

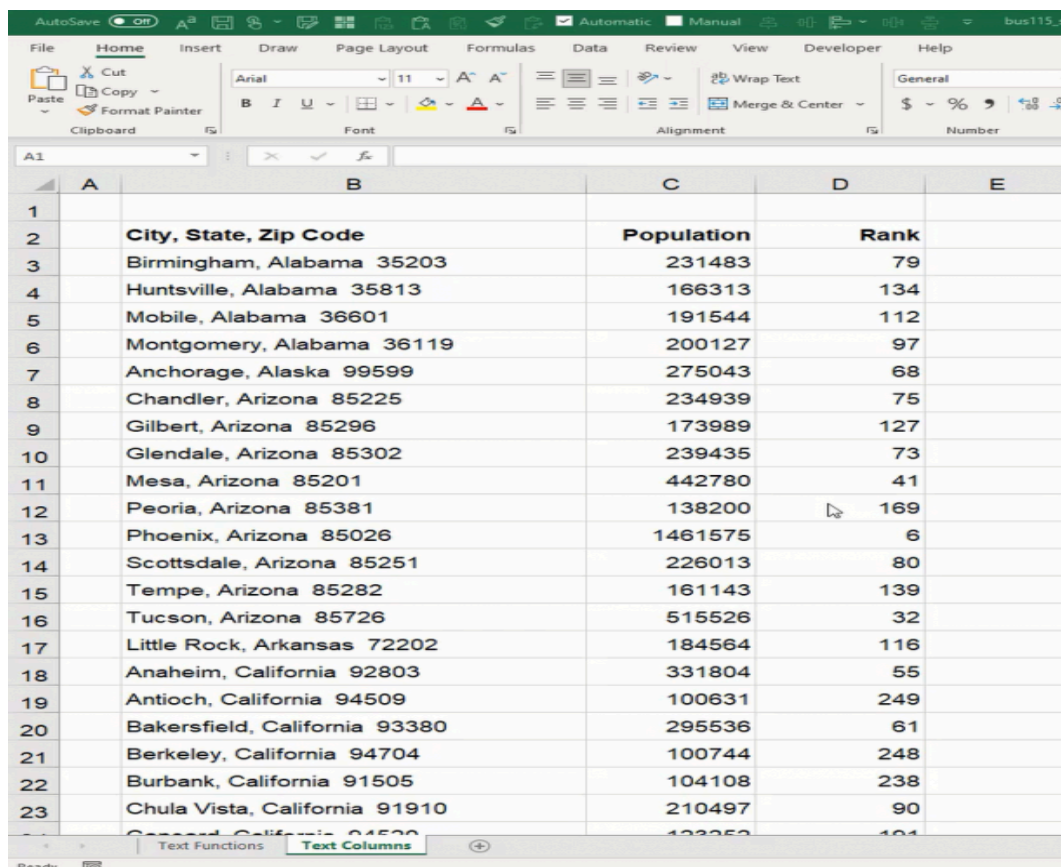
Text to Columns

Excel has a built-in function called Text to Column to parse information into separate columns from a single column. We're going to use a spreadsheet with data listed in three columns. The first column contains data for city, state, and zip code. (See **Figure 22.1**)

Practice Spreadsheet

Use this [workbook](#) for the chapter.

Note: This is the same workbook used in the Text Functions chapter.



The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel interface with the 'Text to Columns' task pane open on the right. The spreadsheet contains data for 23 cities, organized into five columns: City, State, Zip Code, Population, and Rank. The data is as follows:

	City, State, Zip Code	Population	Rank
1			
2	City, State, Zip Code	Population	Rank
3	Birmingham, Alabama 35203	231483	79
4	Huntsville, Alabama 35813	166313	134
5	Mobile, Alabama 36601	191544	112
6	Montgomery, Alabama 36119	200127	97
7	Anchorage, Alaska 99599	275043	68
8	Chandler, Arizona 85225	234939	75
9	Gilbert, Arizona 85296	173989	127
10	Glendale, Arizona 85302	239435	73
11	Mesa, Arizona 85201	442780	41
12	Peoria, Arizona 85381	138200	169
13	Phoenix, Arizona 85026	1461575	6
14	Scottsdale, Arizona 85251	226013	80
15	Tempe, Arizona 85282	161143	139
16	Tucson, Arizona 85726	515526	32
17	Little Rock, Arkansas 72202	184564	116
18	Anaheim, California 92803	331804	55
19	Antioch, California 94509	100631	249
20	Bakersfield, California 93380	295536	61
21	Berkeley, California 94704	100744	248
22	Burbank, California 91505	104108	238
23	Chula Vista, California 91910	210497	90

