Step-by-Step: Strings in spreadsheets

This reading outlines the steps the instructor performs in the next video, Strings in spreadsheets. In this video, the instructor demonstrates the LEN, LEFT, RIGHT, and FIND functions and discusses how you can use them to better understand your data.

Keep this step-by-step guide open as you watch the video. It can serve as a helpful reference tool if you need additional context or clarification while following the video steps. This is not a graded activity, but you can complete these steps to practice the skills demonstrated in the video.

What you'll need

If you'd like to access the spreadsheet the instructor uses in this video, click the link to the dataset to create a copy. If you don't have a Google account, you may download the data directly from the attachments below. Note that this is a larger database so it may take a moment or two to load.

Link to the Citi Bike dataset: Citi Bike Trip Data.

OR

Citi Bike Trip Data
XLSX File

Note: If the directions in the video do not work for the version of Excel you have, visit the free online training center Microsoft Excel for Windows Training, and search for these functions to learn how to use them in Excel.

Example 1: The `LEN` function

The `LEN` function calculates a string's length. Use this formula to check the length of the datetime strings in column C.

1. Open the Citi Bike Trip Data spreadsheet.
2. In cell **B2**, enter the equals sign [`=`] to begin the function.
3. Enter `LEN`, followed by an open parenthesis [`(`].
4. Select cell **C2**. Then add a close parenthesis [`)`].
5. Press **Enter**. The result, 19, indicates the string in cell **C2** is 19 characters.