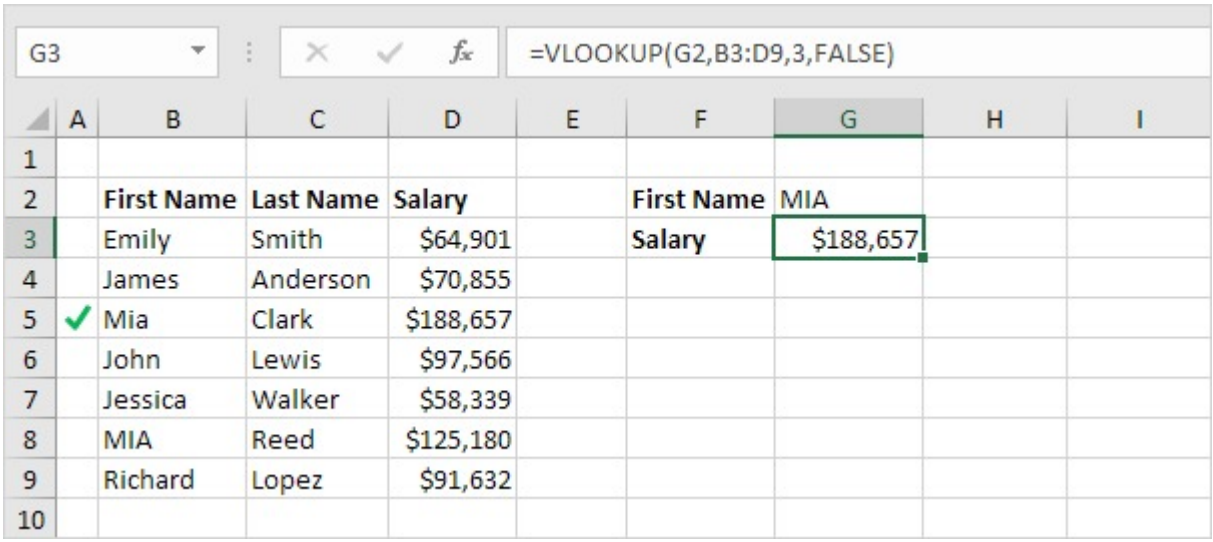
Case-sensitive Lookup in Excel

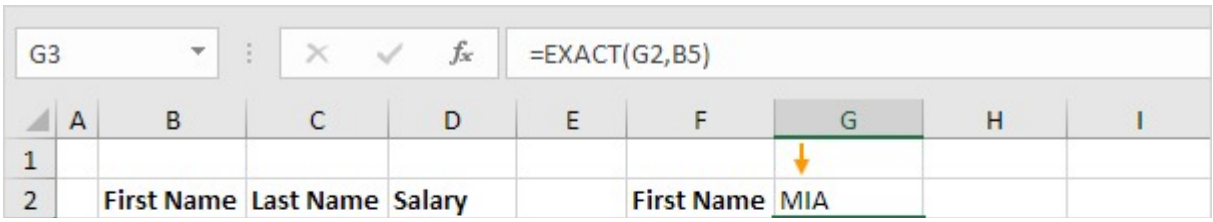
By default, the VLOOKUP function performs a case-insensitive lookup. However, you can use INDEX, MATCH and EXACT in Excel to perform a case-sensitive lookup.

1. For example, the simple VLOOKUP function below returns the salary of Mia Clark. However, we want to look up the salary of MIA Reed (see cell G2).



