

# 3 Ways To Split a Cell In Excel

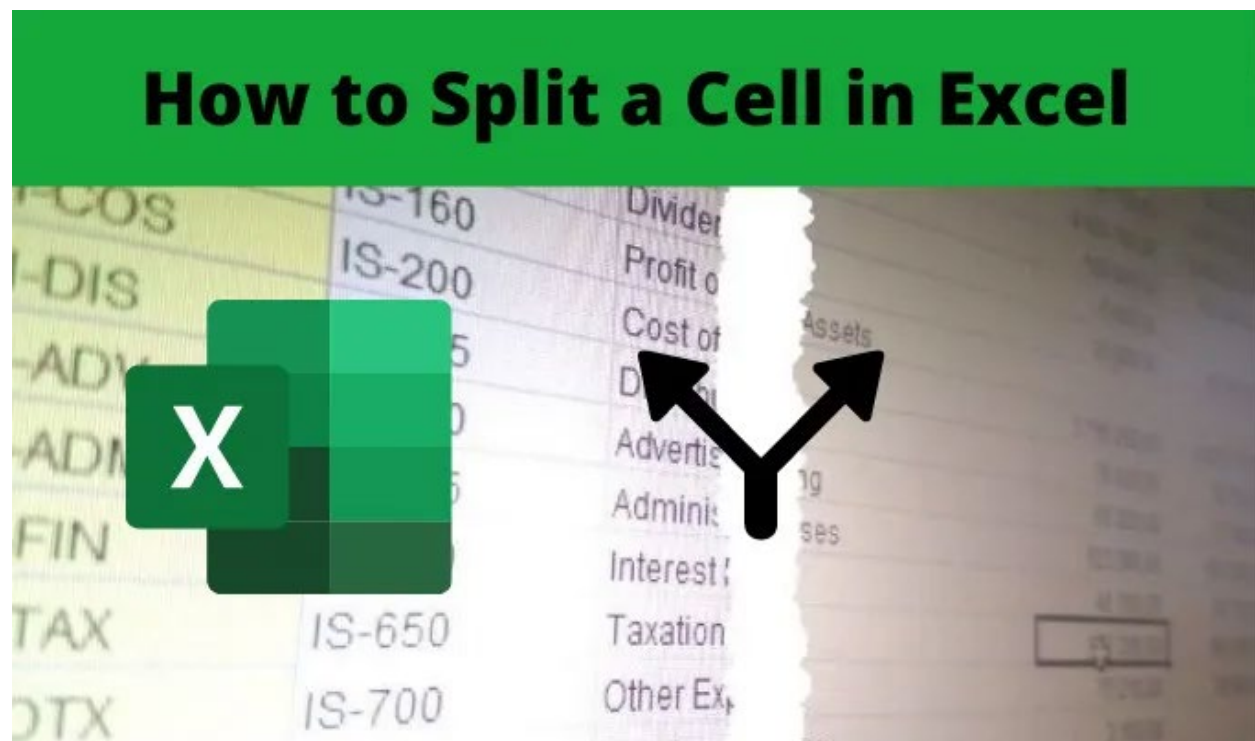


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If you're working with data in Excel that you've imported from other sources, sometimes you have to work with data that isn't in a format that you want. This is especially true with comma-delimited text that comes into single cells.

The only way to deal with that data is to split a cell in Excel. There are different ways to do this, depending on the format of the data.



In this article you'll learn how to split a cell, how to roll that out to an entire column, and when you should choose each option.

## Convert Text To Columns

One of the most common methods to split a cell in Excel is using the Text to Columns tool. This lets you split an entire column of cells using whatever rules you like.

The feature also includes an easy-to-use wizard, which is why most people prefer using it. It also handles any text format, whether the separating text is a space, a tab, or a comma.