Figure 22.1

However, we want to separate the information from this single column into individual columns. To achieve this, we use Excel's Text to Column function. To get started, navigate to the **Data** tab in the ribbon toolbar. Then, press the **Text to Columns** button. (See **Figure 22.2**)

Note: We can use functions to separate data, but Text to Columns can be useful when the data does not need to update after separation.

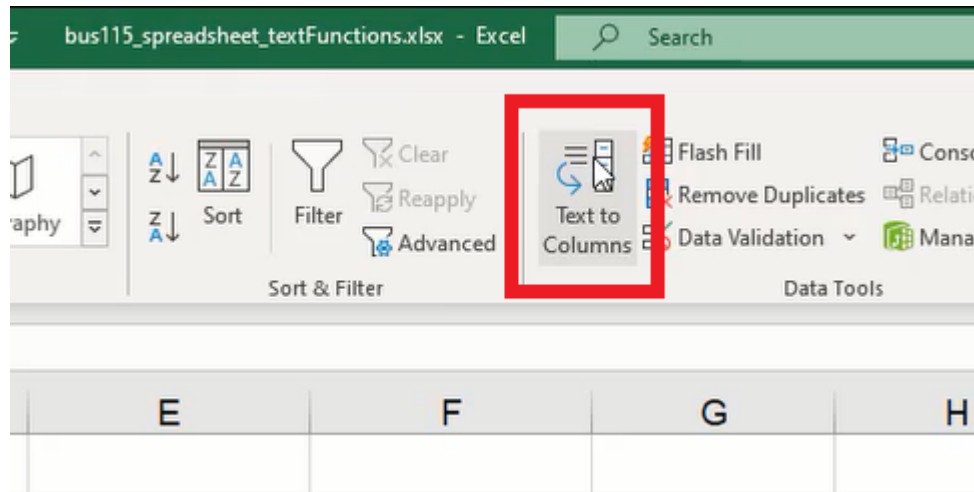


Figure 22.2

Using a Delimiter for Text to Column

The **Text to Columns** button will open a dialogue box with two options as shown in **Figure 22.3: Delimited** and *Fixed Width*. Delimited parses data by using specific symbols as separators to represent the point data will be divided. Fixed Width parses data determined by the number of spaces between characters specified for separation.

We're going to look at the Delimited option first, then we'll address Fixed Width. Complete the following steps:

1. Select **Delimited** and press **Next**. (See **Figure 22.3**)
 - a. The window will ask what we want to be the delimiter. We can choose tabs, semicolon , comma, space, or another specific character of our choice. (See **Figure 22.4**)

