

EXCEL

CORE

BOOK



There is no ailment or suffering without cure.

[Learn the Ultimate Remedy](#)

MAST MAST HEALERS PRESENT "THE ULTIMATE REMEDY"

All those suffering from any Physical Mental, spiritual illness or black magic, should listen to surah "Al-Rehman" a recitation by Qari Abdul Basit (Without translation) 3 times a day for 7 consecutive days with closed eyes. Every time after listing take half a glass of water, close eyes and say "ALLAH" thrice in heart and drink in 3 sips.

www.alrehman.com

Microsoft

Excel

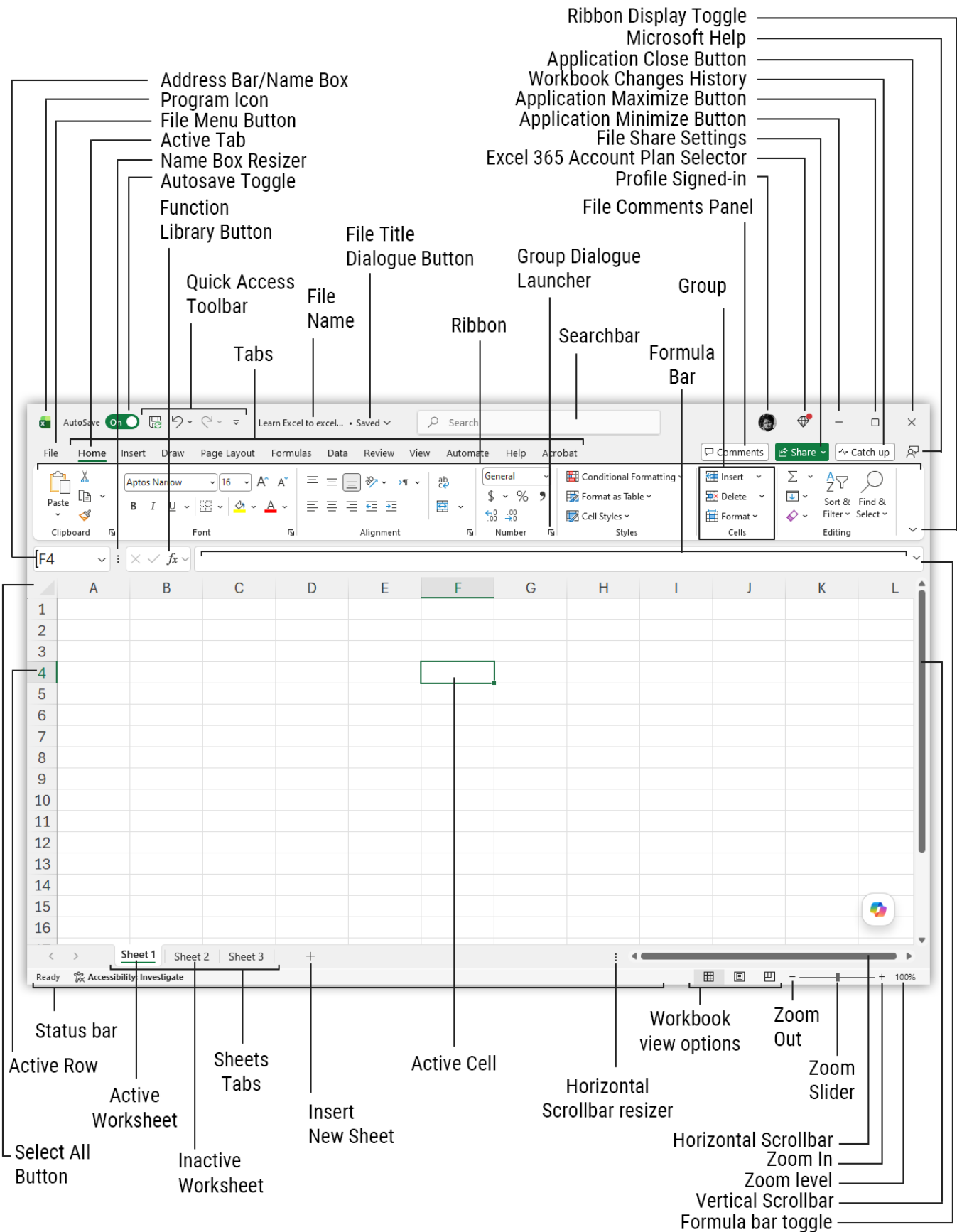
Core Book

© learnexceltoexcel.com, 2026

As a **reader** you are permitted to *share* it for FREE with your friends, colleagues and others who wish to learn Microsoft Excel. Remember you are permitted to share this file *as is* and NOT to sell it as I have reserved this right for myself.

No part of this book can be edited changed, reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form without the prior written permission.

We are grateful to Microsoft for making Excel.



Above is the “home screen” or what I used to call *working environment* that you see when you open Excel.

The above-mentioned interface is of Excel 365 and is fairly similar to other versions with few options moved around compared to older versions. But nothing has changed drastically since 2016 interface and almost every function occupies same location.

As you can see a lot is packed in quite a limited *estate*. So give it some time to simmer and digest what is what and where. You can use mouse to invoke each function on the screen or use shortcuts for most of them. I will come to *shortcut keys* later in the text.

To read what each of the labeled functions do in more detail head over to:

[Introduction to Excel Interface](https://learnexceltoexcel.com/excel-for-accountants-introduction-to-excel-interface/)

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/excel-for-accountants-introduction-to-excel-interface/>

1 Excel Home Tab

Excel's ribbon is divided in many tabs and each tab is divided in groups where each group holds different buttons to perform certain task.

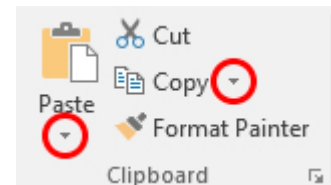
By default, Excel home tab consists of 7 groups:

1. Clipboard
2. Font
3. Alignment
4. Number
5. Styles
6. Cells
7. Editing

As you can notice, all seven sets are about formatting and editing contents.

Excel Tip # 1 – Additional options

If you look closely some buttons are with *downward pointing* arrows and some are without. These downward arrow, when clicked, give access to additional tasks such buttons can perform. For every button, these drop-down or downward arrow buttons have different options.



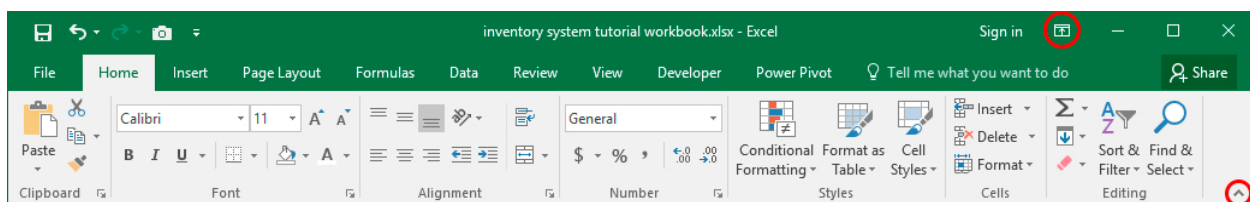
Excel Tip # 2 – Invoke dialogue box from ribbon

Another noticeable thing is small button at the bottom right corner of certain groups. It is called **dialogue box launcher** and invokes the relevant dialogue box with access to additional features.



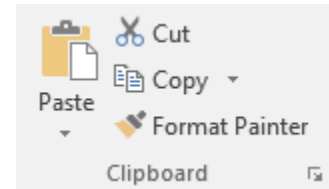
Excel Tip # 3 – Ribbon display options

Double clicking the active tab or clicking the upward arrow on the bottom right corner of the ribbon or hitting CTRL+F1 shortcut will minimize the ribbon making more room underneath. You can choose between different ribbon display options by clicking the **ribbon options** button with application control buttons on the top right of application window.



1.1 Clipboard

Just like other programs, clipboard is part of Excel environment and let you cut or copy and paste the contents of one cell or range of cells.



Excel Tip # 4 – Copy as picture

Pushing the drop down buttons on the right of *copy* button give option to copy the data as picture instead of actual contents. Yes, Excel does allow copying and pasting the data range as picture. However, the picture is a static one i.e. if the underlying data, picture of which is taken, changes then the picture **does not** update.

Excel Tip # 5 – Dynamic pictures with Excel Camera Tool

However, if dynamic picture is intended i.e. a picture that updates if underlying data is changed then use **camera tool** instead. To learn more about Excel Camera Tool read:

[Excel Camera tool – What, How and Why?](https://learnexceltoexcel.com/what-excel-camera-tool-help-spreadsheet-skills/)

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/what-excel-camera-tool-help-spreadsheet-skills/>

1.1.2 Paste Special

In Excel, paste function can do much more than just copied range. If you press CTRL+C to copy and later CTRL+V then it will simply paste whatever you copied in the active cell.

Remember the basic concept of copy/paste is that you copy the **source** cell and paste it on **destination** cell. Usually you paste everything from content to formatting, formula and everything.

However, if you press drop down under paste button, then you get access to loads of different paste options that are basically **paste special option**.

Past special gives you much more flexibility then simple paste including:

1. Pasting only formula
2. Pasting column width of source cell
3. Pasting only values

Excel Tip # 6 – Paste column width of source range

Instead of manually trying to match the width between two or more columns, you can simply *paste* the column width to select columns.

Simply select the cell or range in the column you want to mimic > copy it > and go to cell or range of cells of the column(s) you want to adjust > Hit ALT+CTRL+V shortcut, from the dialogue box select column width option and click OK. The width of columns will be adjusted.

Step 1:
Select and Copy

Step 2:
Select cells to adjust

Step 3:
Click paste special

Step 4:
Select column and OK

DONE!

