MICROSOFT EXCEL



Relative and Absolute References

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 - To create and copy a formula using absolute references
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3 Introduction

- There are two types of cell references: relative and absolute.
 Relative and absolute references behave differently when copied and filled to other cells.
- Relative references change when a formula is copied to another cell.
- Absolute references, on the other hand, remain constant no matter where they are copied.

Relative references

By default, all cell references are **relative references**. When copied across multiple cells, they change based on the relative position of rows and columns. For example, if you copy the formula **=A1+B1** from row 1 to row 2, the formula will become **=A2+B2**. Relative references are especially convenient whenever you need to repeat the same calculation across multiple rows or columns.

In the following example, we want to create a formula that will multiply each item's **price** by the **quantity**. Instead of creating a new formula for each row, we can create a single formula in cell **D2** and then copy it to the other rows. We'll use relative references so the formula calculates the total for each item correctly.

1. Select the **cell** that will contain the formula. In our example, we'll select cell **D4**.

D4	\bullet : \times \checkmark f_x				
	А	В	С	D	E
з	MENU ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	LINE TOTAL	
4	Empanadas: Beef Picadillo	\$2.99	15	¢	
5	Empanadas: Chipotle Shrimp	\$3.99	10		
6	Tamales: Chicken Tinga	\$2.29	20		
7	Tamales: Vegetable	\$2.29	30		
8	Arepas: Carnitas	\$2.89	10		
9	Arepas: Queso Blanco	\$2.49	20		
10	Empanadas: Apple Cinnamon	\$3.19	40		
11	Beverages: Horchata	\$1.89	25		
12	Beverages: Lemonade	\$1.89	35		
13	Beverages: Tamarindo	\$1.89	10		
14			TOTAL	\$0.00	
15					

2. Enter the **formula** to calculate the desired value. In our example, we'll type **=B4*C4**.

C	4 \checkmark : \times \checkmark f_x =B4*C4				
	A	В	с	D	E
3	MENU ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	LINE TOTAL	
4	Empanadas: Beef Picadillo	\$2.99	15	=B4*C4	
5	Empanadas: Chipotle Shrimp	\$3.99	10		
6	Tamales: Chicken Tinga	\$2.29	20		
7	Tamales: Vegetable	\$2.29	30		
8	Arepas: Carnitas	\$2.89	10		
9	Arepas: Queso Blanco	\$2.49	20		
10	Empanadas: Apple Cinnamon	\$3.19	40		
11	Beverages: Horchata	\$1.89	25		
12	Beverages: Lemonade	\$1.89	35		
13	Beverages: Tamarindo	\$1.89	10		
14			TOTAL	\$0.00	
15					

⁸ Using relative references

- 3. Press **Enter** on your keyboard. The formula will be calculated, and the result will be displayed in the cell.
- Locate the fill handle in the bottom-right corner of the desired cell. In our example, we'll locate the fill handle for cell D4.

D	D4 \checkmark : $\times \checkmark f_x$ =B4*C4							
	А	В	С	DE				
3	MENU ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	LINE TOTAL				
4	Empanadas: Beef Picadillo	\$2.99	15	\$44.85				
5	Empanadas: Chipotle Shrimp	\$3.99	10	\mathbf{v}				
6	Tamales: Chicken Tinga	\$2.29	20					
7	Tamales: Vegetable	\$2.29	30					
8	Arepas: Carnitas	\$2.89	10					
9	Arepas: Queso Blanco	\$2.49	20					
10	Empanadas: Apple Cinnamon	\$3.19	40					
11	Beverages: Horchata	\$1.89	25					
12	Beverages: Lemonade	\$1.89	35					
13	Beverages: Tamarindo	\$1.89	10					
14			TOTAL	\$44.85				
15								

