

**Question:** When I start typing a formula, such as an IF formula, I forget what the required information might be for the formula. Is there any way to quickly see what's required for my formula?

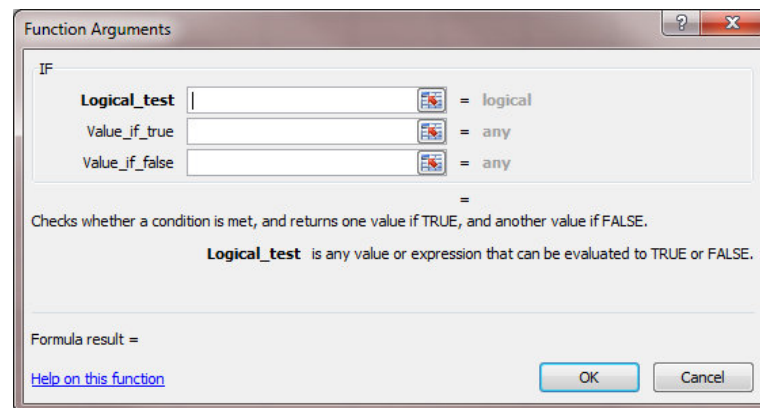
**Answer:** Yes, by using a keyboard shortcut.

**Process (Excel 2003 and 2007):**

After using a formula in Excel a few times, you can become familiar enough with the syntax (i.e. the way the formula is structured) that you can type the formula directly into a cell. A good tip while you're becoming more adept at using this method is to use the *Fx* button, which is to the immediate left of the formula bar (shown below):



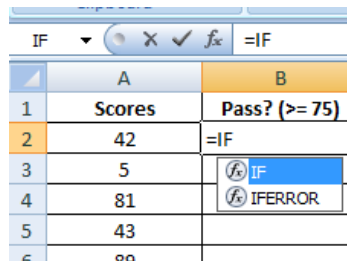
This will bring up a window that allows you to select the function you'd like to use, then provides a handy interface which lets you insert the values needed to make the formula work. Below is a picture of the 'Function Arguments' window for the IF function:



This window makes it very easy to add the parameters needed, and Excel will build the formula in the background. Occasionally, when we are hand typing a formula, we may get stuck on the structure of the formula, and seeing this window would be a great help. Here's how to bring it up with one, simple, keyboard shortcut. We'll be using a table of test scores, then setting up an IF function to check to see whether the score is a *pass* or *fail*:

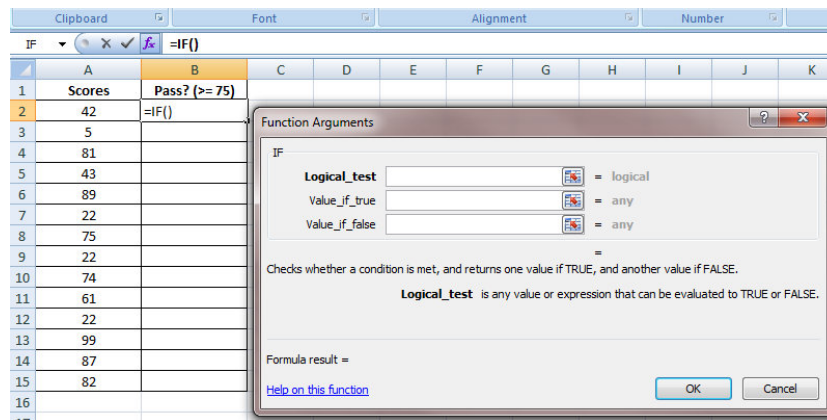
	A	B
1	Scores	Pass? (>= 75)
2	42	
3	5	
4	81	
5	43	
6	89	
7	22	
8	75	
9	22	
10	74	
11	61	
12	22	
13	99	
14	87	
15	82	

1. Select cell **B2** and type in **=IF**. Do not press **Enter** at this time.



	A	B
1	Scores	Pass? (>= 75)
2	42	=IF
3	5	
4	81	
5	43	
6	89	

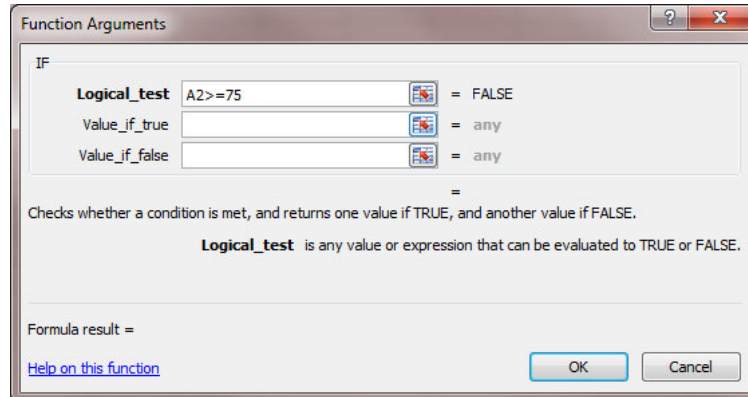
2. Press **CTRL + A**.



