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Excel® 2013 Absolute Beginner's Guide

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Contents

INTRODUCTION **1**

Who Should Read This Book 3

How This Book Is Organized 3

Downloading the Example Files 3

Conventions Used In This Book 4

Special Elements 4

1 Understanding the Microsoft Excel Interface **5**

Taking a Closer Look at the Excel Window 6

Customizing the Excel Window 12

Moving Around and Making Selections on a Sheet 19

Installing Optional Components 21

2 Working with Workbooks, Sheets, Rows, Columns, and Cells **27**

Managing Workbooks 28

Using Templates to Quickly Create New Workbooks 33

Working with Sheets and Tabs 36

Working with Rows and Columns 40

Working with Cells 43

3 Getting Data onto a Sheet **47**

Types of Data You Enter into Excel 48

Entering Different Types of Data into a Cell 48

Controlling the Next Cell Selection 50

Using Copy, Cut, Paste, Paste Special to Enter Data 52

Using Text to Columns to Separate Data in a Single Column 54

Inserting Symbols and Equations into a Cell 58

Using Web Queries to Get Data onto a Sheet 59

Using Series to Quickly Fill a Range 60

Editing Data 62

Working with Tables 64

Fixing Numbers Stored as Text 67

Spellchecking Your Sheet 69
Finding Data on Your Sheet 69
Using Data Validation to Limit Data Entry in a Cell 71

4 Formatting Sheets and Cells 75
Adjusting Row Heights and Column Widths 76
Changing the Font Settings of a Cell 77
Aligning Text in a Cell 79
Reflowing Text in a Paragraph 83
Applying Number Formats with Format Cells 85
Creating a Custom Format 88
When Cell Formatting Doesn't Seem to Be Working Right 95
The Number Group on the Ribbon 95
Adding a Border Around a Range 96
Coloring the Inside of a Cell 98
Creating Hyperlinks 99
Quick Formatting with the Format Painter 101
Dynamic Cell Formatting with Conditional Formatting 101
Using Cell Styles to Quickly Apply Formatting 109
Using Themes to Ensure Uniformity in Design 109

5 Using Formulas 113
The Importance of Laying Out Data Properly 114
Adjusting Calculation Settings 114
Viewing Formulas Versus Values 115
Entering a Formula into a Cell 116
Three Ways of Entering a Formula's Cell References 118
Relative Versus Absolute Formulas 118
Using a Cell on Another Sheet in a Formula 119
Using R1C1 Notation to Reference Cells 119
Using F4 to Change the Cell Referencing 121
Mathematical Operators 122

Copying a Formula to Another Cell 123
Using Names to Simplify References 125
Inserting Formulas into Tables 128
Using Table Names in Table Formulas 129
Writing Table Formulas Outside the Table 130
Using Array Formulas 132
Converting Formulas to Values 136
Troubleshooting Formulas 137

6 Using Functions 143

Breaking Down a Function 144
Finding Functions 144
Entering Functions Using the Function Arguments Dialog Box 146
Entering Functions Using In-Cell Tips 147
Using the AutoSum Button 148
Using Lookup Functions to Match a Value and Return Another 152
SUMIFS 159
SUMPRODUCT 160
Logical Functions 162
Nested IF Statements 164
IFERROR 165
Date and Time Functions 166
Troubleshooting Dates and Times Stored as Strings 172
Goal Seek 173
Using the Function Arguments Dialog Box to Troubleshoot Formulas 174

7 Sorting Data 177

Preparing Data 178
Opening the Sort Dialog Box 178
Sorting by Values 178
Sorting by Color or Icon 180
Using the Quick Sort Buttons 182
Quick Sorting Multiple Columns 182

Randomly Sorting Data 183
Sorting with a Custom Sequence 184
Rearranging Columns Using the Sort Dialog Box 186
Rearranging Columns Using the Mouse 186
Fixing Sort Problems 187

8 Filtering and Consolidating Data 189

Preparing Data 190
Applying a Filter to a Data Set 190
Clearing a Filter 191
Reapplying a Filter 192
Turning Filtering On for One Column 192
Filtering for Listed Items 192
Filtering the Grouped Dates Listing 193
Using the Search Function to Filter for or Exclude Items 195
Using the Search Function on Grouped Dates 196
Using Text, Number, and Date Special Filters 198
Filtering by Color or Icon 200
Filtering by Selection 200
Allowing Filtering on a Protected Sheet 201
Using the Advanced Filter Option 202
Removing Duplicates from a Data Set 207
Consolidating Data 208

9 Distributing and Printing a Workbook 213

Using Cell Comments to Add Notes to Cells 214
Allowing Multiple Users to Edit a Workbook at the Same Time 216
Hiding and Unhiding Sheets 217
Locking Rows or Columns in Place 218
Creating Custom Views of Your Data 219
Configuring the Page Setup 220
Creating a Custom Header or Footer 222
Using Page Break Preview to Set Page Breaks 225

Printing Sheets 226
Protecting Your Workbook from Unwanted Changes 227
Protecting the Data on a Sheet 228
Preventing Changes by Marking a File as Final 230
Restricting Access Using IRM 230
Certifying a Workbook with a Digital Signature 230
Sharing Files Between Excel Versions 231
Removing Hidden or Confidential Information 231
Recovering Lost Changes 232
Sending an Excel File as an Attachment 233
Sharing a File Online 234

10 Subtotals and Grouping 235
Using the SUBTOTAL Function 236
Summarizing Data Using the Subtotal Tool 237
Copying the Subtotals to a New Location 240
Formatting the Subtotals 241
Applying Different Subtotal Function Types 241
Combining Multiple Subtotal Results to One Row 243
Subtotaling by Multiple Columns 245
Sorting Subtotals 246
Adding Space Between Subtotaled Groups 246
Grouping and Outlining Rows and Columns 249

11 Creating Charts and Sparklines 253
Preparing Data 254
Elements of a Chart 254
Types of Charts 256
Adding a Chart to a Sheet 258
Adding, Removing, and Formatting Chart Elements 262
Editing and Formatting a Chart Title 262
Changing the Display Units in an Axis 263
Applying Chart Styles and Colors 264

Applying Chart Layouts 265
Moving or Resizing a Chart 265
Switching Rows and Columns 266
Changing an Existing Chart's Type 266
Creating a Chart with Multiple Chart Types 266
Updating Chart Data 268
Creating Stock Charts 269
Creating Bubble Charts 269
Pie Chart Issue: Small Slices 270
Adding Sparklines to Data 272
Creating a Chart Using a User-Created Template 275

12 PivotTables and Slicers 277

Preparing Data for Use in a PivotTable 278
PivotTable Limitations 279
PivotTable Compatibility 279
PivotTable Field List 280
Creating a PivotTable 281
Changing How a PivotTable Appears on a Sheet 286
PivotTable Sorting 287
Expanding and Collapsing Fields 289
Viewing the Records Used to Calculate a Value 290
Grouping Dates 290
Filtering Data in a PivotTable 292
Creating a Calculated Field 296
Hiding Totals 298
Formatting Values 298
Slicers 299

13 Using Power View to Create Reports 301

Power View Requirements 302
Creating Reports 302
Inserting and Formatting a Report Title 305

Changing Data Visualizations ... 305
Combining Multiple Visualizations ... 309
Changing Colors ... 310
Sorting ... 311
Filtering ... 312
Sharing Power View Reports ... 315

14 Inserting SmartArt, WordArt, and Pictures ... 317
Working with SmartArt ... 318
Inserting WordArt ... 325
Inserting Pictures ... 326

15 An Introduction to Using Macros and UDFs ... 333
Enabling VBA Security ... 334
Developer Tab ... 335
Introduction to the Visual Basic Editor ... 336
Understanding How the Macro Recorder Works ... 338
Recording a Macro ... 342
Running a Macro ... 343
User-Defined Functions ... 347

16 Introducing the Excel Web App ... 355
Requirements ... 356
Acquiring a Microsoft Account ... 356
Uploading and Downloading Workbooks ... 358
Opening a Workbook ... 360
Creating a New Workbook Online ... 361
Saving a File to Your Local Drive ... 362
Sharing a Folder or Workbook ... 362
Interacting with a Sheet Online ... 366
Configuring Browser View Options ... 367
Setting Up a Survey ... 369

Index ... 373

About the Author

Tracy Syrstad is the project manager for the MrExcel consulting team and also handles many of the tech support calls. She's been helping people with Microsoft Office issues since 1997 when she discovered free online forums where anyone could ask and answer questions. She discovered she enjoyed teaching others new skills, and when Tracy began working with the MrExcel team, she was able to integrate the fun of teaching with one-on-one online desktop sharing sessions.