5. Click and drag the **fill handle** over the cells you want to fill. In our example, we'll select cells **D5:D13**.

D	4 • I : \times \checkmark f_x =B4*C4				
	A	В	с	D	Е
3	MENU ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	LINE TOTAL	
4	Empanadas: Beef Picadillo	\$2.99	15	\$44.85	_
5	Empanadas: Chipotle Shrimp	\$3.99	10		
6	Tamales: Chicken Tinga	\$2.29	20		
7	Tamales: Vegetable	\$2.29	30		
8	Arepas: Carnitas	\$2.89	10		
9	Arepas: Queso Blanco	\$2.49	20		
10	Empanadas: Apple Cinnamon	\$3.19	40		
11	Beverages: Horchata	\$1.89	25		
12	Beverages: Lemonade	\$1.89	35		
13	Beverages: Tamarindo	\$1.89	10		
14			TOTAL	\$44.85	Τ'
15					

¹⁰ Using relative references

6. Release the mouse. The formula will be **copied** to the selected cells with **relative references**, displaying the result in each cell.

	D4	\bullet : \times \checkmark f_x =B4*C4				
1		A	В	С	D	E
	3	MENU ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	LINE TOTAL	
	4	Empanadas: Beef Picadillo	\$2.99	15	\$44.85	
	5	Empanadas: Chipotle Shrimp	\$3.99	10	\$39.90	
	6	Tamales: Chicken Tinga	\$2.29	20	\$45.80	
	7	Tamales: Vegetable	\$2.29	30	\$68.70	
1	8	Arepas: Carnitas	\$2.89	10	\$28.90	
	9	Arepas: Queso Blanco	\$2.49	20	\$49.80	
	10	Empanadas: Apple Cinnamon	\$3.19	40	\$127.60	
	11	Beverages: Horchata	\$1.89	25	\$47.25	
	12	Beverages: Lemonade	\$1.89	35	\$66.15	
	13	Beverages: Tamarindo	\$1.89	10	\$18.90	
-	14			TOTAL	\$537.85	+
	15					

• You can double-click the **filled cells** to check their formulas for accuracy. The relative cell references should be different for each cell, depending on their rows.

N	ETWORK ▼ : × ✓ f _x =B8*C8				
	A	В	С	D	E
3	MENU ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	LINE TOTAL	
4	Empanadas: Beef Picadillo	\$2.99	15	\$44.85	
5	Empanadas: Chipotle Shrimp	\$3.99	10	\$39.90	
6	Tamales: Chicken Tinga	\$2.29	20	\$45.80	
7	Tamales: Vegetable	\$2.29	30	\$68.70	
8	Arepas: Carnitas	\$2.89	10	=B8*C8	
9	Arepas: Queso Blanco	\$2.49	20	\$49.80	
10	Empanadas: Apple Cinnamon	\$3.19	40	\$127.60	
11	Beverages: Horchata	\$1.89	25	\$47.25	
12	Beverages: Lemonade	\$1.89	35	\$66.15	
13	Beverages: Tamarindo	\$1.89	10	\$18.90	
14			TOTAL	\$537.85	
15					

12 Absolute references

- There may be a time when you don't want a cell reference to change when copied to other cells. Unlike relative references, **absolute references** do not change when copied or filled. You can use an absolute reference to keep a row and/or column **constant**.
- An absolute reference is designated in a formula by the addition of a **dollar sign (\$)**. It can precede the column reference, the row reference, or both.

\$A\$2	The column and the row do not change when copied
A\$2	The row does not change when copied
\$A2	The column does not change when copied

13 Absolute references

- You will generally use the \$A\$2 format when creating formulas that contain absolute references. The other two formats are used much less frequently.
 - When writing a formula, you can press the **F4** key on your keyboard to switch between relative and absolute cell references. This is an easy way to quickly insert an absolute reference.

In the example below, we're going to use cell E2 (which contains the tax rate at 7.5%) to calculate the sales tax for each item in column D. To make sure the reference to the tax rate stays constant—even when the formula is copied and filled to other cells—we'll need to make cell \$E\$2 an absolute reference.

