

13.2 Tables

Syllabus 2026 - 2028

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Create a table with a specified number of rows and columns
- Place text or objects in a table
- Edit a table: insert or delete rows and columns; merge cells
- Format a table: horizontal and vertical cell alignment, gridlines, text wrapping, shading, row height and column width

What a table is

A **table** arranges data in **rows** (across) and **columns** (down). Each box where a row and column meet is a **cell**. Tables keep text and objects neatly aligned and are used for lists, schedules, forms and layout.

Figure 63: Parts of a table and editing it

Merged cell (title across 4 columns)			
Name	Class	Mark	Grade
Thandi	9A	78	A
Sipho	9B	64	B

Annotations:

- Merged cells (points to the first row header)
- Row: across (points to the first row header)
- Shaded cell (points to the cell containing 'A')
- Column: down (points to the first column header)

Insert or delete rows and columns; merge cells from the Layout menu

Creating a table and placing contents

- Use Insert, Table, and choose or type the **specified number of rows and columns**; count carefully and check afterwards
- Click in a cell and **type text** or place an **object** such as an image into it
- Use the **Tab** key to move to the next cell

Editing a table

Action	How and why
Insert rows or columns	Choose where to add: above, below, left or right of the selected cell; used when data is added
Delete rows or columns	Remove an unwanted row or column and its contents
Merge cells	Join several cells into one, for example for a heading across all columns

Formatting a table

Figure 64: Horizontal and vertical cell alignment

top left	top centre	top right
middle left	middle centre	middle right
bottom left	bottom centre	bottom right

Horizontal: left, right, centre, fully justified

Vertical: top, middle, bottom

Also: wrap text within a cell, set row height and column width, shade cells, show or hide gridlines

Format	Options
Horizontal alignment	Left, right, centre, fully justified
Vertical alignment	Top, middle, bottom
Gridlines	Show or hide the cell borders; hidden lines suit a layout table
Wrap text within a cell	Long text continues on the next line inside the cell, instead of widening the column
Shading or colouring	Fill a cell with colour to emphasise a heading or group
Row height and column width	Adjust so all contents are visible and the table looks balanced

- Use **left** alignment for text and **right** alignment for numbers so decimal places line up
- Use **centre** alignment for headings, and keep a consistent style throughout the table

EXAM TIP

Read the task closely: **merge** joins cells, whereas **adjusting width** changes the size of a column. Remember also that **horizontal** alignment is left to right, and **vertical** alignment is top to bottom.

Key terms

Term	Meaning
Table	Data arranged in rows and columns.
Row	A horizontal line of cells.
Column	A vertical line of cells.
Cell	A single box where a row and column meet.
Merge cells	Join two or more cells into one.
Gridlines	The lines that show the edges of cells.
Shading	Colour used to fill a cell.
Justified	Text aligned to both left and right edges.

Practice questions

Answer each question in full sentences. Command words used: State (give a short answer), Describe (say what it is like), Explain (give reasons), Analyse (break it down and examine it), Suggest (apply your knowledge to a situation), Compare and contrast (similarities and differences), Evaluate (weigh up and reach a judgement).

No.	Question	Marks
1	State the meaning of the term 'cell' in a table.	[1]
2	State two options for horizontal alignment of text in a cell.	[2]
3	Describe how a heading can be placed across all the columns of a table.	[3]
4	Explain why gridlines may be hidden in a table used to lay out a page.	[2]
5	Suggest three formatting changes that would make a table of marks easier to read.	[3]
6	Compare and contrast inserting a new row with merging two cells.	[4]
7	Analyse the advantages of using a table, rather than tab stops, to arrange data in a document.	[4]

Total: 19 marks