G.C.E. O/L Grade 10 ICT · Lesson 6

6.4 Tables in Word Processing: Merge and Split Cells

A **table** arranges information in **rows** (across) and **columns** (down). Each box is a **cell**. Tables are used for timetables, mark sheets, price lists and forms. In this note you will learn how to **insert a table**, change **column width and row height**, **insert and delete** rows and columns, **merge and split cells**, and add **borders and shading** in Word, Writer and Google Docs.

1. Parts of a table

Row
A horizontal line of cells (across).

Column
A vertical line of cells (down).

Cell
The box where a row and a column meet.

Header row
The first row with column headings, often bold and shaded.

Example: a 3-column × 4-row mark sheet has **3 × 4 = 12 cells**. (Columns are said first: '3 × 4 table' = 3 columns, 4 rows in Word's Insert Table grid.)

Name	ICT	Maths
Nimal	78	65
Sara	91	84
Kasun	65	72

2. Insert a table

Software	Steps
MS Word	Insert → Table → drag the grid, or Insert Table... and type columns and rows
LibreOffice Writer	Table → Insert Table (Ctrl+F12)
Google Docs	Insert → Table → choose the size

> 💡 Press **Tab** to move to the next cell; pressing Tab in the last cell adds a new row.

3. Column width and row height

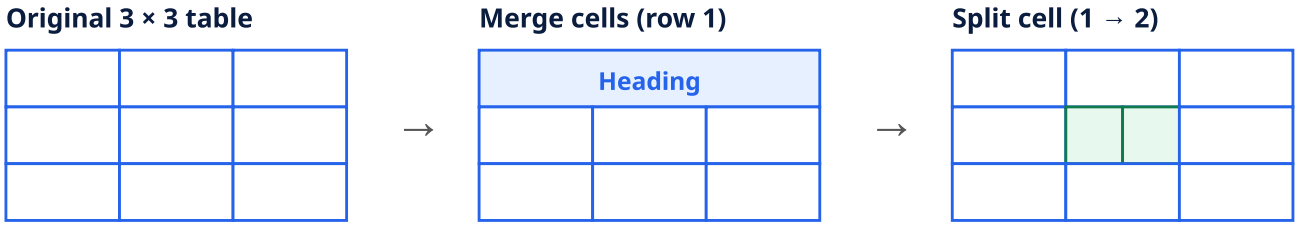
- Drag the border line between columns or rows.
- Table Layout → Cell Size: type exact width/height (e.g. 3 cm).
- **AutoFit**: AutoFit Contents, AutoFit Window, Fixed Column Width. **Distribute Columns/Rows** makes them equal.

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4. Insert and delete

Right-click a cell → **Insert** → Rows Above / Rows Below / Columns Left / Columns Right. Right-click → **Delete** → Delete Cells / Rows / Columns / Table. (Pressing Delete key only clears the text, not the cells.)

5. Merge and split cells



Merge: join two or more cells into one. Split: divide one cell into more cells.

Merge joins the 3 cells of row 1 into one heading cell; Split divides one cell into 2 columns.

Action	Word	Writer	Google Docs
Merge	Select cells → Table Layout → Merge Cells	Table → Merge Cells	Right-click → Merge cells
Split	Table Layout → Split Cells → number of columns/rows	Table → Split Cells	Right-click → Split cell

💡 Merge the top row to make a table title, e.g. ‘Grade 10 Term Test Marks’.

6. Borders and shading

- **Borders**: lines around cells – choose style, colour and width (Table Design → Borders; Writer: Table Properties → Borders).
- **Shading**: background colour of cells (Table Design → Shading; Docs: Cell background colour).
- **Table Styles** apply ready-made borders and shading in one click.
- Tick **Repeat Header Rows** so the heading appears on every page of a long table.

Key Words

Table – Information arranged in rows and columns.

Row – A horizontal line of cells.

Column – A vertical line of cells.

Cell – The box where a row and column meet.

Header row – First row holding column headings.

Merge cells – Join two or more cells into one cell.

Split cells – Divide one cell into several cells.

Column width – How wide a column is.

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Row height – How tall a row is.	**AutoFit** – Automatically sizes columns to contents or window.
Borders – Lines drawn around cells or the table.	**Shading** – Background colour filled in cells.

Sample Q&A

1. How many cells are in a table with 5 columns and 4 rows?

> **Answer:** 5 × 4 = 20 cells.

2. What is the difference between merge and split?

> **Answer:** Merge joins several cells into one; split divides one cell into several.

3. How do you add a row below the current one?

> **Answer:** Right-click → Insert → Insert Rows Below (or press Tab in the last cell for the last row).

4. Pressing the Delete key on a selected row – what happens?

> **Answer:** Only the text is cleared; the row stays. Use Delete → Delete Rows to remove it.

5. What are borders and shading?

> **Answer:** Borders are lines around cells; shading is background colour inside cells.