1. Select the **cell** that will contain the formula. In our example, we'll select cell **D4**.

	D4	\bullet : \times \checkmark f_x					
		А	В	С	D	E	
1	2				TAX RATE:	7.5%	
	3	MENU ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	SALES TAX	LINE TOTAL	
	4	Empanadas: Beef Picadillo	\$2.99	15	¢	\$44.85	
	5	Empanadas: Chipotle Shrimp	\$3.99	10		\$39.90	
	6	Tamales: Chicken Tinga	\$2.29	20		\$45.80	
	7	Tamales: Vegetable	\$2.29	30		\$68.70	
1	8	Arepas: Carnitas	\$2.89	10		\$28.90	
	9	Arepas: Queso Blanco	\$2.49	20		\$49.80	
	10	Empanadas: Apple Cinnamon	\$3.19	40		\$127.60	
	11	Beverages: Horchata	\$1.89	25		\$47.25	
	12	Beverages: Lemonade	\$1.89	35		\$66.15	
	13	Beverages: Tamarindo	\$1.89	10		\$18.90	
	14				TOTAL	\$537.85	
	15						

Enter the formula to calculate the desired value. In our example, we'll type =(B4*C4)*\$E\$2, making \$E\$2 an absolute reference.

N						
	А	В	С	D	E	
2				TAX RATE:	7.5%	
3	MENU ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	SALES TAX	LINE TOTAL	
4	Empanadas: Beef Picadillo	\$2.99	= (B4	*C4)*\$E\$2	\$44.85	
, 5	Empanadas: Chipotle Shrimp	\$3.99	10		\$39.90	
6	Tamales: Chicken Tinga	\$2.29	20		\$45.80	
7	Tamales: Vegetable	\$2.29	30		\$68.70	
8	Arepas: Carnitas	\$2.89	10		\$28.90	
9	Arepas: Queso Blanco	\$2.49	20		\$49.80	
10	Empanadas: Apple Cinnamon	\$3.19	40		\$127.60	
11	Beverages: Horchata	\$1.89	25		\$47.25	
12	Beverages: Lemonade	\$1.89	35		\$66.15	
13	Beverages: Tamarindo	\$1.89	10		\$18.90	
14				TOTAL	\$537.85	
15						

- 3. Press **Enter** on your keyboard. The formula will calculate, and the result will display in the cell.
- Locate the fill handle in the bottom-right corner of the desired cell. In our example, we'll locate the fill handle for cell D4.

	D4	↓ ▼ : × √ <i>f</i> _x =(B4	*C4)*\$E\$2				
		А	В	С	D	E	
	2				TAX RATE:	7.5%	
/	3	MENU ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	SALES TAX	LINE TOTAL	
	4	Empanadas: Beef Picadillo	\$2.99	15	\$3.36	\$48.21	
	5	Empanadas: Chipotle Shrimp	\$3.99	10		\$39.90	
	6	Tamales: Chicken Tinga	\$2.29	20		\$45.80	
	7	Tamales: Vegetable	\$2.29	30		\$68.70	
	8	Arepas: Carnitas	\$2.89	10		\$28.90	
	9	Arepas: Queso Blanco	\$2.49	20		\$49.80	
	10	Empanadas: Apple Cinnamon	\$3.19	40		\$127.60	
	11	Beverages: Horchata	\$1.89	25		\$47.25	
	12	Beverages: Lemonade	\$1.89	35		\$66.15	
	13	Beverages: Tamarindo	\$1.89	10		\$18.90	
	14				TOTAL	\$541.21	
	15						

5. Click and drag the **fill handle** over the cells you want to fill (cells **D5:D13** in our example).

	D4	\cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot f_x =(B4	*C4)*\$E\$2				
		A	В	С	D	E	
1	2				TAX RATE:	7.5%	
	3	MENU ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	SALES TAX	LINE TOTAL	
	4	Empanadas: Beef Picadillo	\$2.99	15	\$3.36	\$48.21	
	5	Empanadas: Chipotle Shrimp	\$3.99	10		\$39.90	
	6	Tamales: Chicken Tinga	\$2.29	20		\$45.80	
	7	Tamales: Vegetable	\$2.29	30		\$68.70	
1	8	Arepas: Carnitas	\$2.89	10		\$28.90	
ALC: NO.	9	Arepas: Queso Blanco	\$2.49	20		\$49.80	
	10	Empanadas: Apple Cinnamon	\$3.19	40		\$127.60	
	11	Beverages: Horchata	\$1.89	25		\$47.25	
	12	Beverages: Lemonade	\$1.89	35		\$66.15	
	13	Beverages: Tamarindo	\$1.89	10		\$18.90	
	14				TOTAL	\$541.21	
	15						

6. Release the mouse. The formula will be **copied** to the selected cells with an **absolute reference**, and the values will be calculated in each cell.

