

Advanced Excel Interview Questions

1. What is INDEX–MATCH and why is it better than VLOOKUP?

Answer:

INDEX–MATCH searches in any direction (left/right), works faster on large datasets, and doesn't break when column positions change.

2. What is XLOOKUP and how is it different from VLOOKUP?

Answer:

XLOOKUP can search both vertically + horizontally, supports exact match by default, and can return multiple columns at once.

3. Explain the difference between a Pivot Table and Power Pivot.

Answer:

- **Pivot Table:** Summarizes data within Excel sheets.
 - **Power Pivot:** Handles millions of rows, supports advanced modeling, relationships, and DAX formulas.
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4. What is a dynamic array formula?

Answer:

Formulas like **FILTER, SORT, UNIQUE, SEQUENCE** that spill results automatically into adjacent cells.

5. What is the FILTER function used for?

Answer:

Allows extracting rows that match conditions.

Example: =FILTER(A2:B20, B2:B20 > 500)

6. What is a macro?

Answer:

A macro is an automated set of actions written using **VBA (Visual Basic for Applications)**.

7. What is the difference between COUNTIF and COUNTIFS?

Answer:

- **COUNTIF:** One condition
 - **COUNTIFS:** Multiple conditions
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8. What is Power Query used for?

Answer:

Used to import, clean, transform, and combine data automatically using the “M” language.

9. What does the SUMPRODUCT function do?

Answer:

Performs multiplication of arrays and then sums the result.
Often used for conditional calculations.

10. What is a nested IF?

Answer:

Multiple IF statements inside one formula for multi-condition checks.

Better alternative: **IFS()**

11. What is the purpose of the IFS function?

Answer:

Replaces multiple nested IF statements with a cleaner structure.

12. What does the TRANSPOSE function do?

Answer:

Converts rows to columns and vice-versa.

13. What is the difference between Absolute, Relative, and Mixed cell references?

Answer:

- **Relative:** A1

- **Absolute:** \$A\$1
- **Mixed:** \$A1 or A\$1

Used for controlling how formulas behave during copy/paste.

14. How do you remove extra spaces except single spaces within text?

Answer:

Use TRIM() function.

15. What are slicers in Pivot Tables?

Answer:

Visual filters that allow easy filtering of Pivot Table data.

16. What is a Pivot Chart?

Answer:

A dynamic chart linked to a Pivot Table.

17. How do you create relationships between tables?

Answer:

Use **Data → Relationships** or Power Pivot's data model.

18. What is a scenario manager?

Answer:

A tool to create and compare “what-if” scenarios in Excel.

19. How do you use Goal Seek?

Answer:

Data → What-If Analysis → Goal Seek

Used to find required input to achieve a specific output.

20. What is the difference between SUBSTITUTE and REPLACE?

Answer:

- **SUBSTITUTE:** Replaces text based on matching text.
 - **REPLACE:** Replaces text based on position.
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21. What is the INDIRECT function used for?

Answer:

Converts text into a usable cell reference.

22. Explain the concept of array formulas.

Answer:

Formulas that work with multiple values at once (legacy Ctrl+Shift+Enter formulas or new dynamic arrays).

23. What are structured references?

Answer:

Table-reference system used in Excel tables (e.g., Table1[Sales]).

24. What does the OFFSET function do?

Answer:

Returns a range that is offset from a starting point; used for dynamic ranges.

25. How do you perform multi-criteria lookup without XLOOKUP?

Answer:

Using INDEX + MATCH with concatenation.