

ESSENTIAL **C**OMPUTER **S**KILLS

Essential Office Applications Book 1

SAMPLE LESSON (FROM LESSON 6)

by
Scott Weberg

Scott's Place Curriculum



www.scottosplace.com

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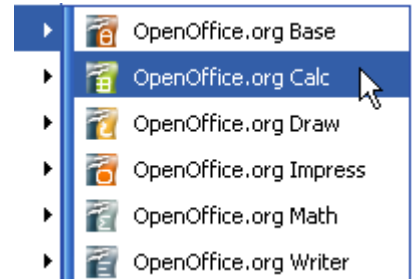
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Lesson 6: Spreadsheet Basics

A **spreadsheet** is an application that allows you to format, display, and manipulate data in a myriad of ways. **Data** is defined as “individual facts, statistics, or items of information.” The possibilities here are endless. Do you want to keep track of your sports achievements? Do you want to create a list of all the books you own, and be able to sort it by length, genre and author? Or maybe you want a little help keeping track of your school test scores throughout the year with a running average for each subject. Anytime you want to keep track of some information, you can use a spreadsheet to do so.

If you are using the OpenOffice.org application, the spreadsheet tool is called **Calc**. If you are using Microsoft Office, the spreadsheet program is called **Excel**. Microsoft Excel is very similar to Calc, and any major differences will be noted.



Once you open your spreadsheet program, you should see a window with grid lines that make up several rows and columns. The rows are usually numbered, while the columns are usually labeled with letters. The window from the **Calc** program is shown below.

 A screenshot of the OpenOffice.org Calc spreadsheet window titled 'Untitled1 - OpenOffice.org Calc'. The window shows a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, Tools, Data, Window, Help), a toolbar with various icons, and a spreadsheet grid. The grid has columns labeled A, B, C, D and rows numbered 1 through 11. Cell A1 is selected and highlighted with a solid black border. A dashed black border highlights the intersection of Row 7 and Column C, which is cell C7. Three text boxes with arrows point to specific parts of the window: the top menu and toolbar area, the selected cell A1, and the dashed border around cell C7.

Note that the menus, icons and settings at the top of the window are very similar to those in the Word Processor.

The first **cell** selected is referenced as “**A1**” (Column A, Row 1). The selected cell is shown in the field right above the spreadsheet grid.

The dotted lines indicate **Row 7** and **Column C**. Where the dotted lines intersect is the cell **C7**.

There are three basic types of data that can be entered in spreadsheet cells: text, numbers, and formulas. The remainder of this lesson will demonstrate entering these types of data.

NOTE: The best way to learn from these lessons is to **DO THEM** in your own spreadsheet as you read the lesson.

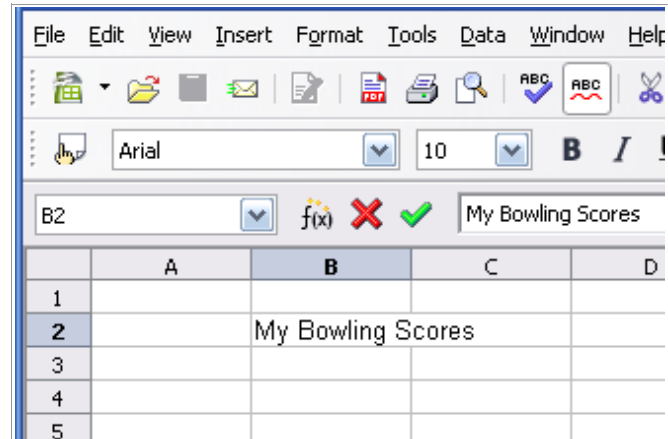
Entering Text

To make this more interesting, let's consider a plausible reason to create a spreadsheet. Say you are in a bowling league, and each week you bowl 3 games. You would like to create a spreadsheet to keep track of your games for the entire season.

The first thing you must do is decide how to lay out your spreadsheet. Think of it as a form that you will fill out each week after bowling your 3 games. You probably want a title for your spreadsheet at the top, so here is how to enter some text for your title.

