

# Sorting Multiple Columns

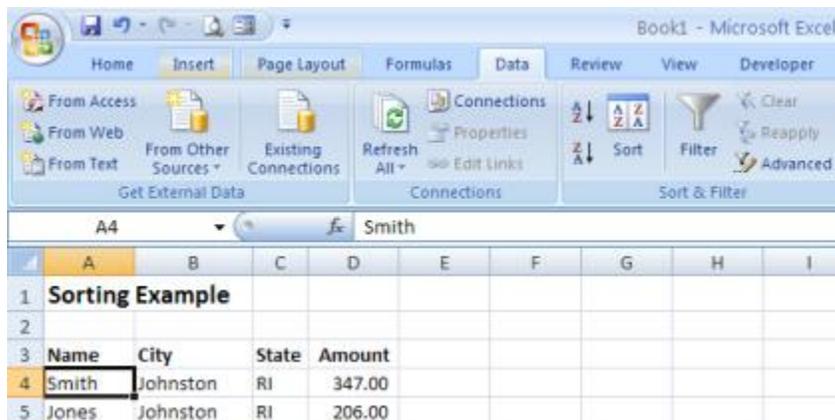
by Dick Evans

Sorting is a simple task in Excel, but it can be confusing when sorting more than one column of data. This paper walks you through a simple one column sort to a multi-column sort.

1. Start Excel
2. Create the following worksheet:

	A	B	C	D
1	<b>Sorting Example</b>			
2				
3	<b>Name</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Amount</b>
4	Smith	Johnston	RI	347.00
5	Jones	Johnston	RI	206.00
6	Fairly	Cranston	RI	472.00
7	Capps	Cranston	RI	286.00
8	King	Cumberland	RI	422.00
9	Smith	Cumberland	RI	369.00
10	Jones	Warwick	RI	500.00
11	Fairly	Warwick	RI	158.00
12	Capps	Coventry	RI	355.00
13	King	Coventry	RI	195.00
14	Smith	Bristol	CT	415.00
15	Jones	Bristol	RI	282.00
16	Fairly	Newport	RI	175.00
17	Capps	Newport	RI	126.00
18	King	New Haven	CT	135.00
19	Smith	New Haven	CT	323.00
20	Jones	Hartford	CT	437.00
21	Fairly	Hartford	CT	368.00

3. Click any cell in column A containing Names.



4. Click **Data > Sort & Filter**, and then the icon with **A over Z** and the **down arrow**. This is the command to sort the column of data selected in ascending alphabetical sequence. The up arrow command sorts in descending sequence.

	A	B	C	D
1	<b>Sorting Example</b>			
2				
3	<b>Name</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Amount</b>
4	Capps	Cranston	RI	286.00
5	Capps	Coventry	RI	355.00
6	Capps	Newport	RI	126.00
7	Fairly	Cranston	RI	472.00
8	Fairly	Warwick	RI	158.00
9	Fairly	Newport	RI	175.00
10	Fairly	Hartford	CT	368.00
11	Jones	Johnston	RI	206.00
12	Jones	Warwick	RI	500.00
13	Jones	Bristol	RI	282.00
14	Jones	Hartford	CT	437.00
15	King	Cumberland	RI	422.00
16	King	Coventry	RI	195.00
17	King	New Haven	CT	135.00
18	Smith	Johnston	RI	347.00
19	Smith	Cumberland	RI	369.00
20	Smith	Bristol	CT	415.00
21	Smith	New Haven	CT	323.00

5. Using the same steps, **sort the data by state**.

	A	B	C	D
1	<b>Sorting Example</b>			
2				
3	<b>Name</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Amount</b>
4	Fairly	Hartford	CT	368.00
5	Jones	Hartford	CT	437.00
6	King	New Haven	CT	135.00
7	Smith	Bristol	CT	415.00
8	Smith	New Haven	CT	323.00
9	Capps	Cranston	RI	286.00
10	Capps	Coventry	RI	355.00
11	Capps	Newport	RI	126.00
12	Fairly	Cranston	RI	472.00
13	Fairly	Warwick	RI	158.00
14	Fairly	Newport	RI	175.00
15	Jones	Johnston	RI	206.00
16	Jones	Warwick	RI	500.00
17	Jones	Bristol	RI	282.00
18	King	Cumberland	RI	422.00
19	King	Coventry	RI	195.00
20	Smith	Johnston	RI	347.00
21	Smith	Cumberland	RI	369.00

