

# 5 Ways To Convert Text to Numbers In Excel

Something every user should know

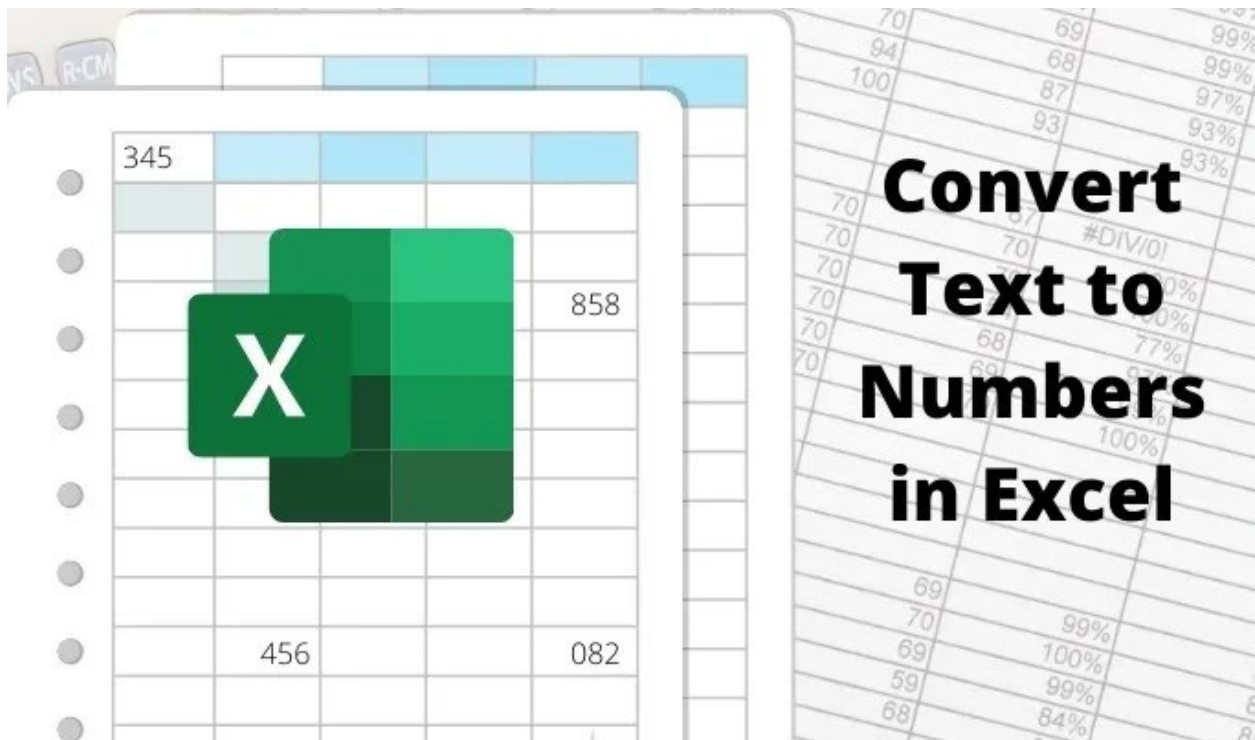


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One of the most common annoyances that people cite with Excel is dealing with how numbers and text are formatted in cells. It's especially annoying when numbers inadvertently get entered into a spreadsheet in text format.

When this happens, calculations and different formulas don't work quite right, or may not work at all.

