

Learning to Extract Month and Year from Dates in Google Sheets

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In the realm of [spreadsheet](#) management, effectively handling and presenting [date data](#) is paramount. Working in [Google Sheets](#) often requires simplifying comprehensive date stamps to display only the [month](#) and [year](#). This specific transformation is fundamental for generating clear reports, streamlining [data analysis](#), and significantly improving overall data readability.

It is important to understand the distinction between visual [formatting](#) and genuine data conversion. While built-in formatting options in Google Sheets can change how a date looks, they do not alter its underlying numerical value. To genuinely convert a date into a specific, extractable month and year [text string](#), we must utilize the powerful and versatile [TEXT function](#). This function provides the necessary mechanism to define a custom format pattern, granting precise control over the final output.

This comprehensive guide will detail the necessary [formulas](#) required to achieve various month and year outputs. We will demonstrate how to harness the flexibility of the [TEXT function](#) to ensure your temporal data meets all your analytical and reporting specifications, covering everything from numerical representations to full, descriptive month names.

The Core Difference: Date Serial Numbers vs. Text Strings

To master date manipulation in Google Sheets, one must first grasp how dates are stored. Dates are not held as human-readable text; rather, they are maintained internally as sequential [serial numbers](#). For instance, the first day of the 20th century (January 1, 1900) is represented by the number 1, and each subsequent day increments this value. This numerical storage system facilitates calculations and comparisons. When you use standard [cell](#) formatting (e.g., transforming "1/15/2023" visually), you are merely masking this underlying number with a different display style, preserving the numerical value.

However, analytical demands often require the date components--specifically the month and year--to be treated as actual [text strings](#), not as numerical data points. This is exactly the scenario where the [TEXT function](#) proves invaluable. Unlike simple cell formatting, the TEXT function performs a genuine conversion, transforming the date's numerical serial value into a stable text output based on the user's defined format pattern.

The function's syntax is elegantly simple: `=TEXT(value, format_pattern)`. The `value` is typically the reference to the [cell](#) containing the source date. Crucially, the `format_pattern` is a string enclosed in quotes that dictates the exact structure of the resulting text. To successfully extract month and year data, it is essential to learn the specific code characters used within this pattern, as they govern the final appearance of the output.

Mastering Format Patterns for Date Extraction

The true flexibility of the [TEXT function](#) resides in its highly configurable `format_pattern` argument. To convert dates efficiently into various month and year formats, you must understand the specific character combinations used for temporal data. These patterns allow you to control whether the output is numerical, abbreviated, or fully descriptive.

mm: This pattern renders the [month](#) as a compulsory two-digit number (e.g., 01 for January, 12 for December). This option ensures a uniform, numerical representation suitable for sorting.

mmm: Utilize this pattern to present the [month](#) as a concise three-letter abbreviation (e.g., Jan, Feb, Mar). This is excellent for compact textual displays and space-saving reports.

mmmm: This pattern produces the full, unambiguous name of the [month](#). Use this format for highly professional reports and dashboards where maximum clarity is required.

yy: This pattern displays the [year](#) using only its final two digits (e.g., 23 for 2023, 99 for 1999). This is the most condensed option when the century context is already known.

yyyy: This pattern ensures the full, four-digit [year](#) is displayed (e.g., 2023, 1999). This is mandatory for formal documentation and any long-term data sets requiring unambiguous temporal records.

By strategically combining these pattern codes with appropriate separators (such as slashes, hyphens, or spaces), you can achieve almost any customized date output. It is crucial to remember that the resulting output from the TEXT function is always a [text string](#). Consequently, you cannot perform standard date arithmetic on the converted value without first reverting it back to a date [data type](#).

Essential TEXT Formulas for Date Conversion

The following are the fundamental [formulas](#) necessary to transform a complete [date](#) into specific month and [year](#) formats within [Google Sheets](#). Each formula leverages the TEXT function with a specific `format_pattern` argument. For the purposes of these examples, we will assume the original date is located in [cell A1](#), which should be adjusted based on your actual data layout.

Formula 1: Numerical Month and Full Year (e.g., 01/2022)

This formula is highly effective when your reporting standards require a precise numerical representation of the month combined with the full four-digit year, separated by a slash. This clean and universally recognized format is essential for many standard data aggregation requirements.

=TEXT(A1, "mm/yyyy")

Formula 2: Numerical Month and Abbreviated Year (e.g., 01/22)

If space is a concern or if the context makes the century clear, this formula provides the most concise output. It displays the numerical month followed by only the last two digits of the year.

