Chapter 1 Entering the Spreadsheet Data

In This Chapter

- Launching Excel and opening a new workbook
- Moving around the workbook
- Selecting cell ranges in a worksheet
- Doing simple data entry in a worksheet
- ▶ Using AutoFill to create data series and copy formulas
- Saving the spreadsheet as an Excel workbook file

A ata entry is the bread and butter of any spreadsheet you create or edit. The exercises in this chapter give you a chance to practice launching Excel, moving around a new spreadsheet, the many aspects of data entry, and, most importantly, saving your work.

Launching Excel

Excel is only one of the many application programs included as part of Microsoft Office. In order to be proficient in its use, you need to be familiar with all the various ways of launching the program.



• What are the different techniques I can use to start Excel?

- **A.** You should be familiar with all these methods:
 - Click Start on the Windows taskbar and then highlight All Programs and click Microsoft Office Excel (2003 users need to select the Microsoft Office item before clicking Microsoft Office Excel).
- Double-click an Excel workbook file in any folder on any drive to which your computer has access.
- Double-click the Excel program icon on your computer's desktop.
- Click the Microsoft Excel icon on the taskbar's Start menu.
- Click the Excel icon on the Quick Launch toolbar.

Try It

Exercise 1-1: Launching Excel

The last three methods listed previously for launching Excel are available only if you've added the Excel program icon to the desktop, the Start menu, and the Quick Launch toolbar, respectively. For this exercise, add the Excel program icon to your computer if you still need to and then launch Excel using each of the five methods.



- ✓ Add an Microsoft Office Excel shortcut to the Windows desktop by right-clicking the Microsoft Office Excel item as it appears on the Start All Programs Microsoft Office submenu and then highlighting Send To before you click Desktop (Create Shortcut) on the Send To submenu.
- Add Excel to the Start menu by right-clicking the Microsoft Office Excel desktop shortcut and then clicking Pin to Start Menu on its shortcut menu.
- Add Excel to the Quick Launch toolbar on the Windows taskbar by holding down Ctrl as you drag and drop the Microsoft Office Excel desktop shortcut on to its place in the toolbar.



How do I make Excel launch automatically each time I start my computer?

А. Copy the Microsoft Office Excel item to the Startup submenu on the All Programs menu.

Opening a New Workbook

Each time you launch Excel (using any method other than double-clicking an Excel file icon), a new workbook containing three blank worksheets opens. You can then build your new spreadsheet in this workbook, using any of its sheet pages.

The blank workbook that opens with Excel is given a temporary filename such as Book1, Book2, and so on that appears after Excel's name on the program window's title bar. If you want to start work on a spreadsheet in another workbook, click the New button on the Standard toolbar.

When Excel opens a blank workbook upon launching the program or after clicking the New button, the new workbook follows the general Excel Worksheet template (which controls the formatting applied to all its blank cells). You can also open new workbooks from other, specialized templates or from a workbook that you've already created. To do this, choose File=>New. If you're running Excel 2002 or 2003, the program opens the New Workbook Task pane, where you can click the template or file to use. If you're running Excel 2000 or earlier, the program opens the New dialog box, from which you can open the template.



The Templates folder in the Excel Workbook folder on the workbook CD-ROM (which you copied to the Excel Workbook Templates folder on your hard disk) contains a couple of template files that you can use and modify for your own use. To take a peek at them on the General tab of the Microsoft Templates folder, click the On My Computer link under Templates on the New Workbook task pane.

What's so special about an Excel template?

A. A template is a particular type of Excel file designed to automatically generate new workbooks that use both its data and formatting. Each time you open a template, Excel opens a copy of the template file rather than the original (by appending a number to the template's original filename). Excel template files use the filename extension .xlt to differentiate them from regular Excel workbook files, which carry an .xls filename extension.

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How can I create templates out of my own Excel workbook files?

A. Build a spreadsheet in a new or existing workbook file. To this spreadsheet add all the stock text and data, calculating formulas, and formatting required in all the files

- **Q.** What's the difference between opening a new workbook file from an Excel template file rather than an existing Excel workbook file?
- **A.** None, provided that you open the new file using the From Existing Workbook under New or the On My Computer link under Templates in the New Workbook Task pane, rather than in the Open dialog box. (Doing this opens not a copy of the template or workbook file but the original file for editing.)

you will generate from its ensuing template and then save this file with the File Save As command. Select Template (*.xlt) in the Save As Type drop-down list box and edit the dummy filename (without removing the .xlt filename extension) before you click the Save button.