Dedication

To Bill Jelen and Loretta Yates who believed it was time for my training wheels to come off.

Acknowledgments

Years ago while I answered Microsoft Office questions at online forums, I met Anne Troy, aka Dreamboat. She introduced me to Bill Jelen, aka MrExcel, and my life took a major turn. Bill opened several doors for me, including the one that has led to this book. Thank you both.

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We Want to Hear from You!

As the reader of this book, *you* are our most important critic and commentator. We value your opinion and want to know what we're doing right, what we could do better, what areas you'd like to see us publish in, and any other words of wisdom you're willing to pass our way.

We welcome your comments. You can email or write us directly to let us know what you did or didn't like about this book—as well as what we can do to make our books better.

Please note that we cannot help you with technical problems related to the topic of this book.

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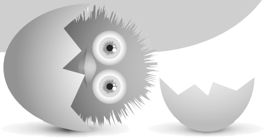
INTRODUCTION



Familiarity with Microsoft Excel is a requirement for many jobs today. Workers in numerous offices use Excel to track and report information. Sales reps track leads, prospects, commissions, and travel expenses in Excel. Workers on the factory floor log schedules and quality data in Excel.

Excel is an amazingly flexible program. A new Excel worksheet offers a seemingly endless blank canvas of rows and columns where you can enter, summarize, and report data of any type. Charts and other data visualization tools can convert a page full of numbers to a visual snapshot. Pivot tables can summarize thousands of detailed records to a one-page summary in a few mouse clicks.

If you've never opened Excel, or if you've used Excel only to neatly arrange lists in columns, this book will get you up to speed with the real-life skills needed to survive in a job that requires familiarity with Excel.

When a potential employer asks if you know Excel, you need to ask which *version* of Excel. There are a lot of products available that have Excel in the name but offer a different subset of commands.

- Excel 2013 is the most recent version of the full-featured Excel program. The full version of Excel is what you will find in use in most job environments.
- Excel Web App is browser-based version of Excel. Whereas the browser is great for displaying existing Excel worksheets, the Web App allows users to enter new data and formulas in an Excel workbook while online. Those users do not need to have Excel installed on their computers. Mobile workers today might use Excel Web App to access their Excel data while they are out of the office. You also might expect college students to use Excel Web App to collaborate on group projects using this free version of Excel.
- Excel 2007 and Excel 2010 are similar to Excel 2013. If you learned how to use Excel 2013 and begin work where the company uses Excel 2007, you will be able to transfer most of your skills. Some features, such as sparklines, are missing. The Excel 2007 File menu offers far fewer choices than the Excel 2010 and Excel 2013 File menus. (In Excel 2007, the word *File* was replaced with an Office logo inside a round circle in the upper-left corner of the program. This was a bad idea and Microsoft went back to the word *File* in Excel 2010.) For the most part, you should find yourself comfortable working in Excel 2007 or Excel 2010 using the knowledge that you learn about Excel 2013 using this book.
- Excel 2003, Excel 2002, Excel 2000, and Excel 97 are collectively known as the legacy versions of Excel. Although the concepts of entering data and formulas in the worksheet are the same, the entire command structure is different in these versions of Excel. Instead of the intuitive ribbon interface, you will find long text lists of commands organized on menus, such as File, Edit, View, Insert, and so on. Although the menu system is harder to learn, hundreds of

millions of people originally learned about Excel using these menus. Nearly half the companies with Excel installed are still hanging on to their legacy installations of Excel. Be prepared to have a steep learning curve as you try to find where the Excel 2013 commands are located in the old Excel menus.

> **NOTE** If this is your first experience with Excel, going to work in an office that is still using Excel 2003 is going to present some frustrations for you and the employer as you try to adjust to the older version of Excel. If the company is still using Excel 2003, it either means that the company didn't have the money to upgrade or that the people at the company are firmly entrenched with the old version of Excel. Be up front with your manager. Explain that you learned Excel using Excel 2013. That manager resisted upgrading to Excel 2013 because he or she didn't want to take the time to learn the new ribbon interface. As someone who learned on Excel 2013, it will be just as intimidating to learn where familiar commands are in the old Excel environment.

Who Should Read This Book

Excel 2013 Absolute Beginner's Guide is recommended for anyone who wants to use Excel. Whether this is your first time entering data in Excel or you've used Excel before but need to get caught up on the new functionality, this book walks you through the steps and gets you comfortable using Excel.

How This Book Is Organized

This book teaches you the important functions and uses for Microsoft Excel. As each chapter progresses, it builds on skills learned in previous chapters. The concepts in this book allow you to get started by entering data and formulas in Excel. However, the later chapters on pivot tables and charting provide you with enough advanced techniques to allow you to thrive in any job requiring Excel.

Downloading the Example Files

You can download the sample files for this book from quepublishing.com.

Conventions Used In This Book

The following conventions are used in this book:

- At the beginning of each chapter, you'll find a quick overview of the major topics that will be explained as you read through the material that follows.
- The end of each chapter reviews key points you just learned about.

Most steps in this book require the use of the mouse. All mouse instructions are based on a right-handed mouse. *Click* refers to a single click using the left mouse button. *Double-click* refers to a double-click using the left mouse button. *Right-click* refers to a single click using the right mouse button.

If a *keyboard shortcut* is provided, you have to press two or more keys on the keyboard at the same time. The two keys are shown with the key names joined with a plus (+) sign. For example, Ctrl+V requires you to hold down the Ctrl key, press the V key once, then let go of both keys.

Special Elements

This book also includes a few special elements that provide additional information not included in the basic text. These elements are designed to supplement the text to make your learning faster, easier, and more efficient.

TIP A *tip* is a piece of advice—a little trick, actually—that helps you use your computer more effectively or maneuver around problems or limitations.

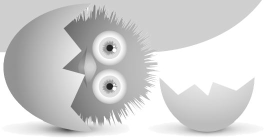
NOTE A *note* is designed to provide information that is generally useful but not specifically necessary for what you're doing at the moment. Some are like extended tips—interesting, but not essential.

CAUTION A *caution* tells you to beware of a potentially dangerous act or situation. In some cases, ignoring a caution could cause you significant problems—so pay attention to them!

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Learn the different types of data.
- Enter data into a cell.
- Quickly copy data using the fill handle.
- Fix numbers stored as text.

3



GETTING DATA ONTO A SHEET

Data entry is one of the most important functions in Excel—and one of the most tedious, especially when the data is repetitive. This chapter shows you tricks for copying down data, fixing entered data, and helping your users enter data correctly by providing a predefined list of entries.

Types of Data You Enter into Excel

It's important to differentiate types of data because Excel treats each differently. You tell Excel what kind of data is in a cell by how you type it into the cell or by how you format the cell. Data in Excel can fall into one of four categories.

- **Numbers**—Numeric data that can be used for calculation purposes.
- **Text**—Alphabetic *or* numeric data that is not used for calculation purposes. Examples of numeric text are phone numbers or Social Security numbers.
- **Dates and Times**—Although dates and times may be considered alphanumeric, there are occasions where you might want to perform calculations on the values, so it is important to identify the data correctly to Excel.
- **Formulas and Functions**—It's important that Excel knows you're entering a formula or it will treat what you enter like text. This topic is covered in detail in Chapter 5, "Using Formulas."

You can't combine types of data in a cell. You can type "5 oranges," but Excel will see that as text. It won't separate the "5" as a number and the "oranges" as text. If you want to deal with the 5 as a number, then you need to enter it into its own cell.

Entering Different Types of Data into a Cell

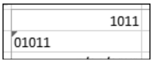
How you intially type data into a cell affects how Excel interprets it. You can save yourself some time if you let Excel format your data, but it will only do so properly if it can understand what you want. The following sections will help you help Excel understand what you want.

Typing Numbers into a Cell

Numbers are the simplest thing to type into a cell. You select a cell, type in a number, press Enter or Tab, and you're done.

Typing Text into a Cell

If you simply select a cell and start typing without any forethought, you might get unexpected results. For example, select a cell and type the ZIP Code for Chester, MA, which is 01011, and press Enter or Tab. The beginning 0 disappears and all you see is 1011, as shown in Figure 3.1.



1011

01011

FIGURE 3.1

Excel tries its best to decipher the data you enter, but sometimes you have to help it out.

The reason this happens is because Excel assumes you are typing in a number, and numbers do not start with zeros. Although ZIP Codes are numeric, they aren't numbers—that is, you don't do any math with them. You need to plan ahead—know that you are entering numeric data that should be treated like text, and you need to let Excel know this. To let Excel know that you are entering a number that should be treated like text, type an apostrophe before you type the number.

