

Task: Convert comma separated values into long format in MS Excel.

Approach Used:

We can achieve this using Excel Power Query. Based on my experience, this is the easiest/faster method to convert comma separated values into long format in MS Excel.

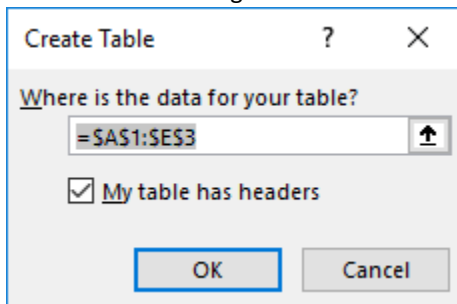
Example:

Let's say we have following table that has records for couple of movies. The actors are comma separated and we want to convert this into long format.

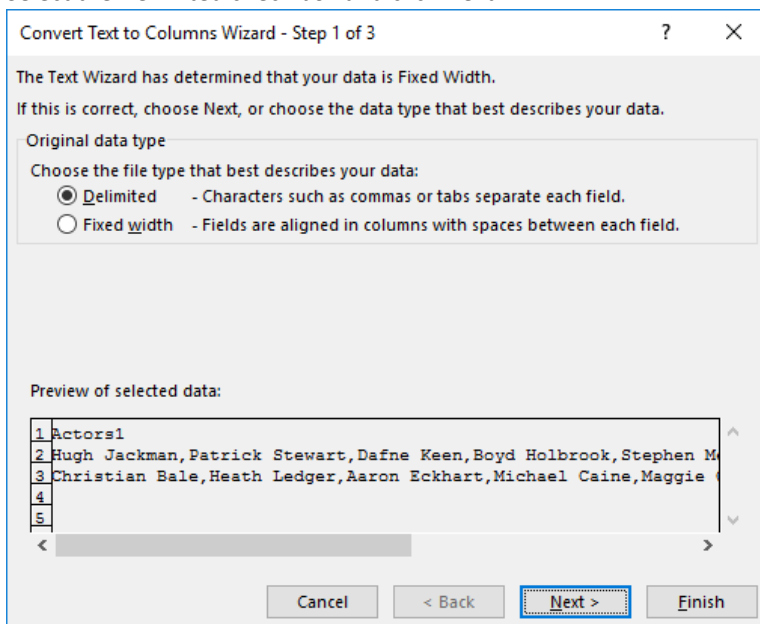
Movie	Year Release	Director	Actors1
Logan	2017	James Mangold	Hugh Jackman,Patrick Stewart,Dafne Keen,Boyd Holbrook,Stephen Merchant,Elizabeth Rodriguez,Richard E. Grant
The Dark Knight	2008	Christopher Nolan	Christian Bale,Heath Ledger,Aaron Eckhart,Michael Caine,Maggie Gyllenhaal,Gary Oldman,Morgan Freeman

Steps:

1. Convert the data range into Table in Excel (click Ctrl + T). Select data range and click ok on below pop-up window.



2. Select the "Actors1" column. Go to Data menu → "Text To Column" option. Following window will show up. Select the Delimited check box and click Next.



3. Select "Comma" check box and click Next. (If the delimiter is other than comma, you can specify that here)

Convert Text to Columns Wizard - Step 2 of 3

This screen lets you set the delimiters your data contains. You can see how your text is affected in the preview below.

Delimiters

☐ Tab

☐ Semicolon

☒ Comma

☐ Space

☐ Other:

☐ Treat consecutive delimiters as one

Text qualifier:

Data preview

Actors1				
Hugh Jackman	Patrick Stewart	Dafne Keen	Boyd Holbrook	Stephen Merchant
Christian Bale	Heath Ledger	Aaron Eckhart	Michael Caine	Maggie Gyllenhaal

Cancel < Back Next > Finish

4. Click Finish.

Convert Text to Columns Wizard - Step 3 of 3

This screen lets you select each column and set the Data Format.

Column data format

☒ General

☐ Text

☐ Date: MDY

☐ Do not import column (skip)

'General' converts numeric values to numbers, date values to dates, and all remaining values to text.

Advanced...

