This article is based on legacy software.

In Excel 2008, every cell can be formatted differently. There are many options available to customize your Excel workbook, which can make the worksheet easier to read. Excel also provides many number formats, allowing you to standardize how numbers will appear in your document. For more information, refer to Formatting Numbers.

### Filling Cells with Color

Cells can be filled with color to highlight or emphasize cell contents. It can easily be applied to your workbook.

1. Select the cell(s) you want to fill with color.

2. Click **Toolbox**.

   ![Toolbox](image)

   The **Formatting Palette** appears.

3. If the **Borders and Shading** section is not expanded, click it.

   The **Borders and Shading** section expands.

4. Under **Shading**, from the **Fill Color** pull-down menu, select the desired color.

   The cell is filled with the desired color.

### Formatting Borders

To make certain cells stand out in the worksheet, you may want to format a cell's borders.
Changing Borders

1. Select the cell(s) whose borders you want to format.

2. Click Toolbox.
   
The Formatting Palette appears.

3. If the Borders and Shading section is not expanded, click it.
   
The Borders and Shading section expands.

   ![Borders and Shading section]

4. Under Borders, from the Border Type pull-down menu, select the desired border.
   
The desired border is applied.

Changing Border Color

1. Select the cell(s) whose borders you want to format.

2. Click Toolbox.
   
The Formatting Palette appears.

3. If the Borders and Shading section is not expanded, click it.
   
The Borders and Shading section expands.

   ![Borders and Shading section]

4. Under Borders, from the Border Color pull-down menu, select the desired color.
   
The color is applied to the borders.
Changing Border Style

1. Select the cell(s) whose borders you want to format.

2. Click Toolbox. 
   The Formatting Palette appears.

3. If the Borders and Shading section is not expanded, click it.
   The Borders and Shading section expands.

4. Under Borders, from the Border Style pull-down menu, select the desired style.
   The style is applied to the borders.

Deleting Borders

1. Select the cell(s) whose borders you want to delete.

2. Click Toolbox. 
   The Formatting Palette appears.

3. If the Borders and Shading section is not expanded, click it.
   The Borders and Shading section expands.

4. Under Borders, from the Border Type pull-down menu, select No Border. 
   The border is erased.
Using Conditional Formatting

Conditional Formatting allows you to format cells depending on how their data relates to other data. For example, in a list of numbers ranging from 1 to 10, you can format cells with data closer to 1 to have red fill color, and cells with numbers closer to 10 to have green fill color. You can also format data bars to appear within the cell, making a concise bar graph within a worksheet. For more information, refer to Working with Conditional Formatting.

Merging Cells

A cell merge converts selected cells into a single cell. This can be useful for creating titles.

Creating a Cell Merge

WARNING: After a cell merge, if two or more selected cells have data in them, Excel will display the information from the cell closest to the upper left corner, deleting all other data.

1. Select the cell(s) you want to merge.

2. Click Toolbox. The Formatting Palette appears.

3. If the Alignment and Spacing section is not expanded, click it. The Alignment and Spacing section expands.

4. Under Indentation and Merge, select Merge cells. NOTE: The option is selected when a checkmark appears. The cells are merged.

5. (Optional) To make additional adjustments, under Indentation and Merge, from the Indent text box, type the desired number.

OR
Removing a Cell Merge

1. Select the cell(s) you want to split.

2. Click Toolbox. 
   The Formatting Palette appears.

3. If the Alignment and Spacing section is not expanded, click it. 
   The Alignment and Spacing section expands.

4. Under Indentation and Merge, deselect Merge cells. 
   NOTE: The option is deselected when no checkmark appears. 
   The cells are split.

Wrapping Text

If you have text that appears in a single cell and you want to increase the height of the cell without expanding the row or column, you can use the Wrap text option.

1. Select the cell(s) you want to wrap text.

2. Click Toolbox. 
   The Formatting Palette appears.

3. If the Alignment and Spacing section is not expanded, click it. 
   The Alignment and Spacing section expands.
4. Select **Wrap text**.

   *NOTE: The option is selected when a checkmark appears.*

Wrap text is applied.

5. (Optional) To remove the text wrap, deselect **Wrap text**.

   *NOTE: The option is deselected when no checkmark appears.*

### Copying Cell Formatting

If you want to copy only a cell’s formatting you can use the **Format Painter** option. This will format the destination cell the same as the source cell without changing its content.

This method applies to copying formatting to one cell or contiguous cells.

1. Highlight the cell containing the desired formatting.

2. From the **Standard** toolbar, click **Format Painter**.

   The pointer changes shape to include a paintbrush.

3. Highlight the desired cells to be formatted.

   The format you copied is applied to the cell(s).

This method applies to copying formatting to multiple, non-contiguous cells.

1. Highlight the cell containing the desired formatting.

2. From the **Standard** toolbar, double click **Format Painter**.

   The pointer changes shape to include a paintbrush.

3. Highlight the desired cells to be formatted.

   The format you copied is applied to the cells.

4. To turn off the **Format Painter**, press [esc].
OR
Click Format Painter.