

# Sorting in Excel

By Dick Evans

Often it is necessary to sort rows of data in Excel; perhaps alphabetically, by date, by a value, and so forth. To see how easy this is to do, create the following worksheet:

	A	B	C	D
1	<b>Sorting in Excel</b>			
2				
3	Last	First	Age	M/F
4	Heiyer	Emily	57	F
5	Lee	Mario	68	M
6	Wade	Carolyn	46	F
7	Hoffman	Latisha	52	F
8	Tantoh	Saru	61	F
9	Jervis	James	33	M
10	Grantstein	Jared	72	M
11	Dickenson	Charles	64	M
12	Romanoff	Nicole	51	F
13	Bing	Brady	40	M
14	Coleman	Sorel	73	F
15	Hazard	Thomas	83	M
16	Patel	Julie	69	F
17	Flores	William	66	M

**Click** any cell containing a last name, such as **A10**

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel interface. The ribbon is set to the 'Data' tab, and the 'Sort Ascending' button is highlighted. The spreadsheet contains the following data:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	<b>Sorting in Excel</b>										
2											
3	Last	First	Age	M/F							
4	Heiyer	Emily	57	F							
5	Lee	Mario	68	M							
6	Wade	Carolyn	46	F							
7	Hoffman	Latisha	52	F							
8	Tantoh	Saru	61	F							
9	Jervis	James	33	M							
10	Grantstein	Jared	72	M							
11	Dickenson	Charles	64	M							
12	Romanoff	Nicole	51	F							
13	Bing	Brady	40	M							
14	Coleman	Sorel	73	F							
15	Hazard	Thomas	83	M							
16	Patel	Julie	69	F							
17	Flores	William	66	M							

On the formatting toolbar, click the **Sort Ascending** tool

The screenshot shows the same Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, but the data is now sorted in ascending order by Last name. The 'Sort Ascending' button is no longer highlighted. The data is as follows:

	A	B	C	D
1	<b>Sorting in Excel</b>			
2				
3	Last	First	Age	M/F
4	Bing	Brady	40	M
5	Coleman	Sorel	73	F
6	Dickenson	Charles	64	M
7	Flores	William	66	M
8	Grantstein	Jared	72	M
9	Hazard	Thomas	83	M
10	Heiyer	Emily	57	F
11	Hoffman	Latisha	52	F
12	Jervis	James	33	M
13	Lee	Mario	68	M
14	Patel	Julie	69	F
15	Romanoff	Nicole	51	F
16	Tantoh	Saru	61	F
17	Wade	Carolyn	46	F

The data is sorted in ascending order by Last name. The column title remains at the top and all data associated with the last name are repositioned to match the last name.

The data used by excel includes all data included in the range in which the selected data is included. The column to be sorted is the column the selected cell is in.

This method only allows sorting on one column at a time. Should you want to sort by last name within sex, sort on name first, then sort again on sex. Try it.

	A	B	C	D
1	<b>Sorting in Excel</b>			
2				
3	Last	First	Age	M/F
4	Coleman	Sorel	73	F
5	Heiyer	Emily	57	F
6	Hoffman	Latisha	52	F
7	Patel	Julie	69	F
8	Romanoff	Nicole	51	F
9	Tantoh	Saru	61	F
10	Wade	Carolyn	46	F
11	Bing	Brady	40	M
12	Dickenson	Charles	64	M
13	Flores	William	66	M
14	Grantstein	Jared	72	M
15	Hazard	Thomas	83	M
16	Jervis	James	33	M
17	Lee	Mario	68	M

If you need to sort on a number of rows which include imbedded blank cells, select the entire range of rows by dragging the mouse with the left button down over the row numbers. After selected the rows, use the Sort tool.

To try this out, **insert a blank row after Wade in row 10**

	A	B	C	D
1	<b>Sorting in Excel</b>			
2				
3	Last	First	Age	M/F
4	Coleman	Sorel	73	F
5	Heiyer	Emily	57	F
6	Hoffman	Latisha	52	F
7	Patel	Julie	69	F
8	Romanoff	Nicole	51	F
9	Tantoh	Saru	61	F
10	Wade	Carolyn	46	F
11				
12	Bing	Brady	40	M
13	Dickenson	Charles	64	M
14	Flores	William	66	M
15	Grantstein	Jared	72	M
16	Hazard	Thomas	83	M
17	Jervis	James	33	M
18	Lee	Mario	68	M

Select C4, then **sort ascending** to sort by age

	A	B	C	D
1	<b>Sorting in Excel</b>			
2				
3	Last	First	Age	M/F
4	Coleman	Sorel	73	F
5	Patel	Julie	69	F
6	Tantoh	Saru	61	F
7	Heiyer	Emily	57	F
8	Hoffman	Latisha	52	F
9	Romanoff	Nicole	51	F
10	Wade	Carolyn	46	F
11				
12	Bing	Brady	40	M
13	Dickenson	Charles	64	M
14	Flores	William	66	M
15	Grantstein	Jared	72	M
16	Hazard	Thomas	83	M
17	Jervis	James	33	M
18	Lee	Mario	68	M

Notice the rows 12-18 were not sorted. Excel assumes only the contiguous cells; the cells within the range of known data.

**Select the rows 3-18**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	
1	<b>Sorting in Excel</b>						
2							
3	Last	First	Age	M/F			
4	Coleman	Sorel	73	F			
5	Patel	Julie	69	F			
6	Tantoh	Saru	61	F			
7	Heiyer	Emily	57	F			
8	Hoffman	Latisha	52	F			
9	Romanoff	Nicole	51	F			
10	Wade	Carolyn	46	F			
11							
12	Bing	Brady	40	M			
13	Dickenson	Charles	64	M			
14	Flores	William	66	M			
15	Grantstein	Jared	72	M			
16	Hazard	Thomas	83	M			
17	Jervis	James	33	M			
18	Lee	Mario	68	M			
19							

On the menu bar, select **Data > Sort**



The Sort dialogue box displays. Excel assumes the first row is a Header row. If it is not, click the No header row radio button. The top Sort by selection lets you select the top level sort. If you were sorting by name within age, age would be the top level and name would be selected in the next Then by box. Be sure to choose Ascending or Descending for each, and then **click OK**

	A	B	C	D	E
1	<b>Sorting in Excel</b>				
2					
3	Last	First	Age	M/F	
4	Hazard	Thomas	83	M	
5	Coleman	Sorel	73	F	
6	Grantstein	Jared	72	M	
7	Patel	Julie	69	F	
8	Lee	Mario	68	M	
9	Flores	William	66	M	
10	Dickenson	Charles	64	M	
11	Tantoh	Saru	61	F	
12	Heiyer	Emily	57	F	
13	Hoffman	Latisha	52	F	
14	Romanoff	Nicole	51	F	
15	Wade	Carolyn	46	F	
16	Bing	Brady	40	M	
17	Jervis	James	33	M	
18					
19					

The sort completes and places the empty row at the bottom of the data