G.C.E. O/L Grade 10 ICT · Lesson 7

7.1 Spreadsheet Software: Features, Uses and the GUI

An **electronic spreadsheet** is application software that stores data in a grid of **rows and columns** and does calculations automatically. When a number changes, every formula that uses it is **recalculated** at once. In this note you will learn what spreadsheets are used for, name popular programs (**MS Excel, LibreOffice Calc, Google Sheets**) and identify the parts of the window: **ribbon, Name Box, formula bar, column and row headings, cells, active cell, sheet tabs and status bar**.

1. What is a spreadsheet?

A paper spreadsheet is a large sheet ruled into rows and columns, used by accountants. An **electronic spreadsheet** does the same on a computer, but it can **calculate, sort, draw charts and recalculate automatically**. One file is called a **workbook**; each page inside it is a **worksheet** (sheet).

MS Excel
Part of Microsoft 365; file type .xlsx.

LibreOffice Calc
Free and open source; file type .ods.

Google Sheets
Free, runs in a web browser and saves to Google Drive.

Excel for the web
Online Excel in a browser, saved to OneDrive.

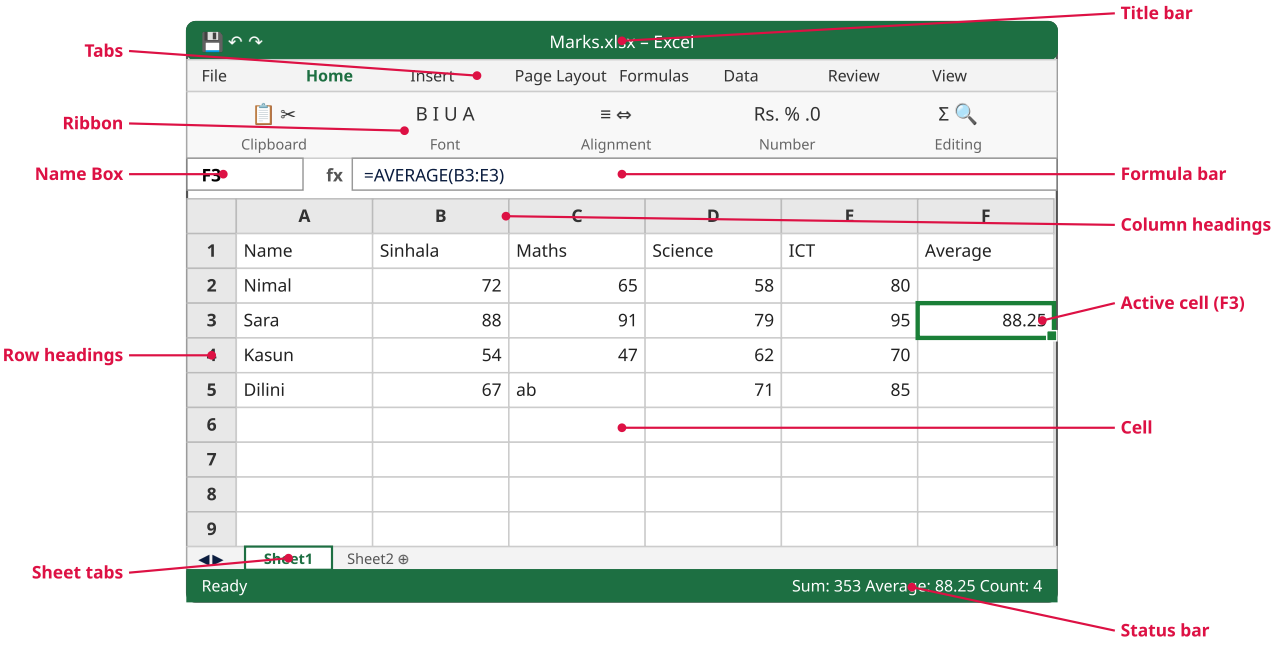
2. Functions (uses) of a spreadsheet

- **Calculations** with formulas and functions, e.g. totals and averages of marks.
- **Automatic recalculation** when data changes.
- **Charts** (column, bar, line, pie) to show data as pictures.
- **Sorting and filtering** lists, e.g. rank students by total.
- **Simple statistics**: SUM, AVERAGE, MAX, MIN, COUNT.
- **Storing and formatting** tables: shop bills in Rs., attendance, rainfall records.

Use	Sri Lankan example
School	Term test mark sheet, averages and class rank
Shop	Bill: Qty × Price in Rs., total and discount
Weather	Monthly rainfall in Colombo in mm, with a chart
Home	Electricity units and family budget

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3. The spreadsheet window (GUI)



	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Name	Sinhala	Maths	Science	ICT	Average
2	Nimal	72	65	58	80	
3	Sara	88	91	79	95	88.25
4	Kasun	54	47	62	70	
5	Dilini	67	ab	71	85	
6						
7						
8						
9						

Excel window. F3 is the active cell; its formula is shown in the formula bar and its address in the Name Box. The status bar shows Sum 353, Average 88.25 and Count 4 for the selected cells B3:E3.

