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1 The `xlsread` Command

MATLAB has the ability to read data from Microsoft Excel files. This is accomplished using the `xlsread` command. This command is extensive and has the ability to do much more than we will explore here.

While the `xlsread` command has the ability to do a great many things, it is most easily used in situations where you have a number of Excel files that contain data that you need to pull into MATLAB and that layout of the data in the files is the same. If you just have one or two files, it is probably just as easy to open them individually, then copy and paste what you need into a MATLAB variable. This technique is not appealing in situations where you may have 10's or 100's of files.

The basic syntax for the `xlsread` command is given by

```
[num, txt, raw] = xlsread(filename)
```

Here, `filename` is the name of the Excel file as a string variable (including the extension). There are three outputs from the command

- `num` - this output contains all numerical data from the file and will be a matrix of numerical data. This can be quite extensive depending on the layout of the data in the file.
- `txt` - this output contains all text data from the file. This is returned as a cell array.
- `raw` - this output contains everything that is in the Excel file. This is returned as a cell array variable since it will likely contain a mix of numerical and text data.

By default, the output is limited to the data on the top sheet of the Excel file, but a specific sheet can be given as an optional input.