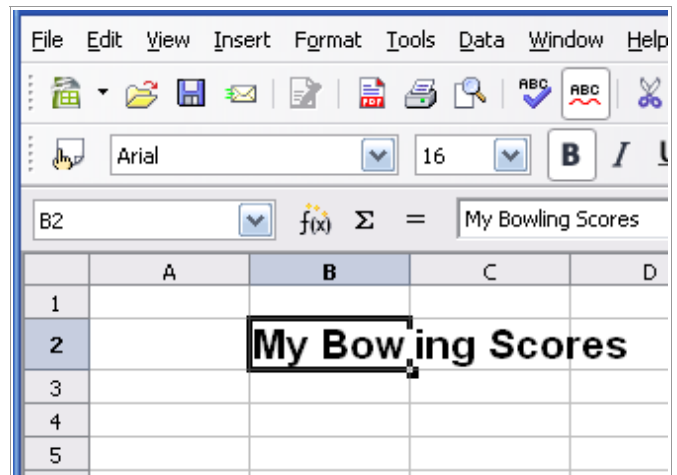
Click in a cell near the top of your spreadsheet, and type in your title. In this case, I selected cell B2, and typed “My Bowling Scores”.

Notice that the text does not *look* like a title yet. Remember what you learned in your lessons on Word Processing? That knowledge will serve you well here. You can change the size and font of your text, and make it bold, in the same way. Notice in the picture that this text is using the **Arial** font, and is **10** point size.



Now I have adjusted the text. You can either highlight the text, or select the cell (you might have to click on another cell, and then click on B2 again), and then set the size and other aspects of the text in the cell. You should see the text change immediately as you change the formatting options.

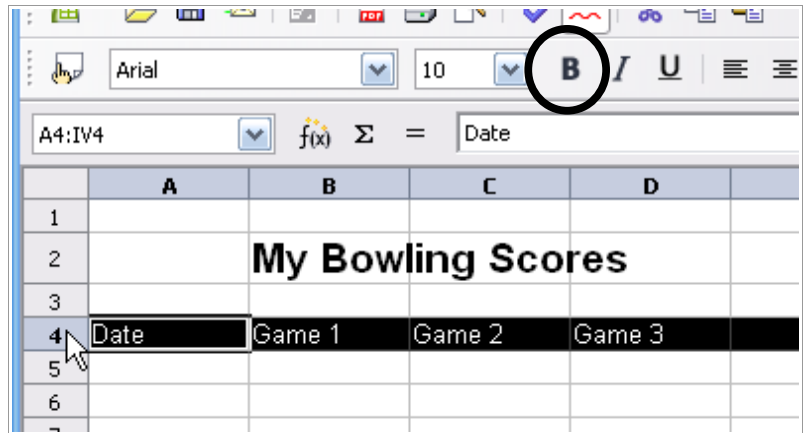
To make your text look like a title, try **16** point and **bold**, as shown to the right.



In addition to the title, you probably will want a heading line, to tell you exactly what data will go in each column of your spreadsheet. (Headings are *always* a good idea, even if you think that no one else will ever look at the spreadsheet.)

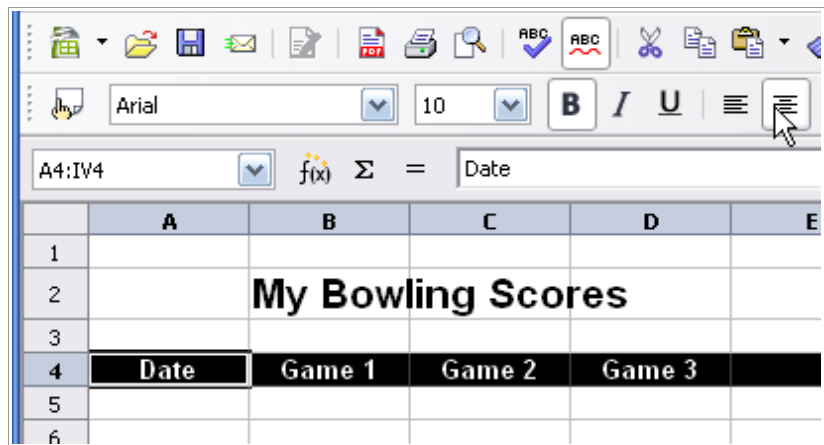
For your bowling spreadsheet, you might decide to have 1 row for each week's games. In column A, you could put the date you bowled. In columns B, C, and D, you could put each game's score. So let's set up a heading for that layout.