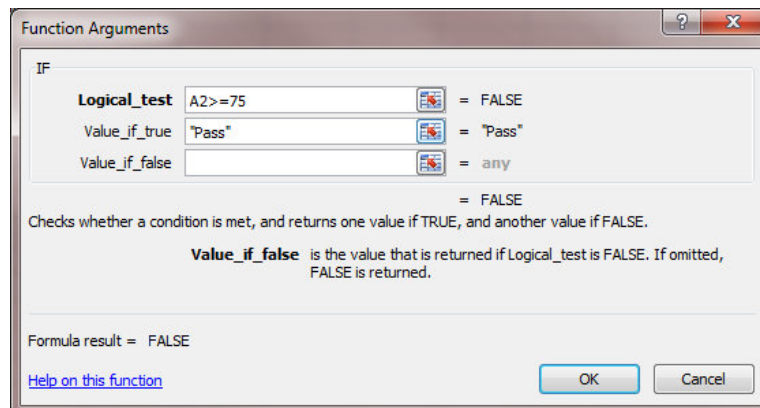
	A	B
1	Scores	Pass? (>= 75)
2	42	=IF()
3	5	
4	81	
5	43	
6	89	
7	22	
8	75	
9	22	
10	74	
11	61	
12	22	
13	99	
14	87	
15	82	

This shortcut will automatically bring up the 'Function Arguments' window for the formula you started typing, in this instance the **IF** function.

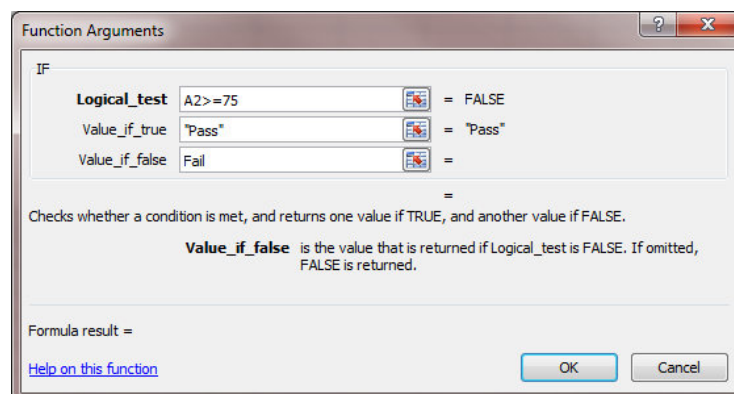
3. In the **Logical\_test** box, type in **A2>=75** and press the **Tab** key, which shifts you to the next field. This formula will check to see whether the score is equal to or greater than 74



4. In the **Value\_if\_true** field, type in the word **Pass** and then press the **Tab** key. If the number in cell **A2** is indeed equal to or greater than 75, this is the value that will be returned. You'll note that the word **Pass** is automatically put inside quotation marks to show that the response should be in text format.



5. In the **Value\_if\_false** field, type in the word **Fail**, then click the **OK** button.



6. Cell **B2** now returns the result **Fail**, as cell **A2** is 42. You can now double-click on the **AutoFill** handle (highlighted below)...

B2    fx    =IF(A2>=75,"Pass","Fail")

	A	B
1	Scores	Pass? (>= 75)
2	42	Fail
3	5	

... which will copy this formula down to cell **B15**.

	A	B
1	Scores	Pass? (>= 75)
2	42	Fail
3	5	Fail
4	81	Pass
5	43	Fail
6	89	Pass
7	22	Fail
8	75	Pass
9	22	Fail
10	74	Fail
11	61	Fail
12	22	Fail
13	99	Pass
14	87	Pass
15	82	Pass

If you have any suggestions for an Excel Tips & Tricks topic, or you would like help with a particular function, please email [enablement@alchemex.com](mailto:enablement@alchemex.com) and yours could be the next Tip Of The Week.

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