Microsoft Excel VLOOKUP Function – Find Things in a Table or Tables

Use the VLOOKUP function when you want to find items in your table. You can also use the VLOOKUP function to pull information from multiple spreadsheets to one spreadsheet.

- In this tutorial, you will learn how to use the VLOOKUP function to find information in one table.
- In this tutorial, you will learn how to use the VLOOKUP function to merge information from one spreadsheet to another.

Locating LOOKUP Functions

1. You will find the VLOOKUP function on the Function Library section of the FORMULAS tab ribbon under the Lookup & Reference drop-down selection.
Finding Information Inside an Existing Table

In this tutorial, you will build a VLOOKUP identifying sales for specific store numbers. The LOOKUP function will search column A for the information we want to see in Column B. When building a VLOOKUP, the value you want to look up must always be in the first column of the range of cells in the table array.

1. Select the table and the value you want to look up. Design a description box for your information. Here you have built a description box that will look up the sales for a specific store number.
2. Enter a **VLOOKUP** function into the cell that will display the information being looked up. Click in the cell that will display the information. Go to the **FORMULAS** tab ribbon under the **Lookup & Reference** drop-down selection and select **VLOOKUP**. The **Function Arguments** wizard box for the **VLOOKUP** will appear.
3. Fill in the Function Arguments in the wizard box.

a. **Lookup_value** is the value you want to look up or that you are searching for. As a reminder, the **Lookup_value** must be in the first column of the cells you identify as the **Table_array**. For this example, you are looking up the store number (Column A) someone enters in cell E5. Place your cursor in the **Lookup_value** tab, then click on the cell that will later identify the store number you place in the description box. The cell label will show in the **Lookup_value** wizard.

b. **Table_array** is the range of cells used for the look up, identifying where you want to search. For this example, you are selecting the entire table, columns A:B. Place your cursor in the **Table_array** tab, then click and hold down your mouse to highlight all the columns you want to include in the lookup. The column labels will show up in the **Table_array** wizard.

c. **Col_index_num** is the column label (as a number) where the result of the search is found. For this example, when we choose to lookup a value identified in Column A, we want the function to give us the figure in Column B. We need to assign a number to Column B; therefore, we use 2. Column numbers are chronological to the letters; i.e., A is 1, B is 2, C is 3, etc. Type the number 2 in the **Col_index_num** wizard.

d. **Range_lookup** defines the logic you want to use to find the value you are looking for. If you want an exact match, use the definition “FALSE”, and if an approximate match is acceptable, use “TRUE”. For this example, you are selecting FALSE because you want an exact match.
Here is another display explaining the function arguments as it relates to the instructions above. When you complete the set up of the **Function Arguments**, click **OK**.

Column B is the second column; index number 2.

Range lookup is FALSE; find an exact match.
4. Now that the **Function Arguments** are complete, your **VLOOKUP** will function as follows: type a Store Number in Cell E5, the resulting sales amount appears in Cell E6.

**FINISH:** After following the steps above, you can create a simple chart inside your Excel workbook.