Destination: \$D\$1

Data preview

General	General	General	General	General
Actors1				
Hugh Jackman	Patrick Stewart	Dafne Keen	Boyd Holbrook	Stephen Merchant
Christian Bale	Heath Ledger	Aaron Eckhart	Michael Caine	Maggie Gyllenhaal

Cancel < Back Next > Finish

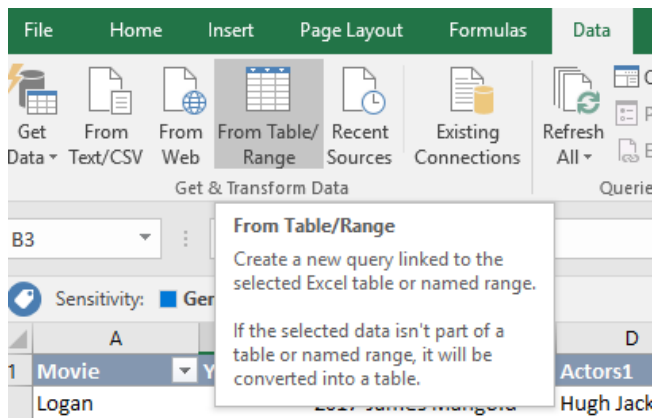
5. Now, the values will get split and few more columns will get created.

Note that, the columns names are incremental i.e. Actors2, Actors3, Actors4.

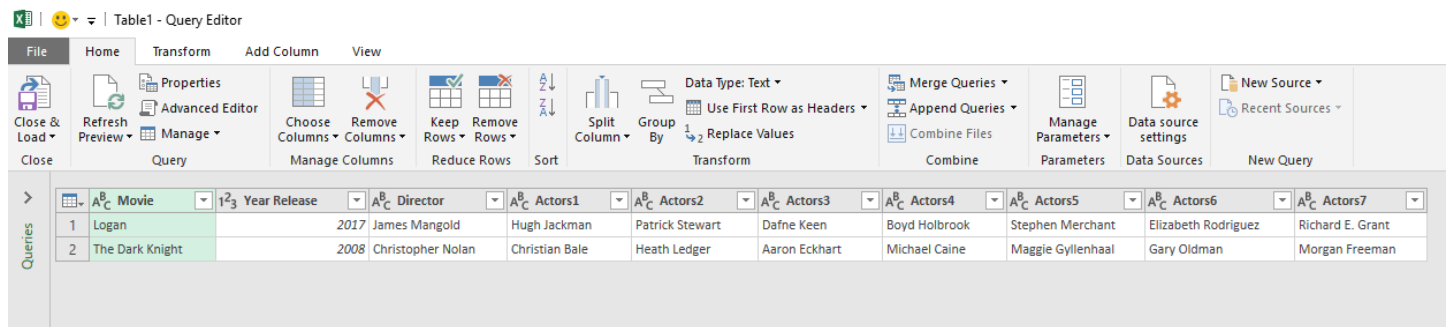
Excel will automatically fill the series if the original column (in our case, it is Actor1) is suffixed with numeric value.

Movie	Year Release	Director	Actors1	Actors2	Actors3	Actors4	Actors5	Actors6	Actors7
Logan	2017	James Mangold	Hugh Jackman	Patrick Stewart	Dafne Keen	Boyd Holbrook	Stephen Merchant	Elizabeth Rodriguez	Richard E. Grant
The Dark Knight	2008	Christopher Nolan	Christian Bale	Heath Ledger	Aaron Eckhart	Michael Caine	Maggie Gyllenhaal	Gary Oldman	Morgan Freeman

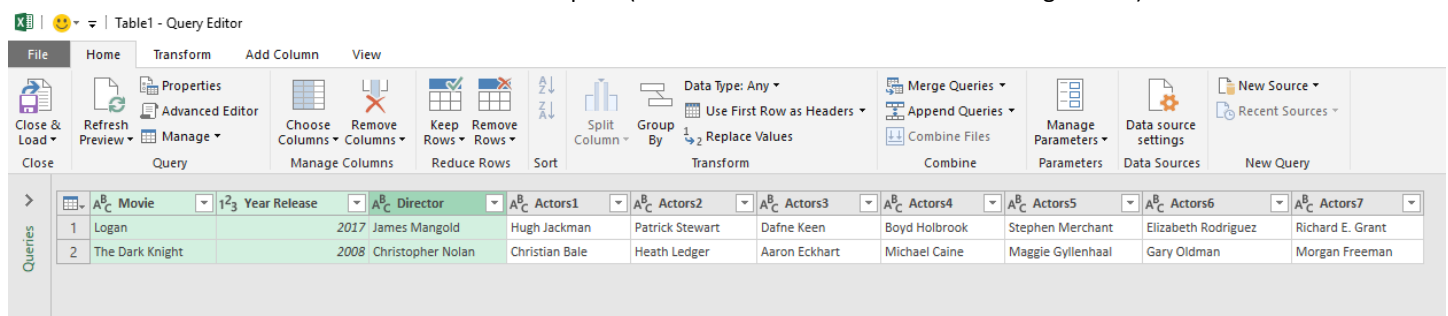
6. Go to Data menu → From Table/Range option, to open the power query.



