Select All Button

Clicking the intersection of the row and column headers selects all cells on the active worksheet of the active window.

Active Cell Indicator

This dark outline indicates the currently active cell (one of the 16,777,216 cells on each worksheet).

Row Headings

Numbers ranging from 1 to 65,536—one for each row in the worksheet. You can click a row heading to select an entire row of cells.

Column Headings

Letters ranging from A to IV—one for each of the 256 columns in the worksheet. After column Z comes column AA, which is followed by AB, AC, and so on. After column AZ comes BA, BB, and so on until you get to the last column, labeled IV. You can click a column heading to select an entire column of cells.

Tab Scroll Buttons

These buttons let you scroll the sheet tabs to display tabs that aren't visible.

Sheet Tabs

Each of these notebook-like tabs represents a different sheet in the workbook. A workbook can have any number of sheets, and each sheet has its name displayed in a sheet tab. By default, each new workbook that you create contains three sheets.

Tab Split Bar

This bar enables you to increase or decrease the area devoted to displaying sheet tabs. When you show more sheet tabs, the horizontal scrollbar's size is reduced.

Horizontal Scrollbar

Allows you to scroll the sheet horizontally.

Entering and Editing Worksheet Data

People use spreadsheets primarily to store data and perform calculations. This chapter discusses the various types of data that you can enter into Excel.

Types of Worksheet Data

As you know, an Excel workbook can hold any number of worksheets, and each worksheet is made up of cells. A cell can hold any of three types of data:

♦ Values

♦ Text

♦ Formulas

A worksheet also can hold charts, maps, drawings, pictures, buttons, and other objects. These objects actually reside on the worksheet's *draw layer,* which is an invisible layer on top of each worksheet.

Cross-Reference The draw layer is discussed in Chapter 14. This chapter is concerned only with data that you enter into worksheet cells.

Values

Values, also known as numbers, represent a quantity of some type: sales, number of employees, atomic weights, test scores, and so on. Values that you enter into cells can be used in formulas or can be used to provide the data that is used to
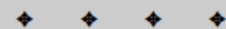
create a chart. Values also can be dates (such as 6/9/2019) or times (such as 3:24 a.m.), and you'll see that you can manipulate these types of values quite efficiently.

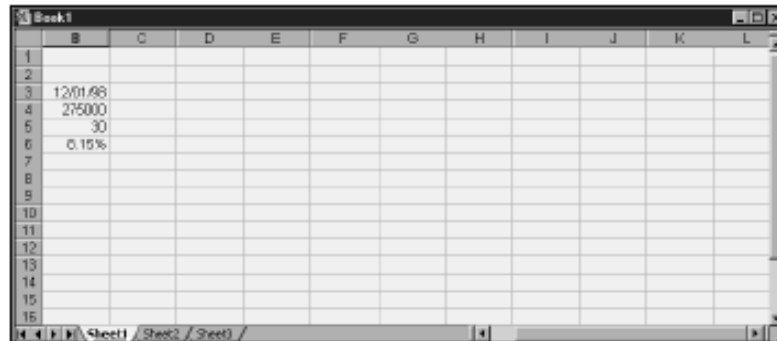Figure 6-1 shows a worksheet with some values entered in it.

Figure 6-1: Values entered in a worksheet.

Text

Most worksheets also include non-numeric text in some of their cells. You can insert text to serve as labels for values, headings for columns, or instructions about the worksheet. Text that begins with a number is still considered text. For example, if you enter an address such as **1425 Main St.** into a cell, Excel considers this to be text rather than a value.

Figure 6-2 shows a worksheet with text in some of the cells. In this case, the text is used to clarify what the values mean.
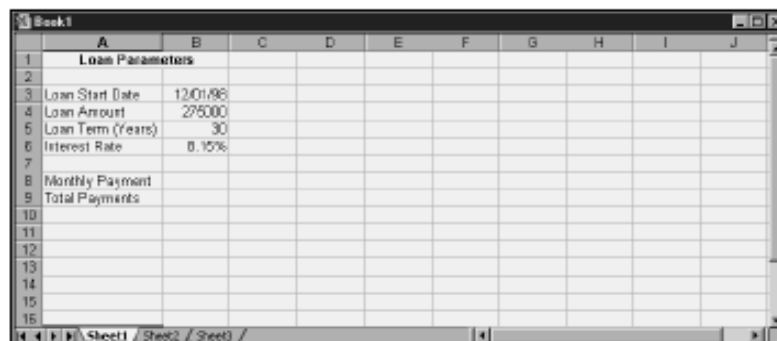

Figure 6-2: This worksheet consists of text and values.

Formulas

Formulas are what make a spreadsheet a spreadsheet — otherwise, you'd just have a strange word processor that is good at working with tables. Excel enables you to enter powerful formulas that use the values (or even text) in cells to calculate a result. When you enter a formula into a cell, the formula's result appears in the cell. If you change any of the values used by a formula, the formula recalculates and shows the new result. Figure 6-3 shows a worksheet with values, text, and formulas.

Cross-Reference   Chapter 9 discusses formulas in detail.

Figure 6-3: Cells B8 and B9 contain formulas that use the other values.

Excel's Numerical Limitations

New users often are curious about the types of values that Excel can handle. In other words, how large can numbers be? And how accurate are large numbers?

Excel's numbers are precise up to 15 digits. For example, if you enter a large value, such as 123,123,123,123,123,123 (18 digits), Excel actually stores it with only 15 digits of precision: 123,123,123,123,123,000. This may seem quite limiting, but in practice, it rarely causes any problems.

Here are some of Excel's other numerical limits:

Largest positive number: 9.9E+307

Smallest negative number: −9.9E+307

Smallest positive number: 1E-307

Largest negative number: −1E-307

These numbers are expressed in scientific notation. For example, the largest positive number is "9.9 times 10 to the 307th power."

Forcing a New Line in a Cell

If you have lengthy text in a cell, you can force Excel to display it in multiple lines within the cell. Use Alt+Enter to start a new line in a cell. Figure 6-14 shows an example of text in a cell that is displayed in multiple lines. When you add a line break, Excel automatically changes the cell's format to Wrap Text.

Cross-Reference   Learn more about the Wrap Text formatting feature in Chapter 11.

Figure 6-14: Alt+Enter enables you to force a line break in a cell.

Entering Fractions

If you want Excel to enter a fraction into a cell, leave a space between the whole number and the fraction. For example, to enter the decimal equivalent of $6\,7/8$, enter **6 7/8** and then press Enter. When you select the cell, 6.875 appears in the formula bar, and the cell entry appears as a fraction. If you have a fraction only (for example, $1/8$), you must enter a zero first, like this: **0 1/8**. When you select the cell and look at the formula bar, you see 0.125. In the cell, you see $1/8$.

Using a Data Entry Form

If you're entering data that is arranged in rows, you may find it easier to use Excel's built-in data form for data entry. Figure 6-15 shows an example of this.

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