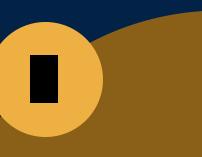# XLOOKUP vs VLOOKUP: Key Differences in Excel Lookup Functions

XLOOKUP, available in Excel 365 and 2019, searches vertically and horizontally with exact matches by default. VLOOKUP, from Excel 2007 onward, searches vertically with approximate match default. Each has distinct advantages in data retrieval and flexibility.

Vertical Search Limited to Leftmost Column

VLOOKUP searches only the first column vertically, limiting lookup value location and data layout flexibility.

Searches Both Vertically and Horizontally

XLOOKUP searches vertically and horizontally, offering more flexibility in data access and organization.

Default Approximate Match Can Cause Errors

VLOOKUP defaults to approximate match unless exact match is specified, causing errors if data isn't sorted properly.

VLOOKUP Traditional

XLOOKUP Modern Lookup

Default Exact Match for Reliable Results

XLOOKUP defaults to finding exact matches, reducing errors and improving accuracy without additional parameters.

Returns Single Column Value Only

VLOOKUP returns data from a single specified column, limiting its ability to retrieve multiple values or arrays from a lookup.

Supports Returning Multiple Columns and Arrays

XLOOKUP can return arrays or multiple column values, enhancing its utility for complex data retrieval and dynamic reporting.