Select another cell and this time type '01011 and then press Enter or Tab. You'll notice that the beginning zero remains. But you don't see the starting apostrophe. Also, the ZIP Code is aligned to the left side of the cell instead of the right. This is another default action Excel takes when you enter data—it aligns the values for numbers, dates, and times to the right and text to the left.

NOTE You'll also notice a small green triangle in the upper-left corner of the cell. This is an Error Checking option covered in more detail later in this chapter.

When you type alphabetic characters into a cell, you don't need to worry about a leading apostrophe. Nor do you need to worry about the apostrophe if you are mixing numbers and letters in the cell. But if you do have an apostrophe because it's habit, that's OK because Excel ignores leading apostrophes. However, if you need an apostrophe at the beginning of a cell, then enter two apostrophes—only the second one will show.

Typing Dates and Times into a Cell

Dates and times are another category in which it's important for Excel to know what you are typing in. But in this case, the important thing to remember is to *not* put an apostrophe or other character before your date or time. Excel is very smart about date and time entry, and if you simply type it in, it does a very good job of deciphering your data.

Excel uses the system-configured date format. For example, in the United States, when entering numeric dates, the month comes first. For example, May 14, 2012 is written as 5/14/12.

If you enter only a month and day, Excel will append the current year. But this also means that if you enter a fraction that could be interpreted as a date, such as 3/4, Excel will convert it to a date, 3/4/12. To enter a fraction, you must format the cell as Fraction before entering it.

Dates must always include a day, month, and year, even if not all three will appear when the cell is formatted (see Chapter 4, "Formatting Sheets and Cells," for more details on how formatting affects what you see but not actually what's in the cell).

When entering times, you must enter it using a 24-hour clock, also known as military time or include the a.m. or p.m.

When entering a date, the time is included. But you might not see the part you didn't type in until the cell is formatted to show it.

Controlling the Next Cell Selection

If you're typing a single column list into Excel, you might get frustrated as the next selection moves to the next cell to the right when you want it to go *down* to the next cell. Or if your list has multiple columns, you find the next cell selection going down instead of to the *right*. You don't have to put up with how Excel moves to the next cell selection. You can use several tricks to control what cell you enter data into next.

TIP Although Enter and Tab are commonly used to exit out of a cell, you can also use the navigation keys on the keyboard. Another option is Ctrl+Enter, which exits the cell but keeps it selected, allowing you to continue working with the cell, like when applying a format to it.

Entering Data in a Multicolumn List

Normally, when you press the Enter key as you enter data, the active cell moves directly down the column. If instead you want the selection to move to the right, you use the Tab key.

You can take advantage of these default actions to enter data in a multicolumn list, having Excel smoothly move from column to column to the next row. To make this happen, you must use the Tab key to move from one column to the next. When you get to the end of your data entry row, press Enter. Excel keeps track of which column you started your data entry on and returns you there, making it easier to start the next row of data.

Changing the Next Cell Direction when Pressing Enter

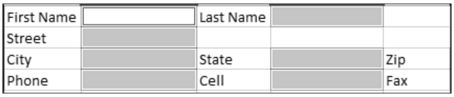
If you don't want to use both Tab and Enter, you can go to File, Options, Advanced, After Pressing Enter, Move Selection, and change the Direction from Down to Right. But Excel will no longer move the selection to the next row when you get to the last column as explained in the previous section—because it doesn't realize you are at the last column.

Preselecting the Data Range

If you have the selection set to move right when you press Enter, you can tell Excel when to go down to the next row by selecting the range into which you are entering data before you begin the data entry. In this way, Excel knows when you've reached the last column and will move down to the next row.

Using a Named Range to Indicate Data Entry Cells

If the data you need to fill in isn't in consecutive columns or rows, such as the form shown in Figure 3.2, you can configure Excel to jump around to the different cells as you press the Enter key. You do this by setting up the data entry cells in a *named range*.



First Name		Last Name		
Street				
City		State		Zip
Phone		Cell		Fax

FIGURE 3.2

You can jump quickly from one highlighted cell to the next by setting those cells to be a named range.

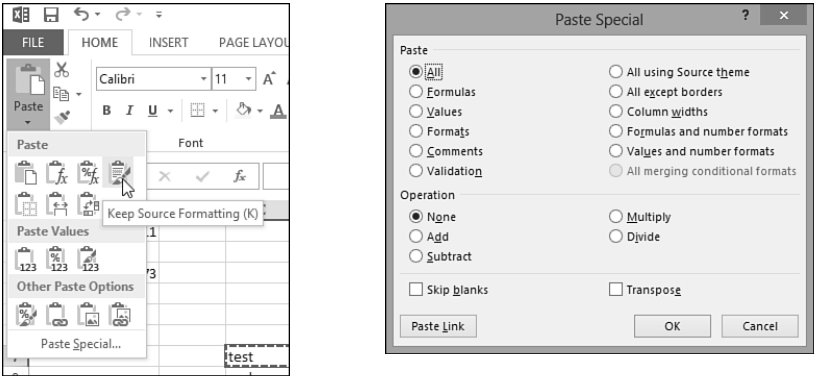
To set up a named range to assist in data entry, follow these steps:

1. Ignore the first data entry field, and select the second field.
2. Hold down the Ctrl key and select each data entry field in the order you want to enter the data.
3. After all the other data entry fields have been selected, while still holding down the Ctrl key, select the first field.
4. Type a name for the selected range in the Name box and press Enter.
5. The next time you need to enter data in the fields, select the named range from the Name box drop-down and the fields will be highlighted, as shown in Figure 3.2. Begin entering data in the first field and press Tab or Enter to automatically go to the next field, repeating until you are done.

Using Copy, Cut, Paste, Paste Special to Enter Data

You can copy or cut data from different sources, such as other workbooks, Word documents, or web pages, and paste the information onto a sheet. Depending on how the data appeared in the original source, you might have to modify it after you paste it in Excel.

One of the ways you can clean up data copied or cut from another source is to use the Paste Special command instead of just Paste. To access this special command, go to Home, Clipboard and click the arrow on the Paste button or right-click on a cell. Various Paste Special options will appear. If you place your cursor over one of the icons, a tip appears, as shown in Figure 3.3. You can access more options by clicking Paste Special at the bottom of the drop-down.



Paste
● All
○ Formulas
○ Values
○ Formats
○ Comments
○ Validation
○ All using Source theme
○ All except borders
○ Column widths
○ Formulas and number formats
○ Values and number formats
○ All merging conditional formats

Operation
● None
○ Add
○ Subtract
○ Multiply
○ Divide

☐ Skip blanks
☐ Transpose

FIGURE 3.3

The Paste Special drop-down provides quick access to the more commonly used options. Click Paste Special at the bottom of the list to access the full dialog box.

Using Paste Special with Ranges

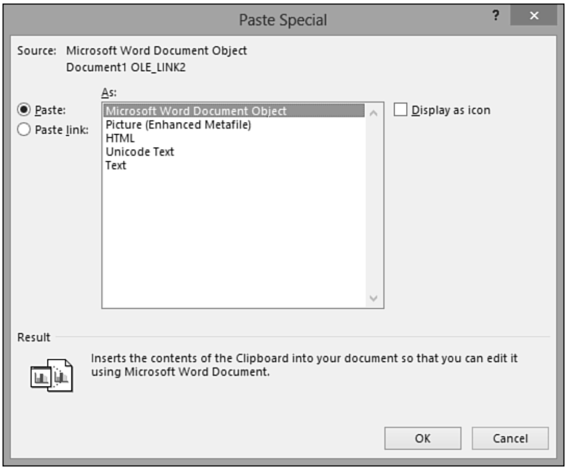
Figure 3.3 shows the Paste Special options available if pasting a range copied or cut from within Excel. The Paste area of the dialog box has different paste options you can choose from. For example, if you select Values, you will only paste the value of what you copied. The formatting and formulas will not be pasted. If you do want the original formatting but also the values, select Values and Number Formats. If you want a combination of values and comments, then you need to use Paste Special twice, selecting Values once and then Comments the second time.

The Operation area allows you to perform simple math on the selected range. For example, if you have a list of prices that need to go up by 1.5%, type .015 in a cell and copy the cell. Select your range of prices and bring up the Paste Special dialog box. From the dialog box, select Values (so you don't lose any formatting you have on your prices) from the Paste area and Multiply from the Operation area. Click OK. Your prices will have increased by 1.5%.

Using Paste Special with Text

If you copy or cut data within a cell (versus the entire cell) or from a non-Excel source, such as a Word document or web page, the Paste Special options are limited. Depending on the source, text, or graphic, you may get the options shown in Figure 3.4.

