Excel Interview Questions with Answers (Shweta Ghotekar)

# 1. VLOOKUP Interview Questions & Answers

Q: What is VLOOKUP and when would you use it?  
A: VLOOKUP is a vertical lookup function that searches for a value in the first column of a range and returns a value in the same row from a specified column. Used for looking up employee names, prices, regions, etc.  
  
Q: What are the limitations of VLOOKUP?  
A: It only looks to the right of the lookup column, breaks if columns are inserted, and is slower on large datasets.  
  
Q: Example of VLOOKUP:  
=VLOOKUP("South", A2:D100, 4, FALSE) → Returns value from 4th column where "South" is found.  
  
Q: Why does VLOOKUP break if columns are inserted?  
A: Because column index number is static (like 4), so inserting columns changes the data layout but not the formula.

# 2. HLOOKUP Interview Questions & Answers

Q: What is the difference between VLOOKUP and HLOOKUP?  
A: VLOOKUP searches vertically down columns, HLOOKUP searches horizontally across rows.  
  
Q: When is HLOOKUP used?  
A: When data is organized in rows, like quarters or months.  
  
Example: =HLOOKUP("Q1", A1:D4, 2, FALSE)

# 3. XLOOKUP Interview Questions & Answers

Q: What is XLOOKUP and how is it better?  
A: XLOOKUP is the modern replacement for VLOOKUP and HLOOKUP. It can search both directions (left and right), return default values, and doesn't break when columns are inserted.  
  
Syntax:  
=XLOOKUP(lookup\_value, lookup\_array, return\_array, [if\_not\_found], [match\_mode], [search\_mode])  
  
Q: What is 'match\_mode'?  
A: It controls type of match: exact (0), exact or next smaller (-1), exact or next larger (1), wildcard (2).  
  
Q: What is 'search\_mode'?  
A: It controls the direction: first-to-last (1) or last-to-first (-1).

# 4. INDEX & MATCH Q&A

Q: What does INDEX do?  
A: It returns the value of a cell at the intersection of a row and column within a range.  
  
Q: What does the number '2' indicate in =INDEX(B2:B6, 2)?  
A: It returns the 2nd value from the range B2:B6.  
  
Q: What does MATCH do?  
A: MATCH returns the position of a value in a list. Example: MATCH("Mango", A1:A5, 0) → 3  
  
Q: Why use INDEX-MATCH over VLOOKUP?  
A: It's more flexible, can look to the left, and doesn't break with column insertions.

# 5. COUNTA Function

Q: What does COUNTA do?  
A: COUNTA counts all non-empty cells in a range.  
  
Example: =COUNTA(A1:A10) → Counts how many cells are not blank.  
  
Q: How is COUNTA different from COUNT?  
A: COUNT counts only numeric values. COUNTA counts numbers, text, dates, etc.

# 6. Logical Functions (IF, AND, OR)

Q: How does the IF function work?  
A: IF tests a condition and returns one value if TRUE and another if FALSE.  
  
Example: =IF(A2>5000, "Bonus", "No Bonus")  
  
Q: How to use multiple conditions?  
A: Use AND/OR inside IF.  
=IF(AND(A2="South", B2>5000), "Top Performer", "Average")  
  
Q: What is the use case in interviews?  
A: Used in bonus calculation, grading systems, performance evaluation.

# 7. Basic vs Advanced Excel

Q: What are basic Excel skills?  
A: Data entry, formatting, basic formulas (SUM, AVERAGE, COUNT).  
  
Q: What are advanced Excel skills?  
A: Pivot Tables, VLOOKUP, INDEX-MATCH, data cleaning, charts, dashboards, Power Query.  
  
Q: How do you clean raw data?  
A: Remove duplicates, trim spaces, convert text to columns, handle blanks.

# 8. Scenario-Based Questions

Q: How to find duplicates?  
A: Use Conditional Formatting → Highlight Duplicates.  
  
Q: How to make dropdown list?  
A: Use Data Validation → List.  
  
Q: How to summarize data?  
A: Use Pivot Tables for region-wise, category-wise summaries.

# 9. Practice Exercises with Answers

Q1: Use VLOOKUP to return sales for "East"  
A: =VLOOKUP("East", A2:D100, 3, FALSE)  
  
Q2: Use INDEX-MATCH to find employee name by ID  
A: =INDEX(B2:B100, MATCH("E102", A2:A100, 0))  
  
Q3: IF+AND to check high sales in South  
A: =IF(AND(A2="South", B2>5000), "High", "Low")  
  
Q4: Use COUNTA to count all filled feedbacks  
A: =COUNTA(D2:D100)