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1									
2		First Name	Last Name	Salary		First Name	MIA		
3		Emily	Smith	$64,901		Salary	$188,657		
4		James	Anderson	$70,855					
5	✓	Mia	Clark	$188,657					
6		John	Lewis	$97,566					
7		Jessica	Walker	$58,339					
8		MIA	Reed	$125,180					
9		Richard	Lopez	$91,632					
10									

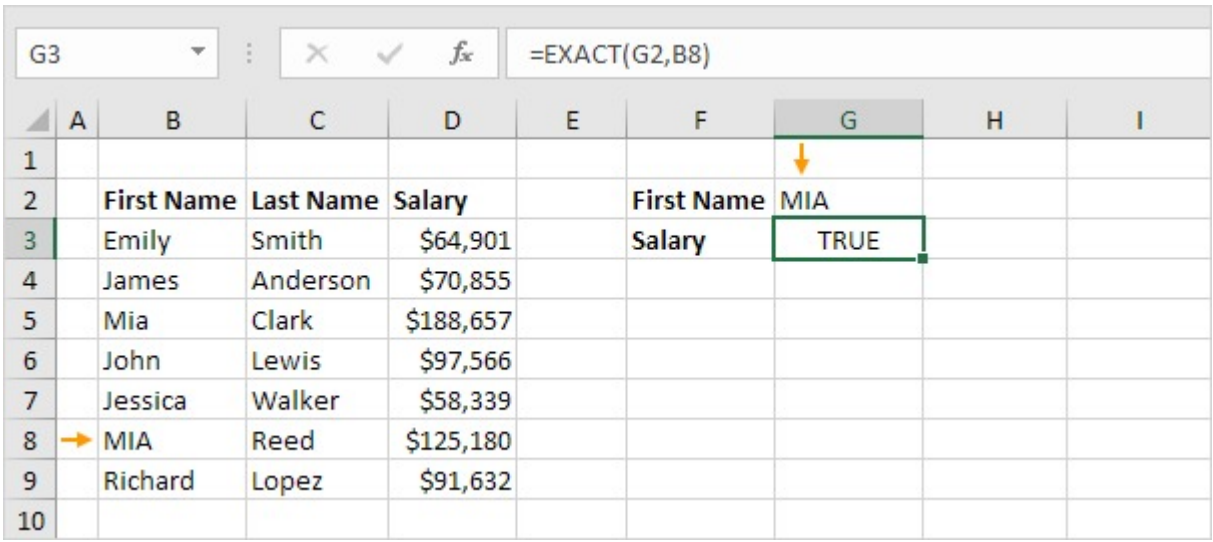
2. The EXACT function in Excel returns TRUE if two strings are exactly the same. The EXACT function below returns FALSE.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1							↓		
2		First Name	Last Name	Salary		First Name	MIA		

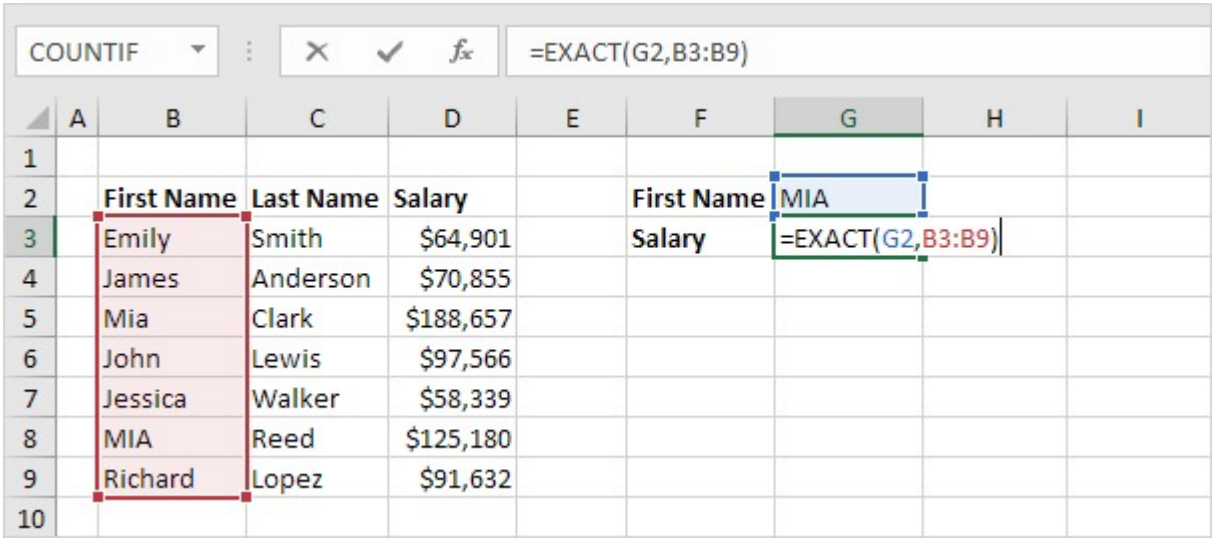
3		Emily	Smith	$64,901		**Salary**	FALSE		
4		James	Anderson	$70,855					
5	→	Mia	Clark	$188,657					
6		John	Lewis	$97,566					
7		Jessica	Walker	$58,339					
8		MIA	Reed	$125,180					
9		Richard	Lopez	$91,632					
10									

