

Spreadsheet Sleuths

4565: Computing Foundations for a Digital Age

Unit 4

Station 2: Spreadsheet Sleuths

Purpose

Students will practice identifying and correcting messy data in a simplified but realistic spreadsheet scenario.

Materials

- Printed spreadsheet (or Google Sheets link) with:
 - Inconsistent date formats (e.g., “March 5” vs. “3/5/24” vs. “5 March 2024”)
 - Duplicate names with slightly different spellings (e.g., “Jon Smith” and “John Smith”)
 - Blank cells for key fields (missing scores, incomplete names)

Instructions

- Students scan the dataset for errors:
 - Find and highlight inconsistent formats.
 - Identify and correct duplicates.
 - Fill in or flag missing values using context clues.
- Students write down at least three changes they made and why.

Sample Errors:

Name	Date	Score
John Smith	March 5	88
Jon Smith	3/5/24	
Alice Reyes	5 March 24	91
Alice Reyes	5 March 2024	91

Wrap-Up Question

- What kind of problems could this messy spreadsheet cause if used in a report?

Student Worksheet

Spreadsheet Sleuths – Student Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions:

Examine the dataset below. Your mission is to find and fix messy data that could cause problems in real life. Look for inconsistent formats, duplicates, and missing values. Then answer the reflection questions.

Messy Data Table

Name	Date	Score
John Smith	March 5	88
Jon Smith	3/5/24	
Alice Reyes	5 March 24	91
Alice Reyes	5 March 2024	91

Step 1: Identify Errors

Circle or highlight the problems you notice in the table above.

- Inconsistent date formats
 - Possible duplicate names
 - Missing values
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Step 2: Correct the Errors

Write the corrected version of the table below.

Name	Date	Score

Step 3: Explain Your Changes

List **three specific changes** you made and explain **why**.

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
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Reflection

What kinds of problems could this messy data cause if it were used in a report?