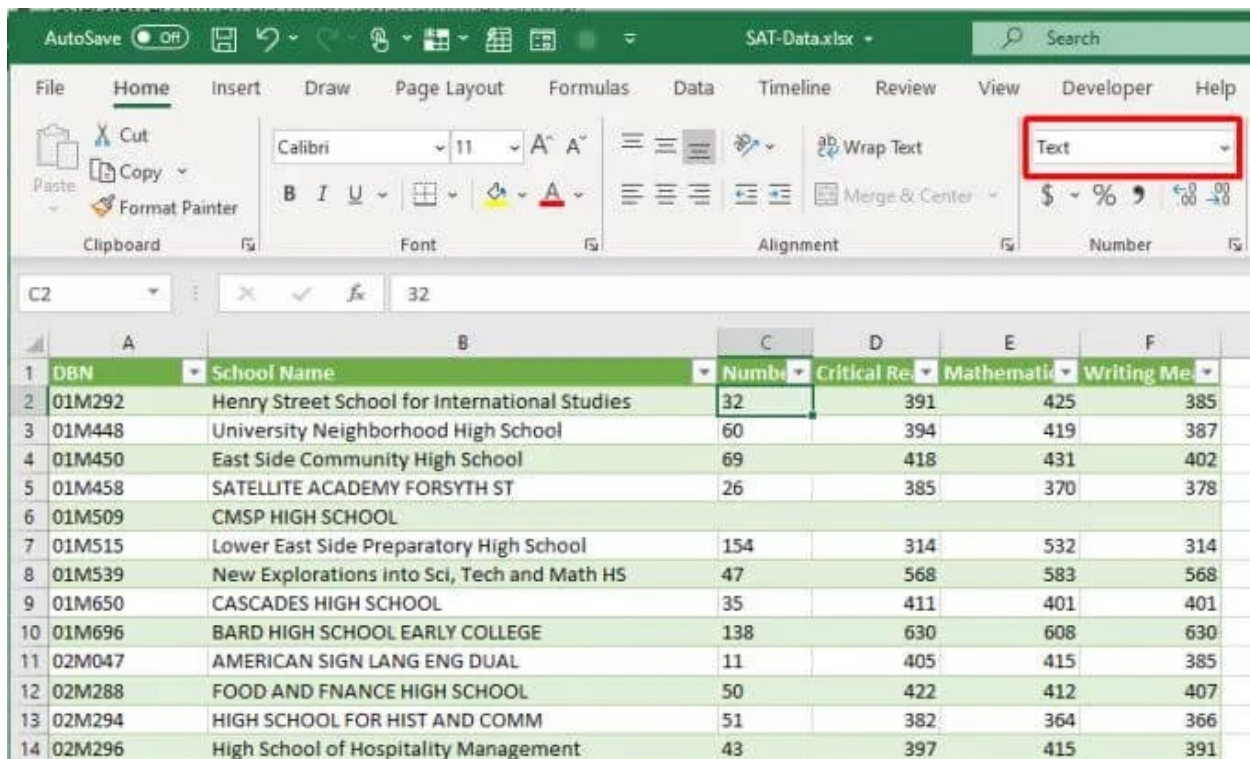


In this article you'll learn how to identify when a column or row of numbers are actually formatted as text, and how to convert text to numbers so that they'll work in formulas and calculations again. This is one of those basic Excel tips everyone should know.

# Is Cell Data Text Or Numbers?

There are several ways you can see if a number or set of numbers in a column or row is formatted as text in Excel.

The easiest way is to select the cell, select the **Home** menu, and under the Number group in the ribbon, note the number format displayed in the dropdown box.



If the dropdown box displays “text”, you know the cell is formatted as text format. If you want to perform numerical calculations on the cell using Excel formulas, you’ll need to convert it first.

In the case where someone has entered numbers in text format using the apostrophe in the cell, you’ll see a small green triangle indicating the value has been entered as text.

	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
	32	391	425	385	35				
	60	394	419	387	45				
	69	418	431	402	66				
	26	385	370	378	98				
					28				
	154	314	532	314	28				
	47	568	583	568					
	35	411	401	401					

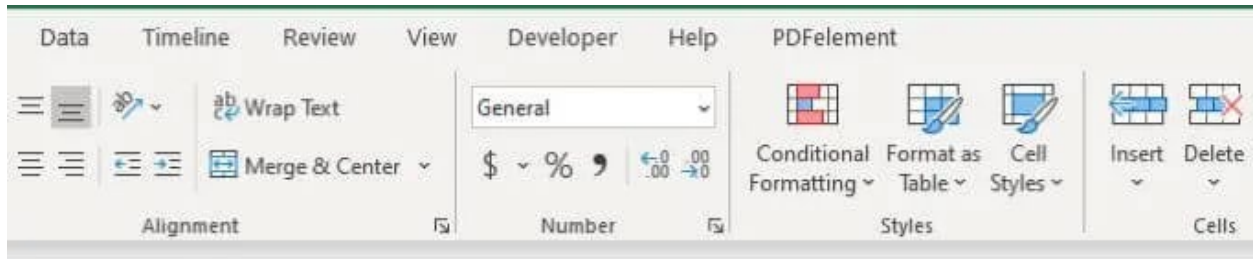
**Note:** Preceding a cell entry with an apostrophe forces the cell formatting to text-based.

If you've discovered, using either of the approaches above, that the numerical data is entered into the Excel sheet in text format, you can use any of the methods below to convert that text to numbers.

## 1. Convert To Number

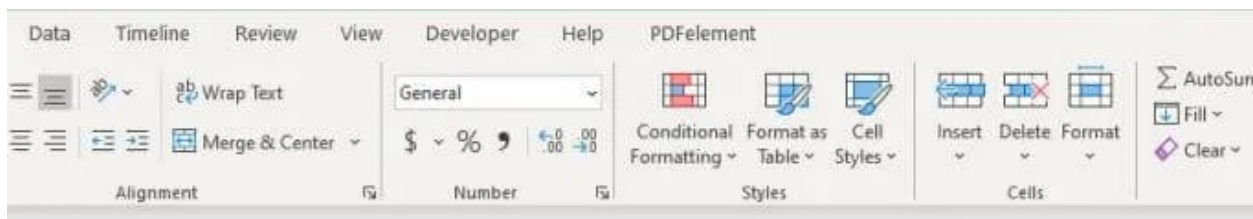
If you need to convert data that's been entered into Excel with an apostrophe, you can easily convert it back to number format using the Convert to Number option.