Part	What it does
Title bar	Shows the workbook name, e.g. Marks.xlsx
Ribbon and tabs	Commands in tabs (Home, Insert, Formulas, Data…) and groups
Name Box	Shows the address of the active cell (F3); type an address to jump to it
Formula bar (fx)	Shows and edits the content or formula of the active cell
Column headings	Letters A, B, C… at the top
Row headings	Numbers 1, 2, 3… on the left
Cell / active cell	Box where a row and a column meet; the active cell has a thick border
Sheet tabs	Switch between worksheets; ⊕ adds a new sheet
Status bar	Shows Ready/Enter mode and quick Sum, Average, Count of the selection

> 💡 In LibreOffice Calc the Name Box is called the **Name Box** too, and the formula bar has **Σ** and **=** buttons. Google Sheets shows the active cell address at the left of the **fx** bar.

4. 2026 update: cloud, co-authoring and AI

> NEW 2026 **Co-authoring:** in Google Sheets and Excel for the web several students can edit the same sheet at once; coloured cursors show who is where, and **Version history** brings back older copies.

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NEW 2026 **Copilot in Excel / Analyze Data / Explore in Sheets** can suggest formulas and charts. Use them responsibly: **check every answer with your own formula**, never paste private data (NIC numbers, phone numbers, marks of others) and say when AI helped.

Key Words

Spreadsheet – Software that stores data in rows and columns and calculates.

Workbook – A spreadsheet file containing one or more worksheets.

Worksheet – One sheet (page) of rows and columns in a workbook.

Ribbon – Band of tabs and command groups at the top.

Name Box – Box showing the address of the active cell.

Formula bar – Bar that shows and edits the content of the active cell.

Column heading – Letter at the top of a column (A, B, C…).

Row heading – Number at the left of a row (1, 2, 3…).

Active cell – The selected cell with a thick border, ready for input.

Sheet tab – Tab at the bottom used to switch worksheets.

Status bar – Bottom bar showing mode and quick Sum/Average/Count.

Co-authoring – Several people editing the same online sheet at once.

Sample Q&A

1. What is an electronic spreadsheet?

Answer: Application software that stores data in rows and columns and performs calculations automatically.

2. Name three spreadsheet programs.

Answer: MS Excel, LibreOffice Calc, Google Sheets.

3. What is the difference between a workbook and a worksheet?

Answer: A workbook is the whole file; a worksheet is one sheet inside it.

4. What does the Name Box show?

Answer: The address of the active cell, e.g. F3.

5. Give two functions of a spreadsheet.

Answer: Any two: calculations, automatic recalculation, charts, sorting/filtering, statistics.

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6. What should you do before using a Copilot-suggested formula?

> **Answer:** Check it gives the right answer with a simple test, and do not share private data.

MCQ

1. Which of these is a spreadsheet program?

A. LibreOffice Calc
B. LibreOffice Writer
C. MS PowerPoint
D. Google Docs

2. A spreadsheet file is called a…

A. Ribbon
B. Cell
C. Workbook
D. Worksheet

3. The box that shows the address of the active cell is the…

A. Formula bar
B. Title bar
C. Name Box
D. Status bar

4. The formula of the active cell is shown in the…

A. Formula bar
B. Row heading
C. Name Box
D. Sheet tab

5. Column headings in a worksheet are…

A. Numbers 1, 2, 3…
B. Letters A, B, C…
C. Sheet names
D. Roman numerals

6. Row headings are…

A. Function names
B. Colours
C. Letters A, B, C…
D. Numbers 1, 2, 3…

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7. Selecting B3:E3 (values 88, 91, 79, 95), the status bar Sum shows…

A. 95
B. 88
C. 353
D. 4

8. Sheet tabs are used to…

A. Change font
B. Move between worksheets
C. Zoom
D. Print

9. The default file type of LibreOffice Calc is…

A. .ods
B. .docx
C. .odt
D. .xlsx

10. MS Excel saves workbooks as…

A. .txt
B. .pptx
C. .xlsx
D. .ods

11. When a value changes, formulas that use it…

A. Are deleted
B. Become text
C. Must be typed again
D. Recalculate automatically

12. Which is NOT a usual function of a spreadsheet?

A. Editing video
B. Calculating averages
C. Sorting data
D. Drawing charts

13. Several students editing one Google Sheet at the same time is…

A. Mail Merge
B. Co-authoring
C. AutoFill
D. Printing

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14. Responsible use of Copilot/Analyze Data means…

A. Copying answers without checking
B. Uploading classmates' NIC numbers
C. Turning off recalculation
D. Checking its formulas and keeping private data out