NOTE The options available depend on the original source. For example, if you copied text from within a cell (versus the entire cell), you would only see pasting options for Unicode Text and Text. You wouldn't have the option of pasting the text as a Word document object because it didn't originate from Word.



Source: Microsoft Word Document Object
Document1 OLE_LINK2

As:

● Paste:
○ Paste link:

- Microsoft Word Document Object
- Picture (Enhanced Metafile)
- HTML
- Unicode Text
- Text

☐ Display as icon

Result

Inserts the contents of the Clipboard into your document so that you can edit it using Microsoft Word Document.

FIGURE 3.4

When doing a Paste Special with text, there are fewer options available.

As you select an option in the As list box, an explanation appears in the Result area at the bottom of the dialog box. If you select the Paste Link option to the left of the list, you'll also be able to link the pasted data to its original source.

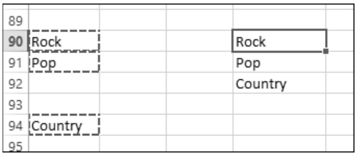
If available, the Display as Icon option lets you paste an icon instead of the text. Double-clicking on the icon opens the text in an editing application (for example, if pasting text from a Word document, you can edit the text in Word).

Using Paste Special with Images and Charts

When pasting images and charts, the dialog box is similar to that shown in Figure 3.4, but the As list box options differ, listing various image types. The different types can affect image resolution and workbook size.

Using Paste to Merge a Noncontiguous Selection in a Row or Column

If you try to copy/paste a noncontiguous selection from different rows and columns, an error message appears. But if the selection is in the same row or column, Excel allows you to copy and paste the data. When the data is pasted, though, it is no longer separated by other cells, as shown in Figure 3.5. You can use this method to create a table of specific values copied from another table.



89					
90	Rock			Rock	
91	Pop			Pop	
92				Country	
93					
94	Country				
95					

FIGURE 3.5

Data from rows 90, 91, and 94 was copied from the table on the left to create the list on the right using the method explained in this section.

Using Text to Columns to Separate Data in a Single Column

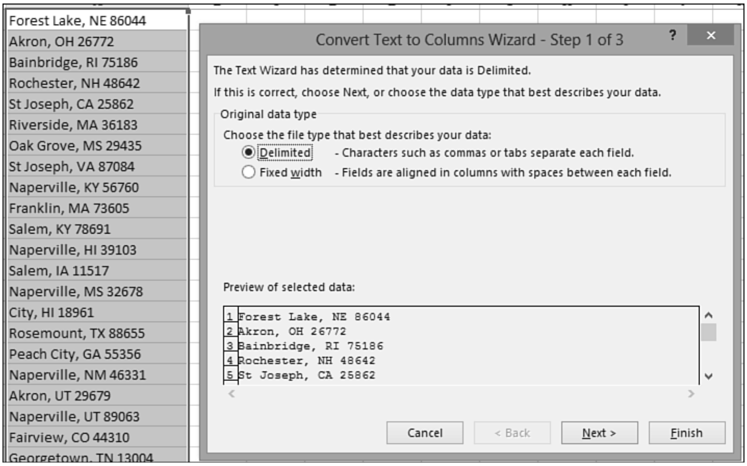
Data, Data Tools, Text to Columns can be used to separate data in a single column into multiple columns, such as if you have full names in one column and need a column with first names and a column with last names. When you select the command, a wizard dialog box opens to help you through the process. In step 1 of the wizard, select whether the text is Delimited or Fixed Width (see the next sections for definitions of Delimited and Fixed Width). In step 2, you provide more details on how you want the text separated. In step 3, you tell Excel the basic formatting to apply to each column.

If you have data in the columns to the right of the column you are separating, Excel overwrites the data. Be sure to insert enough blank columns to not overwrite your existing data before beginning Text to Columns. See the section "Inserting an Entire Row & Column" in chapter 2, "Working with Workbooks, Sheets, Rows, Columns, and Cells," for instructions on how to insert columns.

Working with Delimited Text

Delimited text is text that has some character, such as a comma, tab, or space, separating each group of words that you want placed into its own column. To separate delimited text into multiple columns, follow these steps:

1. Highlight the range of text to be separated.
2. Go to Data, Data Tools, Text to Columns. The Convert Text to Columns Wizard opens.
3. Select Delimited from step 1 of the wizard, as shown in Figure 3.6, and click Next.



Forest Lake, NE 86044
Akron, OH 26772
Bainbridge, RI 75186
Rochester, NH 48642
St Joseph, CA 25862
Riverside, MA 36183
Oak Grove, MS 29435
St Joseph, VA 87084
Naperville, KY 56760
Franklin, MA 73605
Salem, KY 78691
Naperville, HI 39103
Salem, IA 11517
Naperville, MS 32678
City, HI 18961
Rosemount, TX 88655
Peach City, GA 55356
Naperville, NM 46331
Akron, UT 29679
Naperville, UT 89063
Fairview, CO 44310
Georgetown, TN 13004

The Text Wizard has determined that your data is Delimited.

If this is correct, choose Next, or choose the data type that best describes your data.

Original data type

Choose the file type that best describes your data:

● Delimited - Characters such as commas or tabs separate each field.

○ Fixed width - Fields are aligned in columns with spaces between each field.

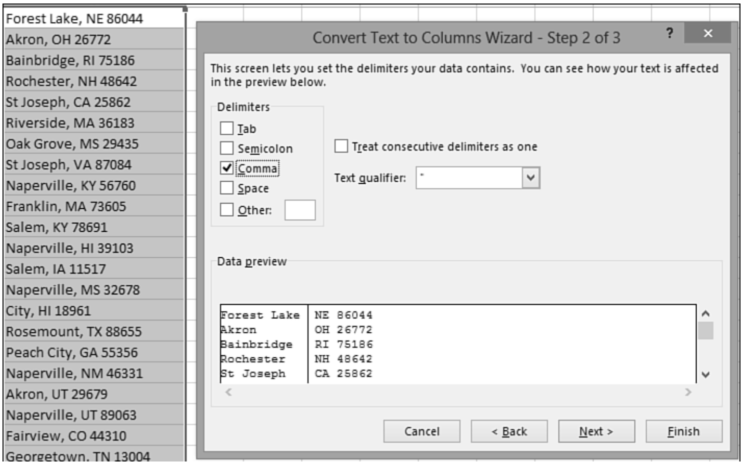
Preview of selected data:

```
1 Forest Lake, NE 86044
2 Akron, OH 26772
3 Bainbridge, RI 75186
4 Rochester, NH 48642
5 St Joseph, CA 25862
```

FIGURE 3.6

Select the Delimited option to separate text joined by delimiters, such as commas, spaces, or tabs.

4. Select one or more delimiters used by the grouped text, as in Figure 3.7, and click Next.



Forest Lake, NE 86044
Akron, OH 26772
Bainbridge, RI 75186
Rochester, NH 48642
St Joseph, CA 25862
Riverside, MA 36183
Oak Grove, MS 29435
St Joseph, VA 87084
Naperville, KY 56760
Franklin, MA 73605
Salem, KY 78691
Naperville, HI 39103
Salem, IA 11517
Naperville, MS 32678
City, HI 18961
Rosemount, TX 88655
Peach City, GA 55356
Naperville, NM 46331
Akron, UT 29679
Naperville, UT 89063
Fairview, CO 44310
Georgetown, TN 13004

Convert Text to Columns Wizard - Step 2 of 3

This screen lets you set the delimiters your data contains. You can see how your text is affected in the preview below.

Delimiters
☐ Tab
☐ Semicolon
☑ Comma
☐ Space
☐ Other:

☐ Treat consecutive delimiters as one

Text qualifier: "

Data preview

```
Forest Lake  NE 86044
Akron        OH 26772
Bainbridge   RI 75186
Rochester    NH 48642
St Joseph    CA 25862
```

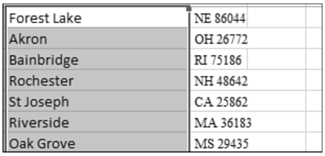
FIGURE 3.7

Select the Delimited option to use the comma as a delimiter between the city, state, and ZIP Code.

If you need more than one delimiter but one of the delimiters is used normally in the text, such as the space between city names and the space between a state and ZIP Code (Sioux Falls, SD 57057), consider running Text to Columns twice: once to separate the city (Sioux Falls) from the state ZIP Code (SD 57057) and again to separate the state and ZIP Code.

5. For each column of data, select the data format. For example, if you have a column of ZIP Codes, you need to set the format as Text so any leading zeros are not lost. But be warned—setting a column to Text prevents Excel from properly identifying formulas entered into that column.

