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## Hands-On Activity: Using VLOOKUP

Practice Quiz • 1h

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## Hands-On Activity: Using VLOOKUP

Total points 2

1.



1 / 1 point

### Activity overview

Earlier, you learned about VLOOKUP, a function that uses vertical lookup to find specific values in a spreadsheet. In this activity, you will practice using VLOOKUP to consolidate information between two spreadsheets, clean data, and create a summary table from a query.

By the time you complete this activity, you will be able to use VLOOKUP to complete a variety of tasks in spreadsheets. This will enable you to clean and analyze data more efficiently, which is important for working with large datasets in your career as a data analyst.

### What you will need

To get started, first access the VLOOKUP Practice Worksheet.

Click the link to the worksheet to create a copy. If you don't have a Google account, you may download the VLOOKUP Practice Worksheet directly from the attachments below.

Link to the worksheet: [VLOOKUP Practice Worksheet](#)

OR

Download VLOOKUP Practice Worksheet:

**VLOOKUP Practice Sheet**

XLSX File

### Search with VLOOKUP

Although you would usually clean your data prior to using VLOOKUP, this first step will illustrate why it's important to clean data first.

Imagine your research requires you to know how many hours an employee worked on a specific date. This is easy to do manually on a small spreadsheet and becomes harder as the amount of information grows or is spread across multiple spreadsheets. The VLOOKUP function provides a way to have the spreadsheet gather the information for you.

Assume you needed to figure out how many hours the employee Daniel Chan worked on January 3, 2020. In the spreadsheet you downloaded, it is easy to notice which number contains Daniel's name. But imagine if you had thousands of employees in your spreadsheet. It might not be easy to find his name without searching each cell. In this step, you are going to use Daniel Chan's name as the **lookup\_value**, sometimes known as a search key, in VLOOKUP.

The syntax for the VLOOKUP function is **=vlookup(lookup\_value, table\_array, col\_index\_num, [range\_lookup], true/false)**.

Search for the number of hours Daniel Chan worked on January 3, 2020.

1. In **B11** enter **Chan, Daniel**.

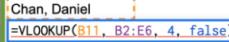
2. In **B12** enter **=VLOOKUP(B11, B2:E6, 4, false)**.

As a refresher, this syntax means that the lookup value is contained in cell B11, the table array contains cells B2 through E6, you want to search in column 4 of this array, and you want an exact match. Remember that column refers to the array column, which represents the limits of your query.

B12	=VLOOKUP(B11, B2:E6, 4, false)							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I

	ID	Name	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020	Total Pay
2	G001	Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5	
3	G002	All, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5	
4	G003	Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5	
5	G004	Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4	
6	G005	Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2	

3. Press **Enter** (Windows) or **Return** (Mac). The cell will now contain an error, #N/A.



```
=VLOOKUP(B11, B2:E6, 4, false)
```

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	ID	Name	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020	Total Pay
2	G001	Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5	
3	G002	All, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5	
4	G003	Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5	
5	G004	Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4	
6	G005	Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2	

Notice that the entry for Daniel Chan has extra spaces after the comma. Because B11 does not contain those extra spaces, the search comes back with an error.

One option to fix this is to adjust the number of spaces until you get an exact match. However, this is not very efficient, and if you could identify the name, you would probably just use the cell number for your query.

The best way to handle this is to trim any extra spaces in the data. This is why it's important to clean your data prior to using VLOOKUP.

## Prepare the data

Now you will prepare the data to help you more easily figure out how many hours employees worked. You first need to clean and label the data. Then, you can combine data from two spreadsheets using the trusty VLOOKUP function.

### Clean and label the data

To trim the data, follow these steps:

- In cell B15 type =trim(B2).
- Click and drag down the bottom-right corner of the cell until you reach B19. The rest of the names will populate.
- For this exercise, you are not replacing the trimmed data into the original table. There are many cases where you need to clean the data for your use, but you do not want to change data in the set with which you are working.
- Scroll below the original data. In cell C15 type =value(C2).
- Click on the bottom-right corner of the cell and drag the cell down to populate the hours for the other employees.

	A	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	ID	Name	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020 Total Pay
2	G001	Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5
3	G002	All, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5
4	G003	Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5
5	G004	Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4
6	G005	Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2

It's also helpful to label the different columns for the data. Working with data gets messy quickly, and it is important to keep track of your value references.