3. The EXACT function below returns TRUE.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1							↓		
2		**First Name**	**Last Name**	**Salary**		**First Name**	MIA		
3		Emily	Smith	$64,901		**Salary**	TRUE		
4		James	Anderson	$70,855					
5		Mia	Clark	$188,657					
6		John	Lewis	$97,566					
7		Jessica	Walker	$58,339					
8	→	MIA	Reed	$125,180					
9		Richard	Lopez	$91,632					
10									

4. Replace B8 with B3:B9.

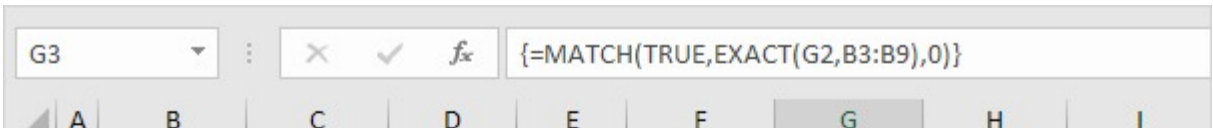


	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1									
2		**First Name**	**Last Name**	**Salary**		**First Name**	MIA		
3		Emily	Smith	$64,901		**Salary**	=EXACT(G2,B3:B9)		
4		James	Anderson	$70,855					
5		Mia	Clark	$188,657					
6		John	Lewis	$97,566					
7		Jessica	Walker	$58,339					
8		MIA	Reed	$125,180					
9		Richard	Lopez	$91,632					
10									

Explanation: the range (array constant) created by the EXACT function is stored in Excel's memory, not in a range. The array constant looks as follows:

{FALSE;FALSE;FALSE;FALSE;FALSE;TRUE;FALSE}

5. All we need is a function that finds the position of TRUE in this array constant. MATCH function to the rescue! Finish by pressing CTRL + SHIFT + ENTER.



	First Name	Last Name	Salary		First Name	MIA
	Emily	Smith	$64,901		Salary	6
	James	Anderson	$70,855			
	Mia	Clark	$188,657			
	John	Lewis	$97,566			
	Jessica	Walker	$58,339			
	MIA	Reed	$125,180			
	Richard	Lopez	$91,632			

Explanation: TRUE (first argument) found at position 6 in the array constant (second argument). In this example, we use the MATCH function to return an exact match so we set the third argument to 0. The formula bar indicates that this is an array formula by enclosing it in curly braces {}. Do not type these yourself.

6. Use the INDEX function (two arguments) to return a specific value in a one-dimensional range. In this example, the salary at position 6 (second argument) in the range D3:D9 (first argument).