6. Click Finish. The text is separated, as shown in Figure 3.8.



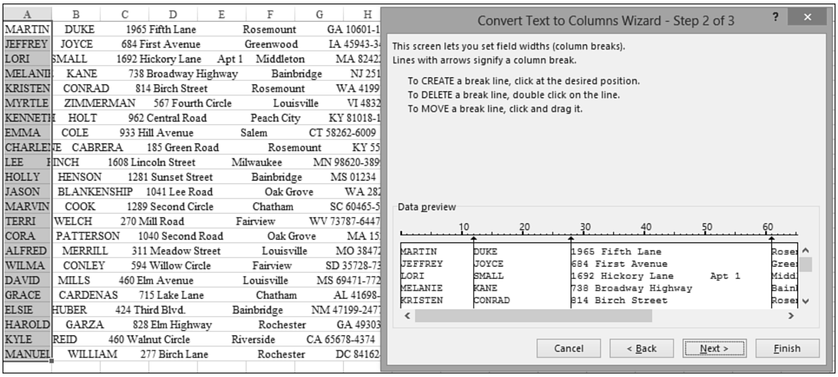
Forest Lake	NE 86044
Akron	OH 26772
Bainbridge	RI 75186
Rochester	NH 48642
St Joseph	CA 25862
Riverside	MA 36183
Oak Grove	MS 29435

FIGURE 3.8

Using Text to Columns with a comma delimiter separated the city from the state and ZIP Code. Run the wizard again on the state ZIP Code column with a space as a delimiter to split up that data.

Working with Fixed-Width Text

Fixed-width text describes text where each group is a set number of characters. You can draw a line down all the records to separate all the groups, as shown in Figure 3.9. If your text doesn't look like it's fixed width, try changing the font to a fixed-width font, such as Courier. It's possible that it's fixed-width text in disguise.



```
MARTIN    DUKE        1965 Fifth Lane              Rosemount     GA 10601-1
JEFFREY   JOYCE       684 First Avenue             Greenwood     IA 45943-3
LORI      SMALL       1692 Hickory Lane     Apt 1  Middleton     MA 8242
MELANIE   KANE        738 Broadway Highway         Bainbridge    NJ 251
KRISTEN   CONRAD      814 Birch Street             Rosemount     WA 4199
MYRTLE    ZIMMERMAN   567 Fourth Circle            Louisville    VI 4832
KENNETH   HOLT        962 Central Road             Peach City    KY 81018-1
EMMA      COLE        933 Hill Avenue              Salem         CT 58262-6009
CHARLENE  CABRERA     185 Green Road               Rosemount     KY 55
LEE       FINCH       1608 Lincoln Street          Milwaukee     MN 98620-389
HOLLY     HENSON      1281 Sunset Street           Bainbridge    MS 01234
JASON     BLANKENSHIP 1041 Lee Road                Oak Grove     WA 28
MARVIN    COOK        1289 Second Circle           Chatham       SC 60465-5
TERRI     WELCH       270 Mill Road                Fairview      WV 73787-6447
CORA      PATTERSON   1040 Second Road             Oak Grove     MA 15
ALFRED    MERRILL     311 Meadow Street            Louisville    MO 3847
WILMA     CONLEY      594 Willow Circle            Fairview      SD 35728-73
DAVID     MILLS       460 Elm Avenue               Louisville    MS 69471-772
GRACE     CARDENAS    715 Lake Lane                Chatham       AL 41698-
ELSIE     HUBER       424 Third Blvd.              Bainbridge    NM 47199-247
HAROLD    GARZA       828 Elm Highway              Rochester     GA 4930
KYLE      REID        460 Walnut Circle            Riverside     CA 65678-4374
MANUEL    WILLIAM     277 Birch Lane               Rochester     DC 8416
```

Convert Text to Columns Wizard - Step 2 of 3

This screen lets you set field widths (column breaks).
Lines with arrows signify a column break.

To CREATE a break line, click at the desired position.
To DELETE a break line, double click on the line.
To MOVE a break line, click and drag it.

Data preview

```
MARTIN      DUKE            1965 Fifth Lane                  Rose
JEFFREY     JOYCE           684 First Avenue                 Gree
LORI        SMALL           1692 Hickory Lane      Apt 1     Midd
MELANIE     KANE            738 Broadway Highway             Bain
KRISTEN     CONRAD          814 Birch Street                 Rose
```

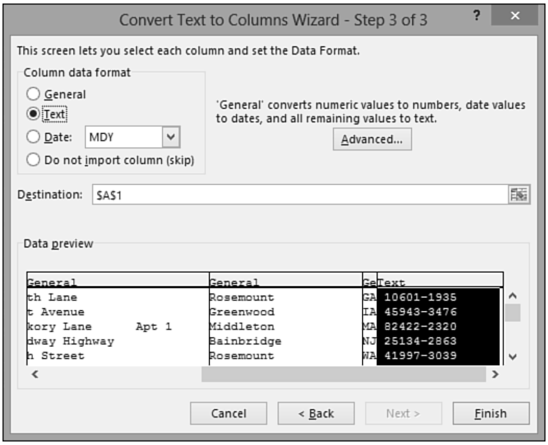
FIGURE 3.9

Use the Fixed Width option when each group in the data has a fixed number of characters.

To separate fixed-width text into multiple columns, follow these steps:

1. Highlight the range of cells that includes text to be separated.
2. Go to Data, Text to Columns.
3. Select Fixed Width from step 1 of the wizard and click Next.
4. Excel will guess at where the column breaks should go, as shown in Figure 3.9. You can move a break by clicking and dragging it to where you want it, insert a new break by clicking where it should be, or remove a break by double-clicking it. Click Next.

   Don't worry about leading spaces—Excel will remove them for you.
5. For each column of data, select the data format. For example, if you have a column of ZIP Codes, you need to set the format as Text so any leading zeros are not lost, as shown in Figure 3.10. But be warned—setting a column to Text prevents Excel from properly identifying formulas entered into that column.
6. Click Finish.



Convert Text to Columns Wizard - Step 3 of 3

This screen lets you select each column and set the Data Format.

Column data format

○ General

● Text

○ Date: MDY

○ Do not import column (skip)

'General' converts numeric values to numbers, date values to dates, and all remaining values to text.

Destination: $A$1

Data preview

General	General	Ge	Text
th Lane	Rosemount	GA	10601-1935
t Avenue	Greenwood	IA	45943-3476
kory Lane Apt 1	Middleton	MA	82422-2320
dway Highway	Bainbridge	NJ	25134-2863
h Street	Rosemount	WA	41997-3039

FIGURE 3.10

In step 3 of the wizard, set the format of each column. If you have numeric text, such as ZIP Codes, make sure you configure the wizard to treat the column as text so you don't lose any leading zeros.

Inserting Symbols and Equations into a Cell

Sometimes you need more than the symbols available on the keyboard, such as a copyright or registered trademark symbol. Some people have the Alt+number combination memorized, but if you're like me, you don't. No worries, though—if you go to the Insert tab, the Symbols group has commands for inserting equations and symbols.

First, select the cell where you want the symbol to appear. Next, select the Symbol option, and a window appears where you can search for the symbol you want. Once you find it, double-click on it, or click on it once and then click the Insert button. The symbol appears in the cell. The dialog box remains open in case you want to enter more symbols.

TIP If the symbol you need is after another word, start typing your text and when you get to the point where the symbol needs to go, don't press Enter or Tab to get out of the cell. Instead, leave the cursor where it is and click the symbol command. When you insert your symbol, it will appear at the cursor's location.

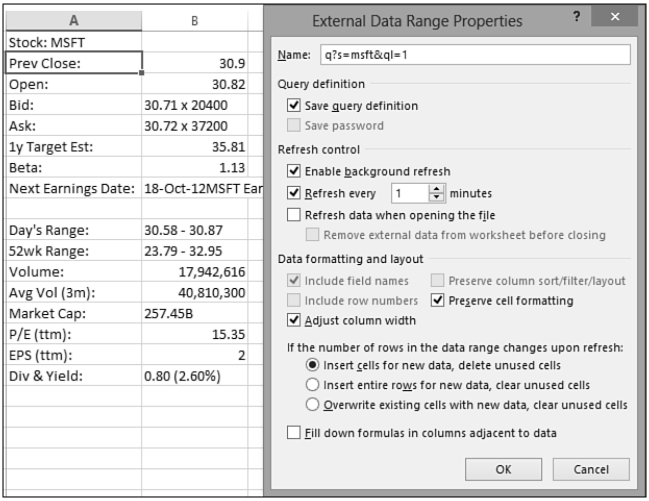
An **equation** isn't the same as a formula. The formulas entered in Excel are meant to do calculations on the sheet. An equation doesn't perform a calculation. Instead, it shows how a calculation is performed, using variables instead of numbers, like E=mc^2. If you click on the down arrow of the Equation button, a list of popular equations appears. If you don't see the one you want, click the Equation button itself. A frame with Type Equation Here will appear on your sheet. Also, two new ribbons will appear—Drawing Tools and Equation Tools. Use the commands on the Equation Tools, Design tab to create your equation. Use the commands on the Drawing Tools, Format tab to format the frame in which the equation appears. When you're done with the equation, just click elsewhere on the sheet.