Copy Paste Row Height in Excel

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/copy-paste-row-height-in-excel-quick-tip/>

Excel tip # 7 – Perform math operations using paste special

Yes! Excel's paste can even do math for you! Instead of writing a new formula or using a new column to get the desired result, if you want to perform simple add, subtract, multiple or divide then you can do using paste special option.

Copy the cell containing value that you want to add to, subtract from, multiple to or divide destination cells.

Say you have a column with values and you want to increase all of them by twice i.e. multiply by 2. So write 2 in any cell > cop this cell > go and select range you want to multiply with > go to paste special dialogue box > select multiply under operations > click OK

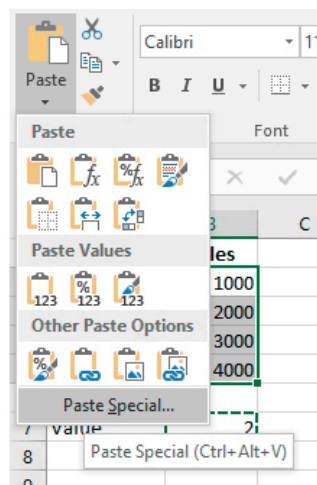
Step 1:
Copy the value

	A	B	C
1	Department	Sales	
2	East	1000	
3	West	2000	
4	North	3000	
5	South	4000	
6			
7	Value	2	
8			

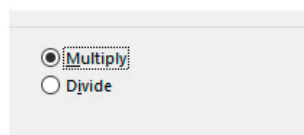
Step 2:
Select the range

	A	B	C
1	Department	Sales	
2	East	1000	
3	West	2000	
4	North	3000	
5	South	4000	
6			
7	Value	2	
8			

Step 3:
Click Paste special



Step 4:
Select multiply > OK



DONE!

	A	B	C
1	Department	Sales	
2	East	2000	
3	West	4000	
4	North	6000	
5	South	8000	
6			
7	Value	2	
8			

30+ Copy & Paste Tricks You Must Know

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/30-plus-copy-paste-tricks-you-must-know-autofill-paste-special/>

Excel Tip # 8 – Transpose Columns to Rows / Rows to Columns

Say you have a data in a column and you want it to convert into rows or you have data in rows and you want to arrange it in columns. This process of rearrangement of data is called **transposition** or simply **transpose**.

Although you can do it manually but having large data makes it really difficult. One easy way out is to use Paste Special

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Department						
2	East						
3	North		Department	East	North	South	West
4	South						
5	West						
6							

I have discussed 5 different ways to achieve this including paste special technique. So read the following tutorial:

[5 Ways to Transpose in Excel – Shifting Columns to Rows or Rows to Columns](https://learnexceltoexcel.com/5-ways-transpose-excel-columns-to-rows-to-columns/)

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/5-ways-transpose-excel-columns-to-rows-to-columns/>

1.1.3 Format Painter

As the name suggests, this tool enables pasting format as easily as painting with a brush. Simply select the cell of which you want to copy the format > click format painter button > go to cell you want to format and with left mouse button you can paste the format easily.

Excel Tip # 9 – Paint formatting on multiple cells

By default, you have to tap format painter every time. And if you have multiple cells to paint, it becomes tiring.

Double clicking format painter button makes it turned ON until you turn it back off manually by clicking the button again. Thus enabling you to paint multiple cells without selecting the source cell again and again.

1.2 Font and Alignment

With these two groups, basic formatting options can be applied including;

1. applying font styles i.e. bold, italic, underline.
2. Changing font type, text size text color and fill color.
3. As excel has cells, it has additional alignment options as top, bottom, middle in addition to left, right and center.
4. Increase or decrease indent of cells' contents

Three important alignment features that are widely used are:



Orientation: that allows you to rotate cell's contents. This is used when column width isn't enough to accommodate heading completely. Alignment dialogue box gives access to additional options

	A	B	C
	Department	Sales	
1			
2	East	2000	
3	West	4000	



Merge cells: merges multiple cells to make it one cell. This is used when a single heading is spanned over multiple columns. One can merge cells along column or along the rows.

Sales		
2014	2015	2016
298	183	259
471	487	489
463	366	434
136	280	145



Wrap text: When you have long text in cell and column width isn't wide enough to accommodate all of it, by default excel will cut off the content. By having wrap text on, Excel will insert **line breaks** to fit the width by adjusting row height.

Long long text Long
long text Long long
text Long long text
Long long text

Excel Tip # 10 – Insert line breaks manually

If you want to insert line breaks manually then you can do so by hitting combo ALT+ENTER. This will keep you in edit mode and starts a new line with in the active cell.

Long long text Long
long text

1.3 Number

One of the most significant feature of Excel as its potential is unknown to many. This group which is basically about formatting numbers does more than just converting numbers to decimals, dates, percentage, currency and accounting formats.

Following are some of the shortcuts to convert the number to specific format instantly:

Ctrl+Shift+~	Apply general number format
Ctrl+Shift+1	Apply number format with two decimal places, thousandth separators in form of comma and minus (-) sign for negative for numbers
Ctrl+Shift+2	Apply time format with hours and minutes expressed in 12 hours format with AM or PM
Ctrl+Shift+3	Apply date format with day, month and year
Ctrl+Shift+4	Apply currency format with figures expressed correct to two decimal places and negative figures in round brackets
Ctrl+Shift+5	Apply percentage format with figures expressed in whole numbers i.e. without decimals
Ctrl+Shift+6	Applies scientific number format with figures expressed up two decimal places

Excel Tip # 11 – CTRL+SHIFT combos are awesome!

In addition to the above shortcut combinations that are related to *number formatting* if we continue the same scheme of combinations we can get additional jobs done as follows:

Ctrl+Shift+7	Apply outline border to cell or selected cells
Ctrl+Shift+8	If active cell is within range: selects whole range or area within range upto blank cell(s) around sub-region
Ctrl+Shift+9	Unhides hidden rows within selection
Ctrl+Shift+0	Unhides hidden columns within selection
Ctrl+Shift+ –	Removes outline border from cell or selected cells
Ctrl+Shift+ =	Opens insert dialogue box to insert rows or columns

To read a detailed list of shortcuts here is one you must not miss:

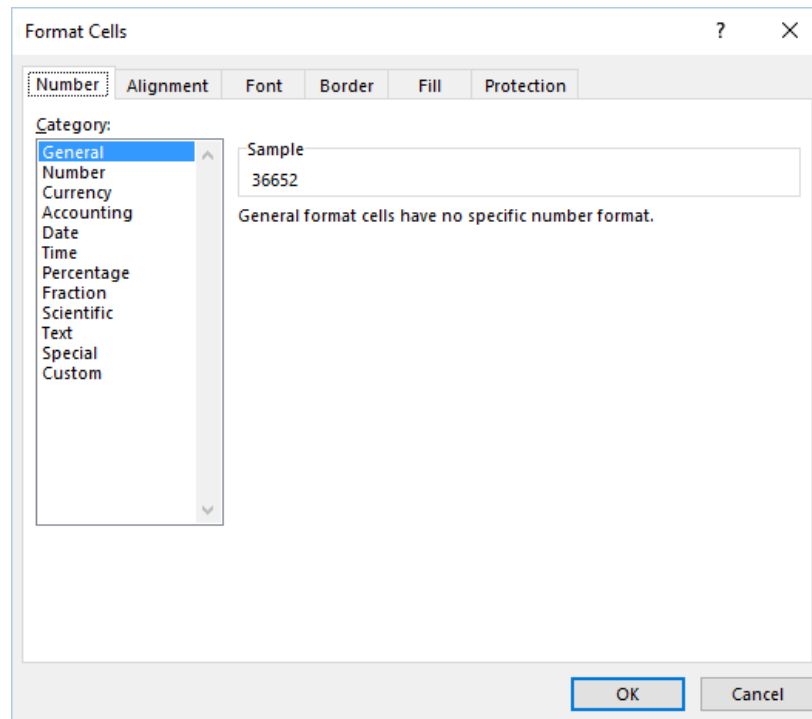
[Microsoft Excel Keyboard Shortcuts](https://learnexceltoexcel.com/microsoft-excel-keyboard-shortcuts-mega-collection/) [Mega Collection](https://learnexceltoexcel.com/microsoft-excel-keyboard-shortcuts-mega-collection/)

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/microsoft-excel-keyboard-shortcuts-mega-collection/>

1.3.1 Excel Custom Number Formatting

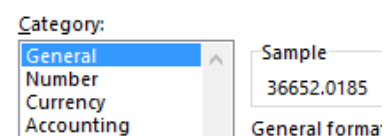
Excel allows the user to apply different number formats right from the ribbon. But one can use **custom** number formats. By custom its meant that user can define their own formats using format cell dialogue box under number tab.

Hit CTRL+1 to invoke the dialogue box. Here you have a list of readymade formats divided in different categories and lastly there is an option for *custom* formatting.

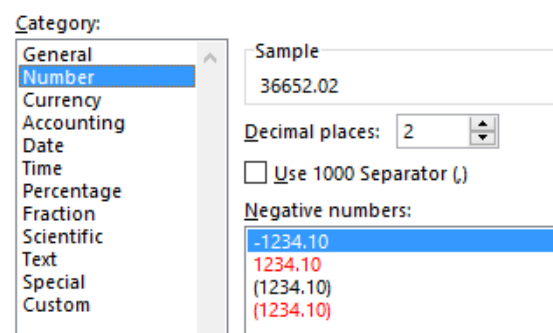


I will briefly discuss the available formats under each category and then jump to custom formats.

General: this format is no real format at all i.e. no specific format is being followed and whatever way user inserted the number Excel will present it as is.



Number: this gives you the ability to adjust decimal portion of number and reporting negative numbers in brackets, red color or both.



Currency: this is like number format above but one additional option of currency symbol.