- Notice the sequence of names in each state remains ascending. Excel remembers the original order when it sorts on the next field (column of data). **Sort again on the City.**

18	Capps	Newport	RI	126.00
19	Fairly	Newport	RI	175.00
20	Fairly	Warwick	RI	158.00
21	Jones	Warwick	RI	500.00

- Notice the names are still in sequence.
- Sorting is easy and multiple fields of data can be sorted individually. However, there is an easier method.

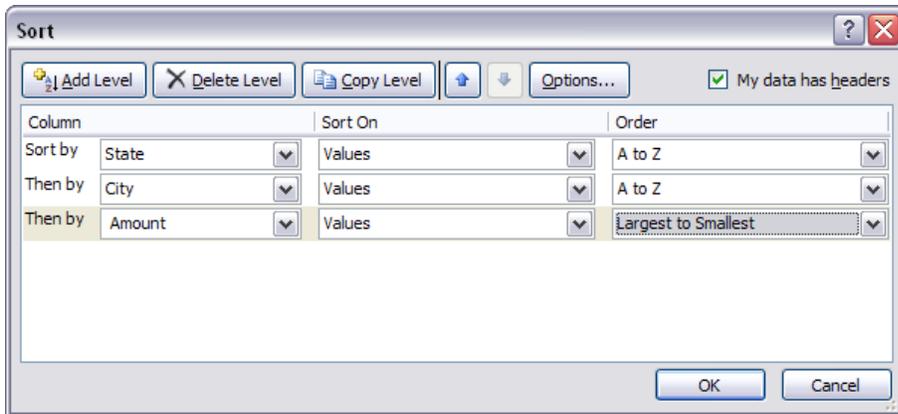
The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel interface with a data table and the Sort dialog box open. The data table is as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	<b>Sorting Example</b>													
2														
3	<b>Name</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Amount</b>										
4	Smith	Bristol	CT	415.00										
5	Jones	Bristol	RI	282.00										
6	Capps	Coventry	RI	355.00										
7	King	Coventry	RI	195.00										
8	Capps	Cranston	RI	286.00										
9	Fairly	Cranston	RI	472.00										
10	King	Cumberland	RI	422.00										
11	Smith	Cumberland	RI	369.00										
12	Fairly	Hartford	CT	368.00										
13	Jones	Hartford	CT	437.00										
14	Jones	Johnston	RI	206.00										
15	Smith	Johnston	RI	347.00										
16	King	New Haven	CT	135.00										
17	Smith	New Haven	CT	323.00										
18	Capps	Newport	RI	126.00										
19	Fairly	Newport	RI	175.00										
20	Fairly	Warwick	RI	158.00										
21	Jones	Warwick	RI	500.00										

The Sort dialog box is open, showing the following settings:

- Column: City
- Sort On: Values
- Order: A to Z
- My data has headers:

- Click in any cell within the area to be sorted. Then **Data > Sort & Filter > Sort** to open the Sort dialog box. This dialog lets you enter all the fields to be sorted at one time and in one place. The number of fields to be used is determined by how many you add to the list. The Names used in the column headings are used to describe the data. If there are no column headings, the column letter will display.



10. **Select the fields** to be sorted using the Add Level button to add the next field. When all needed fields have been added, click **OK**

	A	B	C	D
1	<b>Sorting Example</b>			
2				
3	<b>Name</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Amount</b>
4	Smith	Bristol	CT	415.00
5	Jones	Hartford	CT	437.00
6	Fairly	Hartford	CT	368.00
7	Smith	New Haven	CT	323.00
8	King	New Haven	CT	135.00
9	Jones	Bristol	RI	282.00
10	Capps	Coventry	RI	355.00
11	King	Coventry	RI	195.00

Each states data is together. Within each state, the data is in order by city. Within each city, the data is in descending order by amount.