6. Give two ways to change a column width.

> **Answer:** Drag the column border; type the width in Table Layout → Cell Size; or AutoFit.

MCQ

1. A box in a table where a row and column meet is a…

A. Margin
B. Tab
C. Field
D. Cell

2. A table with 4 columns and 6 rows has how many cells?

A. 24
B. 46
C. 10
D. 20

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3. Columns run…

A. Around the page
B. Horizontally (across)
C. Vertically (down)
D. Diagonally

4. Joining three cells of the top row into one is…

A. Shading
B. Split cells
C. Merge cells
D. AutoFit

5. Dividing one cell into two columns is…

A. Merge cells
B. Borders
C. Delete table
D. Split cells

6. In Word, Merge Cells is on the…

A. Mailings tab
B. Home tab
C. Table Layout tab
D. View tab

7. Pressing Tab in the last cell of a table…

A. Deletes the table
B. Adds a new row
C. Merges all cells
D. Prints the table

8. The background colour of a cell is called…

A. Border
B. Shading
C. Font colour
D. Outline

9. Which makes all columns the same width?

A. Distribute Columns
B. Split Table
C. Merge Cells
D. Text Direction

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10. In LibreOffice Writer, a table is inserted with…

A. Ctrl+T
B. Ctrl+F12
C. F7
D. Ctrl+M

11. To remove a whole column you should use…

A. Shading → None
B. Merge Cells
C. The Delete key only
D. Delete → Delete Columns

12. To show the header row on every page of a long table, use…

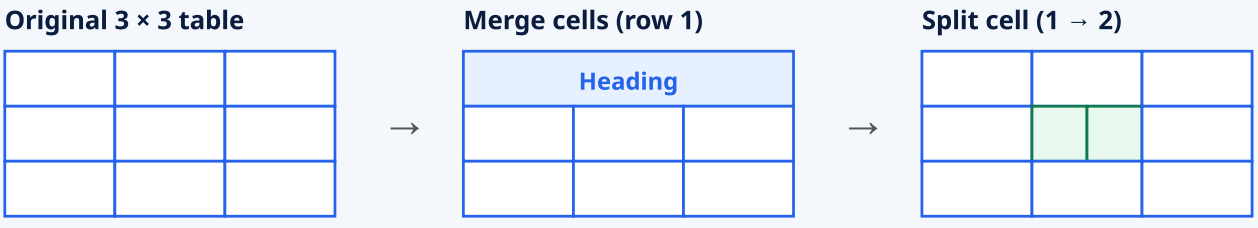
A. Repeat Header Rows
B. Sort
C. AutoFit Window
D. Split Table

Structured Questions

1. (i) Define row, column and cell. (3 marks)
(ii) How many cells are in a 6 × 3 table? (1 mark) *(4 marks)*

> (i) Row – horizontal line of cells; column – vertical line of cells; cell – box where row and column meet. (ii) 6 × 3 = 18.

2. Draw a 3 × 3 table and show (a) the top row merged and (b) the middle cell split into two. *(4 marks)*

> See diagram: the top row becomes one wide cell; the centre cell becomes two narrow cells.
>
> 
>
>
> Merge: join two or more cells into one. Split: divide one cell into more cells.
>
> Model diagram: merge and split.

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3. Write the steps to insert a 4-column, 5-row table in MS Word and add a row at the end. *(4 marks)*

> Insert → Table → Insert Table → Columns 4, Rows 5 → OK. Click the last cell and press Tab (or right-click → Insert → Rows Below).

4. A class timetable must have a title across the top, bold headings with grey shading and thin borders. Explain how to do this. *(4 marks)*

> Select the top row → Merge Cells and type the title; select the header row → Bold, Shading → grey; select table → Borders → All Borders, ½ pt.

5. Give two uses of tables in a school and explain why tables help. *(3 marks)*

> Timetables, mark sheets, attendance, price lists. Tables arrange data neatly so it is easy to read and compare.

Summary

- A table has rows (across), columns (down) and cells.
- Cells = columns × rows.
- Insert: Word Insert → Table; Writer Ctrl+F12; Docs Insert → Table.
- Resize by dragging borders, Cell Size, AutoFit or Distribute.
- Right-click → Insert / Delete rows and columns; the Delete key only clears text.
- Merge = many cells → one; Split = one cell → many.
- Borders are lines; shading is cell background colour.
- Table Styles and Repeat Header Rows save time.

MCQ answer key – 6.4

1. **D** – Cell.
2. **A** – 4 × 6 = 24.
3. **C** – Rows across, columns down.
4. **C** – Merge joins.
5. **D** – Split divides.
6. **C** – Layout tab of Table Tools.
7. **B** – Handy shortcut.
8. **B** – Shading fills cells.
9. **A** – Distribute = equal sizes.
10. **B** – Table → Insert Table (Ctrl+F12).
11. **D** – Delete key clears text only.
12. **A** – Repeat Header Rows.

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