Enter in the following labels:

- B14:** Names
- C14 – H14:** (Enter in the dates 1/1/2020 through 1/6/2020)
- I14:** Hours

• J14: Pay Rate

• K14: Total Pay

B14	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
	ID	Name	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020	Total Pay		
1	G001	Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5			
2	G002	All, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5			
3	G003	Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5			
4	G004	Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4			
5	G005	Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2			
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11		Chan, Daniel									
12		#N/A									
13		Names	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020	Hours	Pay Rate	Total Pay
14		Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5			
15		All, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5			
16		Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5			
17		Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4			
18		Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2			
19											
20											

Populate and sum the remaining hours

Use cells already populated in C15 through C19 to populate the remaining hours needed for each employee.

1. Click and drag the corner of C15 to H15 to populate the remaining hours for Daniel Chan.

2. Repeat this process for the remaining employees.

B14	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
	ID	Name	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020	Total Pay		
1	G001	Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5			
2	G002	All, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5			
3	G003	Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5			
4	G004	Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4			
5	G005	Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2			
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11		Chan, Daniel									
12		#N/A									
13		Names	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020	Hours	Pay Rate	Total Pay
14		Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5			
15		All, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5			
16		Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5			
17		Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4			
18		Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2			
19											
20											

Now, fill in the **Hours** column for the employees.

3. In cell I15 type =sum(C15:H15).

4. Click and drag down the bottom corner of cell I15 to populate the sums for the remaining employees.

I19	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
	ID	Name	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020	Total Pay		
1	G001	Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5			
2	G002	All, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5			
3	G003	Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5			
4	G004	Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4			
5	G005	Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2			
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11		Chan, Daniel									
12		#N/A									
13		Names	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020	Hours	Pay Rate	Total Pay
14		Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5			
15		All, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5			
16		Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5			
17		Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4			
18		Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2			
19											
20											

## Import pay rate data

You might have noticed that pay information is missing from the spreadsheet. Data analysis often requires importing information from different data sources. In this case, the data required is on **Sheet2**. To import this data:

1. Click on **Sheet2**, which you can find at the bottom of the spreadsheet. **Employee ID**, **date of hire (DOH)**, **status**, and **pay rate** are the data found on this sheet.

A1	fx	ID	DOH	Status	Pay Rate
2	G001	12/20/2010	On Leave	100.5	
3	G002	1/5/2010	Contractor	75	
4	G003	11/11/2011	Full-Time	150	
5	G004	5/12/2018	Contractor	65	
6	G005	1/2/2020	Full-Time	3000	
7					

Now, use VLOOKUP to import pay rate data.

2. In J15 (of sheet 1) type: =VLOOKUP(A2, Sheet2!\$A\$2:\$D\$6, 4, false). Consider the syntax for this VLOOKUP function:

• A2 refers to cell A2 in Sheet1.

**Note:** In Sheet2 the rate of pay, and related fields, are referenced by ID instead of employee name. You need to use employee ID to import the pay rate from Sheet2.

- **Sheet2!** refers to the sheet from which you want to access the data.
- **\$A\$2:\$D\$6** refers to the cells that make up the table array. The \$ placed in front of the column tabs and cell numbers locks the formula so that it can be copied by dragging down the cell **J15** to import the pay rate for the other employees.
- **4** refers to the column from which the returned value will come. 4 means that the returned value will come from the 4th column in the selected array.
- **false** signifies that you want an exact, character-for-character match to the lookup value. If you put true instead, VLOOKUP would return an approximate match (or the closest match available) for the lookup value. This is not used very often in real-world situations.

3. Populate the pay rate for the remaining employees by dragging down the corner of the cell to copy the formula.

ID	Name	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020	Total Pay
G001	Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5	
G002	Ali, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5	
G003	Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5	
G004	Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4	
G005	Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2	

Pay Rate								
	100.5							
Names	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020	Hours	Total Pay
Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5	75	
Ali, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5	150	
Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5	65	
Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4	60	
Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2	3000	

Now, calculate total pay.

4. In **K15** type **=product(I15, J15)**.

5. Drag cell **K15** down to populate the total pay for the remaining employees.

ID	Name	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020	Total Pay
G001	Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5	
G002	Ali, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5	
G003	Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5	
G004	Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4	
G005	Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2	

Total Pay								
	3919.5							
Names	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020	Hours	Pay
Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5	39	3450
Ali, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5	46	6600
Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5	44	2730
Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4	42	88500
Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2	29.5	

## Create a summary table

Now that the data is clean and includes pay rate information, you can create a summary table, or pivot table. The following section demonstrates how to create a pivot table in Google Sheets. If you are using Excel, please follow the [documentation for how to manually create a Pivot Table in Excel](#).

