Lesson 3-23: Use an IFERROR function to suppress error messages

1 Open *Invoice-2* from your sample files folder (if it isn't already open).

2 Add a VLOOKUP formula to cell C6 to return the price that corresponds to the *Code* in cell A6.

You learned how to add a VLOOKUP function in *Lesson 3-22: Use a VLOOKUP function for an exact lookup*. This time, the correct arguments are:

Lookup_value	A6
Table_array	Stock
Col_index_num	5
Range_lookup	FALSE

3 AutoFill cells B6:C6 to cells B7:C8.

	A	B	C
5	Code	Description	Price
6	CA74	Cartier Tank 18K	4,570.00
7		#N/A	#N/A
8		#N/A	#N/A
9			Total: #N/A

This is nearly what is needed. The invoice will work just fine when all three lines are populated:

	A	B	C
5	Code	Description	Price
6	CA74	Cartier Tank 18K	4,570.00
7	RO66	Rolex Tudor Oyster	430.00
8	BR43	Breitling Chronomat 18K	3,070.00
9			Total: 8,070.00

But you need to cater for customers that only wish to purchase one watch. To make this work, you need to suppress the error messages when some invoice lines have no stock code.
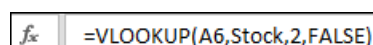
Fortunately, the IFERROR function is designed precisely for this purpose.

4 Wrap each VLOOKUP function with an IFERROR function to return a blank space when an error is encountered.

The IFERROR function can return the value of your choice whenever a formula returns an error.
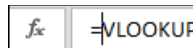
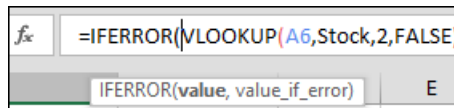1. Click in cell B6.

   Look at the formula in the formula bar:

   | f_x | =VLOOKUP(A6,Stock,2,FALSE) |

This is the VLOOKUP that returns the description. You're going to use this formula as the *value* argument for the IFERROR function. When one function is used inside another function in this way, we sometimes refer to the outside function as a *wrapper.*

2. Click just to the right of the equals sign in the formula bar.
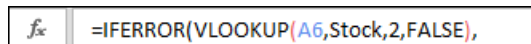
f_x =VLOOKUP

3. Type **IFERROR(**

f_x =IFERROR(VLOOKUP(A6,Stock,2,FALSE)

       IFERROR(**value**, value_if_error)   E

Notice the tip that has appeared. The entire VLOOKUP function is now being used as the *value* argument for the IFERROR function.
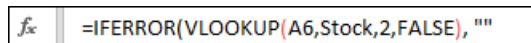
4. Click to the extreme right of the formula in the formula bar and add a comma:

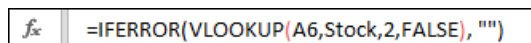f_x =IFERROR(VLOOKUP(A6,Stock,2,FALSE),

You are now ready to add the second argument for the IFERROR function. This argument defines what will be displayed if the VLOOKUP function returns an error.

5. Add an empty string to the IFERROR function.

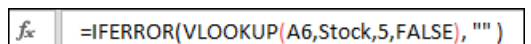   Type **""**. This is an empty string and tells Excel to keep the cell blank when an error is returned.

    f_x =IFERROR(VLOOKUP(A6,Stock,2,FALSE), ""

6. Close the bracket to complete the formula.

    f_x =IFERROR(VLOOKUP(A6,Stock,2,FALSE), "")

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

8. Do the same thing for the *Price* formula in cell C6.

    f_x =IFERROR(VLOOKUP(A6,Stock,5,FALSE), "")

5 AutoFill the formulas in cells B6:C6 to cells B7:C8.

The invoice now works fine, even when some stock codes are left blank.

	A	B	C
5	Code	Description	Price
6	CA74	Cartier Tank 18K	4,570.00
7			
8	PA83	Patek Phillipe Jumbo Nautilus	20,355.00
9		Total:	24,925.00

6 Save your work as *Invoice-3.*

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tip

AutoFill a range of cells in one operation

I've noticed in my classes that many students will respond to the instruction:

"AutoFill the formulas in cells B6:C6 to cells B7:C8"

... by performing two AutoFill operations:

1. Select cell B6.

2. AutoFill cell B6 down to row 8.

3. Select cell C6.

2. AutoFill cell C6 down to row 8.

A quicker way to do this is to AutoFill both cells at the same time:

1. Select cells B6:C6.

2. AutoFill both cells down to row 8.