Using Web Queries to Get Data onto a Sheet

A web query allows you to link a range to text from a web page. As the web page updates, the data on the sheet also updates. To retrieve data from a web page, follow these steps:

1. Go to Data, Get External Data, From Web. The New Web Query dialog box opens.
2. From the Address field at the top, navigate to the desired web page and it will load. If Excel is able to retrieve data from the web page, a yellow box with a black arrow appears near the data.
3. Place your cursor over the box and a frame appears around the data that box is tied to. Not all areas of a web page are retrievable. If you find a box that has the data you want, click the box and it turns into a green box with a black check mark.
4. Select as many sections as you need, then click the Import button at the bottom of the dialog box.
5. From the Import Data dialog box, select the cell where you want the data to appear. If you don't like the current cell address shown, you can click on the sheet and the dialog box updates with a new sheet address. Click OK.
6. After a few seconds, depending on your Internet connection, the data appears on the sheet.

By default, the data refreshes every 60 minutes. You can refresh manually by clicking Data, Connections, and from the Refresh All drop-down, select Refresh. Or you can configure the automatic refresh time by going to Data, Connections, Properties or right-clicking the data and selecting Data Range Properties. Either way opens the External Data Range Properties dialog box where you can set the refresh time by selecting Refresh Every x Minutes and changing the value in the field, as shown in Figure 3.11.



A	B
Stock: MSFT	
Prev Close:	30.9
Open:	30.82
Bid:	30.71 x 20400
Ask:	30.72 x 37200
1y Target Est:	35.81
Beta:	1.13
Next Earnings Date:	18-Oct-12MSFT Ear
Day's Range:	30.58 - 30.87
52wk Range:	23.79 - 32.95
Volume:	17,942,616
Avg Vol (3m):	40,810,300
Market Cap:	257.45B
P/E (ttm):	15.35
EPS (ttm):	2
Div & Yield:	0.80 (2.60%)

External Data Range Properties

Name: q?s=msft&ql=1

Query definition

☑ Save query definition

☐ Save password

Refresh control

☑ Enable background refresh

☑ Refresh every 1 minutes

☐ Refresh data when opening the file

☐ Remove external data from worksheet before closing

Data formatting and layout

☑ Include field names ☐ Preserve column sort/filter/layout

☐ Include row numbers ☑ Preserve cell formatting

☑ Adjust column width

If the number of rows in the data range changes upon refresh:

● Insert cells for new data, delete unused cells

○ Insert entire rows for new data, clear unused cells

○ Overwrite existing cells with new data, clear unused cells

☐ Fill down formulas in columns adjacent to data

FIGURE 3.11

Use a web query to return an automatically updating summary of stock information for MSFT.

Using Series to Quickly Fill a Range

The fill handle, shown in Figure 3.12, can speed up data entry by completing a series for you. Excel comes with several preconfigured series, such as months, days of the week, and quarters. You can also add your own series, as described in the "Creating Your Own Series" section later in this chapter.

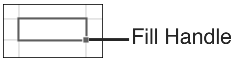


FIGURE 3.12

Use the fill handle to quickly fill in a series.

Extending a Series Containing Text

To extend a series containing text, enter the text you want the series to start with and press Ctrl+Enter to exit the cell, but keep it selected. Place your cursor over the lower-right corner of the cell until a black cross appears. Click the mouse button and as you hold it down, drag the fill handle.

You don't need to start at the beginning of the series. You can start anywhere in the series and Excel will continue it, starting over if you drag the handle long enough. For example, if you begin a series in A1 with Sunday and drag the fill handle to A8, Sunday will appear again, repeating the series.

CAUTION If the text series contains a numerical value, Excel instead copies the text and extends the numerical portion. For example, if you try to extend Monday 1, you get Monday 2, not Tuesday 2. But if you type in Jan 1 and extend that text, Excel extends the numerical portion until Jan 31, then switches to Feb 1. It does this because dates are actually numbers. Seeing the date as Jan 1 is a matter of formatting.

Extending a Numerical Series

If you try to fill numerical series based off of a single cell entry, Excel just copies the value instead of filling the series. There are four ways to get around this:

- Enter at least the first two values of the series before dragging the fill handle.
- Hold down the Ctrl key while dragging the fill handle.
- If there is a blank column to the left or right of the numerical column, include that column in your selection when dragging the fill handle down. For example, if you enter 1 in A1 then select A1:B1 (B1 is blank); when you drag the fill handle down, the series in column A is filled down.
- Hold the right mouse button down while dragging the fill handle and select Fill Series from the context menu that appears when you release the mouse button.

CAUTION If you hold the Ctrl key while trying to extend a text series, Excel copies the values instead of filling in the series.

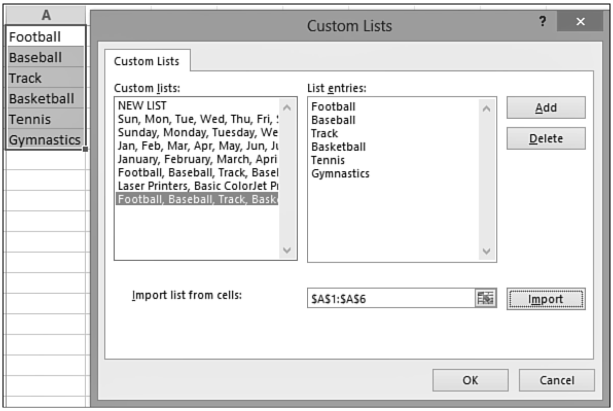
Creating Your Own Series

You can teach Excel the lists that are important to you so that you can take advantage of the series capabilities in Excel. You can take almost any list of items on a sheet and create a custom list for use in filling or sorting.

To create a custom list, follow these steps:

1. Create your list on the sheet and select the range.
2. Go to File, Options, Advanced, General, Edit Custom Lists.

3. The range you selected is already in the Import List from Cells field at the bottom of the Custom Lists dialog box, so click Import.
4. The list is added to both the Custom Lists and List Entries list boxes, as shown in Figure 3.13. The next time you type an item from your list and drag the fill handle, Excel fills in the rest of the series for you.



Football
Baseball
Track
Basketball
Tennis
Gymnastics

Custom lists:
NEW LIST
Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, S
Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, We
Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Ju
January, February, March, Apri
Football, Baseball, Track, Basel
Laser Printers, Basic ColorJet Pr
Football, Baseball, Track, Bask

List entries:
Football
Baseball
Track
Basketball
Tennis
Gymnastics

Import list from cells: $A$1:$A$6

FIGURE 3.13

Create a custom list for use in filling in a series.

Editing Data

Now that you know how to enter data into a blank cell—how do you edit data already in a cell? If you select a cell and start typing, you'll overwrite what was originally in the cell. You have three methods to choose from:

- **Double-click**—When you place your cursor over a cell and it's a big white cross, double-click and the cursor appears wherever you double-clicked at, so you can go directly to a word or between numbers.
- **Formula bar**—Select the cell and then click where you want to edit in the formula bar.
- **F2**—Select the cell and press F2. The cursor appears at the right end of data in the cell.

When you're done making changes, press Enter or whatever method you prefer to exit out of the cell and save your changes. If you change your mind about the changes while you're still in the cell, press Esc and you'll exit the cell without saving your changes.

Editing Multiple Sheets at One Time

You can change the exact same range on multiple sheets at the same time by grouping the sheets and making the change to one of the sheets. For example, you can enter the word *Sales* in cell A1 of all the selected sheets. Or you can apply a bold format to cell C2 in a group of sheets.

To make a change to multiple sheets by just changing one sheet, follow these steps:

1. Go to one of the sheets you need to change.
2. While holding down the Ctrl key, select the tabs of the other sheets you want to make the same change to. This groups the sheets together.
3. Make the changes to the active sheet.
4. To ungroup the sheets, select another sheet, or right-click on a sheet tab and select Ungroup Sheets.

Clearing the Contents of a Cell

To clear the data from a range, leaving the cells otherwise intact, such as the formatting, select the range and press the Delete key or right-click over the selection and choose Clear Contents.