	D4	↓ • : × √ <i>f</i> _x =(B4	*C4)*\$E\$2				
		А	В	С	D	E	
	2				TAX RATE:	7.5%	
	3	MENU ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	SALES TAX	LINE TOTAL	
	4	Empanadas: Beef Picadillo	\$2.99	15	\$3.36	\$48.21	
/	5	Empanadas: Chipotle Shrimp	\$3.99	10	\$2.99	\$42.89	
	6	Tamales: Chicken Tinga	\$2.29	20	\$3.44	\$49.24	
	7	Tamales: Vegetable	\$2.29	30	\$5.15	\$73.85	
	8	Arepas: Carnitas	\$2.89	10	\$2.17	\$31.07	
	9	Arepas: Queso Blanco	\$2.49	20	\$3.74	\$53.54	
	10	Empanadas: Apple Cinnamon	\$3.19	40	\$9.57	\$137.17	
	11	Beverages: Horchata	\$1.89	25	\$3.54	\$50.79	
	12	Beverages: Lemonade	\$1.89	35	\$4.96	\$71.11	
	13	Beverages: Tamarindo	\$1.89	10	\$1.42	\$20.32	
	14				TOTAL	\$578.19	
	15						

²⁰ Using absolute references

• You can double-click the **filled cells** to check their formulas for accuracy. The absolute reference should be the same for each cell, while the other references are relative to the cell's row.

	N	ETWORK ▼ : × ✓ f _x =(B8	*C8)*\$E\$2				
		А	В	С	D	E	
2	2				TAX RATE:	7.5%	
3	3	MENU ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	SALES TAX	LINE TOTAL	
1	4	Empanadas: Beef Picadillo	\$2.99	15	\$3.36	\$48.21	
5	5	Empanadas: Chipotle Shrimp	\$3.99	10	\$2.99	\$42.89	
6	5	Tamales: Chicken Tinga	\$2.29	20	\$3.44	\$49.24	
7	7	Tamales: Vegetable	\$2.29	30	\$5.15	\$73.85	
8	в	Arepas: Carnitas	\$2.89	= (B8	3 *C8)* \$E\$2	\$31.07	
ç	9	Arepas: Queso Blanco	\$2.49	20	\$3.74	\$53.54	
1	0	Empanadas: Apple Cinnamon	\$3.19	40	\$9.57	\$137.17	
1	1	Beverages: Horchata	\$1.89	25	\$3.54	\$50.79	
1	2	Beverages: Lemonade	\$1.89	35	\$4.96	\$71.11	
1	3	Beverages: Tamarindo	\$1.89	10	\$1.42	\$20.32	
1	4				TOTAL	\$578.19	
1	5						

²¹ Using absolute references

Be sure to include the **dollar sign (\$)** whenever you're making an absolute reference across multiple cells. The dollar signs were omitted in the example below. This caused Excel to interpret it as a **relative reference**, producing an incorrect result when copied to other cells.

	NE	TWORK▼ : × ✓ f _x =(B8	*C8)*E6				
		А	В	С	D	E	
/	2				TAX RATE:	7.5%	
	3	MENU ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	SALES TAX	LINE TOTAL	
	4	Empanadas: Beef Picadillo	\$2.99	15	\$3.36	\$48.21	
	5	Empanadas: Chipotle Shrimp	\$3.99	10	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	
	6	Tamales: Chicken Tinga	\$2.29	20	\$2,208.19	\$2,253.99	
	7	Tamales: Vegetable	\$2.29	30	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	
	8	Arepas: Carnitas	\$2.89	=	(B8*C8)*E6	\$65,169.20	
	9	Arepas: Queso Blanco	\$2.49	20	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	
•	10	Empanadas: Apple Cinnamon	\$3.19	40	#########	###########	
4	11	Beverages: Horchata	\$1.89	25	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	
4	12	Beverages: Lemonade	\$1.89	35	##########	###########	
	13	Beverages: Tamarindo	\$1.89	10	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	
4	14				TOTAL	#VALUE!	
1	15						

