

## Lesson 2-21: Use Flash Fill to solve common problems

Flash Fill is one of the Excel 2013's most useful new features. It isn't possible to over-state how useful this tool is. I find myself using Flash Fill almost every day to solve a huge number of different problems.

This lesson gives examples of many everyday tasks that I have found can be quickly and simply completed using Flash Fill. I've also included all of the examples in the sample file: *Flash Fill Examples*.

In the following examples, the shaded cells were filled by Flash Fill.

### Split text

Full Name	First Name	Last Name
Jessica Elizabeth Sagan	Jessica	Sagan
Stephen Bell	Stephen	Bell
John Paul Jennings	John	Jennings

### Extract initials from names

Name	Initials
Jessica Elizabeth Sagan	JES
Stephen Bell	SB
John Paul Jennings	JPJ

### Remove title from names

Full Name	Short Name
Miss Jessica Elizabeth Sagan	Jessica Sagan
Mr Stephen Bell	Stephen Bell
Mr John Paul Jennings	John Jennings

### Add commas (a useful name format for alphabetical sorting)

Name	Sort Name
Jessica Elizabeth Sagan	Sagan, Jessica
Stephen Bell	Bell, Stephen
John Paul Jennings	Jennings, John

### Concatenate text

First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Full Name
Jessica	Elizabeth	Sagan	Jessica Elizabeth Sagan
Stephen		Bell	Stephen Bell
John	Paul	Jennings	John Paul Jennings

### Concatenate text and insert extra text

First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Full Name
Jessica	Elizabeth	Sagan	First Name: Jessica, Last Name: Sagan
Stephen		Bell	First Name: Stephen, Last Name: Bell
John	Paul	Jennings	First Name: John, Last Name: Jennings

### Flash Fill Examples

**Change capitalization**

Mixed Case	Title Case
jessica elizabeth sagan	Jessica Elizabeth Sagan
stephen Bell	Stephen Bell
john Paul jennings	John Paul Jennings

**Extract the day, month or year from a date**

In all of the date based examples note that the *Date* column is formatted as a date.

Custom date formatting is beyond the scope of this *Basic Skills* book but is covered in depth in the *Essential Skills* book in this series (in: *Lesson 4-1: Format Dates*).

Date	Day	Date	Month	Date	Year
19th January 2013	19	19th January 2013	January	19th January 2013	2013
5th August 1967	5	5th August 1967	August	5th August 1967	1967
20th September 1999	20	20th September 1999	September	20th September 1999	1999

**Extract the day/month from a date**

Date	Day/Month
19th January 2013	19th January
5th August 1967	5th August
20th September 1999	20th September

**Extract domain names from e-mail addresses**

E-mail address	Domain
Mary@QuiteContrary.com	QuiteContrary.com
Humpty@Dumpty.com	Dumpty.com
Jack@Nimble.com	Nimble.com

**Format telephone numbers**

Name	Tel (unformatted)	Tel (formatted)
Books A Million	1134960227	(113) 496-0227
Bargain Bookstore	1154960498	(115) 496-0498
Books for Less	1164960593	(116) 496-0593