Category:

- General
- Number
- Currency
- Accounting
- Date
- Time
- Percentage
- Fraction
- Scientific
- Text
- Special
- Custom

Sample

\$36,652.02

Decimal places: 2

Symbol: \$

Negative numbers:

- \$1,234.10
- \$1,234.10
- (\$1,234.10)
- (\$1,234.10)

Accounting: again this is a lot like number and currency format but with no option to express negative numbers in red color or brackets. Though personally I believe that bracket option should be there. But don't worry we will catch up to it later.

Category:

- General
- Number
- Currency
- Accounting
- Date
- Time
- Percentage
- Fraction
- Scientific
- Text
- Special
- Custom

Sample

\$36,652.02

Decimal places: 2

Symbol: \$

Date: This allows number to be formatted as date. And one can choose from long list of date formats and also on the basis of location and one can have access to additional options based on it.

Category:

- General
- Number
- Currency
- Accounting
- Date**
- Time
- Percentage
- Fraction
- Scientific
- Text
- Special
- Custom

Sample

5/6/2000

Type:

- *3/14/2012**
- *Wednesday, March 14, 2012
- 3/14
- 3/14/12
- 03/14/12
- 14-Mar
- 14-Mar-12

Locale (location):

English (United States)

Time: This formats the number in time and there are few formats to choose from the list. By changing location, one can access additional format options.

Category:

- General
- Number
- Currency
- Accounting
- Date
- Time**
- Percentage
- Fraction
- Scientific
- Text
- Special
- Custom

Sample

12:26:38 AM

Type:

- *1:30:55 PM**
- 13:30
- 1:30 PM
- 13:30:55
- 1:30:55 PM
- 30:55.2
- 37:30:55

Locale (location):

English (United States)

Percentage: Express number as a percentage and one can select the decimal places to show as well.

Category:

- General
- Number
- Currency
- Accounting
- Date
- Time
- Percentage**
- Fraction
- Scientific
- Text
- Special
- Custom

Sample: 3665201.85%

Decimal places: 2

Fraction: If you have a number especially in decimals, you can select to report it in fraction form.

Scientific: if you want number to be formatted in exponential form.

Text: This makes the number to act as text. Basically taking away all the characteristics of number. This comes handy in situations where number format won't help. For example, if you want to put 000.00100 as value, if it is formatted as number Excel will automatically change it to 0.001. Changing the format to text is one possible solution to prevent it.

Special: This is a small list of possible scenarios that require special kind of number format. For example, zip code, phone number and social security number.

Category:

- General
- Number
- Currency
- Accounting
- Date
- Time
- Percentage
- Fraction
- Scientific
- Text
- Special**
- Custom

Sample: 36652

Type:

- Zip Code**
- Zip Code + 4
- Phone Number
- Social Security Number

Locale (location): English (United States)

Custom: This is where the magic begins. This allows you to make your own formats to fit your needs. But to make it happen you must know how the codes and syntax work. There are few readymade codes available to be selected. These codes are basically the same formats that has been categorized we saw earlier. Its just that codes were hidden from us and now we can see them.

Category:

- General
- Number
- Currency
- Accounting
- Date
- Time
- Percentage
- Fraction
- Scientific
- Text
- Special
- Custom

Sample

36652

Type:

00000

General

0

0.00

#,##0

#,##0.00

#,##0_);(#,##0)

#,##0_);[Red](#,##0)

#,##0.00_);(#,##0.00)

#,##0.00_);[Red](#,##0.00)

\$#,##0_);(\$#,##0)

\$#,##0_);[Red](\$#,##0)

Delete

In the type field you mention the code to be applied. Again, only correct code following a correct syntax can get you desired result.

1.3.2 Custom Number Format – Basics

Under normal situations code is divided in section as follows

Positive number ; negative number ; zero ; text

Link of article with custom number formatting

Excel Tip # 12 – Use custom number formatting as data validation

Data validation is a control measure that prevents from wrong data to enter the information set. For example, a field that is meant for telephone number must not take text as input. Similarly, if telephone number is longer or shorter than the standard then Excel must warn the user about the mistake. One possible solution is to use custom number formatting option! To learn how to do it read:

Using Excel Custom Number Formatting as Data Validation Tool

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/excel-custom-formatting-to-do-data-validation-task/>

Excel Tip # 13 – Stating “Nil” or “-” for zero

If you want to state “Nil” or “Zero” or “-” instead of a “0” then you can easily do it using custom number format. One possible format code to achieve it is:

0;0;"Nil"

Remember you can use any word or character to show instead of numbered 0 if you choose to format it such.

To learn more about this and more techniques on formatting numbers checkout:

Formatting Numbers in Excel – Conditional Formatting Vs Custom Number Formatting

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/excel-conditional-and-custom-formatting-numbers/>

Excel Tip # 14 – Hide cell contents using custom formatting

One of the best ways to hide the contents of cell or range of cells is to format them with code:

```
;;;
```

This will hide any type of content in the cell so you don't have to hide the row or turn font color to white etc. And later if you want to show the content simply change the format to general or any other appropriate format.

Excel Tip # 15 – Use colors

One of the interesting uses of custom number formatting is that it lets you use colors as well. Like, you can color your positive numbers in blue or green and negative numbers in red or orange.

Following is one of the examples where this method is adopted with following code:

```
[Blue]0;[Red]0;0
```

	A	B	C
1	Actual Sales	Budget Sales	Variance
2	344	166	178
3	354	494	140
4	405	104	301
5	240	284	44
6	104	244	140

Excel Tip # 16 – Use conditions

Let's say you want to highlight only those negative numbers in red that are lower than 100 and only those positive numbers in blue that higher than 200. For this we need to give conditions.

Here is one solution with result:

```
[Blue][>200]0;[Red][<-100]0;0
```

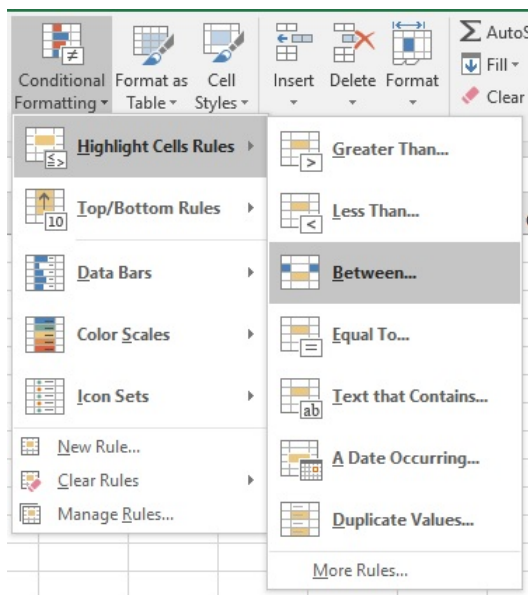
	A	B	C
1	Actual Sales	Budget Sales	Variance
2	344	166	178
3	354	494	140
4	405	104	301
5	240	284	-44
6	104	244	140

1.4 Conditional Formatting

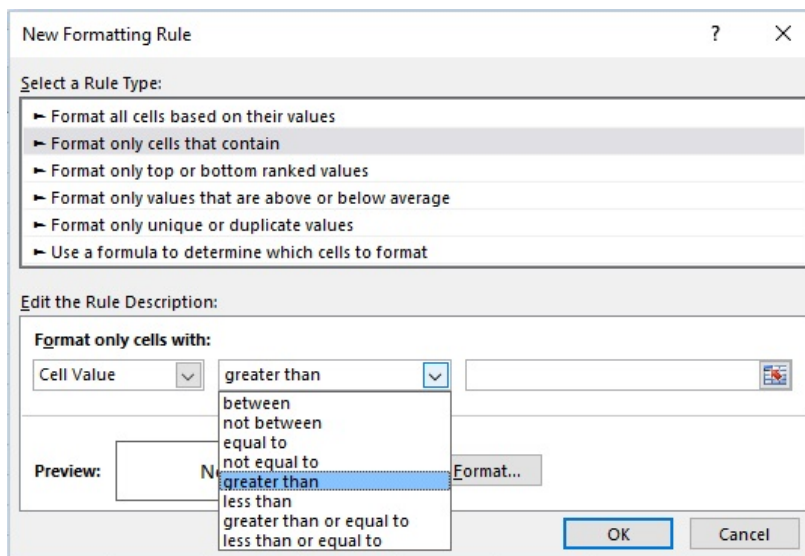
This feature allows user to format range of cells based on content and the conditions specified by the user. Some formats and conditions are ready made and can be deployed with a click of a button whereas more controls are also available.

Mostly this feature is used with numbers but it can work with text as well. For example, user can highlight cells that are:

- greater or lesser than, equal to or between two numbers (cells)
- highlight text that contain a certain string, a date occurring at a certain time
- duplicate values



Clicking more rules will give access to much more control:

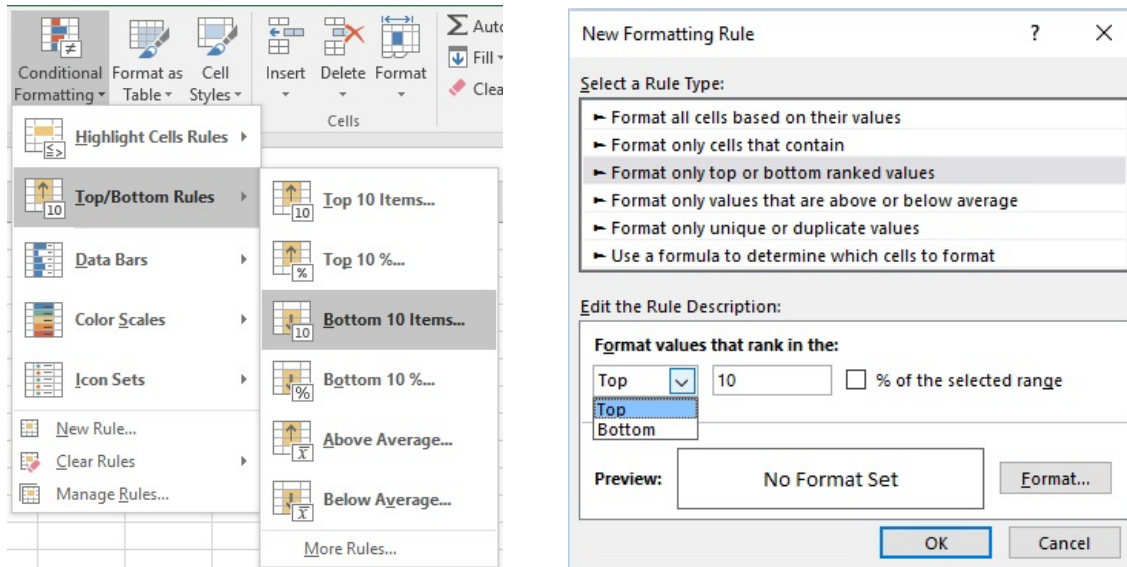


Using Conditional Formatting to highlight range of percentages in Excel

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/excel-conditional-formatting-highlight-percentage-range/>

You can also highlight cells based on top/bottom rules. You can highlight top or bottom 10, 5 or the highest/lowest value in the range etc. using the simple to understand dialogue box.