1. First, select the cells you want to convert back to number format. You will see a yellow diamond appear near the selection with an exclamation symbol in the middle.



	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
	Number	Critical Re	Mathematic	Writing Mean					
	32	391	425	385	35				
	60	394	419	387	45				
	69	418	431	402	66				
	26	385	370	378	98				
					28				
	154	314	532	314	28				
	47	568	583	568					
	35	411	401	401					
	138	630	608	630					
	11	405	415	385					

2. Select this symbol. From the dropdown, choose **Convert to Number**.



	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
	Number	Critical Re	Mathematic	Writing Mean						
	32	391	425	385	35					
	60	394			45					
	69	418			66					
	26	385			98					
					28					
	154	314			28					
	47	568								
	35	411								
	138	630								
	11	405	415	385						
	50	422	412	407						
	51	382	364	366						
	43	397	415	391						

This will update all of the text based numbers you've selected to the General numeric data format.



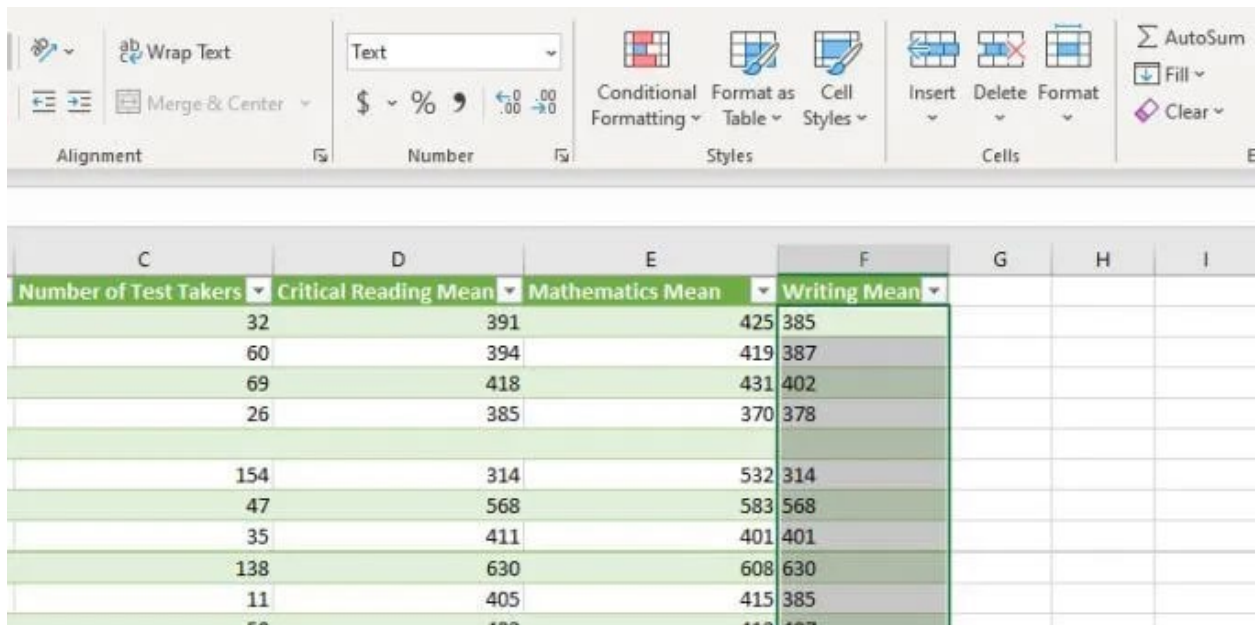
	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
	32	391	425	385	35				
	60	394	419	387	45				
	69	418	431	402	66				
	26	385	370	378	98				
					28				
	154	314	532	314	28				
	47	568	583	568					
	35	411	401	401					
	138	630	608	630					
	11	405	415	385					
	50	422	412	407					

You'll know it worked when all the numbers in your selection switched from being left aligned to right aligned in the cells.

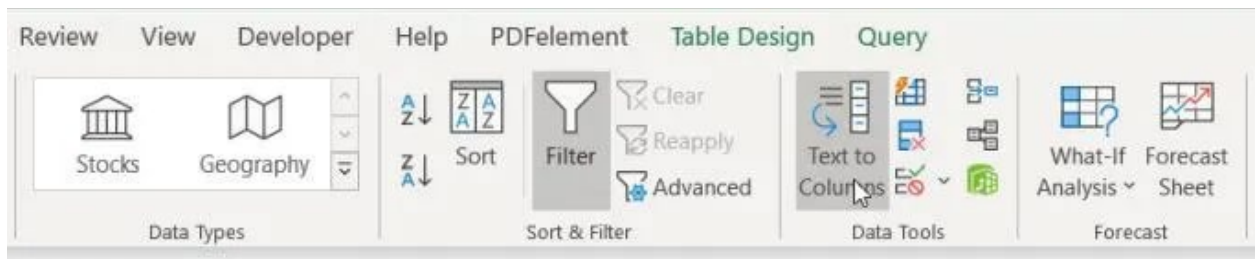
## 2. Using Text to Column

Another easy way to convert text to numbers in Excel is by converting over an entire column of values at once. You can do this using the Text to Column feature.

