

# SUBSTITUTE function

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This article describes the formula syntax and usage of the **SUBSTITUTE** function in Microsoft Excel.

## Description

Substitutes `new_text` for `old_text` in a text string. Use **SUBSTITUTE** when you want to replace specific text in a text string; use **REPLACE** when you want to replace any text that occurs in a specific location in a text string.

## Syntax

**SUBSTITUTE**(text, old\_text, new\_text, [instance\_num])

The **SUBSTITUTE** function syntax has the following arguments:

- **Text** Required. The text or the reference to a cell containing text for which you want to substitute characters.
- **Old\_text** Required. The text you want to replace.
- **New\_text** Required. The text you want to replace `old_text` with.
- **Instance\_num** Optional. Specifies which occurrence of `old_text` you want to replace with `new_text`. If you specify `instance_num`, only that instance of `old_text` is

replaced. Otherwise, every occurrence of `old_text` in `text` is changed to `new_text`.

## Example

Copy the example data in the following table, and paste it in cell A1 of a new Excel worksheet. For formulas to show results, select them, press F2, and then press Enter. If you need to, you can adjust the column widths to see all the data.

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**Data**

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Sales Data <

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Quarter 1, 2008 <

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Quarter 1, 2011 <

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Formula	Description (Result)	Result
=SUBSTITUTE(A2, "Sales", "Cost")	Substitutes Cost for Sales (Cost Data)	Cost Data
=SUBSTITUTE(A3, "1", "2", 1)	Substitutes first instance of "1" with "2" (Quarter 2, 2008)	Quarter 2, 2008
=SUBSTITUTE(A4, "1", "2", 3)	Substitutes third instance of "1" with "2" (Quarter 1, 2012)	Quarter 1, 2012

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