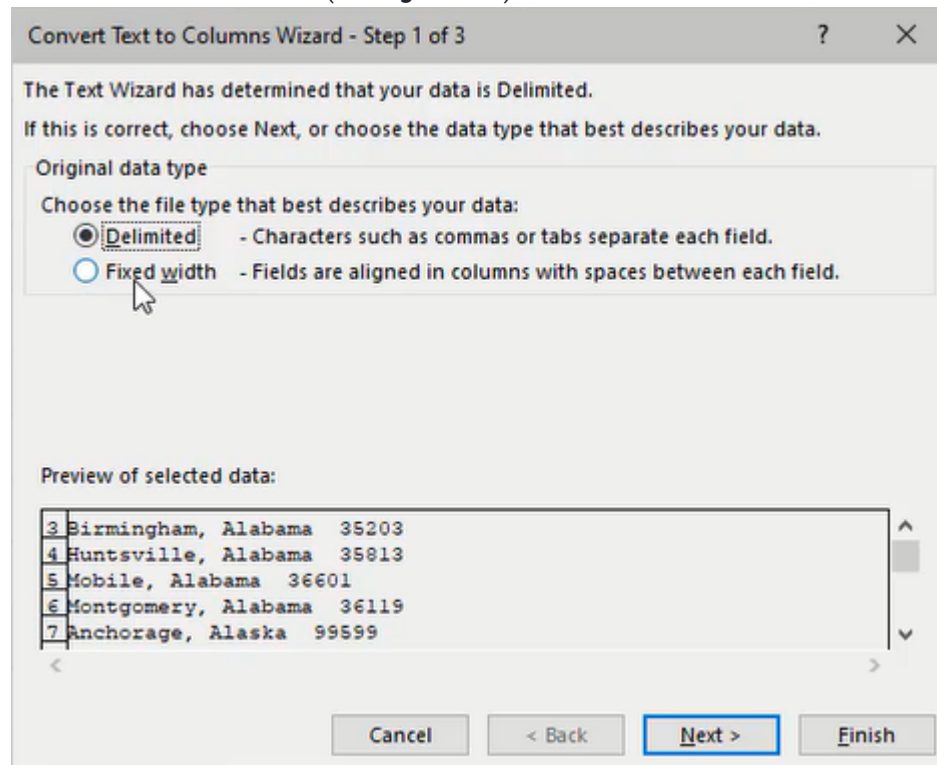


Figure 22.3

2. Look at what separates the city, state, and zip code.
 - a. A comma separates the city and state, then a double space separates the zip code.
3. Select **Comma** to separate the city data.
 - a. Notice the preview demonstrates where the separation will occur and it will remove the comma.
4. Press **Next** to continue.

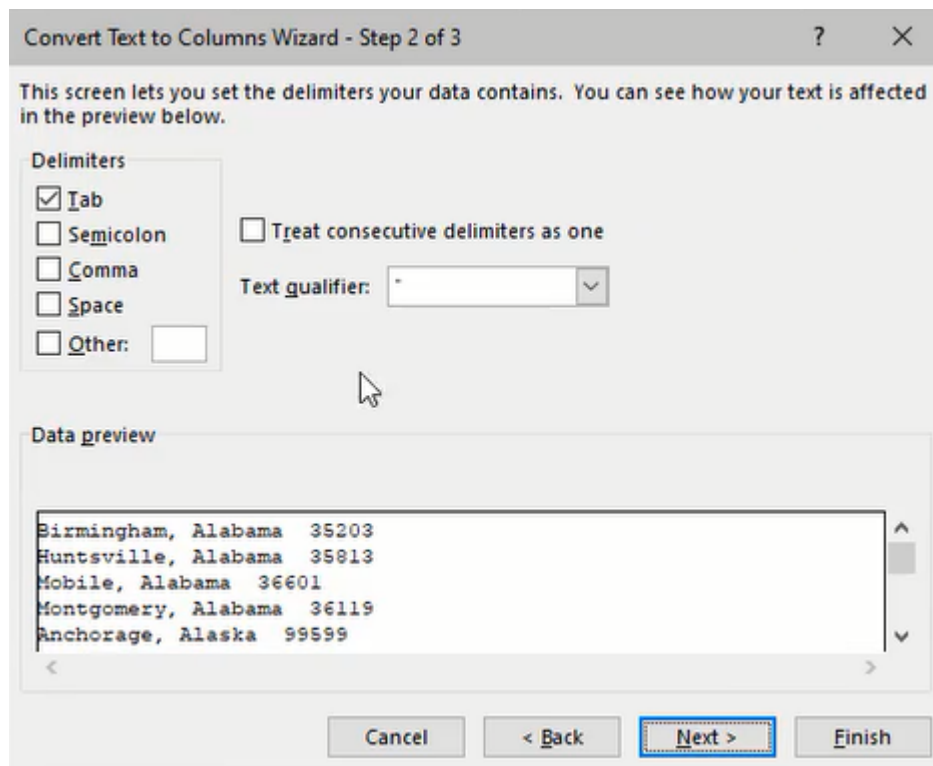


Figure 22.4

5. Determine how the separated data is formatted.
 - a. *Note:* The **Do not import column (skip)** option can be selected to simply remove excess data.
6. For this example, we'll select **General** to port the excess data to the next cell.
7. Press **Finish** to complete the function. (See **Figure 22.5**)

