

ENGINE WORKS BLOG

Under the hood of Alteryx: tips, tricks and how-tos.

Community > Blogs > Engine Works Blog > REST API In 5 Minutes-No Coding

ARTICLE OPTIONS

REST API In 5 Minutes-No Coding



TashaA

Alteryx Alumni (Retired)

...11-23-2015 08:00 AM

Connecting to a REST API from within Alteryx is a great skill to have. However, API documentation can be difficult to navigate, and figuring out where to place the required headers, query strings, and payloads can become confusing. To show how simple it can be, we will attempt to retrieve some stock data from [Quandl](#), an online resource for free and premium datasets, in 5 minutes or less. We will be using the [Quick Start](#) guide for the API, set your timer...

1. Environment Setup

Open a new workflow, add a [Text Input](#) tool with a column titled 'url' and connect a [Download Tool](#) to its output.



2. Request URL

The example in the quick start guide shows us what a URL should look like for a request for Facebook stock data, so we will add that as the value of the 'url' field in the Text Input tool.

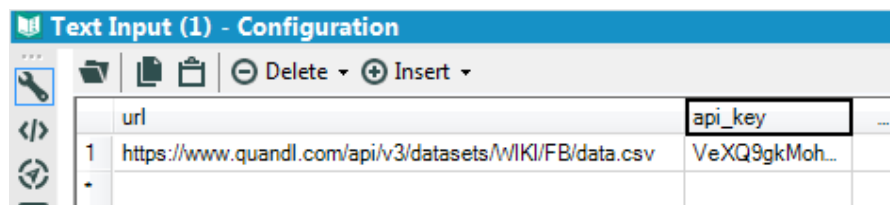
[Search the Community](#)[Blog](#)[SIGN IN](#)[English \(US\)](#)

```
https://www.quandl.com/api/v3/datasets/WIKI/FB/data.csv
```

This will work for now, but in the future we may consider splitting the distinct pieces of the request url into unique fields, and compiling the string using the Formula tool, so that the same workflow may be used to download many different datasets. You may also notice the .csv at the end of the request string, this indicates that we want the request for data to be returned in a .csv format, but we could also specify .json or .xml based on the Quandl documentation.

3. Authentication

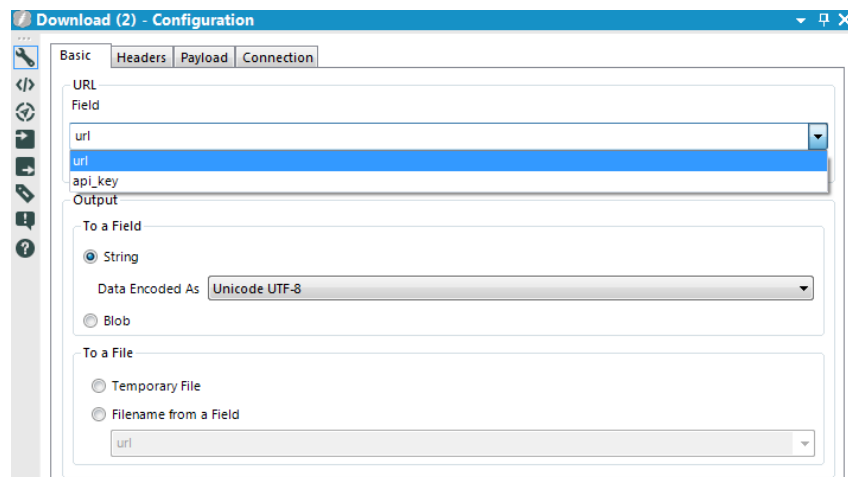
Based on the quick start guide, requests should be authenticated with an API key. Go ahead and [sign up for a key](#). Add another field to the Text Input tool, name the field api_key and add your key as the value for that field. The Text Input tool configuration should look something like this:



4. Configuring the Download Tool

Basic Tab

Select your url field from the dropdown for URL, all other Basic configurations can remain the same.



Headers

Default Settings

Search the Community

Blog



SIGN IN



English (US)

Payload

The HTTP method will be the default selection, 'GET (or FTP)'. The radio button for 'Compose Query String' should be selected. A query string is what comes after the question mark in the URL path. From the list of fields available, select the field containing your API key.

Download (2) - Configuration

Basic Headers **Payload** Connection

HTTP Action: GET (or FTP)

☒ Compose Query String/Body

From the following constant values

Name	Value
------	-------

And values from these fields

- ☐ url
- ☒ api_key
- ☐ Dynamic or Unknown Fields

Content-Type: application/x-www-form-urlencoded

☒ Take Query String/Body from Field

url

☐ Use Following for Query String/Body

Connection

Default Settings

5. Workflow Execution

Add a browse tool to the end, or add an Output Data tool if you would like to save the dataset. Run the workflow and the download tool will add two fields to your workflow, Download Headers and Download Data. The Download Data field will have the Facebook stock data in csv format. Realizing that this may not be the easiest to read, you can add a [Text to Columns](#) tool after this to parse the data into a more readable format.