

Three Ways to Fill Blank Cells within Excel Spreadsheets | AccountingWEB

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By David H. Ringstrom, CPA

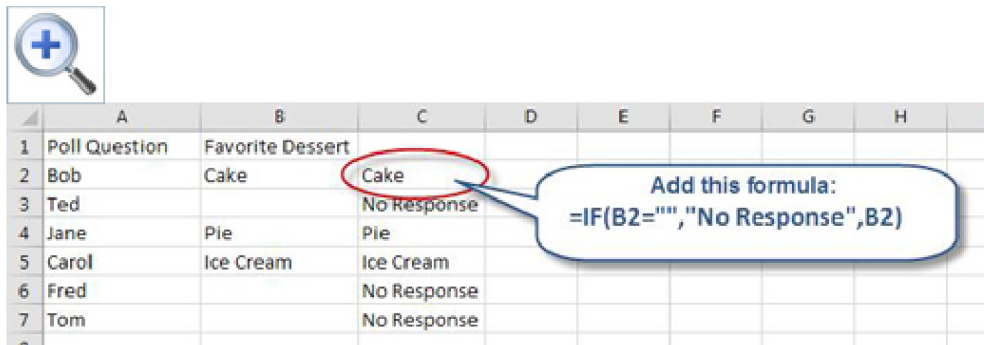
Periodically, you may have a need to fill in gaps within an Excel spreadsheet. One way to do so is to manually fill in each cell, but in this article, I'll show you three alternatives. First I'll use a formula, then Excel's Find and Replace function, and finally the often-overlooked Go To Special feature.



Let's say you have a spreadsheet that looks like Figure 1. You'd like to replace the blank cells in cells B3, B6, and B7 with the words No Response. To do so, you could add this formula in cell C2, and then copy it down through cell C7:

```
=IF(B2="", "No Response", B2)
```

In this case, the two double quotes determine if the cell is blank. If so, the IF statement returns the words No Response; otherwise, it returns the present contents of cell B2. Next, select cells C2 through C7 and press Ctrl-C. Right-click on cell B2 and then choose Paste Special. Double-click on Values to replace the original values. At this point, you can erase cells C2 through C7.



The image shows an Excel spreadsheet with the following data:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Poll Question	Favorite Dessert							
2	Bob	Cake	Cake						
3	Ted		No Response						
4	Jane	Pie	Pie						
5	Carol	Ice Cream	Ice Cream						
6	Fred		No Response						
7	Tom		No Response						

A callout box points to cell C2 with the formula: **Add this formula: =IF(B2="", "No Response", B2)**

Figure 1: You can use an IF statement to populate blank cells.

A longer version of this formula would take this form:

```
=IF(ISBLANK(B2),"No Response",B2)
```

As you can see, ISBLANK returns TRUE if a cell is blank, or FALSE if it isn't.

Of course, in this case you don't necessarily need to use a formula. As shown in Figure 2, you can select cells B2 through B7, and then press Ctrl-H to display the Replace dialog box. Leave the Find What field blank and enter the words No Response in the Replace With field, and then click Replace All. This will automatically fill in the blank cells with the word No Response.

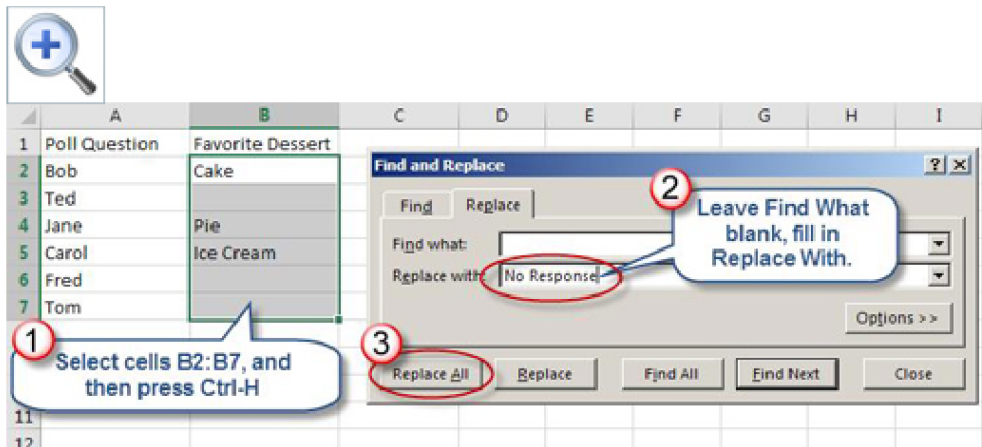


Figure 2: Find and Replace allows you to fill in blank cells.

A third way you can fill in these blank cells is to click once on cell A1, and then press Ctrl-A to select the list. Press Ctrl-G to display the Go To dialog box, and then click the Special button. Double-click on Blanks, which will result in just the blank cells being selected. Type the words No Response, and then press Ctrl-Enter. Doing so will put the words No Response in all of the selected cells at once, as shown in Figure 3.

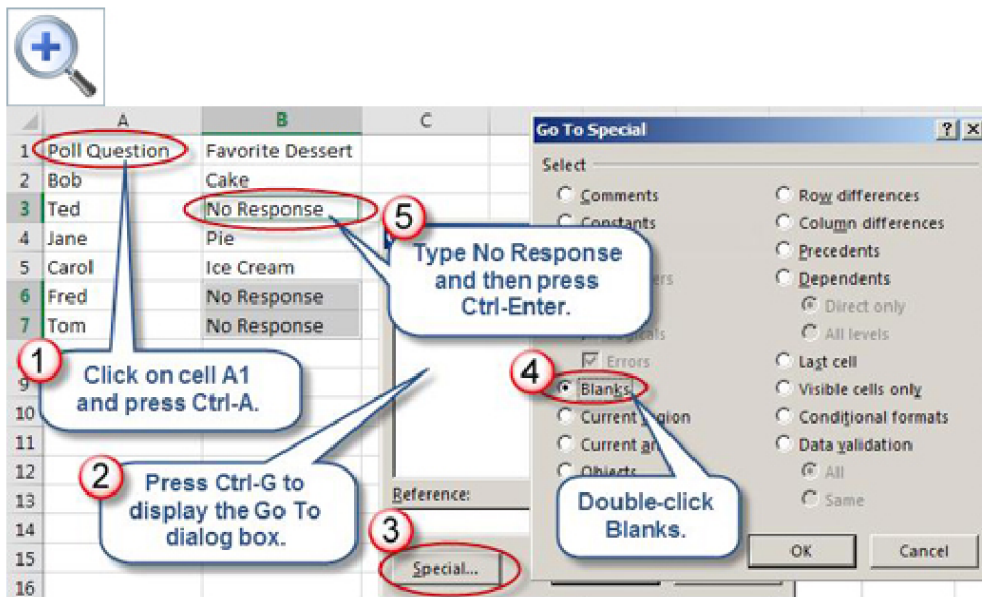


Figure 3: The Go To Special command allows you to select Blanks, while Ctrl-Enter fills multiple cells.

About the author:

David H. Ringstrom, CPA (david@acctadv.com) heads up Accounting Advisors, Inc., an Atlanta-based software and database consulting firm. David regularly presents [Excel training webcasts](#) for AccountingWEB partner CPE Link, and has written articles on spreadsheets since 1996.