Lesson 2-1: Enter text and numbers into a worksheet

Excel beginners tend to reach for the mouse far too often. One of the keys to productivity with Excel is to avoid using the mouse when entering data. In this lesson we'll quickly populate a worksheet without using the mouse at all.

1 Open the sample file: *First Quarter Sales and Profit.*

	A	B	C	D
1	Sales and Profit Report - First Quarter 2008			
2				
3		Jan	Feb	Mar
4	New York	22,000	29,000	19,000
5	Los Angeles			
6	London			
7	Paris			
8	Munich			

2 Notice the difference between values and text.

Cells can contain values or text. Values can be numbers, dates or formulas (more on formulas later).

Excel usually does a great job of recognizing when there are values in a cell and when there is text. The giveaway is that text is always (by default) left aligned in the cell and values are right aligned.

Look at the numbers on this worksheet. Notice how they are all right aligned. This lets you know that Excel has correctly recognized them as values and will happily perform mathematical operations using them.

3 Save a value into a cell.

1. Type the value 42000 into cell B5. Notice that the mouse cursor is still flashing in the cell.

```
42000
```
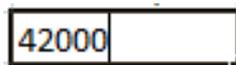
At this stage the value has not been saved into the cell.

If you change your mind, you can still undo the value by pressing the **<ESC>** key at the top left of your keyboard or by clicking the *Cancel button* ☒ on the left hand side of the Formula Bar.

2. Decide that you want to keep this value in the cell by either pressing the **<Enter>, <Tab>** or an **<Arrow>** key on the keyboard, or by clicking the *Confirm button* ☑ on left hand side of the Formula Bar.

4 Enter a column of data without using the mouse.

When you enter data into a column, there's no need to use the mouse. Press the **<Enter>** key after each entry and the active cell

tip

Entering numbers as text

Sometimes you need Excel to recognize a number as text.

If you type an apostrophe (') before the number, Excel won't display the apostrophe but will format the cell as text. You'll notice that the number is then left justified to reflect this.

When a number is formatted as text you cannot perform any mathematical calculation with it.

First Quarter Sales and Profit

important

The many ways of entering numbers

Negative numbers

-123.56
(123.56)

Currency prefixes

Excel is quite happy for you to prefix a number with a currency symbol. The currency symbol it will accept depends upon how you defined the regional options in your operating system.

$123.56 (works in USA)
£123.56 (works in UK)

Formatting currency values in any way required (whatever your locale) is covered in depth in the *Essential Skills* book in this series (in *Session 4: Making Your Worksheets Look Professional*).

Commas

12,234,567.78

Fractions

You must leave a space between a number and a fraction for this to work.

6 1/4
(six, space, one, /, four)

The above will appear on the worksheet as 6.25 after you enter it in this way.

0 1/4
(zero, space, one,/,four)

The above will appear on the worksheet as 0.25. The leading zero is needed to prevent Excel from assuming that you are entering a date.

moves to the cell beneath. Try this now with the following January sales data:

1. Type **18,000** into cell B6.

2. Press the **<Enter>** key to move to cell B7.

3. Do the same to enter the relevant values into the next two cells.

	A	B	C	D
3		Jan	Feb	Mar
4	New York	22,000	29,000	19,000
5	Los Angeles	42,000		
6	London	18,000		
7	Paris	35,000		
8	Munich	12,000		

5   Enter a row of data without using the mouse.

You can also enter a row of data without using the mouse.

1. Click in Cell C5.

2. Type **39,000** and then press the **<Tab>** key on your keyboard.

The <Tab> key is on the left hand side of the keyboard above the <Caps Lock> key. Notice how pressing the <Tab> key saves the value into the cell and then moves one cell to the right.

3. Type **43,000** into cell D5 and press the **<Enter>** key.

You magically move to cell C6 as Excel assumes you want to begin entering data into the next row.

6   Complete the table without using the mouse.

By using the **<Tab>** or **<Enter>** key in the right place you should be able to complete the table now without using the mouse:

	A	B	C	D
3		Jan	Feb	Mar
4	New York	22,000	29,000	19,000
5	Los Angeles	42,000	39,000	43,000
6	London	18,000	20,000	22,000
7	Paris	35,000	26,000	31,000
8	Munich	12,000	15,000	13,000

7   Change the text in cell B3 to January.

1. Double-click cell B3. Notice that there is now a flashing cursor in the cell.
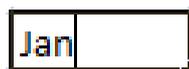
2. Type **uary** on the keyboard to change Jan to January.

3. Press the **<Enter>** key.

8   Change the text in cell B3 back to **Jan** using the formula bar.

Click once in cell B3 and then change the text in the formula bar back to **Jan** (see sidebar).

9   Save your work as *First Quarter Sales and Profit-2.*

Formula Bar