1. Select the entire column of data that you want to convert from text to numbers.



2. Select **Data** from the menu, and then select **Text to Columns** in the Data Tools section of the ribbon.



3. In the Wizard window, keep the default Delimited selected and select **Next**.

Convert Text to Columns Wizard - Step 1 of 3

The Text Wizard has determined that your data is Delimited.  
If this is correct, choose Next, or choose the data type that best describes your data.

Original data type

Choose the file type that best describes your data:

Delimited - Characters such as commas or tabs separate each field.

Fixed width - Fields are aligned in columns with spaces between each field.

Preview of selected data:

2	385
3	387
4	402
5	378
6	
7	314

Cancel < Back **Next >** Finish

4. On the next Wizard page, keep the default **Tab** selected, and select **Next** again.

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: "

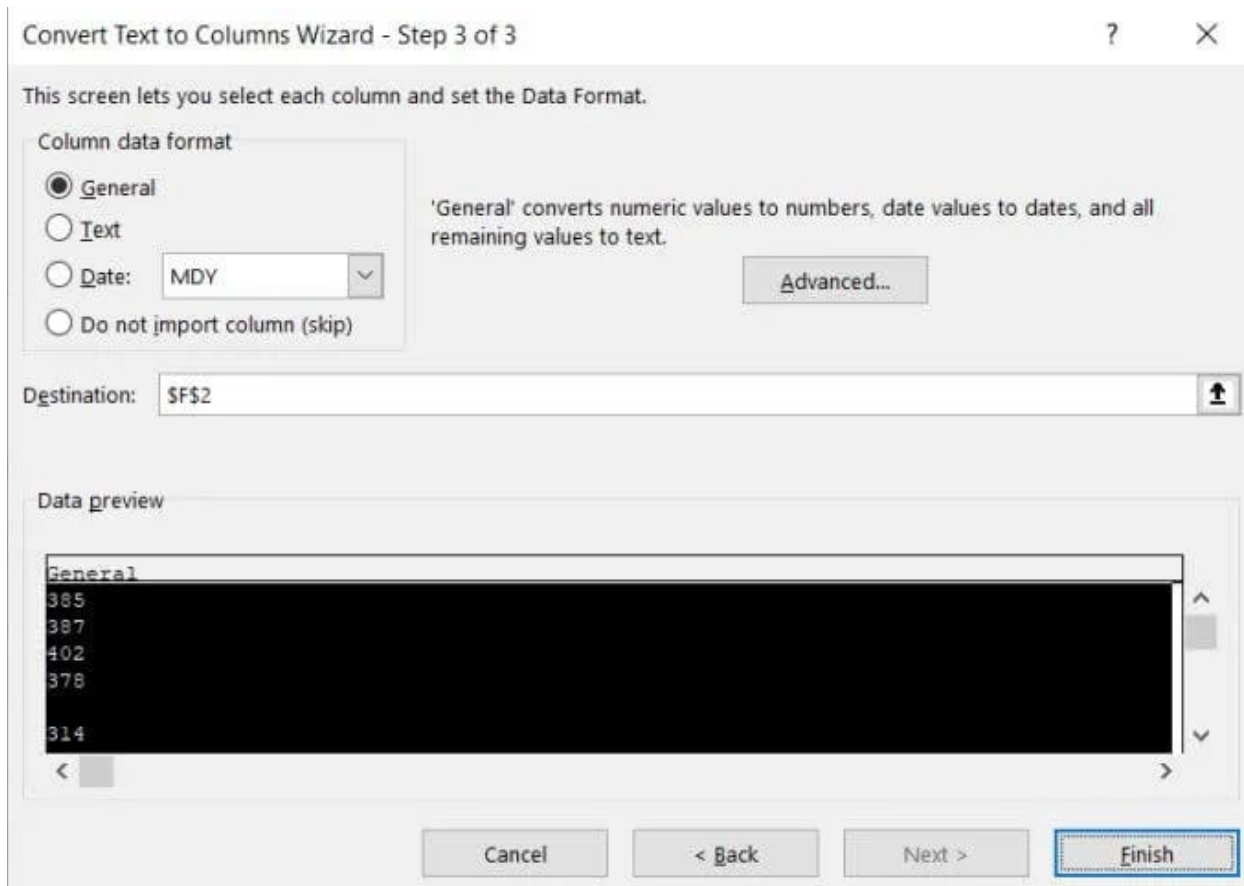
**Data preview**

```
385
387
402
378
314
```

Cancel < Back **Next >** Finish

5. Finally, on the last page of the Wizard, make sure **General** is selected under **Column data format**. For the **Destination** field, you can either select a new column where you want the number data to go, or just keep the current selected column as is. Select **Finish**.