15. Google Sheets files are saved in…

A. The printer
B. Google Drive (cloud)
C. The status bar
D. A floppy disk

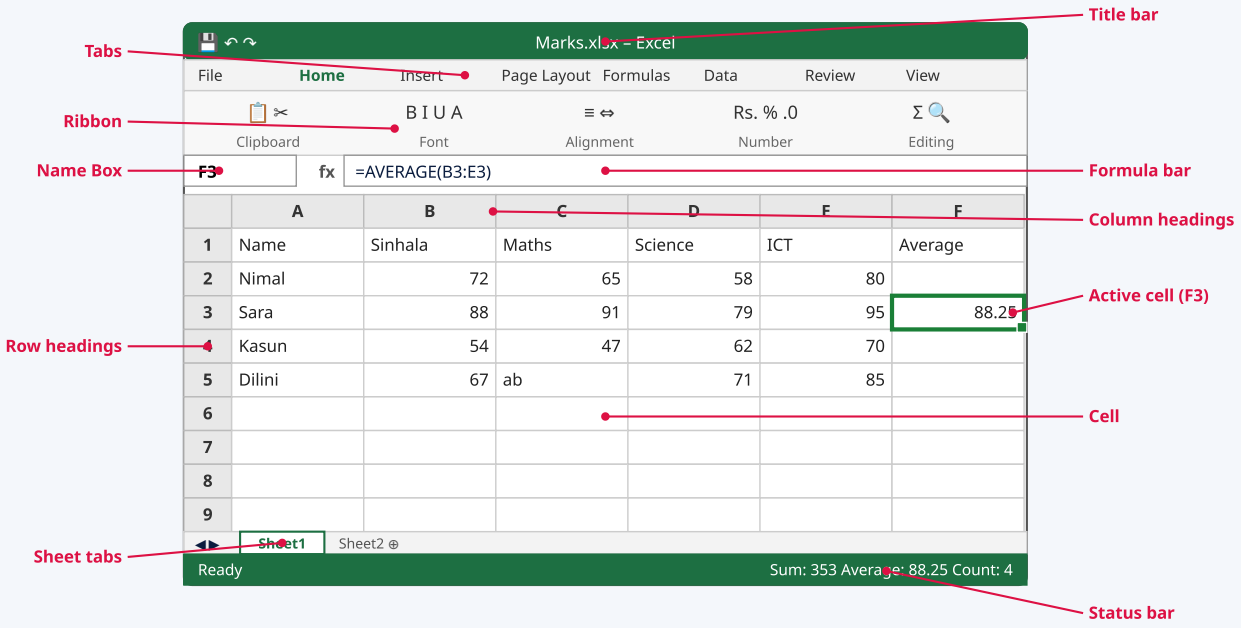
Structured Questions

1. (i) Define an electronic spreadsheet. (2 marks)
(ii) Name two spreadsheet programs. (2 marks) *(4 marks)*

> (i) Application software that stores data in rows and columns and calculates automatically. (ii) Any two: MS Excel, LibreOffice Calc, Google Sheets.

2. Label six parts of a spreadsheet window. *(6 marks)*

> Any six: title bar, ribbon/tabs, Name Box, formula bar, column headings, row headings, active cell, sheet tabs, status bar.



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Model answer: labelled spreadsheet window.

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3. State the difference between the Name Box and the formula bar. *(2 marks)*

> Name Box shows the address of the active cell (F3); the formula bar shows its content/formula (=AVERAGE(B3:E3)).

4. Give three uses of spreadsheets with a Sri Lankan example for each. *(3 marks)*

> Mark sheets and averages in school; shop bills in Rs.; monthly rainfall records with charts.

5. Explain two advantages of co-authoring in Google Sheets and one rule for using AI tools. *(3 marks)*

> Many can edit at once; changes are saved and version history restores old copies. Rule: check AI formulas yourself / do not enter private data.

Summary

- A spreadsheet stores data in rows and columns and calculates.
- Programs: MS Excel (.xlsx), LibreOffice Calc (.ods), Google Sheets.
- Workbook = file; worksheet = one sheet.
- Uses: calculations, recalculation, charts, sorting, statistics.
- Name Box = address; formula bar = content of the active cell.
- Columns are letters; rows are numbers.
- Sheet tabs switch sheets; the status bar shows quick Sum/Average/Count.
- Co-author online; use Copilot/Analyze Data responsibly.

MCQ answer key – 7.1

1. **A** – Calc is the spreadsheet.
2. **C** – File = workbook.
3. **C** – Name Box.
4. **A** – fx bar.
5. **B** – Columns = letters.
6. **D** – Rows = numbers.
7. **C** – 88+91+79+95 = 353.
8. **B** – Bottom tabs.
9. **A** – OpenDocument Spreadsheet.
10. **C** – .xlsx.
11. **D** – Automatic recalculation.
12. **A** – Video is not a spreadsheet job.
13. **B** – Co-authoring.
14. **D** – Check and protect privacy.
15. **B** – Cloud storage.

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