VLOOKUP (Vertical Lookup)

The 'V' stands for **Vertical**. Use VLOOKUP when your data is organized in **columns**, and the unique identifier (what you're searching for) is in the **first column** of your table.

It works like this:

1. **You give it a search value** (e.g., a specific product ID).
2. **It searches down the first column** of a designated table for an exact match to that value.
3. **Once it finds the match,** it looks **across** that same row to a column number you specify.
4. **It returns the value** from that intersecting cell.

**Analogy:** Finding a student's grade by searching for their name in a class roster that lists names down the first column and grades across the rows.

Simplified Formula:

=VLOOKUP(What to look up, Where to look (your table), The column number with the answer, Exact Match or Approximate Match)

HLOOKUP (Horizontal Lookup)

The 'H' stands for **Horizontal**. Use HLOOKUP when your data is organized in **rows**, and the unique identifier (what you're searching for) is in the **first row** of your table.

It works like this:

1. **You give it a search value** (e.g., a specific month name).
2. **It searches across the first row** of a designated table for an exact match to that value.
3. **Once it finds the match,** it looks **down** that same column to a row number you specify.
4. **It returns the value** from that intersecting cell.

**Analogy:** Finding the sales figure for "Q3" in a spreadsheet where quarters are listed horizontally across the top row and sales figures are listed below them.

Simplified Formula:

=HLOOKUP(What to look up, Where to look (your table), The row number with the answer, Exact Match or Approximate Match)

**Key Difference Summary**

| Feature | VLOOKUP (Vertical) | HLOOKUP (Horizontal) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Search Direction** | Down a **column** (Vertically) | Across a **row** (Horizontally) |
| **Lookup Value Location** | Must be in the **first column** of the table. | Must be in the **first row** of the table. |
| **Returns a value from** | A specified **column** in the same row. | A specified **row** in the same column. |

The following video provides an in-depth tutorial on how to use both vertical and horizontal lookups in Excel: VLOOKUP & HLOOKUP in Excel Tutorial