=TEXT(A1, "mm/yy")

Formula 3: Abbreviated Month Name and Full Year (e.g., Jan. 2022)

This format offers a useful balance between descriptive clarity and conciseness. The formula converts the month name into its three-letter abbreviation, followed by a period and the complete four-digit year. This is a popular choice for presentation dashboards and visual summaries.

=TEXT(A1, "mmm. yyyy")

Formula 4: Full Month Name and Full Year (e.g., January 2022)

When maximum readability is the priority--such as in formal documents, executive reports, or content designed for public consumption--this formula is ideal. It displays the full month name followed by the complete four-digit year, eliminating any ambiguity.

=TEXT(A1, "mmmm yyyy")

The subsequent section will move beyond theoretical examples, providing step-by-step demonstrations of how to apply these [formulas](#) across a range of dates in your Google Sheets environment.

Practical Implementation: Step-by-Step Examples

To gain a deep understanding of how the TEXT function facilitates date conversions, we will now walk through practical, step-by-step scenarios for each formula introduced above. These examples illustrate the method for applying the [formulas](#) to a list of dates and observing the immediate, converted results within your spreadsheet. For consistency, we will assume your original date list begins in [cell A2](#).

Example 1: Numerical Month and Full Year (e.g., 01/2022)

Imagine you are managing a transaction log where dates are listed in [Column A](#), and you require

the numerical month and full year format (e.g., "01/2022") in Column B. This structure is typically needed for easy data filtering or sorting data sets chronologically by month.

To execute this conversion, use the following [formula](#), referencing the starting date in A2:

=TEXT(A2, "mm/yyyy")

Input this formula into [cell](#) B2. Once entered, use the fill handle--the small square at the bottom-right corner of cell B2--to quickly drag the formula down the column. This action automatically applies the conversion to all corresponding dates in [Column](#) A.

B2	fx	=TEXT(A2, "mm/yyyy")			
	A	B	C	D	
1	Date	Month & Year			
2	1/4/2022	01/2022			
3	1/9/2022	01/2022			
4	2/10/2022	02/2022			
5	3/18/2022	03/2022			
6	5/6/2022	05/2022			
7	7/18/2022	07/2022			
8	8/1/2022	08/2022			
9	9/1/2022	09/2022			
10	9/15/2022	09/2022			
11	10/4/2022	10/2022			
12	11/15/2022	11/2022			
13	12/13/2022	12/2022			
14	12/25/2022	12/2022			
15	12/29/2022	12/2022			
16					
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18					
19					
20					

As clearly illustrated, [Column](#) B now contains the two-digit month and the full four-digit year extracted from the original dates in [Column](#) A. This resulting text output is now perfectly formatted for non-arithmetic operations.

Example 2: Numerical Month and Abbreviated Year (e.g., 01/22)

When working on a dashboard or summary table where screen real estate is at a premium, converting the [date](#) to a numerical month and the two-digit year (such as "01/22") provides maximum brevity while retaining essential temporal information.

The formula required for this concise [formatting](#) is:

=TEXT(A2, "mm/yy")

Enter this formula into cell B2. Use the fill handle to extend the formula down [Column](#) B, applying the transformation efficiently to all corresponding dates in Column A.

B2		<i>fx</i>	=TEXT(A2, "mm/yy")		
	A	B	C	D	
1	Date	Month & Year			
2	1/4/2022	01/22			
3	1/9/2022	01/22			
4	2/10/2022	02/22			
5	3/18/2022	03/22			
6	5/6/2022	05/22			
7	7/18/2022	07/22			
8	8/1/2022	08/22			
9	9/1/2022	09/22			
10	9/15/2022	09/22			
11	10/4/2022	10/22			
12	11/15/2022	11/22			
13	12/13/2022	12/22			
14	12/25/2022	12/22			
15	12/29/2022	12/22			
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21					

The resultant Column B showcases the two-digit month and the abbreviated two-digit year for every original date. This compact format is highly advantageous for environments requiring rapid visual scanning and minimal data footprint.

Example 3: Abbreviated Month Name and Full Year (e.g., Jan. 2022)

For reports that demand a clear, textual presentation without excessive length, the format displaying the abbreviated month followed by the full year (e.g., "Jan. 2022") is an outstanding compromise. This is often the preferred format in financial summaries and internal analytical reports.

To implement this balanced textual conversion, employ the following [formula](#):

=TEXT(A2, "mmm. yyyy")

Insert this formula into [cell](#) B2, then drag the fill handle down Column B. This ensures the conversion is uniformly applied to all relevant dates originating in Column A.

