

Exercise 1: Exploring Spreadsheet Software

What types of mathematics problems do you solve in your everyday life? How do you find answers to the problems? In the same way that word processing software can help you with writing projects, spreadsheet software can help you solve mathematics problems—especially complicated problems about money and other quantities. One helpful feature of spreadsheet software is that it can automatically calculate new answers if you change any numbers used in the calculations. Spreadsheet software can also be used to make charts and graphs.

Several spreadsheet software applications are available, including Microsoft Excel* and OpenOffice.org Calc*. Sharing one computer, work with a partner to start the spreadsheet software. Notice that spreadsheets have boxes that are organized in tables with columns and rows. The **columns** are named with **letters**, and the **rows** are named with **numbers**. The box located where a column and a row cross is called a **cell**. Each cell is identified by its column letter and row number, such as A1. Spend 10 minutes completing the tasks that follow.

1. Type three different words in cells A1, A2, and A3.
2. Type three different numbers in cells B1, B2, and B3.
3. Click cell B4. Then, click the button that can find the sum of the numbers , and press **Enter**.
4. Change the width of the columns and the height of the rows.
5. Use the remaining time to discover what else you can do with spreadsheet software.

Exercise 2: Discussing Spreadsheet Skills

1. What happened in cell B4 when you clicked the button that finds the sum of the numbers?
2. What is your favorite feature of spreadsheet software?
3. When might you use spreadsheet software? What other types of calculations do you think you could do in a spreadsheet?