4 to 14, what does the formula show now?

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5 What does =AVERAGE(B2:B4) show for 5, 10, 15?

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6 **Marks 50, 60, 70, 80 are in B2:B5. =AVERAGE(B2:B5) shows 65. What is the total of the four marks?**

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7 **Numbers 4, 8, 12 are in A2:A4. How many numbers does =AVERAGE(A2:A4) divide by?**

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8 **Numbers 10, 20, 30, 40 are in A2:A5. =AVERAGE(A2:A5) shows 25. If all four numbers doubled, what would the average be?**

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9 What character must every formula start with?

- A =
- B +
- C :
- D /

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10 What does B2:B5 mean?

- A The range from cell B2 to cell B5
- B The single cell B2
- C The formula =SUM(B2:B5)
- D The value stored in cell B5

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ANSWER KEY

1. 30

2. 6

3. =SUM(A1:A10)

4. 20

5. 10

6. 260

7. 3

8. 50

9. =

10. The range from cell B2 to cell B5

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