While the TEXT function formats a number into a string, Excel has many other built-in functions designed for manipulating existing text. These functions are great for cleaning up data, extracting specific information, and combining text from different cells. 👩‍💻

### **1. Extracting Text (LEFT, RIGHT, & MID)**

These functions let you pull out a part of a text string based on its position.

● **LEFT(text, [num\_chars])**: Extracts a specified number of characters from the **beginning** (left side) of a text string.

○ Example: =LEFT("Freshman", 5) returns "Fresh".

● **RIGHT(text, [num\_chars])**: Extracts a specified number of characters from the **end** (right side) of a text string.

○ Example: =RIGHT("Freshman", 3) returns "man".

● **MID(text, start\_num, num\_chars)**: Extracts a specified number of characters from the **middle** of a text string, starting at a position you define.

○ Example: =MID("Freshman", 6, 3) returns "man".

### **2. Finding Text (FIND & SEARCH)**

These functions help you locate the position of a specific character or text string within another text string. They're often used with LEFT, RIGHT, and MID to make your formulas more flexible.

● **FIND(find\_text, within\_text, [start\_num])**: Finds the starting position of a string. This function is **case-sensitive**.

○ Example: =FIND("N", "Freshman") returns #VALUE! because "N" isn't found, but "n" is.

○ Example: =FIND("n", "Freshman") returns 7.

● **SEARCH(find\_text, within\_text, [start\_num])**: Finds the starting position of a string. This function is **not case-sensitive** and supports wildcard characters.

○ Example: =SEARCH("n", "Freshman") returns 7.

○ Example: =SEARCH("N", "Freshman") also returns 7.

### **3. Combining Text (CONCAT & The "&" operator)**

● **CONCAT(text1, [text2], ...)**: Joins multiple text strings together into one. It's an updated and more flexible version of the older CONCATENATE function.

○ Example: =CONCAT("Hello", " ", "World") returns "Hello World".

● **The "&" operator**: This is an even simpler way to join text strings. It's often preferred by users for its simplicity.

○ Example: ="Hello" & " " & "World" returns "Hello World".

### **4. Replacing Text (REPLACE & SUBSTITUTE)**

These functions are used to swap out parts of a text string for new text.

● **REPLACE(old\_text, start\_num, num\_chars, new\_text)**: Replaces a specified number of characters in a text string with a new string, based on the **starting position**.

○ Example: =REPLACE("2024-09-17", 1, 4, "2025") changes the year and returns "2025-09-17".

● **SUBSTITUTE(text, old\_text, new\_text, [instance\_num])**: Replaces specific text within a string with new text. It's useful when you don't know the exact position of the text you want to change. This function is **case-sensitive**.

○ Example: =SUBSTITUTE("I love blue cars, and blue houses.", "blue", "red") returns "I love red cars, and red houses.".

How to Use the LEFT & RIGHT Functions to Extract Text in Microsoft Excel

This video is a great visual guide for understanding how to use the LEFT and RIGHT functions to extract specific parts of a text string.