CAUTION You may be tempted to use the spacebar to clear a cell. DON'T! While you can't see the space in the cell, Excel can. That space can throw off Excel's functions because to Excel, that space is a character.

Clearing an Entire Sheet

To clear a sheet of all data, but leave any formatting intact, click the intersection between the headers, shown in Figure 3.14, and press Delete or right-click and choose Clear Contents.

To clear a sheet of all data and formatting, select the entire sheet using the intersection between the headers, right-click and select Delete, or go to Home, Cells, Delete.

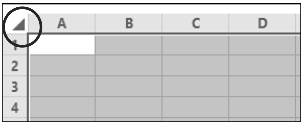


FIGURE 3.14

Clicking the intersection of the row and column headers selects all the cells on the sheet.

Working with Tables

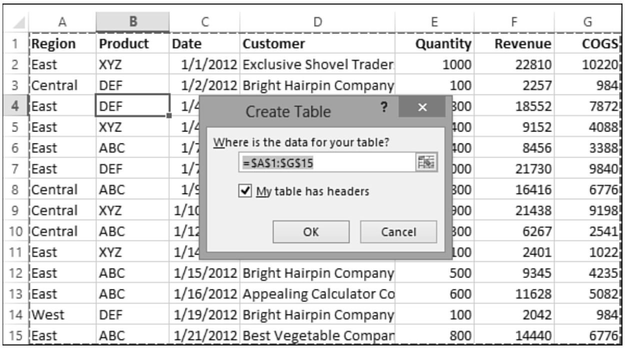
When you enter information in multiple columns on a sheet, it is often referred to as a table, as in a table of data. But Excel also has a special term for a setting you can apply to a data table, imbuing it with special abilities and rules. This term is also *Table*. When your data table is defined as a Table, additional functionality in Excel is made available. For example, with Excel's intelligent Tables, the following additional functionality becomes available:

- AutoFilter drop-downs, shown in Figure 3.16, are automatically added to the headings.
- You can apply predesigned formats, such as banded rows or borders.
- You can remove duplicates based on the values in one or more columns.
- You can toggle the total row on and off.
- Adding new rows or columns automatically extends the table.
- You can take advantage of automatically created range names.

NOTE Throughout this book, when I am referring to this special kind of Table, the T will be capitalized. A normal table that does not have the additional functionality, will have a lowercase t.

Defining a Table

For your data to convert to a Table, it must be set up properly. This means that, except for the headings row (row 1 in Figure 3.15), each row must be one complete record of the data set—for example, a customer or inventory item—as shown in Figure 3.15. Column headers are not required, but if they are included, they must be at the top of the data. If your data does not include headers, Excel inserts some for you.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	**Region**	**Product**	**Date**	**Customer**	**Quantity**	**Revenue**	**COGS**
2	East	XYZ	1/1/2012	Exclusive Shovel Trader	1000	22810	10220
3	Central	DEF	1/2/2012	Bright Hairpin Company	100	2257	984
4	East	DEF	1/4		300	18552	7872
5	East	XYZ	1/4		400	9152	4088
6	East	ABC	1/7		400	8456	3388
7	East	DEF	1/7		00	21730	9840
8	Central	ABC	1/9		300	16416	6776
9	Central	XYZ	1/10		00	21438	9198
10	Central	ABC	1/12		300	6267	2541
11	East	XYZ	1/14		100	2401	1022
12	East	ABC	1/15/2012	Bright Hairpin Company	500	9345	4235
13	East	ABC	1/16/2012	Appealing Calculator Co	600	11628	5082
14	West	DEF	1/19/2012	Bright Hairpin Company	100	2042	984
15	East	ABC	1/21/2012	Best Vegetable Compan	800	14440	6776

Create Table

Where is the data for your table?

=$A$1:$G$15

☑ My table has headers

FIGURE 3.15

Set up your data properly to define it as a Table. Make sure the Create Table dialog box includes your entire data set and properly reflects the existence of headers.

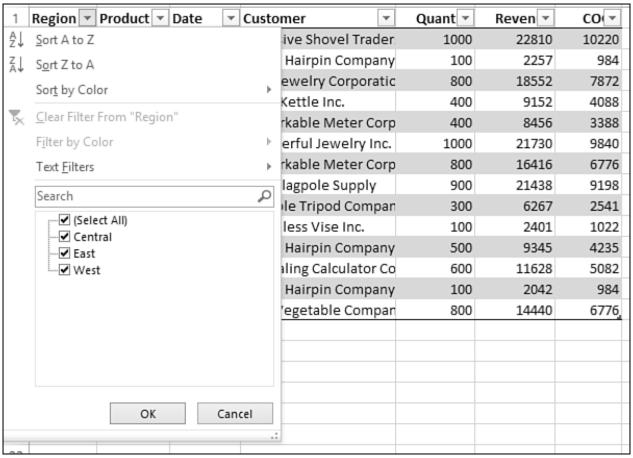
After your data is set up properly, you can define the Table with one of the following methods. Select a cell in the data set and then do the following:

1. Go to Insert, Tables, Table.
2. Go to Home, Styles, Format as Table, and select a style to apply to the data.
3. Press Ctrl+T.
4. Press Ctrl+L.

When you use any one of the preceding methods, Excel determines the range of your data by looking for a completely empty row and column. The Create Table dialog box opens, showing the range Excel has defined. You can accept this range or modify it as needed. To modify it, you can click on the sheet and, holding down the mouse button, drag to create a box enveloping your entire data set. You can also modify it by editing the cell addresses in the Create Table dialog box.

If Excel was able to identify headers, the My Table Has Headers dialog box will be selected, so make sure that Excel has correctly identified whether your data has headers and click OK. If there were no headers, make sure the box is unselected and click OK. Your table will be formatted with AutoFilter drop-downs in the headers, as shown in Figure 3.16.

NOTE With the creation of the Table, a new tab Table Tools, Design has appeared in the ribbon. Whenever you select a cell in a Table, this tab appears. It contains functionality and options specific to Tables.



1
Region
Product
Date
Sort A to Z
Sort Z to A
Sort by Color
Clear Filter From "Region"
Filter by Color
Text Filters
Search
☑ (Select All)
☑ Central
☑ East
☑ West
OK
Cancel

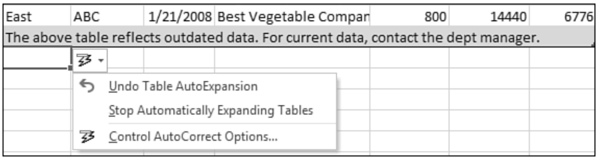
Customer	Quant	Reven	CO
ive Shovel Trader	1000	22810	10220
Hairpin Company	100	2257	984
ewelry Corporatic	800	18552	7872
Kettle Inc.	400	9152	4088
rkable Meter Corp	400	8456	3388
erful Jewelry Inc.	1000	21730	9840
rkable Meter Corp	800	16416	6776
lagpole Supply	900	21438	9198
le Tripod Compan	300	6267	2541
less Vise Inc.	100	2401	1022
Hairpin Company	500	9345	4235
aling Calculator Co	600	11628	5082
Hairpin Company	100	2042	984
'egetable Compan	800	14440	6776

FIGURE 3.16

A Table automatically has AutoFilter drop-downs in the headers.

Expanding a Table

After your data is defined as a Table, the Table automatically expands as you add adjacent rows and columns. If you don't want the new entry to be part of the Table, you can tell Excel by clicking the lightning bolt icon that appears and then selecting either Undo Table AutoExpansion or Stop Automatically Expanding Tables, as shown in Figure 3.17.



East	ABC	1/21/2008	Best Vegetable Compan	800	14440	6776

The above table reflects outdated data. For current data, contact the dept manager.

Undo Table AutoExpansion
Stop Automatically Expanding Tables
Control AutoCorrect Options...

FIGURE 3.17

If you don't want a new row or column to be part of the Table, instruct Excel to undo or stop the autoexpansion.

CAUTION When adding new rows to the bottom of a Table, make sure the total row is turned off; otherwise, Excel cannot identify the new row as belonging with the existing data. The exception is if you tab from the last data row, Excel inserts a new row and moves the total row down.

To manually resize a Table, click and drag the angle bracket icon in the lower-right corner of the Table. You can also select a cell in the Table and go to Table Tools, Design, Properties, Resize Table. Specify the new range in the Resize Table dialog box that opens.

Adding a Total Row to a Table

When you go to Table Tools, Design, Table Style Options, Total Row, Excel adds a total row to the bottom of the active Table. By default, Excel adds the word Total to the first column of the Table and sums the data in the rightmost column, as shown in Figure 3.18. If the rightmost column contains text, Excel returns a count instead of a sum.

