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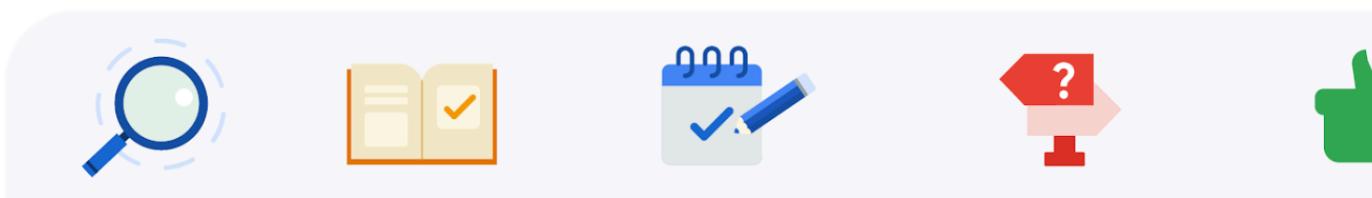# Transform data with SQL

Data analysts usually need to convert data from one format to another to complete an analysis. But what using SQL rather than a spreadsheet? Just like spreadsheets, SQL uses standard rules to convert one type another. If you are wondering why data transformation is an important skill to have as a data analyst, thir being a driver who is able to change a flat tire. Being able to convert data to the right format speeds you a your analysis. You don't have to wait for someone else to convert the data for you.

In this reading, you will go over the conversions that can be done using the `CAST` function. There are also specialized functions like `COERCION` to work with big numbers, and `UNIX_DATE` to work with dates. `UNI` returns the number of days that have passed since January 1, 1970 and is used to compare and work with across multiple time zones. You will likely use `CAST` most often.

Common conversions

The following table summarizes some of the more common conversions made with the `CAST` function. R Conversion Rules in Standard SQL ☐ for a full list of functions and associated rules.

Starting with	`CAST` function can convert to:
Numeric (number)	- Integer - Numeric (number) - Big number - Floating integer - String
String	- Boolean - Integer - Numeric (number) - Big number - Floating integer - String - Bytes