

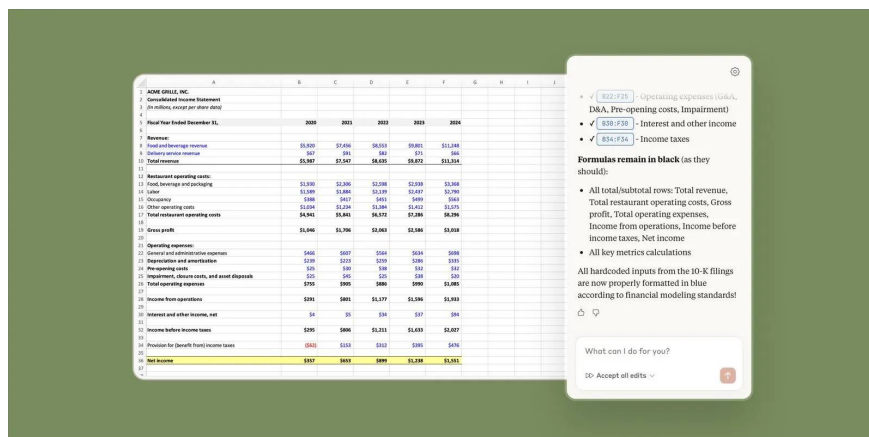
How to use Claude AI to write Excel formulas instantly.

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Claude, built by Anthropic, is particularly powerful at understanding what you mean in plain language and converting it into accurate Excel formulas. This guide will show you exactly how to use it—with practical examples that you can copy and paste directly into your spreadsheets.

Why is Claude so good at Excel formulas?



Unlike conventional search engines, Claude understands context. You can describe your spreadsheet layout, explain the results you want, and Claude will generate the correct formula—taking into account specific column letters, row numbers, and exceptions.

1. Understand natural language - you don't need to know the function name to request it.
2. Dealing with nested formulas - complex polynomial formulas that will take you a lot of time to debug.
3. Explain the formulas – you actually learn them, you don't just copy and paste.

4. Remember the context - describe your spreadsheet once, ask multiple questions.

Getting Started: Request your first recipe

The key to getting great formulas from Claude is to be specific about your spreadsheet layout. Here's a template that works every time:

"I have an Excel spreadsheet where column A has [data type], column B has [data type], and column C has [data type]. I need a formula in column D to [describe what you want]."

Example 1: Conditional calculations

Let's say you have a sales spreadsheet with Column A (salesperson's name), Column B (region), Column C (revenue). You want Column D to show a 10% bonus if sales exceed 50,000, otherwise 5%. Ask Claude and he'll give you the formula:

```
=IF(C2>50000, C2*0.1, C2*0.05)
```

Claude will also explain why the formula works, and often suggest improvements such as a hierarchical structure for multiple bonus levels.

Example 2: Multi-conditional lookup

You need to look up a value based on two criteria. To learn more about lookup functions, see VLOOKUP vs. XLOOKUP. Claude will give you the formula:

```
=INDEX(C:C, MATCH(1, (A:A="Electronics")*(B:B="North"), 0))
```

Note : Claude will remind you that this is an array formula and requires pressing **Ctrl+Shift+Enter** in older versions of Excel.

Advanced techniques

Technique 1: Paste your data

Copy a few rows from your spreadsheet and paste them directly into Claude. This gives it the exact context needed to generate the correct formulas.

Technique 2: Ask for alternatives

After Claude provides you with a formula, ask: "Is there a simpler way?" or "Can you do this without an array formula?", Claude will provide 2-3 alternative methods with different advantages and disadvantages.

Technique 3: Error Handling

Ask Claude to make your formulas more robust. For example, wrap VLOOKUP in error handling:

=IFERROR(VLOOKUP(A2, Sheet2!A:C, 3, FALSE), "Not Found")

Practical use cases

Things you need	What should I ask Claude?
Total value by category	"Add all the values ??in column C when column A equals 'Sales'"
Find duplicate values	"Highlight or mark duplicate values ??in column B"
Calculating dates	"Calculate the number of working days between two dates, excluding weekends."
Text extraction	"Extract domain names from the email addresses in column A"
dynamic range	"Create a formula to automatically add new rows"
Cross-sheet lookup	"Look up values ??from Sheet2 based on matching IDs"

Common mistakes to avoid

1. Too general - Specify the columns and desired results.
2. It doesn't specify your Excel version - the XLOOKUP function only works on Microsoft 365 and Excel 2021 or later.
3. Forgot to set the region - If you use a semicolon instead of a comma as a separator, let Claude know.
4. Do not check for special cases - Always check for blank cells, zero values, and text in numeric columns.

Claude AI is more than just a formula generator – it's like having a patient Excel expert sitting next to you. Start with your most frustrating, most frequently used formula and ask Claude to write it for you. You'll be surprised at how much time you save.

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