Custom Sorting Columns in an Excel Pivot Table

Once in a while, we have a list that we need to sort in a unique order. The default in a pivot table is alphabetically; however, if we need to sort by order of importance that is in NO way alphabetical, we can use a custom sort to make it work.

For an example, I will apply a list we use to provide reports for our reference collection measurements to the stacks management department of the library. Here is the list of collection locations I want to sort:

RefFloor1, RefTier2, ShortShelf, HIDesk, TestAssess, Encyc, 188/MPS, Atlas, College, Career, Rm161, ANSI

In this list, items are grouped by where they are in the collection and we want them to appear on our report this way. How do I get these to show up in this order as column labels in my pivot table?

The easiest way to do this is with a custom list:

1. Open the excel file you want to sort and place your cursor in the top cell of the column you want to sort.

![Steps 1 and 2]

2. From the Home ribbon, click the Sort and Filter button and select Custom Sort from the menu.

3. In the Sort pop-up box, click the pull-down arrow in the Order column and select Custom List...

![Step 3]
4. With **NEW LIST** selected in the **Custom List** box, place your cursor in the **List Entries:** box and type your field list, one per line:

![Custom List Boxes](image)

**Steps 4 and 5**

5. Once you have your list completed, click the **Add** button and select the list from the **Custom Lists** box.

6. Click **OK**

7. The list will appear in the **Sort by** row

![Sort Window](image)

**Step 7**

8. Click **OK**

Your list will appear in the sort order you just made, AND when you make a pivot table, it will appear in that order as well.