And more rules give plenty more options to fine tune application of condition (right image):



Other than highlighting cells based on their value, you can format them with data bars. Data bars make numbers easy to interpret with visual aids. Here is one example:

Month	Actual Sales	Budgeted Sales	Variance	Variance %
Jan	4232	2940	1292	44%
Feb	3186	4896	-1710	-35%
Mar	2395	4152	-1757	-42%
Apr	2401	2599	-198	-8%
May	4200	3363	837	25%
Jun	2474	2086	388	19%
Jul	3906	2319	1587	68%
Aug	3251	4974	-1723	-35%

Excel Tip # 17 – Highlight duplicates in data ranges

To find duplicates in data you can use conditional formatting to take the hard work out of the equation.

	A	B	C	D
1		Students studying	Students Studying	
2		ACCA F2	ACCA F3	
3		Nasir	Hasaan	
4		Jamal	Batman	
5		Aun	Faisal	
6		Saima	Nasir	
7		Nigar	Ayesha	
8		Faisal	Aaiza	
9				
10				

You can learn the technique in detail here:

Compare two lists for duplicates or unique values in no time using Excel

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/compare-lists-duplicate-unique-value-excel/>

Excel Tip # 18 – Conduct LOOKUP using conditional formatting

Usually we use formulas to do lookups, but if you want to do *visual* lookups then conditional formatting can be of great help. For example, you want to highlight sales of select department from select month:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Accounting	25	39	23	10	32	5
Tax	36	14	33	38	49	34
Audit	27	8	32	50	21	14
Reporting	49	19	49	7	46	50
Financial management	15	38	26	11	2	39
Law	41	22	8	49	27	7
Month	Mar					
Subject	Reporting					

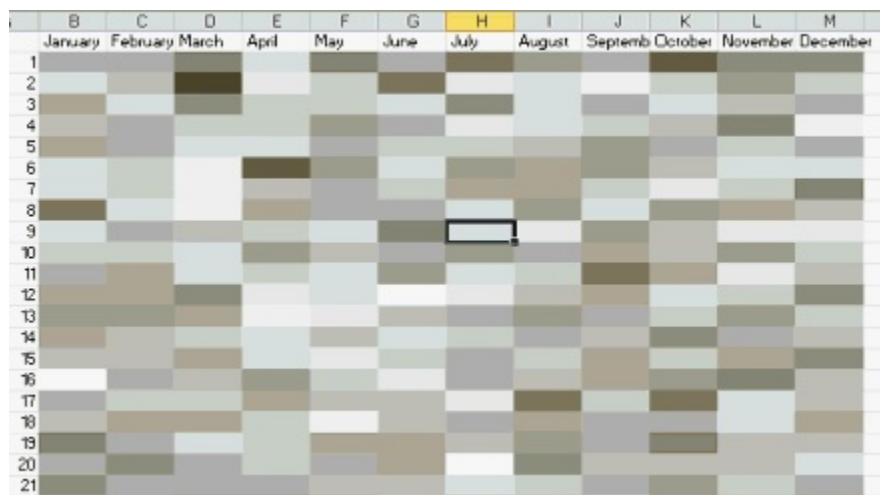
This tutorial explains the whole process how to do this:

How to LOOKUP using ONLY Conditional Formatting in Excel

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/lookup-using-conditional-formatting-excel/>

Excel Tip # 19 – Heatmaps with Conditional Formatting

Another great use of conditional formatting is to highlight the intensity or repetition. For example, if you want to know which day of the week labour worked most hours or which day of the year employees have birthdays then you can make “heat maps” using conditional formatting which is basically an application of color scales. Here is one example:



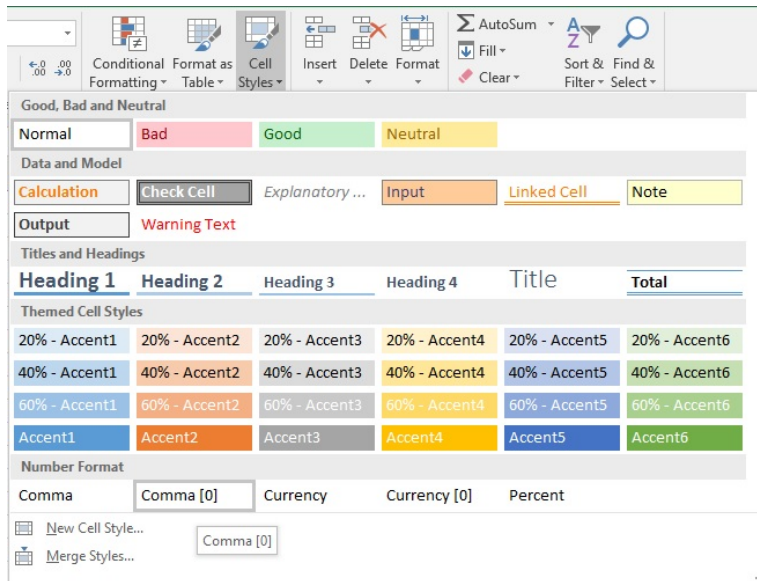
You can learn creating such heat maps in this tutorial:

Birth Dates Heat Map in Excel – How To

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/birth-dates-heat-map-in-excel-how-to/>

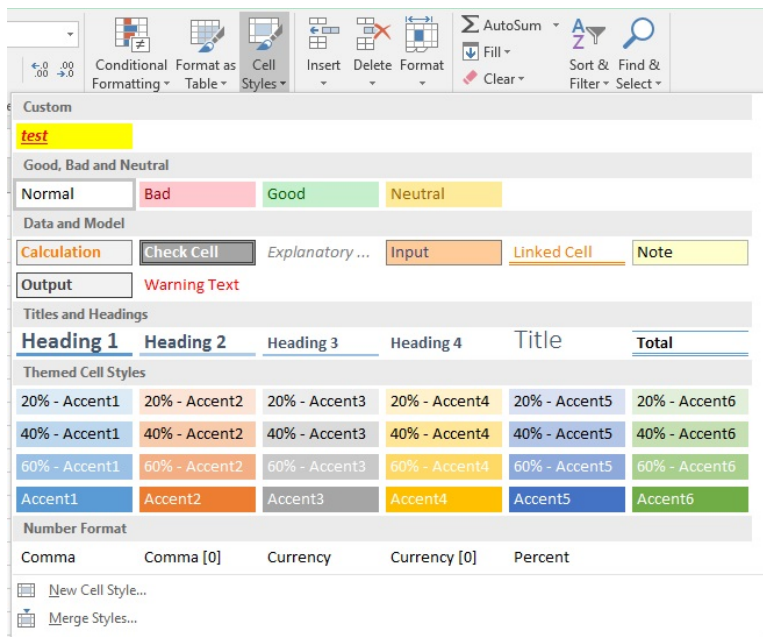
1.5 Cell Styles

Cell styles are ready made format settings available to be deployed instantly. With this feature you can actually save your own formats so that you don't have to repeat the process again and again.



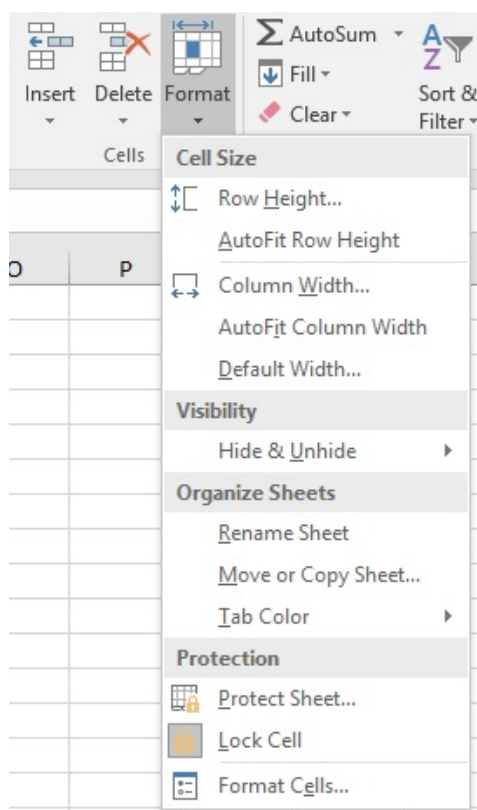
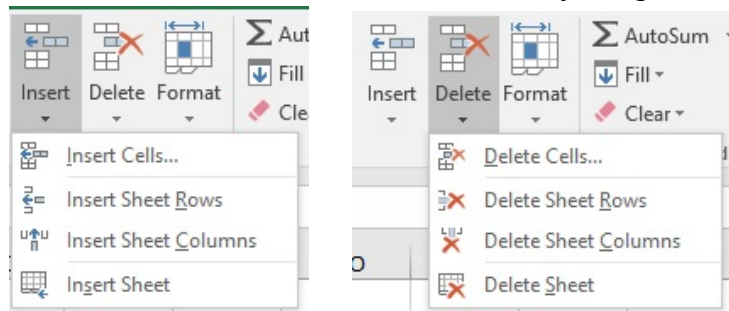
The process of defining new style is simple. Just make all the changes to one cell (that you later want to apply to multiple cells) and then go to cell styles > click new cell style.