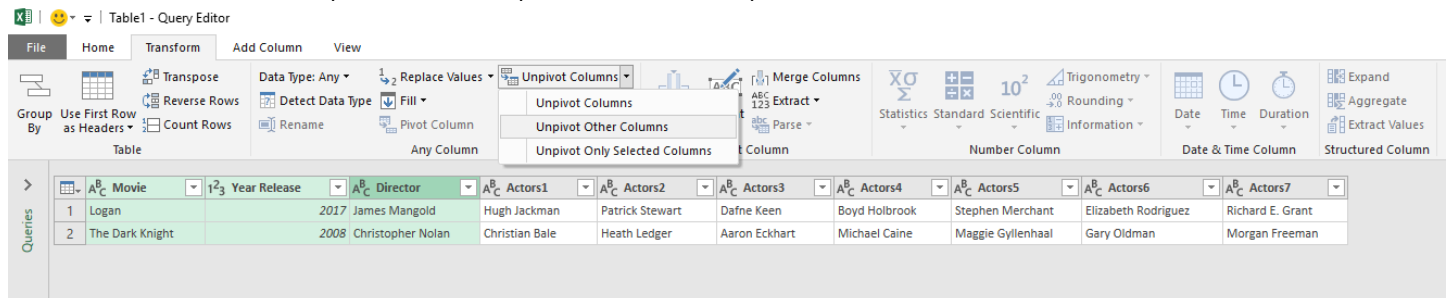
7. It will open the below power query editor window.



8. Select all the column which we do not want to transpose (i.e. not want to convert them into long format)



9. Go to Transform menu → Unpivot Column drop down → select “Unpivot other columns”



10. Now, the Actors columns will get transposed as below.

Table1 - Query Editor

	Movie	Year Release	Director	Attribute	Value
1	Logan	2017	James Mangold	Actors1	Hugh Jackman
2	Logan	2017	James Mangold	Actors2	Patrick Stewart
3	Logan	2017	James Mangold	Actors3	Dafne Keen
4	Logan	2017	James Mangold	Actors4	Boyd Holbrook
5	Logan	2017	James Mangold	Actors5	Stephen Merchant
6	Logan	2017	James Mangold	Actors6	Elizabeth Rodriguez
7	Logan	2017	James Mangold	Actors7	Richard E. Grant
8	The Dark Knight	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors1	Christian Bale
9	The Dark Knight	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors2	Heath Ledger
10	The Dark Knight	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors3	Aaron Eckhart
11	The Dark Knight	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors4	Michael Caine
12	The Dark Knight	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors5	Maggie Gyllenhaal
13	The Dark Knight	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors6	Gary Oldman
14	The Dark Knight	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors7	Morgan Freeman

11. Go to Home menu → Close & Load to load it to the excel workbook.

Table1 - Query Editor

Close & Load

Save your changes to this query, close the Query Editor window, and load results to the default destination.

	Year Release	Director	Attribute	Value
1	2017	James Mangold	Actors1	Hugh Jackman
2	2017	James Mangold	Actors2	Patrick Stewart
3	2017	James Mangold	Actors3	Dafne Keen
4	2017	James Mangold	Actors4	Boyd Holbrook
5	2017	James Mangold	Actors5	Stephen Merchant
6	2017	James Mangold	Actors6	Elizabeth Rodriguez
7	2017	James Mangold	Actors7	Richard E. Grant
8	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors1	Christian Bale

12. The comma separated actor values are now split and converted to long format.

Excel Workbook - Sheet2

Movie	Year Release	Director	Attribute	Value
1	2017	James Mangold	Actors1	Hugh Jackman
2	2017	James Mangold	Actors2	Patrick Stewart
3	2017	James Mangold	Actors3	Dafne Keen
4	2017	James Mangold	Actors4	Boyd Holbrook
5	2017	James Mangold	Actors5	Stephen Merchant
6	2017	James Mangold	Actors6	Elizabeth Rodriguez
7	2017	James Mangold	Actors7	Richard E. Grant
8	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors1	Christian Bale
9	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors2	Heath Ledger
10	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors3	Aaron Eckhart
11	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors4	Michael Caine
12	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors5	Maggie Gyllenhaal
13	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors6	Gary Oldman
14	2008	Christopher Nolan	Actors7	Morgan Freeman

Queries & Connections: 1 query, 14 rows loaded.