Exercise 1-2: Opening a New Workbook

Launch Excel and then open a new workbook (Book2). Switch to Book1 (notice the change in the Excel program title bar) and then back to Book2 and close this workbook. Notice what happens to Book1 when you close Book2. Leave Book1 open for the next exercise.



Try It

To switch from Sheet1 of Book2 and make Sheet1 of Book1 active, click the Book1 icon on the Windows taskbar or press Ctrl+Tab (to switch back to Book2, click the Book2 icon on the taskbar or press Ctrl+Tab again so that Sheet1 of Book2 is selected).

To close a workbook file, choose File Close or click the workbook's Close Window button. (The Close Window button is the one with the black X, which is immediately beneath the program's red Close button, which has a white X.)

Exercise 1-3: Opening a New Workbook from a Template

Open a new workbook from the Hourly Wages template that you copied from the Templates folder on the workbook CD-ROM to the Microsoft Templates folder (see "Using the Practice Material on the CD-ROM" in the Introduction for details). Switch back and forth between the Book1 and Hourly Wages1 workbook files. Then, close the Hourly Wages1.xls workbook file, leaving open the Book1.xls file for the next exercise.



To open a new workbook from a template file, you click the On My Computer link under Templates on the New Workbook task pane, and then click the .xlt file to use in the General tab of the Templates folder before you select OK.

Moving around the Workbook

The key to doing both data entry and data editing in any spreadsheet is selecting the cell or cells you want to fill or modify. Selecting a cell almost always entails moving the cell cursor (or pointer) to another part of the current worksheet. Sometimes, it also involves activating a different worksheet in the workbook file.

Excel gives you plenty of choices in techniques for moving the cell cursor: Some use the mouse and others are keyboard driven.

Moving within the displayed area

Here's a recap of the most important ways to move the cell cursor to a new cell within the area of the worksheet that is currently displayed on-screen:

- Click the target cell with the white-cross mouse pointer.
- ✓ Press the arrow keys until the cell pointer is in the target cell.
- Click the Name Box with the current cell reference at the very beginning of the Formula Bar, enter the reference of the target (by column letter and row number as in D12), and press Enter.

Try It

Exercise 1-4: Moving the Cell Cursor within the Displayed Area

Make Sheet1 of the blank workbook, Book1, active and then practice moving the cell cursor to different cells in the displayed area using the mouse, arrow keys, and Name Box:

- 1. Move the cell pointer to cell F9 with the mouse.
- 2. Move the cell pointer to cell C13 using just the down and left arrow keys.
- **3.** Move the cell pointer to cell A1 using only the Name Box.



Keep in mind that you can always move the cursor to cell A1 (also known as the Home cell) of any active worksheet simply by pressing Ctrl+Home.

Moving to a new area of the worksheet

Many times you have to make cell entries in areas that aren't currently displayed in the active worksheet. One of quickest ways to do this is by entering the reference of the cell you want to go to in the Name Box. You can also use any the following techniques to scroll to new parts of the current worksheet:

- ✓ To scroll up and down rows of the worksheet by windows, press Page Up or Page Down or click the blank area above or below the scroll box in the vertical scroll bar.
- ✓ To scroll left and right columns of the worksheet by windows, click the blank area to the left or right of the scroll box in the horizontal scroll bar.
- ✓ To quickly scroll through rows or columns of the worksheet, hold down the Shift key as you drag the scroll box up or down in the vertical scroll bar or left and right in the horizontal scroll bar.

- If you use a mouse with a wheel button, scroll up and down the rows of the worksheet by rotating the wheel button forward (to scroll up) and backward (to scroll down).
- If you use a mouse with a wheel button, pan through the rows and columns of the worksheet by clicking the wheel button and then dragging the triangular mouse pointer in the direction you want to scroll.



Don't forget that scrolling is not the same as selecting! After scrolling to a new part of the worksheet in view, you still have to select a cell by clicking it to set the cursor in it.