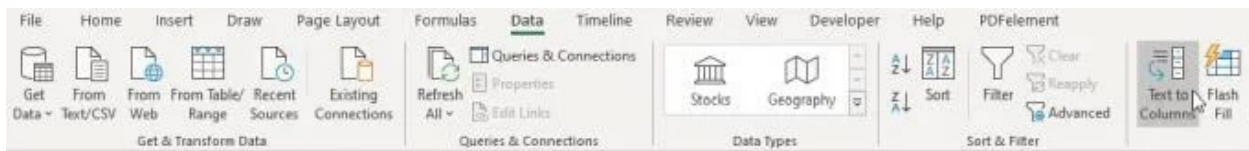
Let's look at an example of how to use the Text to Columns feature in Excel.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Purchase Orders							
2	OrderDate	Region	Name	Item	Units	UnitCost	Total	
3	1/6/2019	East	Jones Andrews	Pencil	95	1.99	189.05	
4	1/23/2019	Central	Kivell Jardine	Binder	50	19.99	999.5	
5	2/9/2019	Central	Jardine Jardine	Pencil	36	4.99	179.64	
6	2/26/2019		Gill Andrews	Pen	27	19.99	539.73	
7	4/1/2019	East	Jones Sorvino	Binder	60	4.99	299.4	
8	4/18/2019	Central	Andrews Gill	Pencil	75	1.99	149.25	
9	5/5/2019	Central	Jardine Sorvino	Pencil	90	4.99	449.1	
10	5/22/2019	West	Thompson Kivell	Pencil	32	1.99	63.68	
11	6/8/2019	East	Jones Morgan	Binder	60	8.99	539.4	
12	6/25/2019	Central	Morgan Jones	Pencil	90	4.99	449.1	
13	7/12/2019	East	Howard Kivell	Binder	29	1.99	57.71	
14	7/29/2019	East	Parent Gill	Binder	81	19.99	1,619.19	
15	8/15/2019	East	Jones Gill	Pencil	35	4.99	174.65	

In this example, we want to split the Name column into two cells, the first name and the last name of the salesperson.

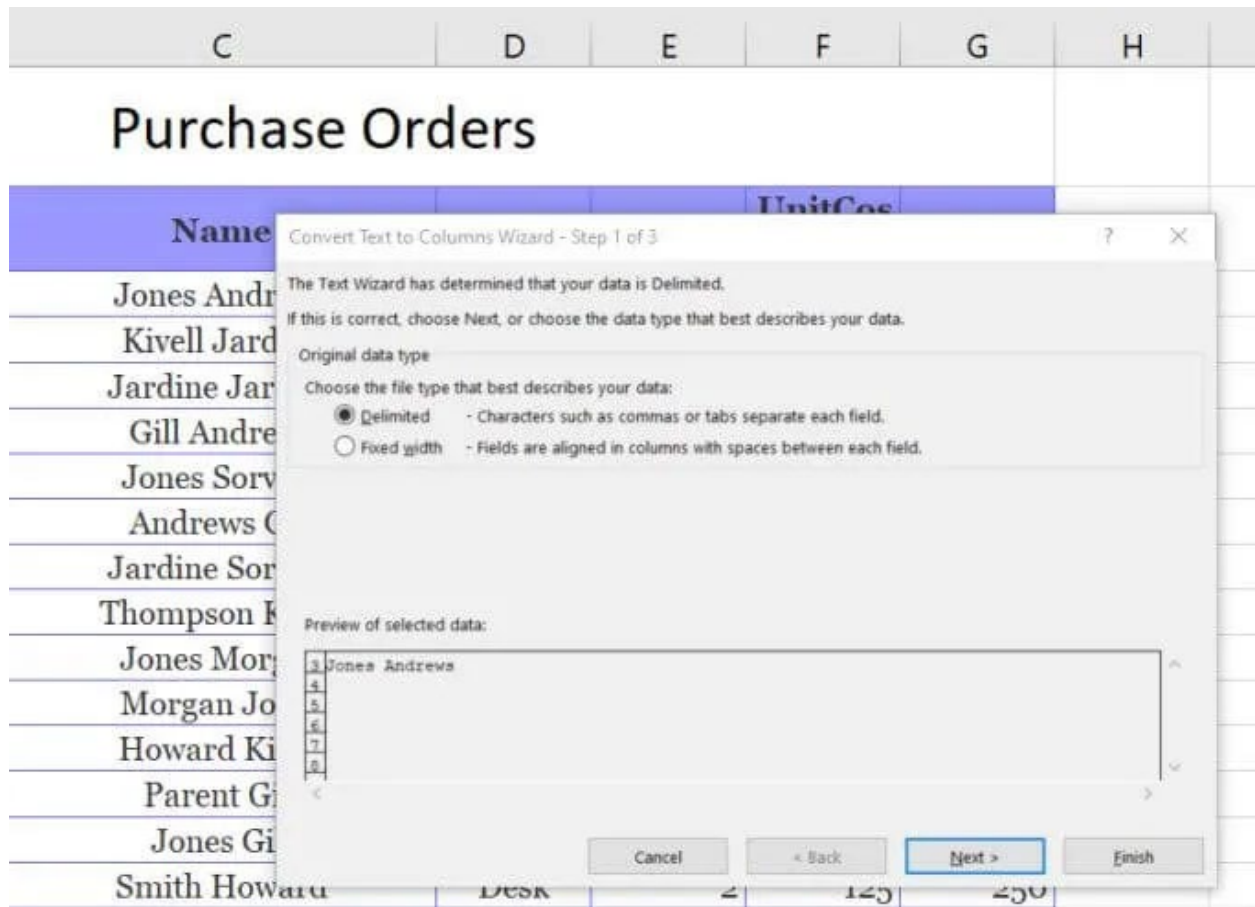
To do this:

