Flash Fill

Flash fill is used to automatically fill data in a workbook when a pattern is sensed. This feature can also be used to split data into two columns.

**TURN ON FLASH FILL**

Flash Fill may not have been activated when Excel 2013 was installed on the computer. If that is the case you can follow the directions below to turn the feature on or just to check and make sure it is active.

- Click the **File Tab**.
- Select **Options** from the list on the left side of the window.
- Click the **Advanced** option.
- Click the **Automatically Flash Fill** check box (see illustration below).

![Excel Options](image)

- Click the **OK** button.
- Close and then re-open the **Workbook**.

**MANUALLY START FLASH FILL**

- Click the **Data Tab**.
- In the **Data Tools Group**, click the **Flash Fill** button.

![Flash Fill](image)

- The data must be already input into the workbook cells to turn on Flash Fill.
**Split Column of Data**

This feature can be used to split data based on what is typed in a column. For instance, if first names and last names are input into one column, the data can be split into two separate columns.

- Enter the First Name or other value into the Column next to the data (see illustration below left).
- Press Enter.
- Start inputting the next name.
- **Flash Fill** will show a list of suggested names (see illustration below right).

Press the Enter key on the keyboard.

The rest of the names in the list will be added to the cells (see illustration below).

- Enter the Last Name for the first entry in the next column.
- Press the Enter key on the keyboard.
- Start inputting the Last Name in the next row.
- A list of suggested names will display (see illustration below left).

Press the Enter key on the keyboard.

The rest of the Last Names will appear in the list (see illustration above right).

**NOTE:**

- Flash Fill is case sensitive. This means that if you type a Last Name in all lower case, when the list is generated the names will be in lower case.
- If a result isn’t what you want, press the **Escape** key on the keyboard to cancel the action. Continue typing without using suggestions.

**Dealing with Middle Names**

- Flash Fill does not work well if some entries have Middle Names and others don’t. This is because the entries are chosen by the position of the item in the list.
If the data consistently has Middle Names or Middle Initials, Flash Fill works the same way as described on the previous page.

Instead of just following the steps two times, you complete them three times (see illustration below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Middle Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wanda Ilene House</td>
<td>Wanda</td>
<td>Ilene</td>
<td>House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Lee Metz</td>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>Metz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian David Sunderman</td>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>Sunderman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma Jane McFaul</td>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>McFaul</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MORE NOTES**

- When using Flash Fill, the data doesn’t have to be names.
- This feature works well with any data that needs to be split into more than one column.
- Flash Fill normally starts working when a pattern of data is recognized.
- This feature works best when the data input is consistent. For instance, all entries have a middle name or none of the entries have a middle name.
- If the data has many inconsistencies, **Text to Columns** or **Functions** may be used to split text.