

What's a Spreadsheet For?: Suitable Uses

60 minutes

ICT2: Introduction to other software packages and applications

Outcome M2.U1.1

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Learn to identify when spreadsheets are the best tool for tasks like budgets, trackers and lists. Decide between spreadsheets and word processors, and connect ideas to your Something Real project by selecting one use to develop.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
M2.U1.1	Identify suitable uses for spreadsheets.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Identify suitable uses for spreadsheets including budgets, trackers, tallies and lists
- Decide when a spreadsheet beats a word processor or other tool
- Link spreadsheet uses to the Something Real project
- List three project spreadsheet ideas and pick the one to build across ICT2

BEFORE THE BELL

- Have the starter menu ready for anyone without a Something Real project (side hustle, club/event, Work Experience, community, passion, Practical Achievement log). It is also on the student Introduction card.
- Students need cloud access to their Project Portfolio root (planning page is not saved in a budget-only folder). Help anyone still creating the folder before the portfolio build.
- Have the starter menu ready (side hustle, club/event, Work Experience, community, passion, Practical Achievement log). Students need their Project Portfolio folder, or help creating it. Display the spreadsheet-uses concept diagram at open.
- Interactive runs on the lesson page. Challenge mode is required. Plan mini-whiteboard pair-share, then one student or the teacher to drive placements.
- Students need cloud access to their Project Portfolio. Demo once: new Word Online or Google Docs planning page named 05_spreadsheet_use_case_v1 in the portfolio root, plus Aoife's four sample column headings aloud. Sentence starters are on the student card.
- Plan a quick show-me-your-file check so every student leaves with a named ICT2 pick highlighted.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

5 min	introduction	Introduction
6 min	content	Key concepts
15 min	activity	Right tool or wrong tool?
4 min	content	Common issues
20 min	activity	Portfolio build
5 min	content	Reflection
5 min	summary	Lesson summary

TEACHING MOVES

- Pair-share on mini-whiteboards, then talk through the six-card drag-sort; nominate one driver for placements.
- Demo once: new Word Online or Google Docs planning page named 05_spreadsheet_use_case_v1 in the Project Portfolio root, and say Aoife's sample columns (Item, Category, Cost €, Date).
- Circulate during the portfolio build; sentence starters are on the student card. Push vague ideas into specifics.
- Project Aoife's four-bullet layout before the three-row concepts table.
- Exit gate: every student shows the file with the ICT2 pick line highlighted or bolded. Fix any pick with no obvious data source first.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Students may argue both tools fit a job; focus on whether calculation or sorting is needed at the end.
- Project ideas may be too vague; encourage specifics like 'first-month costs for materials'.
- Students might try to use spreadsheets for writing tasks; redirect to when data needs to be calculated or listed.
- Students may open Excel Online or Sheets by mistake; this lesson is a planning page in a word processor only.
- Do not send non-budget picks into a 05_budget folder for this planning page.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: sentence starters are on the portfolio card, 'Use 1: A ___ tracker for my ___ so I can ___'; 'ICT2 pick: I will build ___ because it will answer ___.'
- Extension: sketch likely columns for the chosen spreadsheet early (extension challenge in the summary).
- Support: pair students who struggle with tool choice for the sort activity.