How to Use VLOOKUP in Excel 2016

This short tutorial uses Excel 2016 to show you a working example of the VLOOKUP function.

1. Decide where you will place your VLOOKUP formula.

This example uses a spreadsheet of employee names, departments, and salaries. You want to add a VLOOKUP box that allows you to enter an employee’s name and have their salary automatically populate so that you don’t have to manually search through thousands of data rows. This is an exact lookup. Next to your data table you’ve added a lookup box.

2. Click cell F3. Click the Formulas tab and select Insert Function.
3. In the **Search for a function**: text box type “vlookup”. Click the **Go** button.

4. Click the highlighted **VLOOKUP** and click **OK**.

5. Now you can create the **VLOOKUP** formula that will look up the salary for the employee whose name you enter in cell F2.
VLOOKUP operates on the four arguments numbered above. Argument number four, Range_lookup, is optional and you may leave it blank. However, it is not recommended that you do so.

6. In the Lookup_value text box, type “F2”.

In this step, you are asking Excel to look up the contents of cell F2. Excel displays the cell’s value to the right of the text box, helping you check your entry. Here is a manually entered employee name so that you can see what Excel sees. Also, Excel provides information below the text boxes to help you understand each argument.

7. In the Table_array text box, select the table area that Excel should use to find your lookup.
Excel adds the range you select as you highlight a table or area of your worksheet.

8. In the Col_index_num field, type “3”. This is the index column number in the table that contains employees’ salaries.
As before, Excel builds the formula as we add the function arguments and shows the value it sees. For the cell F3, Excel tells you the salary of employee “Amelia Reah” is “83713”.

9. In the Range_lookup box, type “false” or “0”, as you want an exact match, not an approximate match.

Excel also provides tips for the arguments below the text boxes.

10. Click OK.

Excel translated the formula to “$87,713” for employee “Amelia Reah”.