



Module 43: LEFT Function

43.1 LEFT Function

The LEFT function in Excel can be used when you want to extract characters starting on the left side of a text.

It will also extract spaces and special characters. LEFT can also be used to extract digits from numbers, but number formatting will not be extracted. So keep in mind that a currency value, such as £5, will only return a 5.

The formula is written as: **=LEFT(text, [num_chars])**

text - The text from which to extract characters.

num_chars - [optional] the number of characters to extract, starting on the left side of the text. This will have a default of 1 if it is left out of the formula. You can use a cell address or you can hard code the number of characters to extract.

You can also use similar functions called RIGHT and MID (*not discussed in the video*).

The RIGHT function returns characters starting from the right side and MID returns a specified number of characters from the middle of a supplied text string. The RIGHT formula is written as: **=RIGHT (text, [num_chars])** text - The text from which to extract characters from the right.

num_chars - [optional] the number of characters to extract, starting on the right side of the text. This will have a default of 1 if it is left out of the formula.

The MID formula is written as: **MID(text, start_num, num_chars)** text - The text from which to extract characters. start_num - a number that specifies the position of the first character that you want to be returned num_chars - the number of characters to extract.

43.2 Video Instruction

LEFT Function - 2m 09s

43.3 Task

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Download the worksheet that accompanies this video by clicking below. Once downloaded, follow the video above and you will see how to use the LEFT function.

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