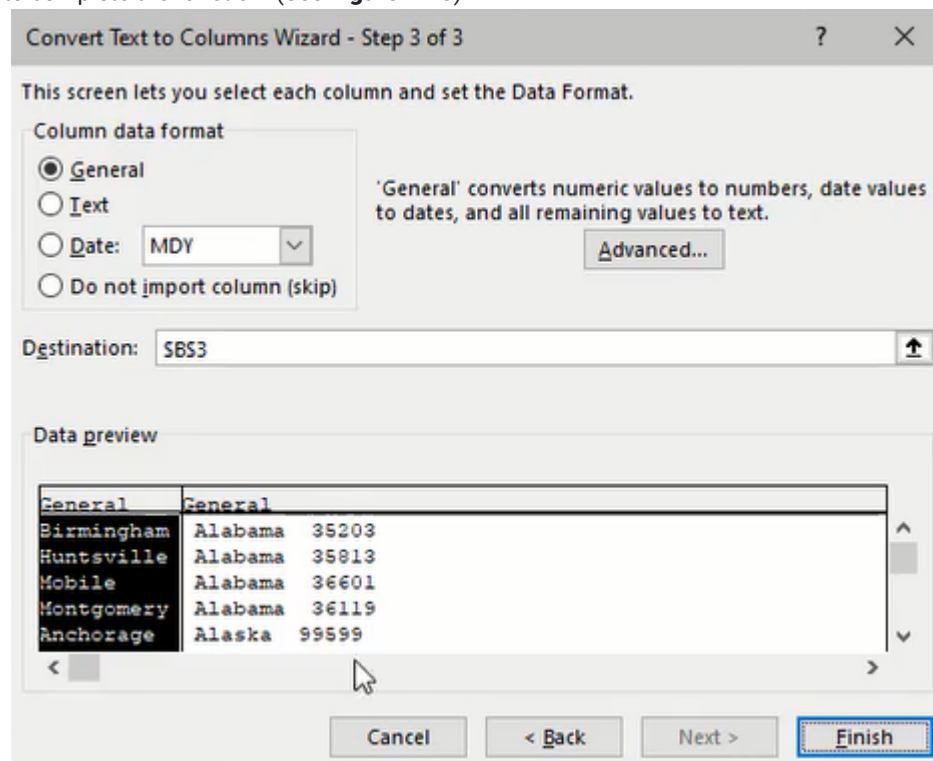


Figure 22.5

Choosing a Delimiter

Now that we have separated the city data, we need to do the same for state and zip code because they are divided by two blank spaces instead of a comma. However, attempting to separate state and zip code by a space delimiter could pose a problem with state names containing a space. For example, New York would be divided with New and York in their own columns.

One solution would be to replace the double spaces with a valid delimiter. We can do this by using the **Find & Replace** tool.

1. Navigate to the **Home** tab of the ribbon toolbar and press the **Find & Select** button (See **Figure 22.6**)
2. Select **Replace...**

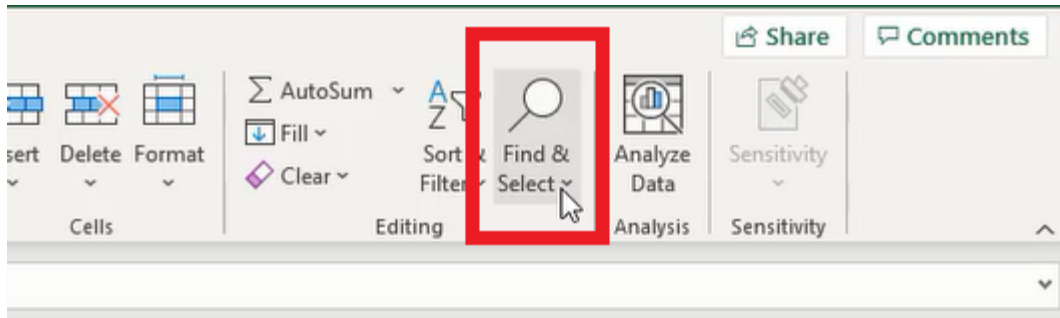


Figure 22.6

3. The Find and Replace window will prompt you to type the characters to search, then the character to replace the found selection.
 - a. Enter two blank spaces in the **Find what** field
 - b. Enter a “pipe” or vertical bar (|) in the **Replace with** field.
4. Press **Find Next** and **Replace** for each instance, or press **Replace All** to complete the action for every instance. (See **Figure 22.7**)