Newly defined style will appear at the top under **custom** section



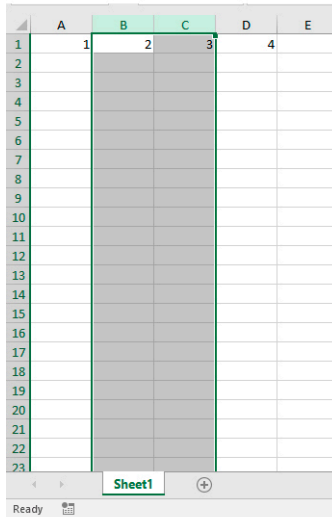
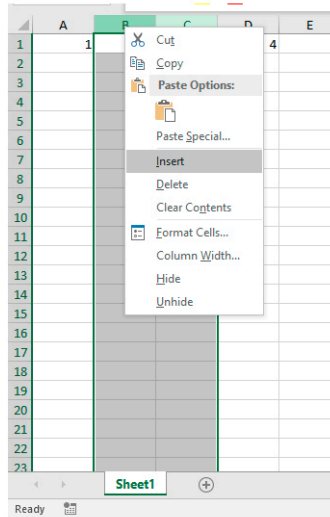
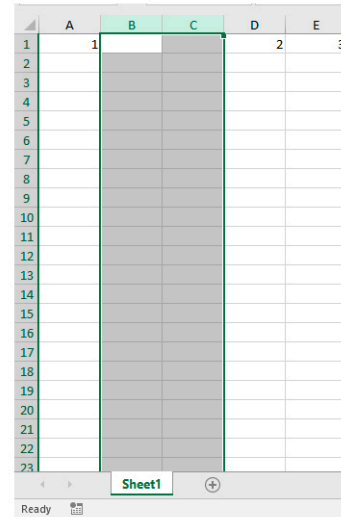
1.6 Cells

In this group we have basic interface format related options. For example, insert, deleting new rows, columns, cells or sheets. And also adjusting the row height or column width.

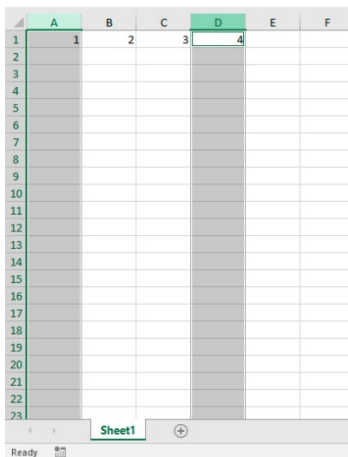
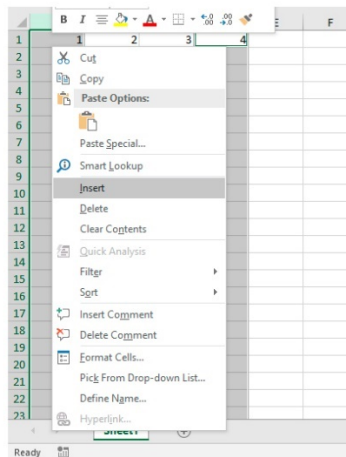
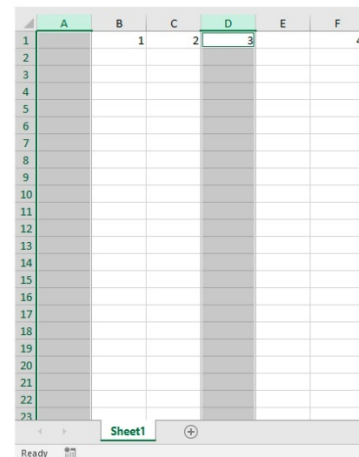


Excel Tip # 20 – Adding multiple columns/rows at once

Suppose you want to add two columns before column B. To do that in one go, select column B and C and then ask Excel to insert new columns. This way it will add two columns.

Select !**Insert !****TADA !****Excel Tip # 21 – Adding multiple columns/rows at particular place**

Simply make the selection of columns/rows before you want to add additional column or rows. For example, you want to add column before A and D simply select A and D (by holding down CTRL key) and insert.

Select !**Insert !****TADA !**

1.7 Editing

This group is like a “quick access” panel for many of the advanced tools and features that do have their dedicated sections in other tabs. For example, formula, Sort and filter. As these tools are widely used therefore, they are placed conspicuously in the home tab.

1.7.1 Autosum

Sum or addition is one of the most important and frequently used operation we perform. To make it easy, Excel has placed this button for users so that you can simply select the cells and click this button to find the sum of values selected.

Simply select the values and click autosum button, and it will automatically insert SUM function at the bottom or to the right of selected values.

You can also use dedicated shortcut combo ALT+= on the keyboard. Just hold down ALT key and press =/+ button on the keyboard (usually placed to the left of backspace key). And you will have SUM function inserted instantly.

Like in the following scenario where you want to find the total of 2015, simply select the values *excluding the header* and hit Autosum button or use shortcut ALT+=

	A	B	C
1	Departments	Year 2015	Year 2016
2	East	10	10
3	West	20	20
4	North	30	30
5	South	40	40
6	Space	50	50
7			

	A	B	C
1	Departments	Year 2015	Year 2016
2	East	10	10
3	West	20	20
4	North	30	30
5	South	40	40
6	Space	50	50
7		150	

Autosum can be applied on rows in the similar manner. Simply select the values along the rows and hit the button or use shortcut.

	A	B	C	D
1	Departments	Year 2015	Year 2016	
2	East	10	10	
3	West	20	20	
4	North	30	30	
5	South	40	40	
6	Space	50	50	
7		150		
8				

	A	B	C	D
1	Departments	Year 2015	Year 2016	
2	East	10	10	20
3	West	20	20	
4	North	30	30	
5	South	40	40	
6	Space	50	50	
7		150		
8				

Excel Tip # 22 – Autosum on multiple rows and column at once

Let's say you want to perform sum along columns and rows at once. One way is to select each row and column and apply it. But fastest way is to select the range with **one additional row/column around the intended range** and apply the autosum using autosum button or ALT+= shortcut. Excel will automatically insert SUM function at the end of every column and row in the empty cells.

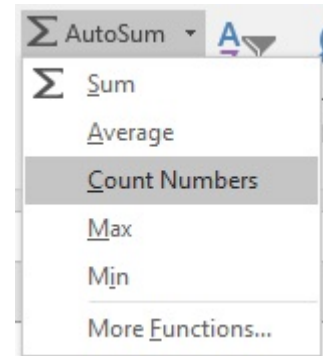
	A	B	C	D
1	Departments	Year 2015	Year 2016	
2	East	10	10	
3	West	20	20	
4	North	30	30	
5	South	40	40	
6	Space	50	50	
7				
8				

	A	B	C	D
1	Departments	Year 2015	Year 2016	
2	East	10	10	20
3	West	20	20	40
4	North	30	30	60
5	South	40	40	80
6	Space	50	50	100
7		150	150	300
8				

Excel Tip # 23 – More functions on the go!

In addition to SUM function, Excel makes few more widely used functions available for quick access too. It saves you from typing the whole function yourself.

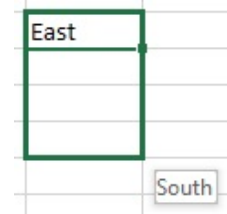
Application is done in similar manner and you simply have to select the appropriate one by clicking the drop-down arrow with the autosum button.



1.7.2 Fill

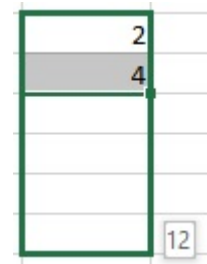
As the name suggests, this tool helps fill range of cells basically automating the process of data entry. However, for this tool to work, data is required to have a recognizable pattern or should be a series of some kind. Otherwise it will become a simple copy/paste tool that repeats the data as you drag the fill handle.

Some series are already known to Excel like East, West, North, South. If you mention any of these four in a cell and drag the handle in any direction, Excel will start filling the series. Another example of inbuilt series is of months i.e. January, February, March etc.



On releasing the left mouse button the cells will be populated with series instantly.

Similarly, if you have a data that follows a certain pattern then you can use fill to get the job done efficiently. For example, multiple of certain number. But to make it work, you have to give a bit of hint to Excel.



If you mention only 2 and drag the fill handle, Excel will only copy 2. If you mention 2 and 4 in respective cells, then Excel will recognize the pattern and fill multiple of 2.

Excel Tip # 24 – Custom Autofill series list

In addition to inbuilt series or autofill lists, you can define your own to make the process easier. For example, you have cities that you need frequently so you can make a list of them yourself.

To understand the process read the first part of following tutorial:

Custom Autofill series and Custom sorting with Custom lists in Excel

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/custom-autofill-series-and-custom-sorting-with-custom-lists-in-excel/>

Excel Tip # 25 – Flash fill

This feature is rather a new addition to Excel's fill arsenal. In many instances, it is so effective that it saves you from writing formulas to extract the data.

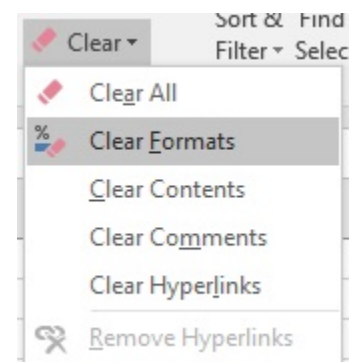
Some classical examples include separating domain names from email address or part of name from full name. For this to work, you do have to provide some data initially and Excel engine on recognizing the pattern will do the job automatically.