²² Using cell references with multiple worksheets

Excel allows you to refer to any cell on any **worksheet**, which can be especially helpful if you want to reference a specific value from one worksheet to another. To do this, you'll simply need to begin the cell reference with the **worksheet name** followed by an **exclamation point (!)**. For example, if you wanted to reference cell **A1** on **Sheet1**, its cell reference would be **Sheet1!A1**.

Note that if a worksheet name contains a **space**, you'll need to include **single quotation marks (' ')** around the name. For example, if you wanted to reference cell **A1** on a worksheet named **July Budget**, its cell reference would be **'July Budget'!A1**.

In our example below, we'll refer to a cell with a calculated value between two worksheets. This will allow us to use the **exact same value** on two different worksheets without rewriting the formula or copying data.

 Locate the cell you want to reference, and note its worksheet.
 In our example, we want to reference cell E14 on the Menu Order worksheet.

	E1	4 ▼ : × √ ƒ _x =sut	JM(E4:E13)					
		А	В	С	D	E		
	2				TAX RATE:	7.5%		
	3	MENU ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	SALES TAX	LINE TOTAL		
,	4	Empanadas: Beef Picadillo	\$2.99	15	\$3.36	\$48.21		
/	5	Empanadas: Chipotle Shrimp	\$3.99	10	\$2.99	\$42.89		
	6	Tamales: Chicken Tinga	\$2.29	20	\$3.44	\$49.24		
	7	Tamales: Vegetable	\$2.29	30	\$5.15	\$73.85		
	8	Arepas: Carnitas	\$ 2.89	10	\$2.17	\$31.07		
	9	Arepas: Queso Blanco	\$2.49	20	\$3.74	\$53.54		
	10	Empanadas: Apple Cinnamon	\$3.19	40	\$9 <mark>.</mark> 57	\$137.17		
	11	Beverages: Horchata	\$1.89	25	\$3.54	\$50.79		
	12	Beverages: Lemonade	\$1.89	35	\$4.96	\$71.11		
	13	Beverages: Tamarindo	\$1.89	10	\$1.42	\$20.32		
	14				TOTAL	🕈 \$578.19		
	15							
	16							
	17							
	10							
		Catering Invoice Menu Or	der (+)					

2. Navigate to the desired **worksheet**. In our example, we'll select the **Catering Invoice** worksheet.

3	SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	LINE TOTAL
4	Menu Order	Food & beverage	
5	Paper Goods	Plates, utensils, cups	\$110.87
6	Rental Equipment	Tables, chairs, linens	\$249.95
7	Service Fee	18% of food & beverage	\$0.00
8		TOTAL	\$360.82
9			
10			
11			
-12			
	Catering Invoice 3 Menu	Order (+)	: 4

3. Locate and select the **cell** where you want the value to appear. In our example, we'll select cell **C4**.

(C4	\bullet : \times \checkmark f_x		
		А	В	С
/ 3	;	SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	LINE TOTAL
4	t I	Menu Order	Food & beverage	¢
5	5	Paper Goods	Plates, utensils, cups	\$110.87
6	5	Rental Equipment	Tables, chairs, linens	\$249.95
7	,	Service Fee	18% of food & beverage	\$0.00
8	3		TOTAL	\$360.82
9	,			

4. Type the equals sign (=), the sheet name followed by an exclamation point (!), and the cell address. In our example, we'll type ='Menu Order'!E14.

N	ETWORK▼ : × ✓ f _x ='	Menu Order'!E14	
	А	В	С
3	SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	LINE TOTAL
4	Menu Order	Food & beverage	='Menu Order'!E14
5	Paper Goods	Plates, utensils, cups	\$110.87
6	Rental Equipment	Tables, chairs, linens	\$249.95
7	Service Fee	18% of food & beverage	\$104.07
8		TOTAL	\$1,043.08
9			

5. Press **Enter** on your keyboard. The **value** of the referenced cell will appear. Now, if the value of cell E14 changes on the Menu Order worksheet, it will be updated automatically on the Catering Invoice worksheet.

