# Excel Basics

Getting Started with Excel

Microsoft Excel is a spreadsheet program that allows you to **store**, **organize** and **analyze** information. It is useful for creating a budget, log, invoice, etc. When you open Excel for the first time, you will have the option to create a new workbook, open a recent workbook, or choose a template. To make a

Worksheets & Workbooks

Excel files are called **workbooks**. Each workbook holds one or more spreadsheets, or **worksheets**. The **Sheet Tab** on the bottom of the page shows you the name of the worksheet you are currently working on. It is labeled Sheet 1, but you should change the name so that your sheets are easier to navigate. To add a worksheet, click on the small plus sign.

Working with Cells
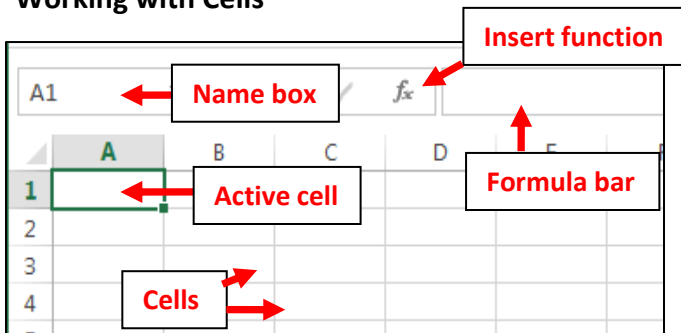
- Each box in a workbook is called a **cell**. A cell is the basic unit for storing data in a spreadsheet. To select a cell, click it.
- A **row** is a group of cells that runs from the left of the page to the right. Rows are identified by numbers.
- A **column** is a group of cells that runs from the top of the page to the bottom. Columns are identified by letters.
- The name of a cell is found by combining the column's letter with the row's number. Cell **A1** is selected in this picture. The **active cell** is the one you have selected. It is indicated by the outlined box.
- The **name box** displays the name/location of a selected (active) cell.
- The **formula bar** displays the contents of the active cell. It's also used for entering or editing data/formulas.
- The **insert function** button is a shortcut for function shortcuts such as SUM and AVERAGE. Click it to see the different functions to choose from.

Formulas & Functions

One of the best features of Excel is the ability to calculate numerical information using formulas. ***The important thing to remember is that all formulas in Excel must begin with an equal sign (=).**

To create a simple budget using the SUM formula:

- Input **Category** in cell **A2**.
- Input **Monthly Cost** into cell **B2**. Notice that some of the words are cut off because they are too long for the cell. Simply double click on the line between cells A and B to auto-format the cells to the correct size. Then do the same between cells B and C.
- Under Category, input **Rent**, **Car**, **Groceries**, & **Insurance** vertically down column A.
- Under Monthly Cost, input **$1000**, **$300**, **$200**, & **$100** vertically down column B.
- Input Total into cell A7.
- Input **=SUM(B3:B6)** into cell **B7,** & then click **ENTER.**

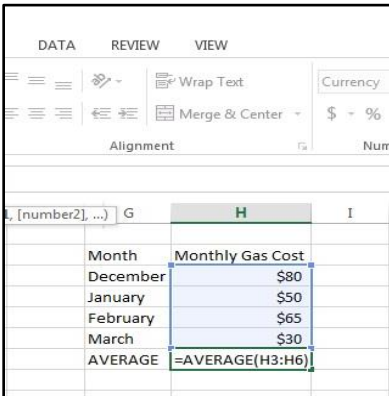*The picture below is what your worksheet should look like before you click ENTER.
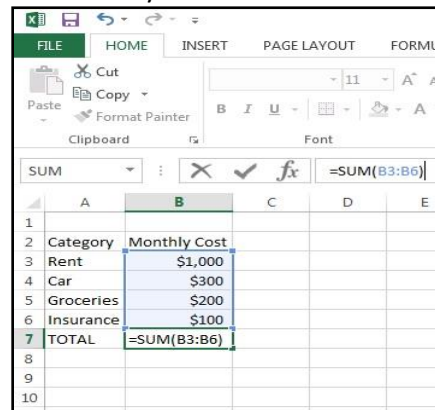
*This picture shows what your workbook should look like after you click ENTER. **If you change any of the cell numbers, the total will change accordingly.**
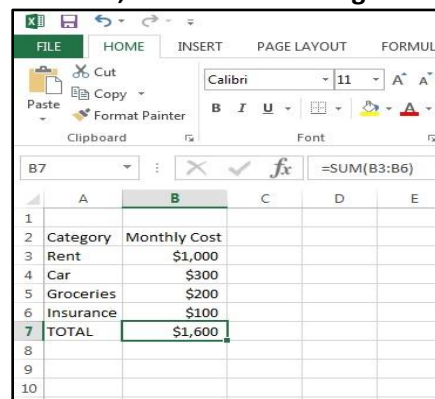
To create a simple average of gas expenses using the AVERAGE formula:

- Input **Month** into cell **G2**. Then input **December**, **January**, **February**, & **March** into the cells below.
- Input **Monthly Gas Cost** into cell **H2**. Then input random values for each month.
- Input **AVERAGE** into cell **G7**.
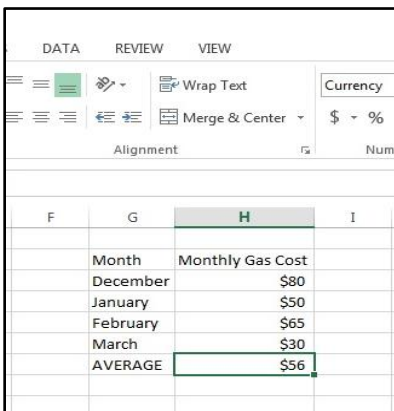- Input **=AVERAGE(H3:H6)** into cell **H7, & then click ENTER.**

*Below is a picture of what the formula should look like when you type it in.

*Below is a picture of the final product after you click ENTER.

Tables & Charts

- To make a graph in Excel, you want to start by **highlighting the information that will be graphed**. To highlight, click the **uppermost left cell** you want to be included, **hold down the clicker**, and then **drag the box** over the span of cells to be graphed.
- Next, click the **INSERT** button.
- Finally, **choose the graph/chart** that you would like. This will insert it into the worksheet. Now your graph/chart can be named and moved to any spot on the worksheet.

Saving & Printing Workbooks

It's always important to save your work to prevent it from being lost.

- To save your workbook in Excel, go to the upper left corner and click **FILE** and then **SAVE**.
- If it's the first time you're saving, the **SAVE AS** window will appear. You'll need to choose where to save the file and give it a name.
- After you give the file a name, click **SAVE** once more to complete the saving process.

There may be times when you want to print a workbook to view and share your data offline. Before you print an Excel workbook, it's important to decide exactly what you want printed. There are three options:

- To print your workbook, select **FILE** in the upper left corner.
- Select **PRINT**. The **PRINT** pane will appear.
- Select "**PRINT ACTIVE SHEETS**"
- Click the **PRINT** button.

This will print the worksheet you have been working on.

To print a selection of cells:

- Select the cells you want by highlighting them
- Select **PRINT**
- Select "**PRINT SELECTION**" from the Print Range drop-down menu
- You will get a preview of the selection and then you can click "**PRINT**."

Still need help?

- Ask at the Reference desk for a quick answer
- Make a Tech Thursday appointment to work through a more difficult problem