Solver

Load the Solver Add-in | Formulate the Model | Trial and Error | Solve the Model

Excel includes a tool called solver that uses techniques from the operations research to find optimal solutions for all kind of decision problems.

Load the Solver Add-in

To load the solver add-in, execute the following steps.

1. On the File tab, click Options.

2. Under Add-ins, select Solver Add-in and click on the Go button.

Search Entire Site Go

Chapter < >

Solver

Learn more, it's easy

Transportation Problem
Assignment Problem
Shortest Path Problem
Maximum Flow Problem
Capital Investment
Sensitivity Analysis

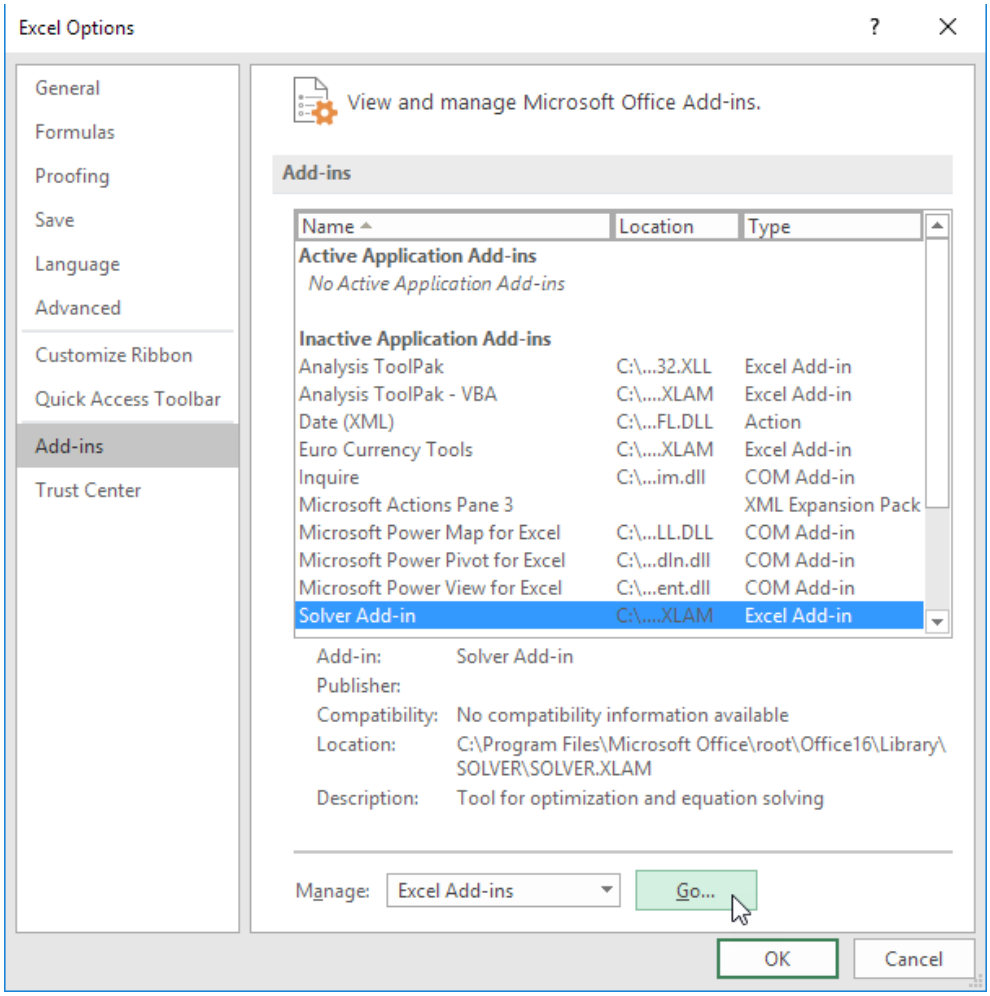
Download Excel File

solver.xlsx

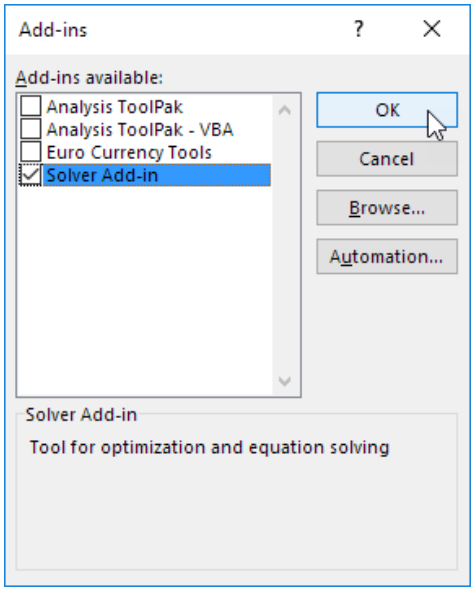
Follow Excel Easy

Most Read

Pivot Tables
Formulas and Functions
Charts
Analysis Toolpak
Drop-down List



3. Check Solver Add-in and click OK.



4. You can find the Solver on the Data tab, in the Analyze group.

Formulate the Model

The model we are going to solve looks as follows in Excel.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Cycle Trader									
2										
3			Bicycles	Mopeds	Child Seats					
4		Unit Profit	100	300	50					
5							Resources		Resources	
6							Used		Available	
7		Capital	300	1200	120		0	≤	93000	
8		Storage	0.5	1	0.5		0	≤	101	
9										
10										
11			Bicycles	Mopeds	Child Seats				Total Profit	
12		Order Size	0	0	0				0	
13										

1. To formulate this linear programming model, answer the following three questions.

a. What are the decisions to be made? For this problem, we need Excel to find out how much to order of each product (bicycles, mopeds and child seats).

b. What are the constraints on these decisions? The constrains here are that the amount of capital and storage used by the products cannot exceed the limited amount of capital and storage (resources) available. For example, each bicycle uses 300 units of capital and 0.5 unit of storage.

c. What is the overall measure of performance for these decisions? The overall measure of performance is the total profit of the three products, so the objective is to maximize this quantity.

2. To make the model easier to understand, name the following ranges.

Range Name	Cells
UnitProfit	C4:E4
OrderSize	C12:E12
ResourcesUsed	G7:G8
ResourcesAvailable	I7:I8
TotalProfit	I12

3. Insert the following three SUMPRODUCT functions.

E	F	G	H	I	J
Child Seats					
50					
		Resources		Resources	
		Used		Available	
120		=SUMPRODUCT(C7:E7,OrderSize)	≤	93000	
0.5		=SUMPRODUCT(C8:E8,OrderSize)	≤	101	
Child Seats				Total Profit	
0				=SUMPRODUCT(UnitProfit,OrderSize)	

Explanation: The amount of capital used equals the sumproduct of the range C7:E7 and OrderSize. The amount of storage used equals the sumproduct of the range C8:E8 and OrderSize. Total Profit equals the sumproduct of UnitProfit and OrderSize.

Trial and Error

With this formulation, it becomes easy to analyze any trial solution.

For example, if we order 20 bicycles, 40 mopeds and 100 child seats, the total amount of resources used does not exceed the amount of resources available. This solution has a total profit of 19000.

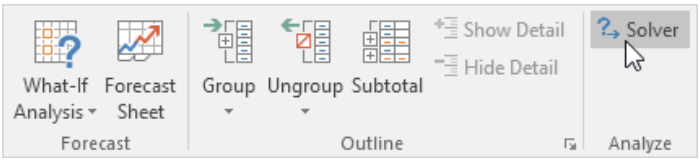
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Cycle Trader									
2										
3			Bicycles	Mopeds	Child Seats					
4		Unit Profit	100	300	50					
5							Resources		Resources	
6							Used		Available	
7		Capital	300	1200	120		66000	≤	93000	
8		Storage	0.5	1	0.5		100	≤	101	
9										
10										
11			Bicycles	Mopeds	Child Seats				Total Profit	
12		Order Size	20	40	100				19000	
13										

It is not necessary to use trial and error. We shall describe next how the Excel Solver can be used to quickly find the optimal solution.