Exercise 1-5: Moving the Cell Cursor to Distant Parts of the Worksheet

Practice moving the cell pointer to cells in unseen parts of Sheet1 in the Book1 workbook by doing the following:

- 1. Move the cell cursor to cell C125 with the Name Box on the Formula Bar.
- **2.** Move the cell cursor to cell CA125 using the horizontal scroll bar.
- **3.** Move the cell cursor to cell CA63560 using the vertical scroll bar.
- **4.** Move the cell cursor directly to cell A1 (the Home cell) in a single operation.

Hold down the Shift key to scroll quickly through columns and rows by dragging the scroll box in the horizontal or vertical scroll bar.

After scrolling into view the region with the cell you want to select, you still need to click the cell to select it.



What's the most efficient way to move between ranges of data that are spread out across a worksheet? **A.** Use the Ctrl key in combination with any of the four arrow keys to jump from occupied cell to occupied cell in a particular direction.

Try It

Exercise 1-6: Moving the Cell Cursor from Entry to Entry

Practice moving the cell pointer around a blank worksheet and between data entries with the Ctrl key and the arrow keys in Sheet1 of Book1 by doing the following:

- Press Ctrl+→, Ctrl+↓, Ctrl+←, and Ctrl+↑ in succession to jump the cell cursor from A1 to IV1, IV1 to IV65536, IV65536 to A65536, and A65536 to back to A1 (when there are no occupied cells in a particular direction, the cursor jumps right to the border of the worksheet).
- **2.** Move the cell cursor to cell A18, type **Stop**, and press Ctrl+Home. Next, press Ctrl+↓ (the cursor stops in A18 rather than A65536 because A18 is now occupied).
- **3.** Move the cell cursor to cell AB18, type **Stop Again**, and press Home. Next, press Ctrl+→ (the cursor stops in cell AB18 rather than IV18 because AB18 is now occupied).
- **4.** Press the Delete key, and then press Ctrl+← followed by the Delete key to remove the two dummy cell entries. Press Ctrl+Home to put the cursor back in cell A1.

Moving to a different sheet in the workbook

Each new workbook you start uses the general Excel Worksheet template that automatically includes three blank worksheets that you can fill with data. If you need more space for a particular spreadsheet, you can add additional worksheets with the Insert=>Worksheet command. If you want all new workbooks you open to have more worksheets, enter a new value in Sheets in a New Workbook text box on the General tab of the Options dialog box (Tools=>Options).



Each sheet in a workbook is automatically given the next available numeric name such as Sheet1, Sheet2, and the like, but you can easily replace these generic names with something descriptive: Double-click the tab you want to rename, type the new sheet name, and press Enter. You can also color-code a sheet tab by right-clicking it, clicking Tab Color on the shortcut menu, and then selecting the color Format Tab Color dialog box before you select OK.

Of course, you must know how to move between the sheets in order to be able to add and edit data in them. The most direct way to select a new worksheet is to click its sheet tab, although you can also use the shortcut keys Ctrl+Page Down to select the next sheet and Ctrl+Page Up to select the previous sheet.

If you add so many worksheets to your workbook that all their sheet tabs can't all be displayed at one time, you can use the Tab scroll buttons to the immediate left of the sheet tab to bring into view the tabs you want to select. You can also display more tabs by reducing the width of the horizontal bar (by dragging to the right the split bar that appears when you position the mouse pointer on the vertical bar at the beginning of the scroll bar).

Try It

Exercise 1-7: Moving to Different Worksheets

Practice moving the cell cursor to specific cells in different worksheets of Book1 by doing the following:

- **1.** Move the cell cursor to cell J25 on Sheet2 (whose cell reference is Sheet2!J25).
- 2. Move the cell cursor to cell CC1000 on Sheet3 (Sheet3!CC1000).
- **3.** Move the cell cursor to cell Sheet 3:J25 on Sheet3, and then activate Sheet2 (note the difference in the worksheet view despite the fact that you've moved to the same cell on an earlier worksheet).
- **4.** Rename Sheet1 to **Spring Sale**.

Selecting Cell Ranges

When entering, editing, or formatting a single cell, all you have to do is move the cell cursor to it as you practiced in the earlier exercises. You can also enter the same data as well do the same type of editing and formatting in a bunch of cells at one time, but to do so, you must first select the cells where all this is going to happen.