In Google Sheets, create a table for data in cells **(B14:K19)** using the following steps:

1. Select the data in cells **(B14:K19)**.

2. Click on the **Data** tab, then select **Pivot Table**.

VLOOKUP Practice Sheet

Data

Pivot table

Sort sheet by column B, A → Z

Sort range by column B, A → Z

Sort range by column B, Z → A

Sort range

Create a filter

Filter views

Slicer

Data validation

Named ranges

Protected sheets and ranges

Cleanup suggestions

Column stats

Split text to columns

1/5/2020    1/6/2020    Hours

ID	Name	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020	Total Pay
G001	Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5	
G002	Ali, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5	
G003	Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5	
G004	Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4	
G005	Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2	

3. A pop-up window will display. Click on **New Sheet**, then click the **Create** button.

ID	Name	1/1/2020	1/2/2020	1/3/2020	1/4/2020	1/5/2020	1/6/2020	Total Pay
G001	Chan, Daniel	8	8	8.5	7	5	2.5	
G002	Ali, Dana	8.5	7	8	8	9	5.5	
G003	Sanchez, Alexis	7.5	6.5	10	8	7	5	
G004	Fischer, Wolfgang	8	8	8	7	7	4	
G005	Patel, Anika	6	5	5	5.5	6	2	

On the side of the new sheet, the **Pivot table editor** will display. The pivot table you are creating will contain each employee's name, pay rate, and total pay. Follow these steps to create the pivot table:

1. Click the **Add** button for **Rows**. Select **Names**.
2. Click the **Add** button for **Values**. Select **Pay Rate**.
3. Click the **Add** button for **Values** again. Select **Total Pay**.

The result should display like this:

Next, convert the cells in the **Sum of Total Pay** column to currency.

4. Select the cells in the column **Sum of Total Pay**.
5. Click on the **\$** symbol on the toolbar.

	A	B	C
1	<b>Names</b>	<b>SUM of Pay R</b>	<b>SUM of Total Pay</b>
2	Ali, Dana	75	\$3,450.00
3	Chan, Daniel	100.5	\$3,919.50
4	Fischer, Wolfgang	65	\$2,730.00
5	Patel, Anika	3000	\$88,500.00
6	Sanchez, Alexis	150	\$6,600.00
7	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3390</b>	<b>\$105,199.50</b>

Alternatively, you can also click on the **Format** tab, select **Number**, then select **Currency**.

The screenshot shows a Google Sheets interface titled "VLOOKUP Practice Sheet". A pivot table is visible in the background. A context menu is open over a cell, with the "Format" tab selected. The "Number" tab is active, and the "Currency" option is highlighted with a green box. The currency value \$1,000.12 is displayed.

Congratulations! You have now used VLOOKUP and created a pivot table, two essential tools for analyzing data in spreadsheets.

### Confirmation and reflection

Imagine the employee Anika Patel asks you to confirm her pay rate. Without using the pivot table, which VLOOKUP function would return her pay rate based off of the imported data on Sheet1?

- =VLOOKUP(B19, B15:J19, 9, false)
- =VLOOKUP(B20, B15:J20, 9, false)
- =VLOOKUP(B19, B15:J19, 9, true)
- =VLOOKUP(B19, B15:J19, 8, false)



Correct

The VLOOKUP function =VLOOKUP(B19, B15:J19, 9, false) would return the value 3000, which is Anika Patel's pay rate. You can use VLOOKUP to find problems or inconsistencies like this in your data. Going forward, you can apply your knowledge of VLOOKUP to find, trim, and convert important information in large datasets.

2. In this activity, you used the VLOOKUP function to find values within a spreadsheet. In the text box below, write 2-3 sentences (40-60 words) in response to each of the following questions:

1 / 1 point

- Why is it important to clean and label data when using VLOOKUP and pivot tables?
- What are some other ways that you might use VLOOKUP with the data in this table?

Why is it important to clean and label data when using VLOOKUP and pivot tables?  
Because if you do not clean your data it can lead to problems when using functions.

What are some other ways that you might use VLOOKUP with the data in this table?  
To find corresponding data, and to grab data from another sheet.



Correct

Congratulations on completing this hands-on activity! A good response would include how VLOOKUP can be used to query and trim data, convert text data to numeric data, and create a summary table from a queried information.

If you are analyzing hours worked, you could use VLOOKUP to query your clean and well-labeled dataset to assess employee status and determine who is full-time, part-time, or on leave. You could also use it to analyze the relationships between pay rates and hire date or status. VLOOKUP is an extremely helpful tool that you can use to analyze data in many situations.