1. Select the **Data** menu. Then select **Text to Columns** in the Data Tools group on the ribbon.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Purchase Orders							
2	OrderDate	Region	Name	Item	Units	UnitCost	Total	
3	1/6/2019	East	Jones Andrews	Pencil	95	1.99	189.05	
4	1/23/2019	Central	Kivell Jardine	Binder	50	19.99	999.5	
5	2/9/2019	Central	Jardine Jardine	Pencil	36	4.99	179.64	
6	2/26/2019		Gill Andrews	Pen	27	19.99	539.73	
7	4/1/2019	East	Jones Sorvino	Binder	60	4.99	299.4	
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9	5/5/2019	Central	Jardine Sorvino	Pencil	90	4.99	449.1	
10	5/22/2019	West	Thompson Kivell	Pencil	32	1.99	63.68	
11	6/8/2019	East	Jones Morgan	Binder	60	8.99	539.4	

2. This will open a three-step wizard. In the first window, make sure **Delimited** is selected and select **Next**.



3. On the next Wizard window, deselect **Tab** and make sure **Space** is selected. Select **Next** to continue.

C                      D                      E                      F                      G                      H                      I

# Purchase Orders

Name	UnitCos			
Jones Andr				
Kivell Jard				
Jardine Jar				
Gill Andre				
Jones Sorv				
Andrews C				
Jardine Sor				
Thompson K				
Jones Mory				
Morgan Jo				
Howard Ki				
Parent G				
Jones Gi				
Smith Howard	DESK	2	125	250
Jones Andrews	Pen Set	16	15.99	255.84

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**

Jones    Andrews

4. On the next window, select the **Destination** field. Then, in the spreadsheet, select the cell where you want the first name to go. This will update the cell in the Destination field to where you've selected.

Purchase Orders							
OrderDate	Region	Name	Item	Units	UnitCost	Total	
1/6/2019	East	Jones Andrews	Pencil	95	1.99	189.05	
1/23/2019	Central	Kivell Jardine	Binder	50	10.00	500.00	
2/9/2019	Central						
2/26/2019							
4/1/2019	East						
4/18/2019	Central						
5/5/2019	Central						
5/22/2019	West						
6/8/2019	East						
6/25/2019	Central						
7/12/2019	East						
7/29/2019	East						
8/15/2019	East						
9/1/2019	Central						
9/18/2019	East						
10/5/2019	Central						
10/22/2019	East						
11/8/2019	East	Parent Jones	Pen	15	19.99	299.85	

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:
- Do not import column (skip)

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

Advanced...

Destination: =H3:H3

Data preview

Jones Andrews  
Kivell Jardine

Cancel    < Back    Next >    Finish

5. Now, select **Finish** to complete the Wizard.

You'll see that the single cell that contained both the first name and last name has been split into two cells that contain each one individually.