	A	B	C
1	Full Name	First name	Last name
2	Keran Kashmir	Keran	
3	Katpana Skardu	Katpana	
4	Karimabad Hunza	Karimabad	
5	Passu Gojal	Passu	
6	Hushey Khaplu	Hushey	

1.7.3 Clear

Nifty little tool that take care of things that are more of a chore. For example, you have a data range and you want to remove all kinds of formatting from it and get to bare data. One way to do this is to reverse all the applied formatting options. This is cumbersome. With this tool, after selecting the data range you simply have to click Clear > Clear formats and that's it!

As you can see it does give other options like clearing only contents while keeping the formats intact for select range of cells. Clear comments will delete any appended comments with the cells and clearing hyperlinks will clear all the links in one strike.



1.7.4 Sort

Though Sort and Filter go together, but I will discuss filter separately later. As both features are important and require fair share of discussion.

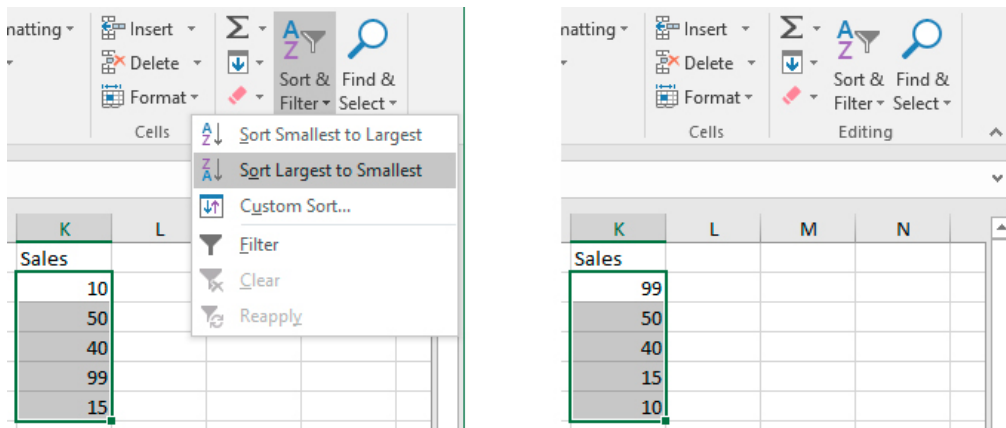
Sort, as we can understand help us arrange the data in particular order. Most known orders are ascending and descending and can help with numeric data and in some cases with alpha and alphanumeric type of data.

But you can sort the data on the basis of:

- Cell color
- Font color
- Cell icons

And sorting is not limited to only ascending or descending order, you can define your own order as well using custom lists.

The fastest way to have your data sorted is simply by selecting it. Simply select the data > Click sort and filter button under home tab in Editing group > Click the order you prefer ascending or descending. Excel will instantly arrange it.



You can also access sort option by right clicking over the selected region.

However, this strategy is flawed and can seriously distort the data especially if you have data spanned in multiple columns.

If you try to arrange only part of the data by selecting it, Excel will through a warning too (as seen on the right)

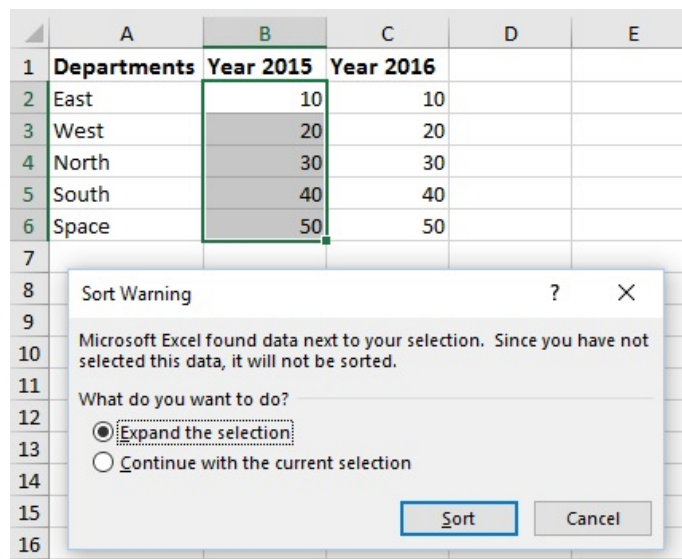
To avoid this you have to select the whole range of data so that entries in rows of all the columns move at the same time.

But even after selecting the whole range, you have less of a control over the data as Excel will arrange the data using the contents of only first column of the selected range.

In our case for example, Excel will use departments to arrange the data in descending order. What if we want to arrange Year 2015 in descending order? The best way to accomplish this however is to first enable **filter** feature first.

Simply select the data range **with headers** and hit CTRL+SHIFT+L or go to home tab > editing group > click sort and filter button > click filter.

You will see downward pointing arrows added to header cells.



Though such arrows are available only after you enable filters however, this gives access to both filter and sorting options.

Now we can easily sort 2015 data by simply clicking the arrow in 2015 header and clicking smallest to largest. Excel will arrange the contents of Year 2015 column in descending order.

	A	B	C
1	Departments	Year 2015	Year 2016
2	East	10	15
3	West	20	62
4	North	30	410
5	South	40	84
6	Space	50	31

	A	B	C
1	Departments	Year 2015	Year 2016
	Sort Smallest to Largest		15
	Sort Largest to Smallest		62
	Sort by Color		410
	Clear Filter From "Year 2015"		84
	Filter by Color		31
	Number Filters		
	Search		

	A	B	C
1	Departments	Year 2015	Year 2016
2	Space	50	31
3	South	40	84
4	North	30	410
5	West	20	62
6	East	10	15
7			
8			
9			
10			

Notice one thing that Year 2015 column now has an icon that clearly describes that it is this column that has been sorted in descending order. So even other users can understand.

Excel Tip # 26 – Multilevel/Multicolumn Sort

In the example above, we sorted single column. But Excel sort can help us in multilevel sorting as well.

For example, you have cities and sales for each city. You want to sort the cities in ascending, descending or in custom order AND arrange sales in descending order so that highest sale appears first for each city. This is possible only with multilevel sort. To learn the technique in detail read this tutorial:

Multilevel or Multi column sort in Excel

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/multi-level-or-multi-column-sort-in-excel-how-to/>

Excel Tip # 27 – Sorting rows left to right instead of columns

Usually the sorting is done on columnar basis i.e. top to bottom as most of the time data is arranged in columns. In some instances, however when data is arranged row-wise i.e. from left to right then you might find yourself in a fix if you want to sort the data.

Fear not, Excel even permits sorting along rows. To learn the technique head to this tutorial:

How to sort Rows horizontally left to right instead of Columns vertically top to bottom

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/how-to-sort-rows-horizontally-instead-of-columns-vertically-in-excel/>

Excel Tip # 28 – Sorting based on cell color

Excel allows data to be based on color and one can choose to show colored cells at the top of the range or at the bottom.

This sorting is quite helpful in situations where data is conditionally formatted and you can sort the cells with specific color.

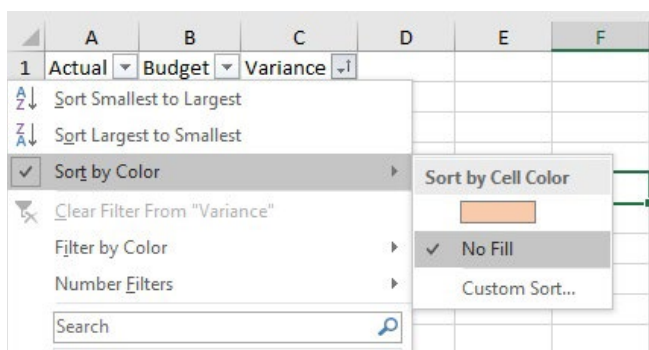
Say you have variance data and you have conditionally formatted the cells with negative numbers as you can see on the right.

Now if you want to sort the variance column based on color then click the arrow > click sort by color > click the color. Excel will put the colored cells on top of the range.

If you want to show colored cells at the bottom of the range, then you need to select **no fill** from the menu.

	A	B	C
1	Actual	Budget	Variance
2	324	191	133
3	332	188	144
4	293	450	-157
5	172	287	-115
6	151	108	43

	A	B	C
1	Actual	Budget	Variance
2	293	450	-157
3	172	287	-115
4	324	191	133
5	332	188	144
6	151	108	43



And then there is one more cool thing to sorting named **custom sort** which is based on custom series lists that we discussed earlier. Once we have custom lists, we can use them to do custom sort as well. To learn this technique, check the last part of this tutorial:

Custom Autofill series and Custom sorting with Custom lists in Excel

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/custom-autofill-series-and-custom-sorting-with-custom-lists-in-excel/>

1.7.5 Filter

As opposed to sorting that only arranges the data in certain order, filter on the other hand reduces the data down to only that part that qualifies the condition without altering the data. In other words, filter only hides the irrelevant data instead of deleting it altogether.

With filters enabled, you can filter the data based on cell color or value of number or manually select what data to show based on content.