Now your data will all be converted to numeric values, which you can use in Excel formulas and calculations.

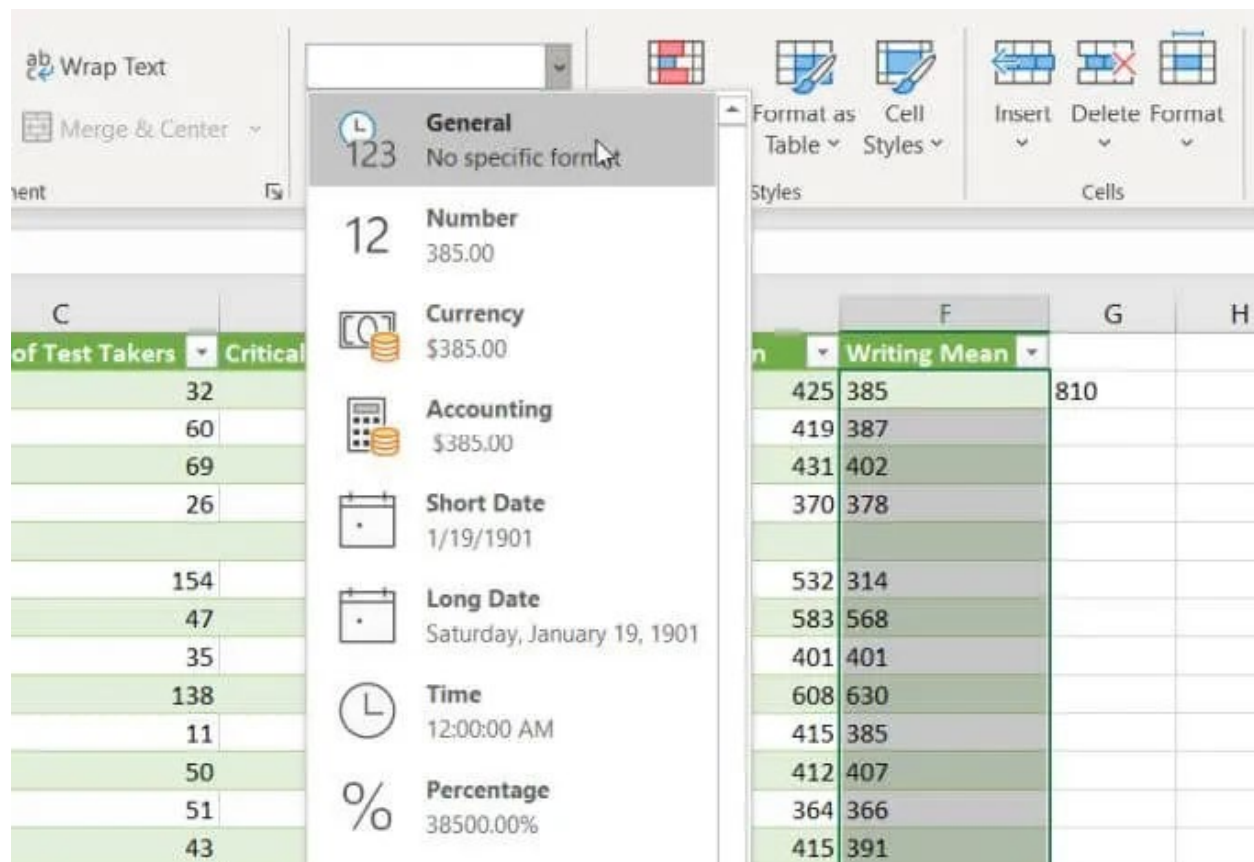
**Note:** You'll notice that the actual cell formatting doesn't change from Text to General even though the values themselves can now be used as numbers. However, if you set your output column to a new column, you will notice that the formatting of the new column is set to General. This is only a cosmetic issue and doesn't affect how the numbers in the "Text" formatted column behave.

### 3. Changing Cell Format

The easiest and fastest way to convert text to numbers in Excel is simply changing the cell formatting from the Home menu.

To do this:

1. Select all of the cells you want to convert. You can select an entire column (don't include the header) if you want to convert all of the cells in a column.
2. Select the Home menu, and in the Number group on the ribbon, select the dropdown box with Text in it.