COUNTIF =INDEX(D3:D9,MATCH(TRUE,EXACT(G2,B3:B9),0))

	First Name	Last Name	Salary		First Name	MIA
	Emily	Smith	$64,901		Salary	=INDEX(D3:
	James	Anderson	$70,855			
	Mia	Clark	$188,657			
	John	Lewis	$97,566			
	Jessica	Walker	$58,339			
	MIA	Reed	$125,180			
	Richard	Lopez	$91,632			

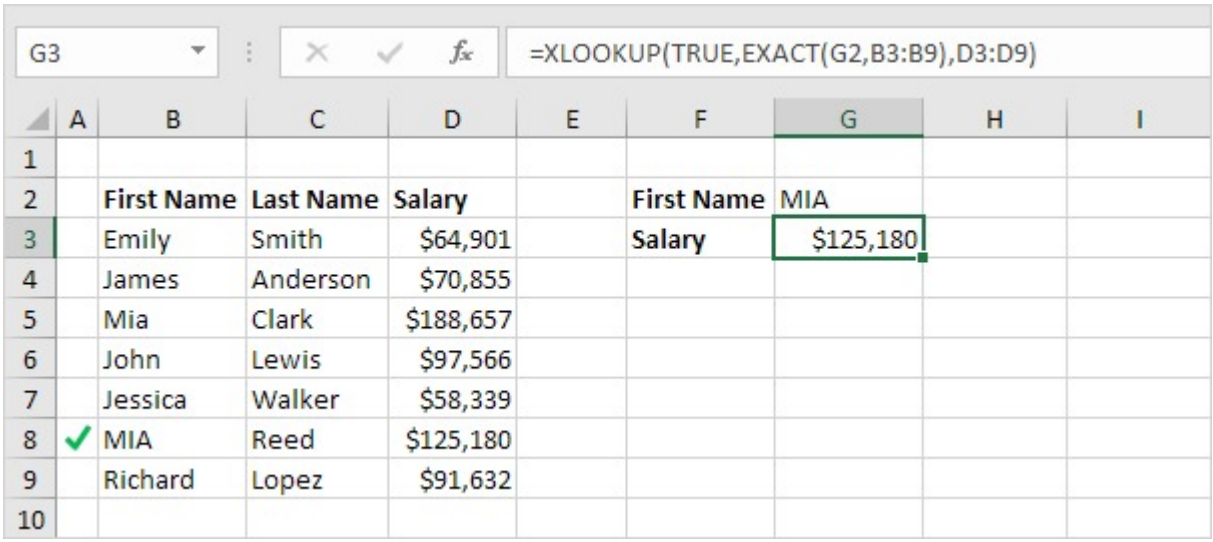
7. Finish by pressing CTRL + SHIFT + ENTER.

G3 {=INDEX(D3:D9,MATCH(TRUE,EXACT(G2,B3:B9),0))}

	First Name	Last Name	Salary		First Name	MIA
	Emily	Smith	$64,901		Salary	$125,180
	James	Anderson	$70,855			
	Mia	Clark	$188,657			
	John	Lewis	$97,566			
	Jessica	Walker	$58,339			
✓	MIA	Reed	$125,180			
	Richard	Lopez	$91,632			

Note: the formula correctly looks up the salary of MIA Reed, not Mia Clark.

8. If you have Excel 365 or Excel 2021, simply use the XLOOKUP function to perform a case-sensitive lookup.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1									
2		First Name	Last Name	Salary		First Name	MIA		
3		Emily	Smith	$64,901		Salary	$125,180		
4		James	Anderson	$70,855					
5		Mia	Clark	$188,657					
6		John	Lewis	$97,566					
7		Jessica	Walker	$58,339					
8	✓	MIA	Reed	$125,180					
9		Richard	Lopez	$91,632					
10									

Note: visit our page about the XLOOKUP function to learn more about this great new Excel function.

Chapter

- Lookup & Reference Functions

Learn more, it's easy

- Vlookup

- Tax Rates
- Index and Match
- Two-way Lookup
- Offset
- Case-sensitive Lookup
- Left Lookup
- Locate Maximum Value
- Indirect
- Two-column Lookup
- Closest Match
- Compare Two Columns
- Xlookup
- Xmatch

⭳ Download Excel File

- case-sensitive-lookup.xlsx

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- Financial Functions

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