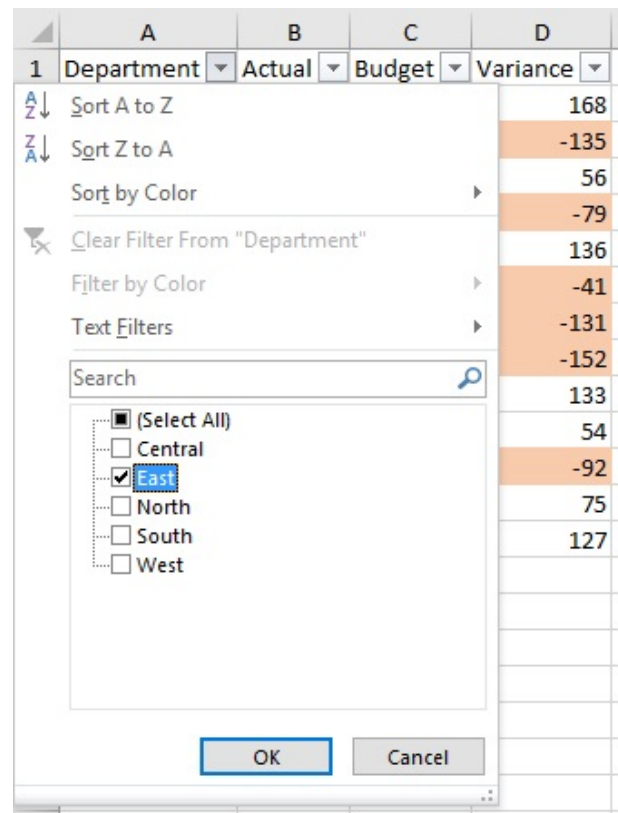
For instance, you have the variance data and want to data only from East department.

Simply click the downward pointing arrow in the header > click **select all** to uncheck every item > check East > click OK.

With filter applied, only that data will be shown in Excel that meets the criteria.

Once the filter is applied, the data will shrink down to show only filtered results.

Another thing to observe is that few row numbers are in blue representing the selected rows.



	A	B	C	D
1	Department	Actual	Budget	Variance
2	East	473	305	168
7	East	299	340	-41
12	East	232	324	-92

Excel Tip # 29 – Selecting only filtered data

Even after your data is filtered, if you try to select the data, Excel by default selects the whole data range **including** those results that are excluded by the filter. **General selection has thick green border around the selected area.**

But to select only that data that is visible after filter is applied, you need to take one additional step after making the general selection.

Simply select the data, and then hit **ALT+;** and you will see only the filtered rows getting selected.

General Selection

	A	B	C	D
1	Department ▼	Actual ▼	Budget ▼	Variance ▼
2	East	473	305	168
7	East	299	340	-41
12	East	232	324	-92

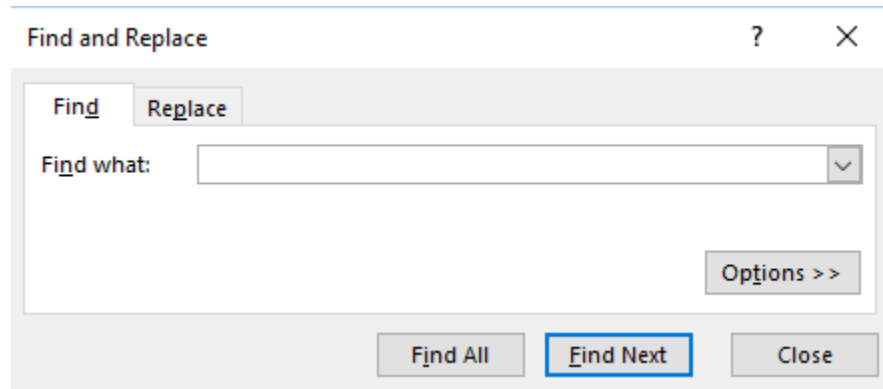
Filter only selection

	A	B	C	D
1	Department ▼	Actual ▼	Budget ▼	Variance ▼
2	East	473	305	168
7	East	299	340	-41
12	East	232	324	-92

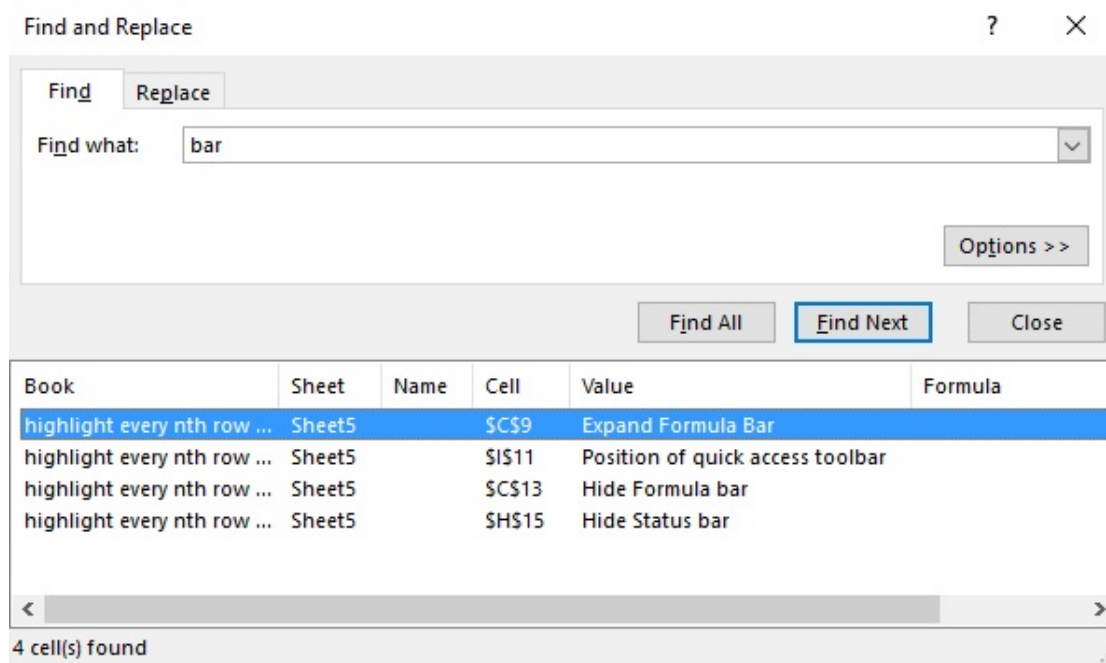
1.7.6 Find

Excel's "Find" does more than simple content search. It can seriously make your workflow efficient if you know how to use it creatively in certain situations. With wildcards and coupled with **replace** functionality, it is a great tool that cannot be overlooked.

To access Find dialogue box simply hit CTRL+F combo. Following dialogue box will appear:



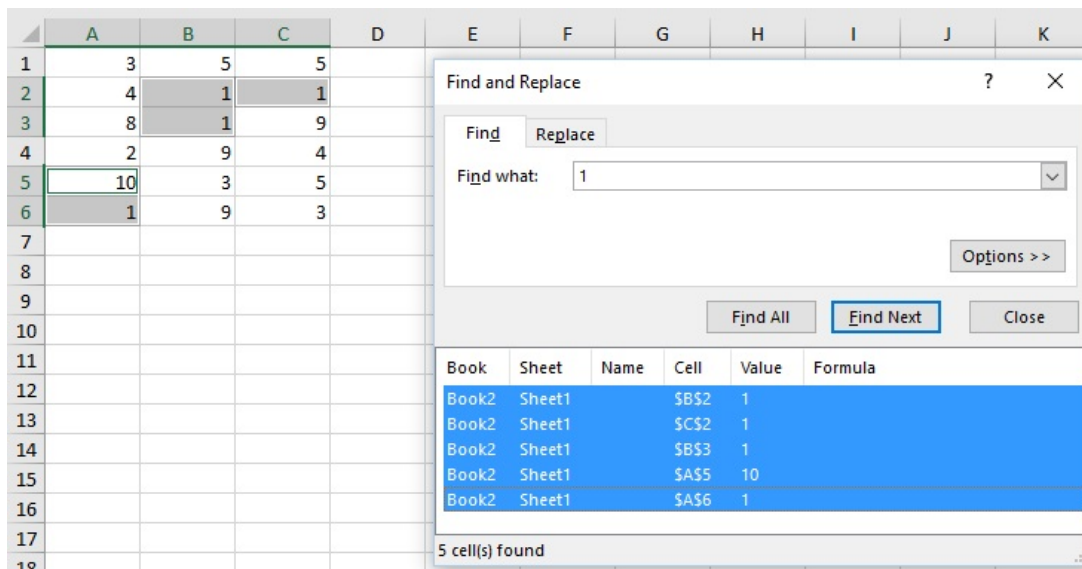
In "Find what" input field you can punch in what you desire to find. If you notice you have two different find command buttons. Find next is enabled by default and helps you cycle through all the records Excel finds. Meaning, every time you press find next it will hop to next matched result. Whereas, "Find All" will list down all the matched results at the bottom of expanded dialogue box as following:



Excel Tip # 30 – Select specific data with Find

Suppose you want to select all the cells that contain the matching data so that you can make the change instantly to all of them (especially if you are inserting/changing a formula) then simply select the first result in the “Find All” list, press and hold SHIFT key on the keyboard and select the last result in the list. This will select all the cells containing data that matches your find criteria.

Now if you want to make any change simply press F2 key, make changes and then hit CTRL+ENTER to push the change in all of the selected cells.



