

Scores and Percents Tutorial

This tutorial is for all of my educators out there, or anyone else who wants to learn how to quickly calculate points earned and percents using a spreadsheet! I am going to show you how to do this in Google Sheets, but the same process works for Excel.

First, we're going to name the columns so we can come back and re-use this if we have something with the same number of points again. That way we know what the numbers mean! I name my columns Points Off, Points Earned, and Percent.

When you graded this assignment, did you take off half points at all, or just full points? This will determine how your first column is set up. In my example, I will use half points because as a math teacher, I give a lot of partial credit. First, we'll fill in a couple rows in our Points Off column. I'm going to start with half a point off, then 1 point, and so on. So in the first column, in the cell below the title, I'll type 0.5. Then in the cell below that, I'll type 1. This should be enough for the spreadsheet to sense a pattern and continue it.

Next, move over to the Points Earned column. Here is where we're going to create our first formula that the spreadsheet will follow. How many points was your assignment worth? I'll say mine was worth 12 points. So in the cell below the title Points Earned, I want my spreadsheet to take the total points (12) and subtract the Points Off (0.5). To do that, I'll type an equals sign, then type 12 minus and click the cell to the left that says 0.5. When you hit enter, your cell should calculate a value of 11.5!

If you're in Google Sheets, it will suggest to autofill. You can do that or do it manually - here's how. Do you see the square in the bottom right corner of that cell? Click and drag it down one cell. Now you should see an 11 under the 11.5. It used your formula to calculate the points earned for 1 point off!

Now let's move over to the Percent column. We're going to use another formula. Click the cell directly below the title Percent. This time, you'll type an equals sign, then click the 11.5, divided by (backslash) then type 12. If you'd like you can also add "times 100" at the end so the percents look nicer and aren't in decimal form. You'll click and drag the formula down one cell just like you did with the previous column. Now you have two completed rows, and it's time for the magic!

Highlight all six cells with numbers in them. Click and drag the box in the lower right corner again - drag it straight down, at least a few rows so you can see how this works. It's up to you if you want to drag it all the way down to zero, or stop when you are confident you won't have any lower scores. And there you go! Now when you have a tally of the number of points taken off, instead of manually subtracting and dividing to get the Points Earned and Percent, you can just reference this spreadsheet! I keep one spreadsheet and make a new Sheet (tab) in it for different point values. You can even name it that point value to reference later.

Here's an example I did with a 17 point quiz. That's not something I can do mentally so this is super helpful! I even highlighted everything below an 80%, since that's my school's retake threshold, so I can quickly see which students will need to do a retake. Once you get used to setting this up, it takes much less time than calculating individual scores and percents, especially if you have over 100 students like I do. Happy spreadsheeting!