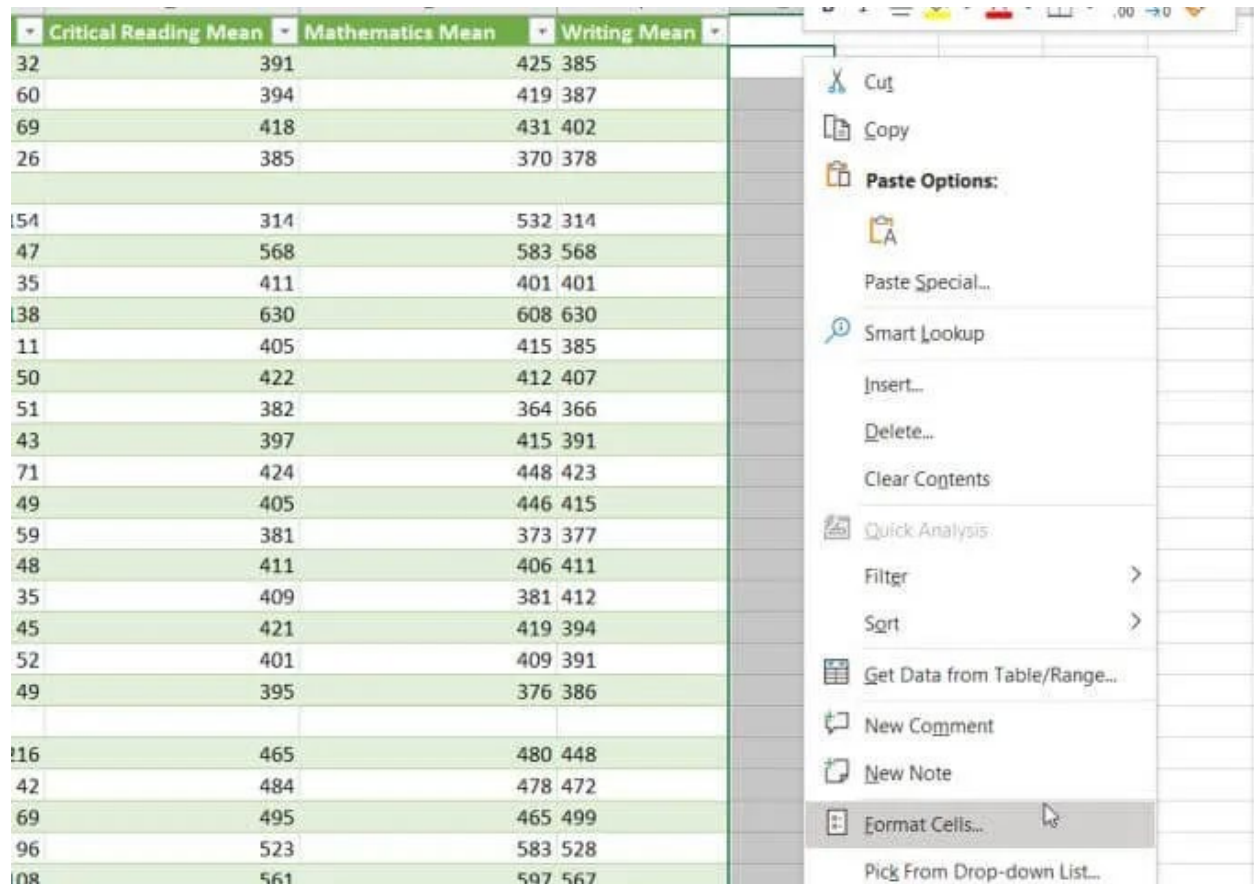


3. You'll see a list of formats to choose from. Select **General** to convert to number format. Or you can select Number, Currency, Accounting, or Percentage if you want those specific number formats applied to your numerical data.