Most of the time when selecting multiple cells in a worksheet, you select a discrete block of cells of so many rows high and so many columns wide. Such a block is known as a *cell range* in the parlance of spreadsheet software.

A cell range is most often described by the reference of its first and last cell (that is, the cell in the upper-left corner and the lower-right corner of is block, respectively). When written, a cell range is separated by a colon, as in B15:F20, for a six-row and six-column cell range whose first cell is B15 and last cell F20. To select this cell range, you move the cursor to cell B15 and then hold down the Shift key as you use the \downarrow and \rightarrow keys to move the cursor to cell F20.

Excel, however, does not limit you to selecting a single cell range for data entry, editing, or formatting. You can select as many cell ranges (even those as small as a single cell) by holding down the Ctrl key as you add a new range to the cell selection.



Always think of the Shift key when you want to select a single range of cells and the Ctrl key when you want to select more than one cell range at one time.

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How do I select cell ranges that include complete rows and columns of the active worksheet?

- **A.** Click the letter of the column or the number of the row whose cells are to be selected in the column and row header, respectively. To select multiple columns or
- **Q.** How do I select ent worksheet
 - How do I select cell ranges that span different worksheets of the active workbook?

rows, hold down the Shift key as you drag through them, if they are consecutive, or click them as you hold down the Ctrl key, if they are noncontiguous. Press Ctrl+A or click the box at the junction of the column and row header to select all the columns and rows in the active worksheet (in other words, the entire worksheet).

A. Click the tab of the first worksheet and then hold down Shift as you click the last sheet before you select the cell range or ranges on the active sheet.

Try It

Exercise 1-8: Selecting Various Cell Ranges

Practice selecting cell ranges in the Spring Sale worksheet of Book1 by doing the following:

- **1.** Select the cell range A2:E2, and then click the Fill Color drop-down button on the Formatting toolbar. Click the Gray-25% square in the pop-up color palette.
- **2.** Select the cell ranges A3:A9 and B3:E3 as a single cell selection (I'm sure you can ConTRoL it) and then assign Light Turquoise to it using the Fill Color drop-down button.
- **3.** Select the cell range B4:E9 and then assign Light Yellow to this range using the Fill Color drop-down button. Next, move the cell cursor to cell A1 (Home).

Making Cell Entries

As you are probably already aware, Excel recognizes only two types of cell entries, text (label) and number (or value). Numeric cell entries are those that consist solely of

numbers or calculable formulas. Text entries are those that consist of all letters or a combination of letters, numbers, and punctuation on which Excel can perform no sort of calculation.

Anything you enter into a cell or cell selection is immediately analyzed as either being a number or text entry. Because the general Excel Worksheet template automatically left-aligns all text entries and right-aligns all numeric ones, you can often tell immediately how your entry has been classified by noting how it's aligned in its cell.

When you make a numeric entry in a worksheet, Excel not only right-aligns the value in its cell but also assigns the General number format to it. In this format, only significant digits are displayed. This means that all trailing zeros are dropped. Also, if the number you enter contains more that can fit within the current column width, Excel automatically converts the value to scientific notation (as in 5.00E+09 for 5,000,000,000).

Sometimes you have to override Excel's number/text assignment in order to obtain the desired cell entry. The most famous example of this is a ZIP code or all numeric part or item number that begins with a zero, as in 00105. If you try to enter this ZIP code into a cell simply by typing its five digits, Excel will interpret it as a numeric entry and in assigning the General format to it, retain only the value 105 in the cell. In order to retain the preceding zeros, you need to force the entry to be recognized as text by typing an initial apostrophe as in '00105 (this apostrophe does not appear in the cell although you can see it on the Formula bar).

Entering data in a single cell

Most cell entries are made by typing from the keyboard (although later versions of Excel do support voice and ink text entry). After typing the characters, which appear both in the cell and on the Formula bar, you must still complete the entry.



Anytime prior to completing the cell entry, you can press the Esc key to clear the cell of all characters you typed there.



- How many methods can I use to complete an entry in the current cell?
- **A.** You should be familiar with all these methods:
 - Click the Enter box on the Formula bar (the one with the check mark).