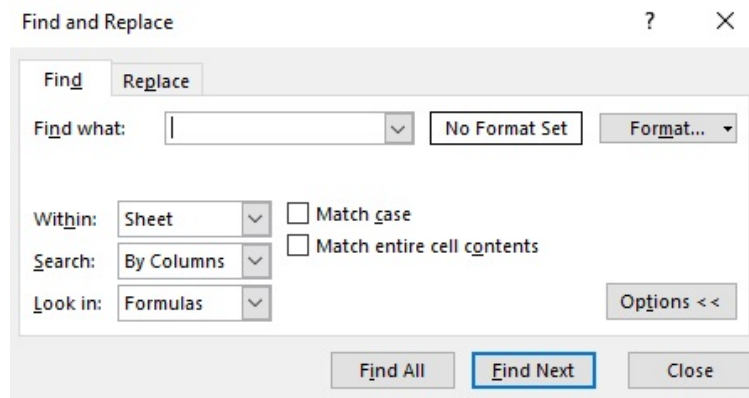
Excel Tip # 31 – Find data based on formatting

Yes, that's right! You can run a find command even on the basis of formatting i.e. how the text or cell is formatted. This is a powerful way of getting precise results. To learn more about how this technique can be used bet's read the following:

Excel Find based on cell formatting – When appearance matters

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/excel-find-based-on-cell-formatting/>

Clicking options button enables you to further fine tune the find command:



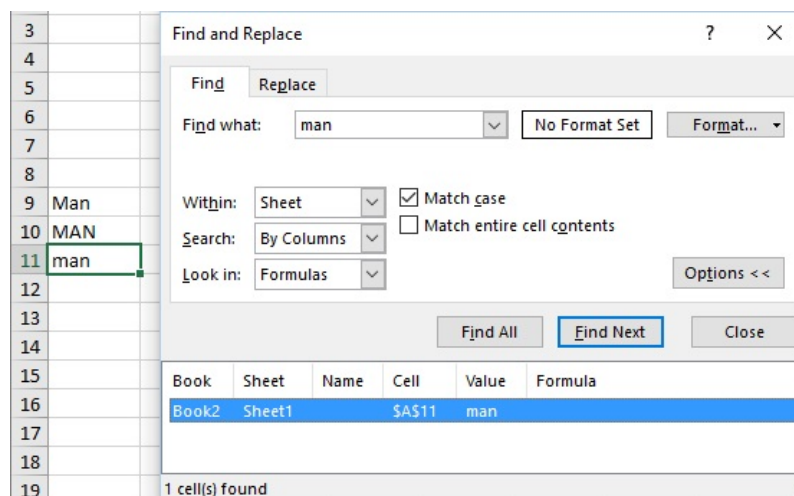
Within: this gives you two options **Sheet** and **Workbook**. If sheet is selected, then Excel will fetch results only from the active worksheet. If workbook is selected, then Excel will fetch results from the whole workbook i.e. all the worksheets included in current workbook.

Search: this allows you to run command **by columns** or **by rows**. By default, it is by rows i.e. Excel will run the command from row to row and if you click find next then Excel will hop to next matching result within active row, and if no matches found, hop to next row and so on. By columns runs the command on column basis.

Look in: this gives you option to find in:

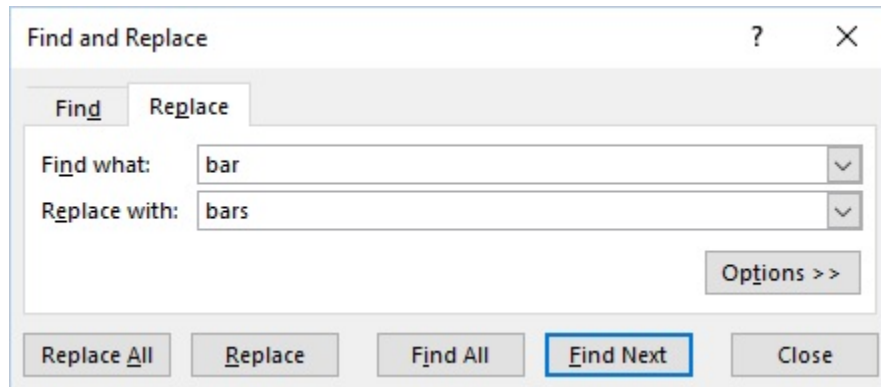
1. **Formulas:** Excel will check for matching results *within* formulas and not the content or results of formula.
2. **Values:** Ignoring formulas, Excel will try to find a match in resultants of formula and simple values
3. **Comments:** self-explanatory i.e. within comments only if there are any.

If you want Excel to return only those results that exactly match the *text case* as mentioned in the “find what” input field, then have “Match case” box checked.



1.7.7 Replace

Replace is exactly Find we discussed above with one additional trick up its sleeve i.e. replace the matched content with given string i.e. it not only finds but also replaces the found results. It resides in the same dialogue box but in a separate tab. You can directly access Replace feature by hitting CTRL+H.



“Replace” button replaces the content one item at a time whereas pressing “Replace All” button will make the changes in all the matched cells at once.

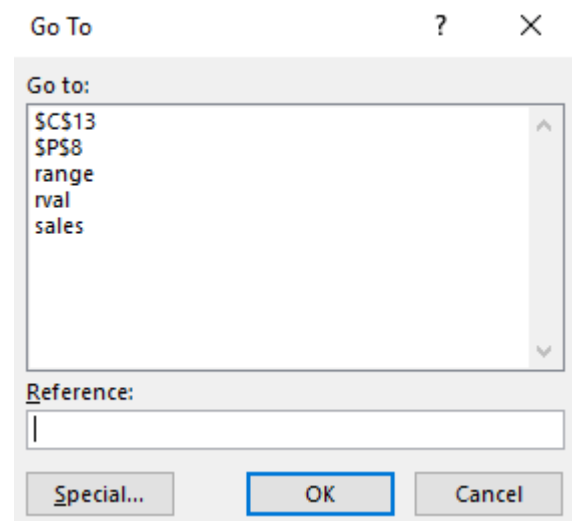
1.7.8 Go To

It’s as simple as the name implies. This feature let you go to certain cell or range of cells. You can say that it’s a warp machine that helps you jump to specific place in seconds and saves you eyeballing, scrolling and clicking.

To access “Go To” dialogue box you can use shortcut called CTRL+G.

In the dialogue box, you can jump to named ranges given as a list (named ranges are cells that have been given a specific name by the user.)

Or, one can punch in their desired cell address like HS14 to jump to cell HS14.



1.7.9 Go To Special

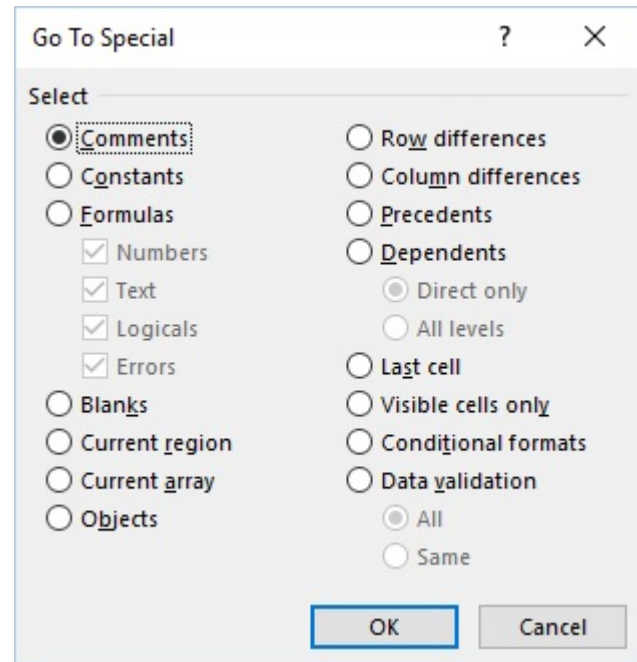
It is the same “Go To” tool at its core but with extra bits. To access it via shortcut combo then press CTRL+G and then ALT+S. A dialogue box as seen on the right will appear.

As you can notice that there are several options to choose from but *one at a time*.

Comments: will help you select all the cells with comments.

Constants: selects all the cells with simple values instead of formulas

Formulas: selects the cells containing formulas. It gives you additional option to select cells that results in number, text or have logical test or return error.



Blanks: selects all the blank cells. By blank it means an empty cell. Sometimes a cell that appears to be empty isn't necessarily blank as well. For example, cell with only spacebar characters inserted, or with NA() result or custom number formatted to have contents hidden will not be treated as a blank cell by Excel and therefore, won't be selected.

Current region: If current cell is within a certain data range then this option will let you select that range.

Current array: If cell is part of an array, then this option will let you select the whole array.

Objects: If your worksheet contains objects like pictures, shapes etc then this option will let you select all of them quickly.

Row difference: Let you select the cells in a row that are different from the active cell within selection.

Column difference: Let you select the cells within a column that are different from the active cell within the selection.

Precedents: Selects all the cells from which current cells is taking input.

Dependents: Selects all the cells to whom current cell is feeding the input.

Last cell: let you select the last cell of the last region in current worksheet

Visible cells only: let you select that are visible. This comes in handy especially when data is filtered.

Conditional formats: Select cells on which conditional formatting has been applied

Data validation: Select cells with data validation applied.

Excel Tip # 32 – Selecting and highlighting differences

Say you have two columns with “date promised” and “date delivered” and you want to highlight all the entries where date delivered is different from date promised then you can do this easily with Go To Special feature. To learn read this tutorial

Selecting and Highlighting difference using Excel Go To Special Row / Column Difference

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/excel-compare-row-column-difference-select-highlight/>

Excel Tip # 33 – Quickly fill blank cells with “Zero”

Say you have loads of empty cells and want to insert 0 or Zero or Nil in all of them quickly. Well you are saved as Excel has Go To Special to help you in this. Following tutorial details the process with animated illustrations:

How to quickly fill cells with 0 (zero) – Excel Quick Tip

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/how-to-quickly-fill-cells-with-0-zero-excel-quick-tip/>

Excel Tip # 34 – Fill blank cells with values from the above cell

Instead of filling the cell with “0” or Nil, if you want to fill each blank cell by taking the value from the immediately above cell then go to special can be of help again.

Quickly fill Blank cells with the Value in the Cell Above

<https://learnexceltoexcel.com/quickly-fill-blank-cells-with-the-value-in-the-cell-above-in-excel-go-to-special/>

Excel Tip # 35 – Quickly select certain type of cells with shortcut keys

Though we have learnt how to use Go To Special to select many different types of cells but with the help of shortcut keys we can select certain type of cells:

1. ALT+H+F+D+U: selects all the cells with formulas
2. ALT+H+F+D+M: selects cells with comments
3. ALT+H+F+D+C: selects every cell with conditional formatting applied
4. ALT+H+F+D+N: selects cells with values or constants
5. ALT+H+F+D+V: select cells with data validation applied
6. ALT+H+F+D+O: selects objects in the worksheet