(C4	\bullet : \times \checkmark f_{x} =			
		A	В	С	
3	;	SERVICE	DESCRIPTION	LINE TOTAL	
4	L.	Menu Order	Food & beverage	\$578.19	
5	;	Paper Goods	Plates, utensils, cups	\$110.87	
6	;	Rental Equipment	Tables, chairs, linens	\$249.95	
7	,	Service Fee	18% of food & beverage	\$104.07	
8	3		TOTAL	\$1,043.08	
9	,				

- If you **rename** your worksheet at a later point, the cell reference will be updated automatically to reflect the new worksheet name.
- If you enter a worksheet name incorrectly, the **#REF!** error will appear in the cell. In our example below, we've mistyped the name of the worksheet. To edit, ignore, or investigate the error, click the **Error** button beside the cell and choose an option from the **menu**.

C	4	Ŧ	:	×	<	$f_{\mathcal{K}}$	=N	/enuOrder!E14		
	í .			Α				В		C
3	SER	VICE						DESCRIPTION	_	LINE TOTAL
4	Mer	u Oro	der					Food & beverage	۰ 🕩	#REF!
5	Pape	er Go	ods					Plates, utensils, cups		Invalid Cell Reference Error 7
6	Rent	tal Eq	uipi	ment				Tables, chairs, linens		Help on this error
7	Serv	ice Fe	ee					18% of food & beverage		Show <u>C</u> alculation Steps
8								TO		Edit in Formula Bar
9										Error Checking <u>O</u> ptions
10)									

³⁰ Practice – Part 1

- Open our practice workbook.
- Click the Paper Goods tab in the bottom-left of the workbook.
- In cell **D4**, enter a formula that multiplies the unit price in **B4**, the quantity in **C4**, and the tax rate in **E2**. Make sure to use an **absolute cell reference** for the tax rate because it will be the same in every cell.
- Use the **fill handle** to copy the formula you just created to cells **D5:D12**.
- Change the tax rate in cell **E2** to 6.5%. Notice that all of your cells have updated.

31 Solution

	D4					
		А	В	С	D	E
	1	SABROSA Empanadas & More	Catering Inv Sabrosa Empanada 1202 Biscayne Bay Orlando, FL 32804	/OiCE as & More Drive	Invoid Date:	ce #: 5686B 05/10/16
202	2				TAX RATE:	6.5%
	3	ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	SALES TAX	LINE TOTAL
	4	10.5" Extra Thick Dinner Plates - 20 count	\$3.79	15	\$3.70	\$60.55
	5	8" Deep Dessert Plates - 15 count	\$3.99	20	\$5.19	\$84.99
	6	16 oz. Beverage Cups - 30 count	\$1.29	10	\$0.84	\$13.74
	7	12 oz. Styrofoam Coffee Cups - 20 count	\$1.59	15	\$1.55	\$25.40
	8	50 count Plastic Spoons - White	\$2.59	6	\$1.01	\$16.55
	9	50 count Plastic Forks - White	\$2.69	6	\$1.05	\$17.19
	10	50 count Plastic Knives - White	\$2.19	6	\$0.85	\$13.99
	11	100 count Dinner Napkins - Blue	\$1.39	3	\$0.27	\$4.44
	12	75 count Beverage Napkins - Green	\$1.19	4	\$0.31	\$5.07
	13				TOTAL	\$241.91

³² Practice – Part 2

- Click the Catering Invoice tab.
- Delete the value in cell C5 and replace it with a reference to the total cost of the paper goods. Hint: The cost of the paper goods is in cell E13 on the Paper Goods worksheet.
- **Optional:** Use the same steps from above to calculate the sales tax for each item on the **Menu Order** worksheet. The total cost in cell **E14** should update. Then, in cell **C4** of the **Catering Invoice** worksheet, create a **cell reference** to the total you just calculated. **Note:** If you used our practice workbook to follow along during the lesson, you may have already completed this step.