B2		=TEXT(A2, "mmm. yy")			
	A	B	C	D	
1	Date	Month & Year			
2	1/4/2022	Jan. 22			
3	1/9/2022	Jan. 22			
4	2/10/2022	Feb. 22			
5	3/18/2022	Mar. 22			
6	5/6/2022	May. 22			
7	7/18/2022	Jul. 22			
8	8/1/2022	Aug. 22			
9	9/1/2022	Sep. 22			
10	9/15/2022	Sep. 22			
11	10/4/2022	Oct. 22			
12	11/15/2022	Nov. 22			
13	12/13/2022	Dec. 22			
14	12/25/2022	Dec. 22			
15	12/29/2022	Dec. 22			
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Upon completion, [Column](#) B will accurately present each date using the desired abbreviated month and full year format. This structure is both informative and visually accessible, optimizing the data

for various analytical and reporting contexts.

Example 4: Full Month Name and Full Year (e.g., January 2022)

When the highest degree of readability is required, such as in executive summaries or formal documents, converting the date into its full month name and full year (e.g., "January 2022") is the most appropriate choice. This format eliminates any ambiguity and provides a clear, natural language representation.

The [formula](#) necessary to achieve this comprehensive [format](#) is:

=TEXT(A2, "mmmm yyyy")

Place this formula into [cell](#) B2. Next, extend the formula down Column B by dragging the fill handle. This action converts all dates in your source data (Column A) into the highly readable, descriptive format.

B2			=TEXT(A2, "mmmm yyyy")		
	A	B	C	D	
1	Date	Month & Year			
2	1/4/2022	January 2022			
3	1/9/2022	January 2022			
4	2/10/2022	February 2022			
5	3/18/2022	March 2022			
6	5/6/2022	May 2022			
7	7/18/2022	July 2022			
8	8/1/2022	August 2022			
9	9/1/2022	September 2022			
10	9/15/2022	September 2022			
11	10/4/2022	October 2022			
12	11/15/2022	November 2022			
13	12/13/2022	December 2022			
14	12/25/2022	December 2022			
15	12/29/2022	December 2022			
16					
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As shown, [Column B](#) now successfully displays the full month name and the complete four-digit year for each original date. This format ensures maximum clarity, making your data presentations exceptionally clear and user-friendly.

Strategic Advantages for Data Management

The practice of converting dates into specific month and year formats using the TEXT function in Google Sheets is not merely a stylistic choice; it is a critical component of robust [data management](#) and advanced [analysis](#). This technique provides distinct benefits that streamline workflow and enhance the quality of insights derived from temporal data.

Facilitating Advanced Reporting and Grouping: Most analytical reports and pivot tables require data to be aggregated or grouped based on consistent time periods, such as monthly or yearly cohorts. By converting dates into standardized [text strings](#) (e.g., "YYYY-MM"), you create stable categorical variables that allow for easy sorting, filtering, and summarization, providing clearer visibility into long-term trends.

Ensuring Data Consistency Across Systems: When data is exported from Google Sheets or integrated with external databases, maintaining a standardized [format](#) for month and year components prevents errors and data inconsistencies that commonly arise from regional date settings. The TEXT function guarantees a predictable, stable text output, irrespective of the original input date's visual formatting.

Improving Data Visualization and Communication: Presenting dates using descriptive formats like "February 2024" is universally more intuitive and digestible for non-technical stakeholders than viewing raw numerical dates. This immediate clarity significantly improves the comprehension of your [data visualization](#) and communication efforts.

Creating Stable Concatenated Keys: In complex data structures, month and year combinations often serve as unique identifiers or keys used for joining disparate datasets. Converting these elements to text allows them to be reliably concatenated with other data points without encountering calculation errors or formatting conflicts inherent to date values.

Conclusion: Mastering Date Presentation

The capability to convert [dates](#) into precise month and year formats using the [TEXT function](#) in [Google Sheets](#) is an essential skill for anyone involved in data manipulation, reporting, or organizational tasks. By gaining proficiency with the TEXT function and its powerful, customizable format patterns, you acquire granular control over the presentation and utility of your temporal data.

Whether your goal is to generate a concise numerical summary, an abbreviated textual label, or a fully descriptive representation, the TEXT function offers the necessary adaptability to meet exact requirements. Always remember the fundamental caveat: the output of these operations is a static [text string](#), meaning it is ideal for display and grouping purposes but unsuitable for direct date calculations or arithmetic operations.

We strongly encourage further experimentation with these conversion [formulas](#) and exploring the broader spectrum of [formatting](#) options available within the TEXT function to elevate your overall [spreadsheet](#) expertise. Clear and effective data presentation remains the cornerstone of sound information management.

Additional Resources to Expand Your Google Sheets Skills

The following tutorials explain how to perform other common tasks in Google Sheets, helping you further expand your skills: