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Displaying Formulas in Excel

(All versions of Excel)

Ever wondered which cells have what formulas?

Whenever you open a spreadsheet, chances are you may not be the first person who has worked with it. One of the most difficult things to do when inheriting a spreadsheet is to decipher it and find out where formulas have been entered and what the formulas contain.

You can always click on a cell and look in the formula bar to see what formula exists in that cell. But, there's an easier way and it's one keystroke!

Anywhere in your spreadsheet, hold the **Ctrl** key and press the **tilde** (~) key (no shift key needed). (In Excel's Help, it's called the "single left quotation key" but since most of us use the single quote key just to the right of your semicolon key, you might think I meant that one. It doesn't work for this feature). So, I'm calling this the **tilde key**.

Here's what it looks like before I press **Ctrl + ~**

Expense	Cash	Franklin	Williams
Auto rental	50.00	50.00	50.00
Air fare	2100.00	0.00	0.00
Lodging	720.55	261.00	420.89
Food/Meals	144.00	78.00	115.75
Telephone	22.50	3.50	12.40
Entertainment	80.00	33.00	43.50
Misc.	29.50	22.65	25.88
TOTALS:	\$3,146.55	\$448.15	\$668.42

And here's what it looks like after I press **Ctrl + ~**

Expense	Cash	Franklin	Williams
Auto rental	50	50	50
Air fare	2100	0	0
Lodging	720.55	261	420.89
Food/Meals	144	78	115.75
Telephone	22.5	3.5	12.4
Entertainment	80	33	43.5
Misc.	29.5	22.65	25.88
TOTALS:	=SUM(B2:B8)	=SUM(C2:C8)	=SUM(D2:D8)

Your entire spreadsheet is now displayed showing formulas where values used to be. Some of the cells are going to be larger to accommodate your formulas, but don't panic. You can get everything back as it was by pressing the **Ctrl + ~** key again.

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