- Press the Enter key.
- Press one of the arrow keys.
- Press Tab, Shift+Tab, Home, Ctrl+Home, Page Up, Page Down, Ctrl+Page Up, Ctrl+Page Down, or any of the other cursor-movement key combinations



Click the Enter box on the Formula bar when you want the cell cursor to remain in the cell where you just made the entry (so that you can format it in some fashion). Press Enter when you want to move the cell cursor to the next row in order to make another entry.

Exercise 1-9: Making Simple Data Entries

Complete the data entry for the simple Spring Sale table shown in Figure 1-1 by doing the following:

- **1.** Enter the table title **Spring Sale Furniture Discounts** in cell A2.
- **2.** Enter the column headings in row 3 as follows:
 - Code in cell A3
 - **Description** in cell B3
 - Retail Price in cell C3
 - **Discount** in cell D3
 - Amount in cell E3

3. Enter the code numbers in column A as follows:

- 02-305 in cell A4
- 02-240 in cell A5
- 04-356 in cell A6
- 01-234 in cell A7
- **03-003** in cell A8
- 01-240 in cell A9
- **4.** Enter the furniture descriptions in column B as follows:
 - 36-inch round table in cell B4
 - 72-inch dining table in cell B5
 - Hutch in cell B6
 - Side chair in cell B7
 - Arm chair in cell B8
 - Armoire in cell B9

5. Enter the retail prices of the furniture in column C as follows:

- 1250 in cell C4
- 1400 in cell C5
- 2500 in cell C6
- **350** in cell C7
- 500 in cell C8
- 1750 in cell C9

6. Enter the discount percentages in column D as follows:

- 25% in cells D4, D5, and D6
- 15% in cells D7 and D8
- 25% in cell D9

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Check your completed spreadsheet table against the one in Solved1-9.xls. (Open this workbook in the Chap1 folder inside the My Practice Spreadsheets folder that you've created in your My Documents folder your hard disk, or in the Excel Workbook folder on the CD-ROM that came with this book.)

Entering data in a cell range

Sometimes you want to make the same entry in several different cells in the same worksheet. To do this, select all the cells and cell ranges and then press Ctrl+Enter to both complete the entry you make in the active cell and simultaneously insert it into all the other selected cells.

Filling in a data series with the Fill handle

The tiny black square in the lower-right corner of the cell cursor is known as the Fill handle. The Fill handle is your key to the AutoFill feature that makes it super-easy either to fill in a continuous range with the same entry or with data series (such as Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and so on, or 101, 102, 103, and the like).

To create a sequential series that increments by one unit (day, hour, month, widget number), you enter the first entry in the series in a blank cell and then drag the Fill handle in the direction you want the series to appear (down or to the right are the most common directions). To create series that increments by other units (every other day, every third month, every fourth hour, every tenth widget), you enter the first two entries in the series (that serve as an example of the increment to be used) in two adjacent blank cells and then drag the Fill handle in the appropriate direction.



Instead of filling in these recognized data series with AutoFill, you can force Excel to copy the entry you've made in the current cell by holding down the Ctrl key as you drag the Fill handle. Excel indicates that it copied rather than filled a range by displaying a tiny plus sign to the side of the Fill handle mouse pointer.

Exercise 1-10: Entering the Same Entry and Using AutoFill

Open a new blank workbook, Book2, and then practice making the same data entry in multiple ranges and using the Fill handle to create various data series in its Sheet1:

- **7.** Enter today's date, following the date format *Oct-25-06*, in the cell selection A1, D3:F3, and B4:B6.
 - Don't forget to hold down the Ctrl key when you're selecting the three ranges in the cell selection.
 - Be sure to complete the current date entry into all the cells of the selection by pressing Ctrl+Enter.
- **2.** Use AutoFill to create a data series with all 12 months in the cell range A8:A19 starting with **January**.
- **3.** Use AutoFill to create a data series with the names of all the days of the week in cell range C8:18 starting with **Monday**.
- **4.** Use AutoFill to create a data series with hours that go from **8:00AM** to 8:00PM in cell range C10:C22.
- **5.** Use AutoFill to create a data series in cell range E10:H10 containing the headings **Qtr1**, Qtr2, Qtr3, and Qtr4.
- **6.** Use AutoFill to create a series in cell range E12:E21 containing **1st Team**, 2nd Team, 3rd Team, and so on all the way up to 10th Team.
- **7.** Use AutoFill to create a data series in cell range G12:L12 that contains the name of every other month starting with **November** and ending with September.



- Don't forget that you need to indicate the every-other-month increment to Excel (by entering January in cell H12 and then selecting the range G12:H12) before using the Fill handle to create the data series.
- **8.** Use AutoFill to copy the data entry **Item 1** to the entire cell range G14:G19 (don't let this one get out of ConTRoL).

Copying a formula with the Fill handle

AutoFill is not only useful for filling in a data series or copying a static data entry to a continuous cell range but also for copying a formula across a row or down a column of a data table. When you copy a formula, Excel automatically adjusts the column and row references in the copies so that they refer to the right data.



Don't forget that Excel automatically uses the so-called relative column and row references cell addresses in all formulas you create. If you ever need to override this so that all or part of a cell reference is not adjusted in the copied formulas, you enter a \$ (dollar sign) before the cell's column letter or row number (you can have Excel do it for you by pressing F4 while building the formula on the Formula bar).

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Try It

Exercise 1-11: Copying a Formula with AutoFill

Complete the Spring Sale table by using the following steps to enter the formula that calculates the discount amount in cell E4 and then use AutoFill to copy that formula down the cell range E5:E9. (Check your results against those in the Spring Sale table shown in *Solved1-11.xls*. You can find this workbook in the Chapter 1 folder in the My Practice Spreadsheets folder in the My Documents folder on your hard disk or in the Excel Workbook folder on the CD-ROM that comes with this book.)



- **1.** Switch to the Spring Sale sheet of Book1 and then move the cell cursor to cell E4.
- **2.** Type = (equal) to start the formula for calculating the sale price of the 36-inch round table (all Excel formulas start with the equal sign).
- **3.** Click cell C4, and then type * (asterisk), which Excel uses as the sign of multiplication, before you click cell D4 (the formula now reads =C4*D4 on the Formula bar).
- **4.** Click the Enter box on the Formula bar and then drag the Fill handle of the cell cursor in cell E4 down to E9 and release the mouse button to make the copies of the formula.

Saving the Spreadsheet in a Workbook File

Now all that remains to do is to save the spreadsheets you created while performing the exercises in this chapter before exiting Excel. As you know, all work that you do in between the times you save the worksheet is at risk because you immediately lose it if your computer experiences even the briefest power interruption.

The first time you save your spreadsheet in a workbook file, the Save As dialog box appears, giving you the opportunity to rename the file (replacing the Book1, Book2 monikers with something more descriptive) in the File Name text and indicate the folder in which it should be saved in the Save In drop-down list box. After that, you can use the Save command to save all additional changes to the same file without opening any dialog box.



Excel saves the current position of the cell cursor in the worksheet when you save its workbook. Therefore, always position the cursor in the cell you want to be current when you next open the workbook for editing before doing the final save of your work session.

How many different techniques can I use to save changes to my workbook file?

- **A.** You should be familiar with all these methods:
 - Click the Save button on the Standard toolbar (the one with the disk icon).
- Choose File >Save on the Menu bar (choose File >Save As if you want to open the Save As dialog box again so that you can rename or save a copy in a new folder).
- Press F12 (Shift+12 to open the Save As dialog box).

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Exercise 1-12: Saving a Spreadsheet

Save the Spring Sales table in a new My Spreadsheets folder inside the My Documents folder on your hard disk:

- **1.** With the Spring Sales table displayed on-screen, select cell A2 before you open the Save As dialog box and then click the New Folder button in the Save As dialog box.
- **2.** Type **My Spreadsheets** (or **My Practice Spreadsheets** if you already have a My Spreadsheets folder inside the My Documents folder) as the folder name in the Name text box of the New Folder dialog box and select OK.
- **3.** Replace Book1.xls in the Name text box by typing **Spring Furniture Sale** and then clicking the Save button.
- **4.** Close the *Spring Furniture Sale* workbook and then switch to Sheet1 of Book2. Save this spreadsheet in the My Spreadsheets folder with the filename **AutoFill Practice** after positioning the cell cursor in cell A1.
- **5.** Close the *AutoFill Practice* workbook and the *Hourly Wages1* workbook by exiting Excel (File=>Exit or Alt+F4) don't save your changes to the *Hourly Wages1* workbook.

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