LESSON 66

Data Input Best Practice

60 minutes | ICT Specialism 3: Spreadsheets | Outcome M3.U1.4

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Discover the five rules professionals follow to make spreadsheet data usable for sorting, filtering, and formulas. Work through a deliberately messy example before auditing and cleaning your own project workbook into a banked Key Assignment file.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
M3.U1.4	Enter and manipulate data in worksheets and create logical formulas using standard functions.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Apply headings in row 1, consistent column types, and no blank mid-table rows
- Avoid merged cells in data areas that break sort, filter, and formulas
- Audit and clean the working project spreadsheet

BEFORE THE BELL

- Prepare a five-point checklist on sticky notes for spot-checking workbooks.
- Print or share the five-rule checklist (same wording as Key concepts).
- Optional: a pre-messed sm3_data_input_practice to share with slower typists. Everyone else types the messy list printed on the step-by-step task.
- Nothing to prepare for anyone missing sm3_from_template: the Introduction step prints a short starter stock list they paste into a new spreadsheet under that name.
- Messy demo sheet on screen; optional pre-messed practice file ready
- Print or share the five-rule checklist; messy demo sheet on screen
- Optional: a pre-messed sm3_data_input_practice to share (students can type the mess from their step); students need spreadsheet access and sm3 folder
- Sticky five-point checklist (absentees paste the starter list from their Introduction step); plan 2-min live audit and 2-min exit bank of sm3_data_input_clean

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

5 min	introduction	Introduction
5 min	content	Key concepts
18 min	activity	Step-by-step task
3 min	content	Common issues
19 min	activity	Independent practice
5 min	content	Reflection
5 min	summary	Lesson summary

TEACHING MOVES

- Keep the class together through the step-by-step task: build or open the mess together, stop and have them name the five problems, then clean it together before anyone works alone.
- Audit one real template sample live for two minutes before independent practice.
- Take in sm3_data_input_clean from 09_specialism/sm3 as the piece of work from this lesson.
- This lesson produces a cleaned single-sheet data table. Multi-sheet structure is not created here, so later lessons should recap this single clean block rather than a multi-sheet workbook.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- After unmerging, students may think the text placement is wrong; only the top-left cell retains the value.
- Formulas fail because numbers are stored as text; plain number first, currency format second.
- Only one of the two blank rows is deleted; insist on both before moving headings.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: pre-messed starter file and printed five-rule checklist.
- Support: pair students for independent practice if needed; anyone without the template cleans the starter list from their Introduction step against the same five rules and saves it as sm3_data_input_clean.
- Extension: sixth project row and a note listing three cleanup checks outside the data block.