

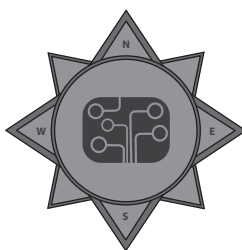
## USING A COMPUTER SPREADSHEET

There are many options of computer spreadsheets, most famously Microsoft Excel. But there are also freeware options out there, like OpenOffice, that work and look almost identical.

A spreadsheet is an incredibly powerful tool for recording data. Not only can you put items into a neat format to keep track of them, but you can also use calculations to auto-calculate formulas.

For the sake of this fast tutorial I will use Excel as the example.

## FLIP OVER FOR YOUR NEXT CHALLENGE



### EARN THIS NUGGET

Create your own spreadsheet to show your weekly allowance, if you have one, fixed expenses, and what you have left. It should be such that as your fixed expenses change, so your amount left at the end of the week changes too. The allowance and expenses don't have to be real; they can be fun. Show your parents your working spreadsheet.

You will start off with a blank grid, A-Z from left to right and one to infinity, top to bottom.

If I type a number in the first column, then select the cell, I can move the content of that cell anywhere I want. You'll see the cursor turns into a four directional cross.

Now, after you have moved the data, move the cursor to the bottom right of that cell. Notice it becomes a different symbol. It's now a small black cross. Click the bottom cell corner and drag it down.



It looks like it just copied that cell, but it is actually doing a calculation and populating those cells how it thinks you want them to be. No undo for that. This time type in 15 underneath the cell with 10 in it. Select both cells at the same time and drag them down using the bottom right hand corner of the bottom cell.

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Now the spread sheet sees a pattern and populates based on the pattern that it sees..

This time type in a date and drag that down.

The spreadsheet recognizes the date and assumes by dragging you'll want sequential days.

Now just for fun, I added an expense for each date, along with a price that I made up. I formatted the dollar column by selecting it and hitting the dollar sign on the tool bar above it. You can also right click and select "format cell," then select "currency." But that method will not put the dollar sign in the front. No biggie.

I also put "Total" in one of the cells and colored it red, just as you might with other computer programs.

Now if you hit the sigma symbol on the toolbar with the cell selected underneath the dollar amounts it will add all those together. You can also do just about any other calculation.



Now at any point, you can change any of these numbers (except the total, because this is driven by all the others) and the overall total will change.

Now, if you click on any cell, you'll notice that the wide box just above the spreadsheet itself will display the content of the selected cell. If you click on cell C3, it will display 18. If you click on cell B1, it will indicate "bike repair." This is the hard data that I typed into the spreadsheet. But clicking on the box to the right of the red "Total" cell, it says something totally different than what you see in the cell. It shows the formula.

What it is saying is that it is calculating the sum of cell C1 to C6. If I change the formula in that box to Sum (C1:C4) you'll notice it now is not including the bottom two cells in the calculation and my total is reduced by those two amounts.

So that is some of the very, very basics of Excel and other spreadsheets. Once you understand the basics, you can do some quite incredible things. Whole volumes have been written on this software. But you'll see how spreadsheets are used in almost every work environment out there. Having a basic understanding of their operation is a great skill to have, Cragman.