

Learning to Extract the Month from Dates in Google Sheets

Authored by
Mohammed loot

October 30, 2025

RECOMMENDED CITATION

Mohammed loot (2025). *Learning to Extract the Month from Dates in Google Sheets*. PSYCHOLOGICAL STATISTICS. Retrieved from <https://statistics.arabpsychology.com/?p=6077>

Extracting specific components from date fields is a fundamental task in [Google Sheets](#), especially when preparing data for analysis, pivot tables, or customized reports. While many functions exist for date manipulation, the [TEXT function](#) offers the most precise control over the output format, allowing users to return the month not just as a number, but as a full or abbreviated name. This capability is vital for creating human-readable reports where numerical month identifiers (like '8' for August) might be confusing or less professional than textual names.

When dealing with raw data, dates often appear in a single column, making it necessary to isolate the month for grouping or filtering purposes. Utilizing the [TEXT function](#) simplifies this process significantly, eliminating the need for complex nested formulas involving functions like `MONTH()` combined with `CHOOSE()` or lengthy conditional statements. This method ensures both efficiency and clarity in your spreadsheet operations, providing immediate visual feedback on the data transformation.

The Core Formula: Using TEXT() for Month Extraction

The most straightforward and versatile way to extract the month from a date and format it according to specific requirements is by employing the powerful [TEXT function](#). This function takes two mandatory arguments: the value you wish to format (in this case, the cell containing the date) and the format string (the specific code dictating how the output should appear).

To obtain the full month name from a date, such as converting "2023-08-15" into "August," the following syntax should be applied:

```
=TEXT(A1, "MMMM")
```

This formula instructs [Google Sheets](#) to evaluate the date stored in cell **A1** and return the corresponding month, formatted specifically as the full month name. The use of four 'M' characters (**MMMM**) within the quotation marks acts as the specific format code for this output. This method ensures that regardless of the underlying numerical date format used by the [spreadsheet](#) system, the resulting value is a clear, textual representation of the month.

Understanding how these format codes work is essential for controlling the final appearance of your extracted data. Depending on whether you require a numerical index, a short abbreviation, or the complete name, you must adjust the 'M' sequence accordingly, as detailed in the comprehensive section below.

Mastering Month Format Codes

The flexibility of the TEXT function lies entirely in its format codes. Specifically for months, the number of 'M' characters determines the level of detail and whether the output is numeric or

alphabetical. Choosing the correct abbreviation allows analysts to tailor their data presentation precisely to the target audience or required data schema.

Note that you can use the following abbreviations to return the month formatted in a different way, providing five distinct presentation styles for monthly data:

M: Returns the month of the year as one or two digits, suppressing leading zeros for months 1 through 9. For example, August would appear as '8'.

MM: Returns the month of the year as two digits, enforcing a leading zero for single-digit months. August would appear as '08'. This format is often preferred for technical data storage or sorting applications where consistent character length is required.

MMM: Returns the month of the year as a short, three-letter name (abbreviation) based on the current locale settings. August would appear as 'Aug'.

MMMM: Returns the month of the year as the full, descriptive name. August would appear as 'August'. This is the ideal format for headers and public-facing reports.

MMMMM: Returns only the first letter of the month name. August would appear as 'A'. This highly condensed format is useful in space-constrained layouts.

These format codes provide granular control over how [date formats](#) are interpreted and presented. By manipulating the format string argument within the TEXT function, users can quickly toggle between numerical indexing (M, MM) useful for calculation, and textual labels (MMM, MMMM, MMMMM) better suited for visualization and reporting.

Example: Extract Month from Date in Google Sheets

To illustrate the practical application of these various format codes, consider a scenario where we possess a dataset containing various dates in Column A. We aim to generate five distinct columns, each showing the month extracted using a different formatting standard.