Purchase Orders							
Name	Item	Units	UnitCost	Total			
Jones Andrews	Pencil	95	1.99	189.05	Jones	Andrews	
Kivell Jardine	Binder	50	19.99	999.5			
Jardine Jardine	Pencil	36	4.99	179.64			
Gill Andrews	Pen	27	19.99	539.73			
Jones Sorvino	Binder	60	4.99	299.4			
Andrews Gill	Pencil	75	1.99	149.25			
Jardine Sorvino	Pencil	90	4.99	449.1			
Thompson Kivell	Pencil	32	1.99	63.68			
Jones Morgan	Binder	60	8.99	539.4			
Morgan Jones	Pencil	90	4.99	449.1			

**Note:** The process above works because the data to split in the cell had a space separating the text. This text-to-column feature can also handle splitting a cell in Excel if the text is separated by a tab, semicolon, comma, or any other character you specify.

## Use Excel Text Functions

Another way to split a cell in Excel is by using different text functions. Text functions let you extract pieces of a cell that you can output into another cell.

Text functions in Excel include:

- Left(): Extract a number of characters from the left side of the text
- Right(): Extract a number of characters from the right side of the text
- Mid(): Extract a number of characters from the middle of a string
- Find(): Find a substring inside of another string
- Len(): Return the total number of characters in a string of text

To split cells, you may not need to use all of these functions. However, there are multiple ways you can use these to accomplish the same thing.

For example, you can use the Left and Find function to extract the first name. The Find function helps because it can tell you where the delimiting character is. In this case, it's a space.

So the function would look like this:

**=LEFT(C3,FIND(" ",C3))**

When you press enter after typing this function, you'll see that the first name is extracted from the string in cell C3.

H3    =LEFT(C3,FIND(" ",C3))

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	<b>Purchase Orders</b>							
2	OrderDate	Region	Name	Item	Units	UnitCost	Total	
3	1/6/2019	East	Jones Andrews	Pencil	95	1.99	189.05	Jones
4	1/23/2019	Central	Kivell Jardine	Binder	50	19.99	999.5	
5	2/9/2019	Central	Jardine Jardine	Pencil	36	4.99	179.64	
6	2/26/2019		Gill Andrews	Pen	27	19.99	539.73	
7	4/1/2019	East	Jones Sorvino	Binder	60	4.99	299.4	
8	4/18/2019	Central	Andrews Gill	Pencil	75	1.99	149.25	
9	5/5/2019	Central	Jardine Sorvino	Pencil	90	4.99	449.1	
10	5/22/2019	West	Thompson Kivell	Pencil	32	1.99	63.68	
11	6/8/2019	East	Jones Morgan	Binder	60	8.99	539.4	
12	6/25/2019	Central	Morgan Jones	Pencil	90	4.99	449.1	
13	7/12/2019	East	Howard Kivell	Binder	29	1.99	57.71	
14	7/29/2019	East	Parent Gill	Binder	81	19.99	1,619.19	

This works, because the Left function needs the number of characters to extract. Since the space character is positioned at the end of the first name, you can use the FIND function to find the space, which returns the number of characters you need to get the first name.

You can extract the last name either using either the Right function or the Mid function.

To use the Right function:

**=RIGHT(C3,LEN(C3)-FIND(" ",C3))**

This will extract the last name by finding the position of the space, then subtracting that from the length of the total string. This gives the Right function the number of characters it needs to extract the last name.

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	<b>Purchase Orders</b>							
	Region	Name	Item	Units	UnitCost	Total		
	East	Jones Andrews	Pencil	95	1.99	189.05	Jones	Andrews
	Central	Kivell Jardine	Binder	50	19.99	999.5		
	Central	Jardine Jardine	Pencil	36	4.99	179.64		
		Gill Andrews	Pen	27	19.99	539.73		
	East	Jones Sorvino	Binder	60	4.99	299.4		
	Central	Andrews Gill	Pencil	75	1.99	149.25		
	Central	Jardine Sorvino	Pencil	90	4.99	449.1		
	West	Thompson Kivell	Pencil	32	1.99	63.68		
	East	Jones Morgan	Binder	60	8.99	539.4		

Technically, you could do the same thing as the Right function using the Mid function, like this:

```
=MID(C3,FIND(" ",C3),LEN(C3)-FIND(" ",C3))
```

In this case the Find function gives the Mid function the starting point, and the Len combined with Find provides the number of characters to extract. This will also return the last name.