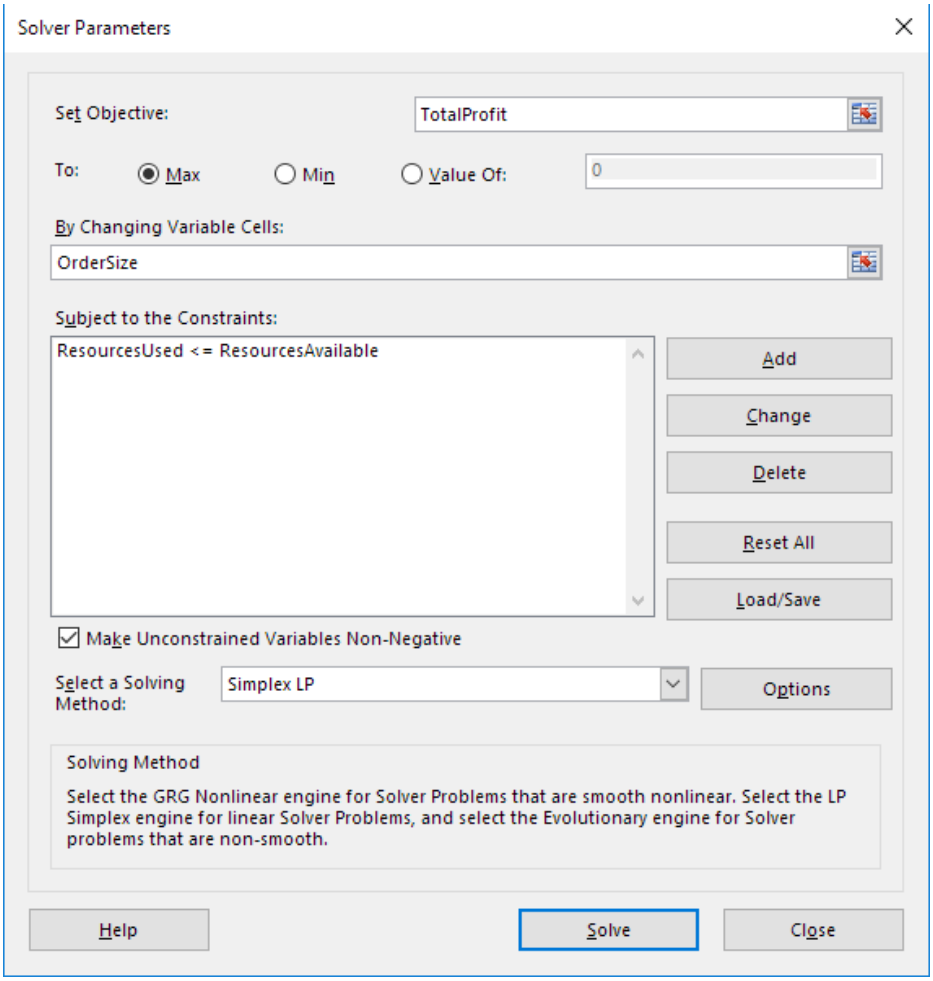
Solve the Model

To find the optimal solution, execute the following steps.

1. On the Data tab, in the Analyze group, click Solver.



Enter the solver parameters (read on). The result should be consistent with the picture below.



You have the choice of typing the range names or clicking on the cells in the spreadsheet.

2. Enter TotalProfit for the Objective.

3. Click Max.

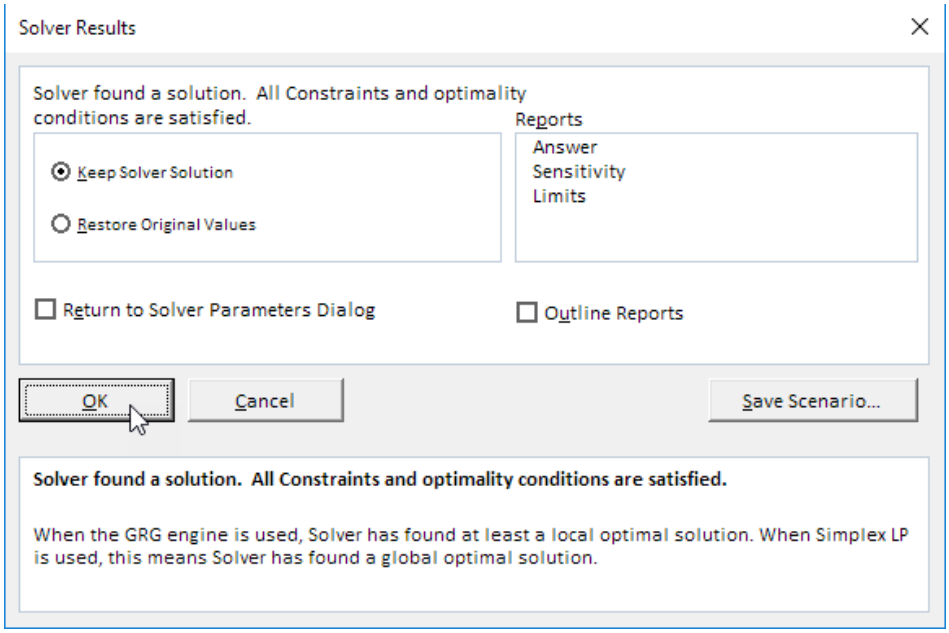
4. Enter OrderSize for the Changing Variable Cells.

5. Click Add to enter the following constraint.

6. Check 'Make Unconstrained Variables Non-Negative' and select 'Simplex LP'.

7. Finally, click Solve.

Result:



The optimal solution:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1		Cycle Trader								
2										
3			Bicycles	Mopeds	Child Seats					
4		Unit Profit	100	300	50					
5							Resources		Resources	
6							Used		Available	
7		Capital	300	1200	120		93000	≤	93000	
8		Storage	0.5	1	0.5		101	≤	101	
9										
10										
11			Bicycles	Mopeds	Child Seats				Total Profit	
12		Order Size	94	54	0				25600	
13										

Conclusion: it is optimal to order 94 bicycles and 54 mopeds. This solution gives the maximum profit of 25600. This solution uses all the resources available.

1/7 Completed! Learn much more about the solver >

Go to Next Chapter: Analysis ToolPak