Suppose we have the following list of dates in [Google Sheets](#), starting in cell **A1**:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Date				
2	1/1/2022				
3	1/4/2022				
4	1/19/2022				
5	2/3/2022				
6	2/24/2022				
7	3/15/2022				
8	4/19/2022				
9	8/30/2022				
10	10/11/2022				
11	12/19/2022				
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					

We can now systematically apply the formula to Column A, adjusting only the format code argument to see the results of M, MM, MMM, MMMM, and MMMMM in subsequent columns (B through F). This hands-on approach demonstrates clearly how the structural difference in the format code translates directly to the extracted output's appearance.

We utilize the following formulas, starting in Row 1: **B1** =TEXT(A1, "M"); **C1** =TEXT(A1, "MM"); **D1** =TEXT(A1, "MMM"); **E1** =TEXT(A1, "MMMM"); **F1** =TEXT(A1, "MMMMM"). We then drag these formulas down the respective columns to process the entire date list:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Date	Month as 1 or 2 digits	Month as 2 digits	Month as Short Name	Month as Long Name	First Letter of Month
2	1/1/2022	1	01	Jan	January	J
3	1/4/2022	1	01	Jan	January	J
4	1/19/2022	1	01	Jan	January	J
5	2/3/2022	2	02	Feb	February	F
6	2/24/2022	2	02	Feb	February	F
7	3/15/2022	3	03	Mar	March	M
8	4/19/2022	4	04	Apr	April	A
9	8/30/2022	8	08	Aug	August	A
10	10/11/2022	10	10	Oct	October	O
11	12/19/2022	12	12	Dec	December	D
12		=TEXT(A2, "M")	=TEXT(A12, "MM")	=TEXT(A2, "MMM")	=TEXT(A12, "MMMM")	=TEXT(A12, "MMMMM")
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						

Reviewing the results confirms the expected behavior for each code:

The values in column **B** display the month of the date in column A using the single-M format, resulting in 1 or 2 digits without leading zeros (e.g., '8' for August).

The values in column **C** display the month using the double-MM format, consistently presenting the month as 2 digits, including a leading zero for January through September (e.g., '08' for August).

The values in column **D** display the month using the triple-MMM format, which returns the short, three-letter name (e.g., 'Aug').

The values in column **E** display the month using the quadruple-MMMM format, providing the full name of the month (e.g., 'August').

The values in column **F** display the month using the quintuple-MMMMM format, resulting in the first letter of the month (e.g., 'A').

Alternative Methods: MONTH() and Data Type Considerations

While the TEXT function is superior for generating formatted textual output, other functions exist for simple numerical extraction. The `MONTH()` function is the dedicated tool for returning the numerical month index (1 through 12) from a date. For instance, the formula `=MONTH(A1)` would simply return the number 8 if A1 contained an August date. Unlike TEXT(), however, MONTH() cannot return 'August' or 'Aug'; it is strictly limited to numerical output.

It is crucial to be aware of the data type returned by these functions. The `MONTH()` function returns a numeric value, which can be used directly in mathematical calculations. Conversely, the [TEXT function](#) always returns a string (text) value, even when using the 'M' or 'MM' formats. This distinction is critical because text strings cannot be used reliably in subsequent arithmetic

operations without explicit conversion, often leading to `#VALUE!` errors if not handled correctly.

Furthermore, when importing or pasting dates into [Google Sheets](#), ensure the cells are properly recognized as date objects. Dates can be entered in various standard formats, such as:

1/1/22 (Short numerical format)

2022-01-01 (ISO standard format)

If the date is stored as a true date (represented internally as a serial number), both `TEXT()` and `MONTH()` will function correctly. If the date is mistakenly stored as a plain text string, these functions will often fail, returning errors or unexpected results. Always verify the formatting of your source column before applying date extraction formulas.

Note: You can find the complete documentation for the `TEXT()` function, including all available format codes for dates, times, and currencies, on the official Google support pages. Referencing the official documentation ensures you are always using the most up-to-date syntax and features.

Additional Resources

Mastering date and time manipulation is a core skill for any advanced [spreadsheet](#) user. The following tutorials explain how to perform other common tasks in Google Sheets, building upon the principles of formatting and function application discussed here: