

# Financial Modeling Basics

GoSkills online course syllabus

Sunday, July 20, 2025

**Skill level**

Beginner

**Lessons**

55

**Accredited by**

CPD

**Pre-requisites**

None

**Video duration**

5h 08m

**Estimated study time**

27h 30m for all materials

**Instructor**

Liam Bastick

## What is Best Practice?

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### Introduction

Introduction and the semantics of what constitutes "best" in "best practice". We consider a good model has four key attributes: Consistency, Robustness, Flexibility, and Transparency.

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### CRaFT - Consistency

An explanation of the reason models should be consistent, and key elements of a workbook that should be consistent.

3

### CRaFT - Robustness

An explanation of why models should be materially free from error.

4

### CRaFT - Flexibility

User should consider what inputs should be variable and how they should be able to vary. Example of methods to control how inputs can be varied.

5

### CRaFT - Transparency

An explanation of why models must be clear, concise, and fit for the purpose of key decision makers. Modelers should consider the logical flow of a model at the outset as well.

## Layout Tips

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### Separation of Inputs + Calculations

How to design your model so that it separates the inputs and calculations.

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### Workbook Structure

Go over the elements that should be incorporated into a workbook.

- 8 **Keyboard Shortcuts**  
A summary of Keyboard Shortcuts.
- 9 **Layout Tips Part 1**  
Layout tips can assist in building a financial model in Excel which is easy to navigate through and understand.
- 10 **Layout Tips Part 2**  
Layout tips for updating workbook names, adding hyperlinks, dates and freezing panes.
- 11 **Layout Tips Part 3**  
General tips and options to change in Excel when laying out a typical worksheet in a financial model.
- 12 **Layout Tips Part 4**  
Layout Tips for using the RANDBETWEEN function to generate random numbers for testing and labelling units.
- 13 **Layout Tips Part 5**  
Formatting tips to improve the look and keep the layout of the template consistent.
- 14 **Formats vs. Styles**  
Highlight the difference between formats and styles in Excel, why they are important and when to apply them.
- 15 **Formats vs. Styles Part 2**  
How to import styles into a workbook.
- 16 **Number Formatting Part 1**  
It is important how numerical data is presented in Excel. Learn how to effectively use number formatting.
- 17 **Number Formatting Part 2**  
Understand the coding in Custom Number Formatting.
- 18 **Number Formatting Part 3**  
How to use Custom Number Formatting.
- 19 **Number Formatting Part 4**  
How to use Custom Number Formatting, continued.
- 20 **Conditional Formatting**  
When to use conditional formatting, and how to effectively apply it.

## 21 Layout Tips Part 6

How to use Work in Progress (WIP) Flagging.

# Range Names

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## 22 Range Names Part 1

How to effectively assign and use range names in an Excel worksheet.

## 23 Range Names Part 2

How to use Range Names in a formula.

## 24 Range Names Part 3

How to use Range Names in a formula, continued.

## 25 Hyperlinks

When and where to use hyperlinks to aid end user navigation.

## 26 Data Validation

Understand how to restrict what end users type into a cell using Data Validation, with examples of lists and whole numbers.

## 27 Data Validation Part 2

Understand how to restrict what end users type into a cell using Data Validation, with examples of text length and custom validation.

## 28 Overall Checks

Highlight the situations where checks are useful, and how the different checks fit into 3 categories. Error Checks, Sensitivity Checks, and Alert Checks.

## 29 Error Checks

How to create a prima facie error check.

## 30 Sensitivity Check

How to create a sensitivity check and where to use one.

## 31 Alert Checks

The check that checks for everything else sensitivity and error checks don't.

# Viewing, Linking, Protection, and Version Control Tips

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- 32 **Printing and Viewing Tips**  
The steps to take to ensure that the model looks as intended when printed.
- 33 **Linking Tips**  
The proper habits to adopt when linking cells together, and the reasons why.
- 34 **Security and Protection**  
The proper steps to take to protect the integrity of the model.
- 35 **Version Control**  
The naming conventions to adopt and the habits that should be practiced.

## Key Functions

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- 36 **Functions Overview**  
An overview of the key functions used for financial modeling in Excel.
- 37 **IF**  
Illustration and issues with the IF function.
- 38 **SUM**  
Illustration and issues with the SUM function.
- 39 **SUMIF**  
Illustration and issues with the SUMIF function.
- 40 **SUMIFS**  
Illustration and issues with the SUMIFS function.
- 41 **SUMPRODUCT**  
Illustration and issues with the SUMPRODUCT function.
- 42 **SUMPRODUCT Part 2**  
An advanced example of the use of SUMPRODUCT.
- 43 **Don't Use HLOOKUP and VLOOKUP**  
Why not to use HLOOKUP and VLOOKUP functions.

- 44 INDEX  
Illustrations of the use of the INDEX function.
- 45 MATCH  
Illustration and issues with the MATCH function.
- 46 INDEX MATCH  
Illustrations of the use of INDEX MATCH.
- 47 LOOKUP  
Illustration and issues with the LOOKUP function.
- 48 LOOKUP Part 2  
Illustration and issues with the LOOKUP function continued.
- 49 OFFSET  
Illustration and issues with the OFFSET function.
- 50 OFFSET Part 2  
Illustration and issues with the OFFSET function continued.
- 51 OFFSET Part 3  
A final look at the illustration and issues with the OFFSET function.
- 52 MOD  
Illustrations and issues with the MOD function.
- 53 EOMONTH  
Illustrations and issues with the EOMONTH function.
- 54 MAX and MIN  
Illustration and issues with MAX and MIN.
- 55 Finale  
An overview of what we have covered in the Financial Modeling Basics course.