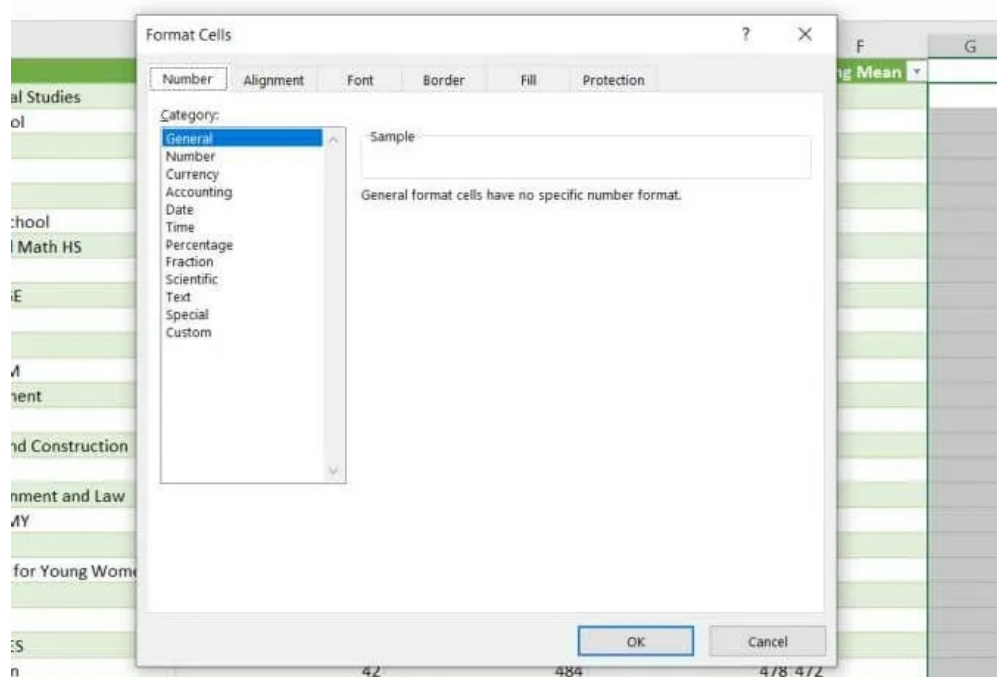
## 4. Using Paste Values

If you need to move text cells that contain numbers into a new cell or column, you can use the Paste Special feature.

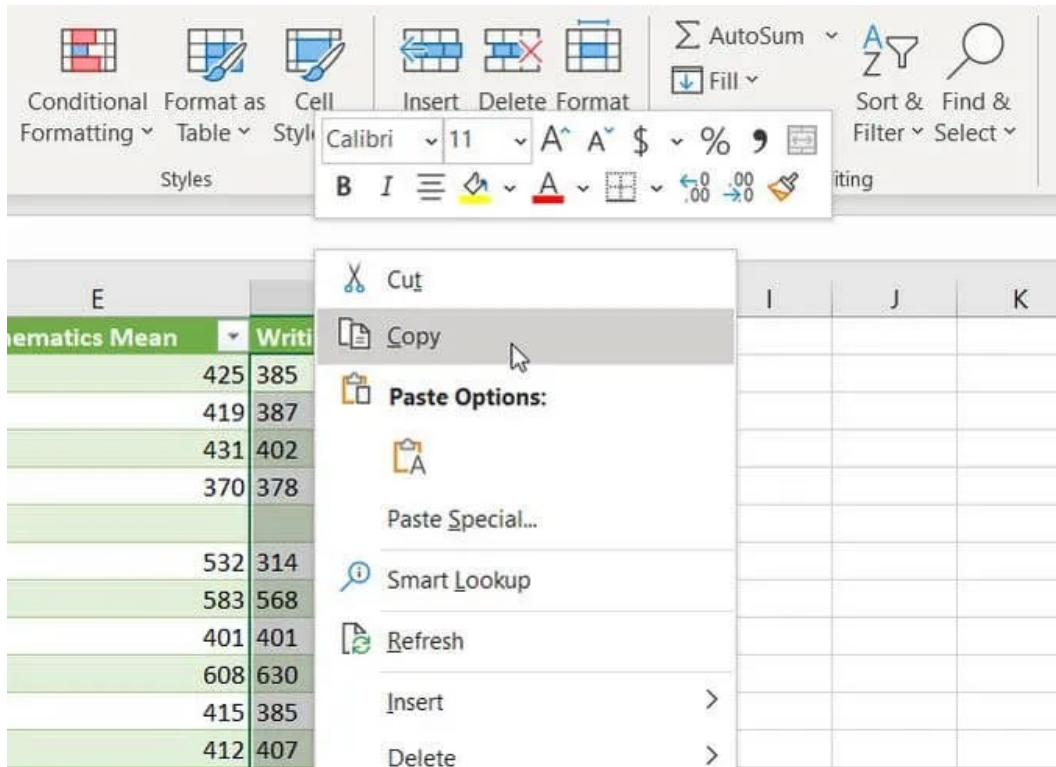
1. Select the group of empty cells where you want to place your output of numeric data. Select **Format Cells** from the pop-up menu.



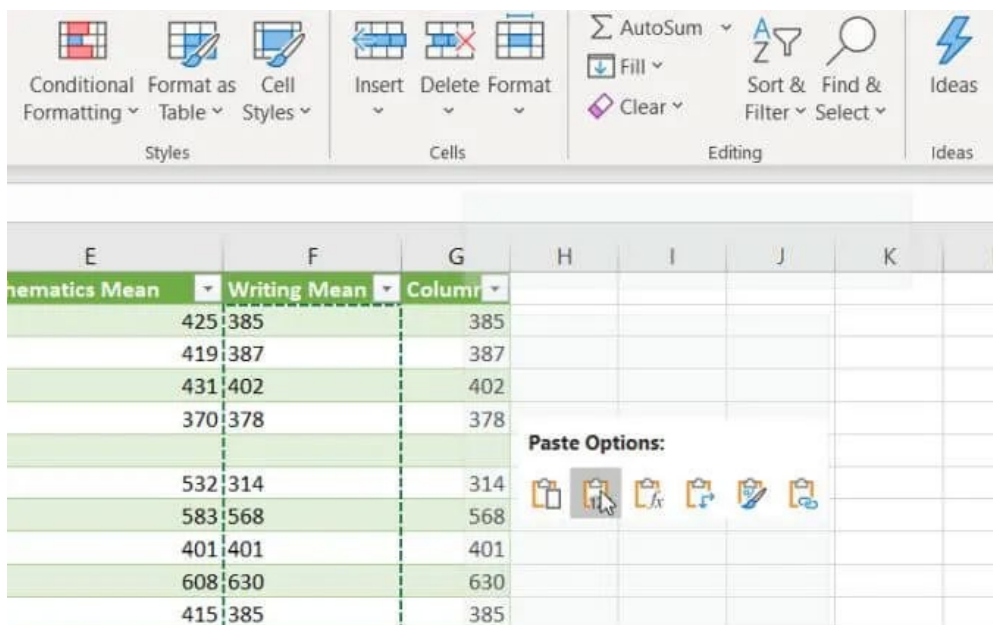
2. In the window that opens, make sure General is selected as the number format and select **OK**.



