

## CREATE A STRUCTURED RANGE OF DATA-GUIDELINES

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To use a range of data effectively, the data must have the same structure throughout. The following guidelines should be kept in mind when creating a data table.

- ✦ A **Data Table** is made up of columns and rows, just like a worksheet.
  - ★ A **column** represents a record and a row represents a field.
  - ★ A **record** is a collection of data about a person, place, or thing.
  - ★ A **field** is individual information such as a person's last name, first name, address, and so forth.
- ✦ Enter the field names in the top row of the range.
  - ★ A **Field Name** (Column Header) is a unique label that describes the contents of the column.
  - ★ Each **Field Name** must be unique; no two names can be the same.
  - ★ This row of names is called the header row.
  - ★ The header row can be any row in the worksheet. It is, however, usually the first row.
- ✦ Use short, descriptive field names.
  - ★ Shorter field names are easier to remember.
  - ★ More field names will appear in the Excel workbook window when shorter names are used.
- ✦ **Format Field Names** differently than the rest of the rows.
  - ★ This will distinguish the header row from the rest of the rows.
  - ★ Use bold formatting, colors, underlines/borders, and a different font size.
  - ★ Solid underlines/borders must be used; the database will not work properly if the lines are not solid.
- ✦ Enter the same kind of data for a field in each record.
  - ★ Some of the records may not contain information in every field.
  - ★ Some fields may be blank if information is not available for that field in a particular record.
- ✦ Insert at least one blank line and one blank column between the data and other information in the worksheet.
  - ★ This will enable Excel to accurately determine the range of the data.
  - ★ If a blank row or column does not appear between the data, the Data Table will assume all the data is part of the range.