Using Excel text functions to split a cell in Excel works as well as the Text-To-Column solution, but it also lets you fill the entire column beneath those results using the same functions.

## Split Cell in Excel Using Flash Fill

The last option to split a cell in Excel is using the Flash Fill feature. This requires that the cells you're splitting the original one into are right beside it.

If this is the case, all you have to do is type the part of the original cell that you want to split out. Then drag the lower right corner of the cell down to fill the cell beneath it. When you do this, you'll see a small cell fill icon appear with a small plus sign next to it.

Select this icon and you'll see a menu pop-up. Select **Flash Fill** in this menu.

OrderDate	Region	Name		Item
1/6/2019	East	Jones Andrews	Jones	Pencil
1/23/2019	Central	Kivell Jardine	Jones	Binder
2/9/2019	Central	Jardine Jardine		Pencil
2/26/2019		Gill Andrews		Pen
4/1/2019	East	Jones Sorvino		Binder
4/18/2019	Central	Andrews Gill		Pencil
5/5/2019	Central	Jardine Sorvino		Pencil
5/22/2019	West	Thompson Kivell		Pencil
6/8/2019	East	Jones Morgan		Binder
6/25/2019	Central	Morgan Jones		Pencil
7/12/2019	East	Howard Kivell		Binder
7/29/2019	East	Parent Gill		Binder

When you do this, you'll see that the Flash Fill feature automatically detects why you typed what you typed, and will repeat the process in the next cell. It'll do this by detecting and filling in the first name in the original cell to the left.



A	B	C	D	E
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## Purchase Orders

OrderDate	Region	Name		Item
1/6/2019	East	Jones Andrews	Jones	Pencil
1/23/2019	Central	Kivell Jardine	Kivell	Binder
2/9/2019	Central	Jardine Jardine		Pencil
2/26/2019		Gill Andrews		Pen
4/1/2019	East	Jones Sorvino		Binder
4/18/2019	Central	Andrews Gill		Pencil
5/5/2019	Central	Jardine Sorvino		Pencil
5/22/2019	West	Thompson Kivell		Pencil
6/8/2019	East	Jones Morgan		Binder
6/25/2019	Central	Morgan Jones		Pencil
7/12/2019	East	Howard Kivell		Binder
7/29/2019	East	Parent Gill		Binder

You can actually do this same procedure when you fill the entire column. Select the same icon and select **Flash Fill**. It'll fill the entire column with the correct first name from the cells to the left.

	Purchase Orders				
2	OrderDate	Region	Name		Item
3	1/6/2019	East	Jones Andrews	Jones	Pencil
4	1/23/2019	Central	Kivell Jardine	Kivell	Binder
5	2/9/2019	Central	Jardine Jardine	Jardine	Pencil
6	2/26/2019		Gill Andrews	Gill	Pen
7	4/1/2019	East	Jones Sorvino	Jones	Binder
8	4/18/2019	Central	Andrews Gill	Andrews	Pencil
9	5/5/2019	Central	Jardine Sorvino	Jardine	Pencil
10	5/22/2019	West	Thompson Kivell	Thompson	Pencil
11	6/8/2019	East	Jones Morgan	Jones	Binder
12	6/25/2019	Central	Morgan Jones	Morgan	Pencil
13	7/12/2019	East	Howard Kivell	Howard	Binder

You can then copy this entire column and paste it into another column, then repeat this same process to extract the last names. Finally, copy and paste that entire column where you want it to go in the spreadsheet. Then delete the original column you used to perform the Flash Fill process.

## Splitting Cells in Excel

As you can see there are a few ways to accomplish the same thing. How you split a cell in Excel boils down to where you want the final result to go and what you plan to do with it. Any options works, so choose the one that makes the most sense for your situation and use it.