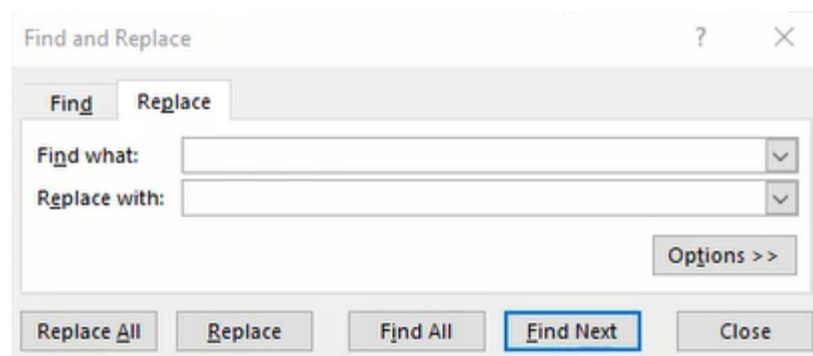


Figure 22.7

Once completed, the Text to Column function can be used again to separate the data by the vertical bar delimiter as it did with the comma.

Using Fixed Width for Text to Column

The Fixed Width option will separate data based on the selected space between characters. For example, we could select the eighth space on the ruler and everything after will be separated into the new cell(s). This option can be useful if all the data equals the same number of characters, such as a five-digit zip code (Ssee **Figure 22.8**), but we only need the first two digits.

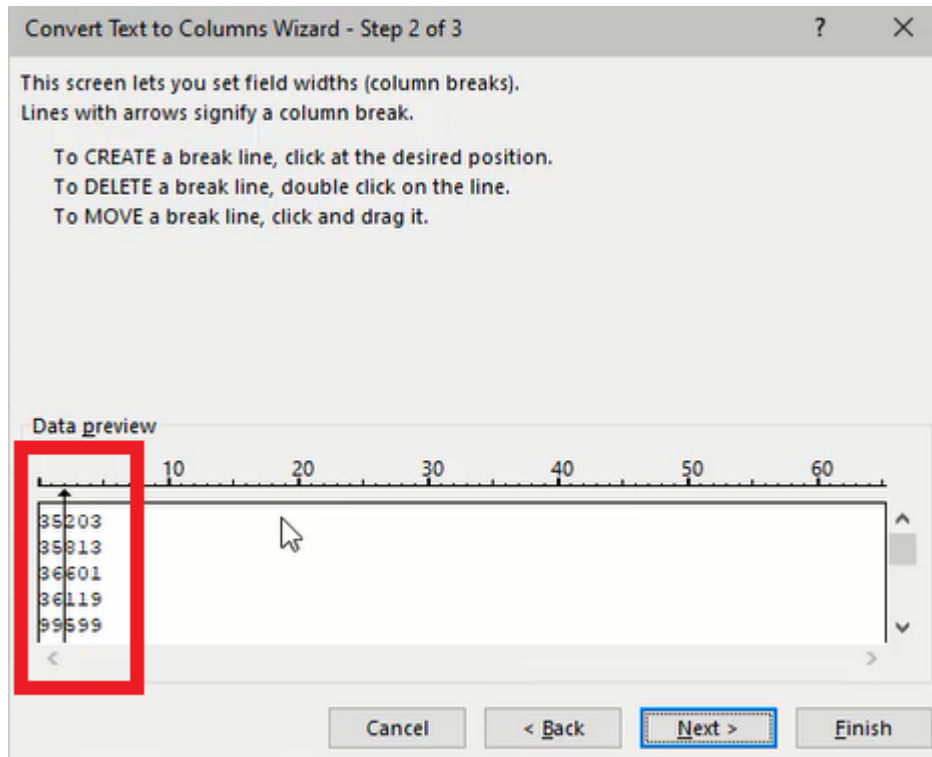


Figure 22.8

Supplemental Resource



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Access it online or download it at https://books.byui.edu/bus_115_business_app/text_to_columns.