Enter the heading for each column – Date, Game 1, Game 2, and Game 3. Usually you will want the heading line to be **bold**, and you can set the entire *row* to be bold at once. Simply click on the Row number to highlight the entire row, as shown in this picture. Then click on the bold icon (circled).

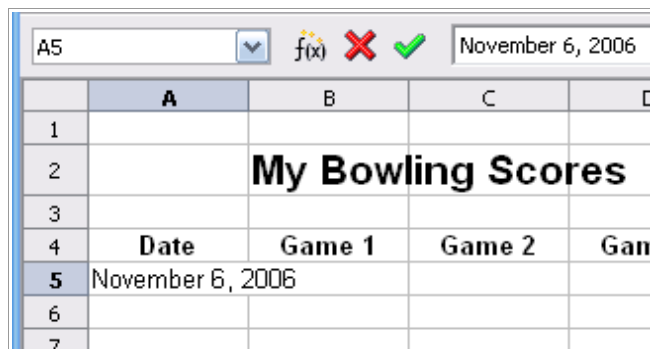
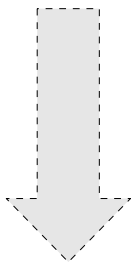


I also think it looks nice to have each heading centered over the column, instead of left-justified.

While the row is selected, simply click on the **centered text** icon, as shown by the mouse pointer in the picture to the right. Presto! All your column headings in that row (Row 4 in the picture) will be centered. Easy!

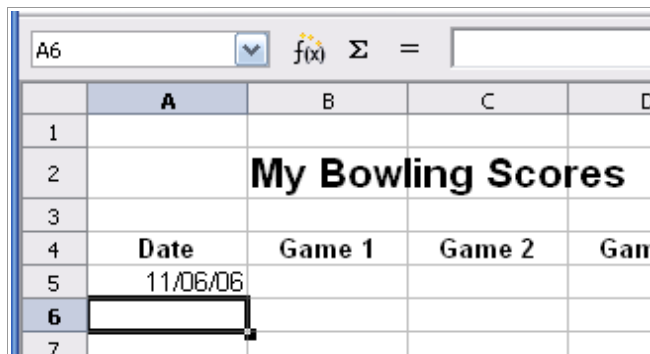


Under the date heading, enter the date that you bowled in normal text as shown – November 6, 2006 – and then press the **Enter** key.



Notice that the date automatically changed to the format of **11/06/06**.

This is because the spreadsheet recognized that you typed a date into the cell, and used a default format to display the date. We will look at how to change this format later, but this default format is OK for now.



Entering Numbers

Now we will enter the scores of the three games that you bowled on November 6th. To enter numbers in your spreadsheet, simply type them in the same way you typed your text in the previous section. The spreadsheet will understand that your data is a number if it contains a single number without any letters or spaces in the cell.

Use the **Arrow Keys** to move the highlighted cell to **B5**, and enter a score of 127, as shown.

When you finish typing “127” you can either press the **Enter** key (which moves the highlighted cell *down*), the **Tab** key (which moves the cell to the *right*), or you can press one of the **Arrow Keys** to enter the number and move the highlighted cell in the direction of the arrow.

	A	B	C	D
1				
2	My Bowling Scores			
3				
4	Date	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3
5	11/06/06	127		
6				
7				

Now you can enter all the games you bowled for the month of November, one set of games for each week in the month.

(As you are working along with this lesson in your spreadsheet, you will want to enter the same numbers as shown in this picture so that your formulas in the next section will give you the same answers as the pictures.)

	A	B	C	D
1				
2	My Bowling Scores			
3				
4	Date	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3
5	11/06/06	127	106	113
6	11/13/06	92	110	148
7	11/20/06	101	133	117
8	11/27/06	152	139	103
9				
10				

Congratulations! You have just created your first spreadsheet! You could use a spreadsheet like this to record all your bowling scores for an entire season in one simple file.

If you have not done so already, make sure you **Save** your spreadsheet so you don't lose your work. You can save spreadsheets in the same way you saved your Word Processing documents. I named my spreadsheet “My Bowling Scores”.

Your bowling spreadsheet is useful for recording data, but you will begin to see the true power of spreadsheets in the next section. Spreadsheets not only record data, but they also allow you to easily calculate even more useful data. For example, wouldn't you like to know what your average bowling score was for each week? Or for the month? Or your average for the entire season? You could use a calculator to figure all this out, or you can continue reading to learn how to let your spreadsheet do all the work for you.