3. Select the entire column of cells you want to convert from text to numbers, right-click, and select **Copy**.



4. Select the first cell in the empty column you formatted, right-click the cell and select **Paste Values**. You'll see all of the text formatted numbers pasted in the General number format.



This works because when you select Paste Values, it pastes only the values from the source cell and not the original cell formatting. Instead, it uses the destination cell formatting, which you configured in the first part of this process.

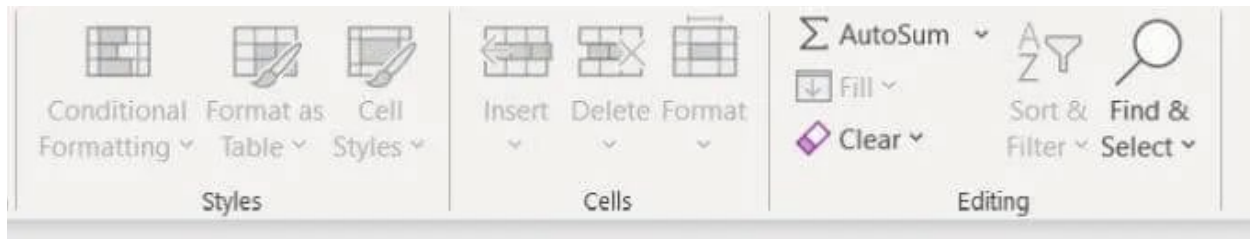
## 5. Using The VALUE Function

There is a special function in Excel that'll convert a number formatted as text into a numeric value. This is the VALUE function.

To use this function, select the cell where you want the converted number to go and type:

**=VALUE(G2)**

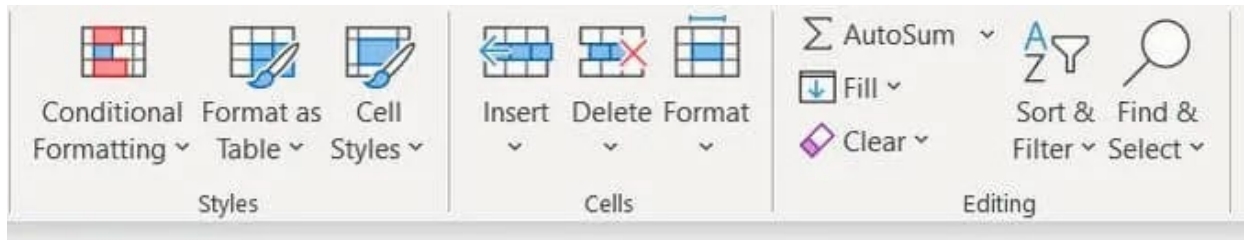
Replace "G2" above with the cell that has the number you want to convert. If you're converting an entire column of numbers, start with the first cell only.



E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Chematics Mean	Writing Mean	Column				
425	385	385	=value(G2)			
419	387	387				
431	402	402				
370	378	378				
532	314	314				
583	568	568				
401	401	401				
608	630	630				
415	385	385				

Press **Enter** and you'll see that the text-formatted number has been converted to a General-format number.

You can then fill the rest of the empty column to the bottom of that column and the VALUE formula will convert the rest of the cells in the original column as well.



E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Mathematics Mean	Writing Mean	Column	Column			
425	385	385	385			
419	387	387	387			
431	402	402	402			
370	378	378	378			
			0			
532	314	314	314			
583	568	568	568			
401	401	401	401			
608	630	630	630			
415	385	385	385			
412	407	407	407			

After using any of these options for reformatting your numbers, you may need to refresh cell data after applying the new formatting.

As you can see, there are a number of ways to convert text to numbers in Excel. The option you choose just depends on where you're trying to place the output. It also depends whether you prefer using copy and paste, Excel formulas, or menu options.

Ultimately, each of these choices provides you with the same end result.