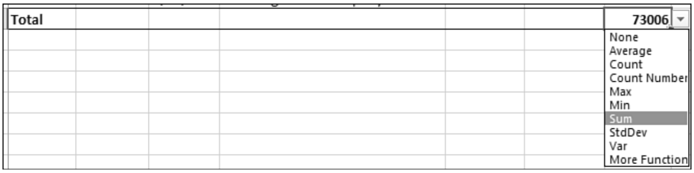


FIGURE 3.18

Selecting the Total Row check box adds a total row to the bottom of the Table. Use the drop-downs in each cell in this row to add or change the function used to total the data in the above column.

Each cell in the total row has a drop-down of functions that can be used to calculate the data above it. For example, instead of the sum, you can calculate the average, max, min, and more. Just make a selection from the drop-down and Excel inserts the formula in the cell.

TIP The functions listed in the drop-down are calculated using variations of the SUBTOTAL function. For more information on this function, see Chapter 10, "Subtotals and Grouping."

Fixing Numbers Stored as Text

Sometimes when you import data or receive data from another source, the numbers might be converted to text. When you try to sum them, nothing works. That is because Excel will not sum numbers stored as text.

When numbers in a sheet are being stored as text, Excel lets you know by placing a green triangle in the cell (if File, Options, Formulas, Error Checking, Enable

Background Error Checking is selected). When you select the cell and click the warning sign that appears, Excel informs you that the number is being stored as text, as shown in Figure 3.19. It then gives you options for handling the number, such as Convert to Number or Ignore Error.

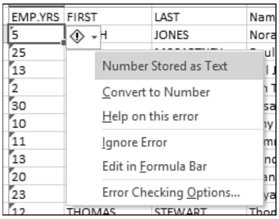

EMP.YRS
FIRST
LAST
Nam
5
JONES
25
13
2
30
10
11
13
20
23
THOMAS
STEWART
Number Stored as Text
Convert to Number
Help on this error
Ignore Error
Edit in Formula Bar
Error Checking Options...

FIGURE 3.19

With Background Error Checking enabled, Excel informs you if a number is being stored as text.

If you have a worksheet with thousands of cells, it will take a long time to convert them all to numbers. Three options for doing a larger-scale conversion are covered in the next sections.

Using Convert to Number on a Range

One option for converting multiple cells into numbers is to use the information drop-down that Excel has provided:

1. Select the range consisting of all the cells you need to convert (making sure that the first cell in the range needs to be converted). The range can include text and other numerical values, as long as it doesn't include cells you do not want to be converted to numbers.
2. Click the warning symbol in the first cell.
3. From the drop-down, select Convert to Number, and all cells in the selected range will be modified, turning the numbers to true numbers.

Using Paste Special to Force a Number

If you have the Background Error Checking disabled and don't see the green warning triangle, try this method for converting cells to numbers:

1. Enter a **1** in a blank cell and copy it.
2. Select the cells containing the numbers, right-click and select Paste Special, Paste Special.
3. From the dialog box that opens, select Multiply, and click OK.

The act of multiplying the values by 1 forces the contents of the cells to become their numerical values.

TIP You can also copy a blank cell and use the Add option instead of Multiply.

Using Text to Columns to Convert Text to Numbers

In step 3 of the Text to Columns wizard, you select the data type of a column. You can use this functionality to also correct numbers being stored as text. To convert a column of numbers stored as text to just numbers, follow these steps:

1. Highlight the range of text to be converted.
2. Go to Data, Text to Columns.
3. Click Finish. The numbers are no longer considered numbers stored as text.

NOTE For more information on the Text to Columns wizard, refer to the section "Working with Delimited Text" earlier in this chapter.

Spellchecking Your Sheet

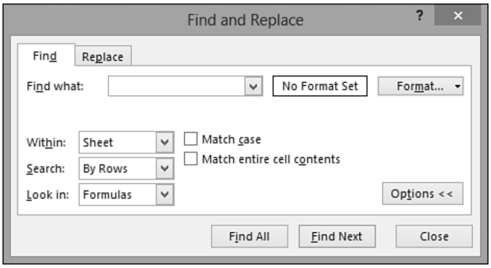
Just like Word, Excel has a spellchecker included. To access it, go to Review, Proofing, Spelling. It reviews all text entries on the sheet. You can configure the options, such as Ignore Words in Uppercase, by clicking the Options button in the Spelling dialog box, or by going to File, Options, Proofing.

If you click the AutoCorrect Options button in the Excel Options dialog box, the AutoCorrect dialog box opens, allowing you to configure how you want the AutoCorrect to work, including automatically replacing text as you type. For example, if you like to abbreviate department as dept. but need it spelled out, you can configure that from this dialog box. Type dept. in the Replace field and department in the With field and click Add. Next time you type dept. in Excel, after you press the spacebar, it will be corrected to department.

Finding Data on Your Sheet

If you press Ctrl+F or go to Home, Editing, Find & Select and select Find from the drop-down, the Find and Replace dialog box opens. Through this dialog box, you can find data anywhere on the sheet or in the workbook. Click on the Replace tab and you can quickly replace the found data.

Click the Options button and the Find dialog box opens up, showing several options to aid in your search, as shown in Figure 3.20:



Find what:

Within: Sheet

Search: By Rows

Look in: Formulas

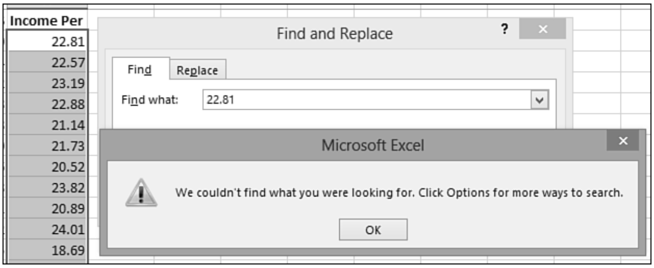
☐ Match case

☐ Match entire cell contents

FIGURE 3.20

Click the Options button to open up the full search potential of the Find and Replace dialog box.

- **Within**—You can search just the active Sheet or the entire Workbook. You can also narrow Excel's search by selecting the range before bringing up the dialog box.
- **Search**—To have the search go down all the rows of one column before going on to the next column, set this to By Rows. To have the search go across all columns in a row before going on to the next row, select By Columns.
- **Look In**—By default, Excel looks in Formulas, that is, the true value of the data in a cell. When you've applied formulas or formatting to a sheet, what you see in a cell might not be what is actually in the cell. Look at Figure 3.21. The value 22.81 is obviously at the top of the column, but a search in Excel does not find it because the value in the cell was calculated. To search for the value, change the drop-down to Values. You can also choose to search in Comments.



Income Per
22.81
22.57
23.19
22.88
21.14
21.73
20.52
23.82
20.89
24.01
18.69

Find what: 22.81

We couldn't find what you were looking for. Click Options for more ways to search.

FIGURE 3.21

If Excel can't find the number you know is on the sheet, check your settings. If set to Formulas, change to Values and vice versa.

CAUTION The settings in the Find and Replace dialog box are stored throughout an Excel session. This means that if you change them in the morning for a search and then try a search again later in the afternoon without having closed Excel at all during the day, the settings changes you've made are still active, even if you're searching a different workbook.

Performing a Wildcard Search

What if you don't know the exact text you're looking for? For example, you're doing a search for Jon Smith but don't know if Jon was entered correctly. To do a wildcard search, you can use an asterisk (*) to tell Excel there might or might not be additional characters between the n, like this: Jo*n Smith. In this case, Excel would return John Smith, Jon Smith, and Jonathan Smith.

If you have a list of part numbers and can remember all but one of the characters, you can use a question mark (?) to replace the unknown character. Use a ? for each unknown. So if you aren't sure of the first and last characters, do this: ?482?. This tells Excel that there is definitely one character in each of those positions.

If you need to include a * or ? as part of your search—not as a wildcard, but as actually part of the search text, then precede the symbol with a tilde (~). Doing this tells Excel that the * or ? is not a wildcard character but an actual text character to use in the search.

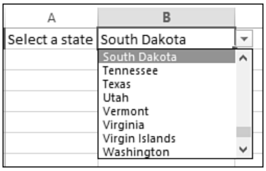
Using Data Validation to Limit Data Entry in a Cell

Data validation, found under Data, Data Tools, Data Validation, allows you to limit what a user can type in a cell. For example, you can limit users to whole numbers, dates, a list of selections, or a specific range of values. Custom input and error messages can be configured to guide the user entry.

The available validation criteria are as follows:

- **Any Value**—The default value allowing unrestricted entry.
- **Whole Number**—Requires a whole number be entered. You can select a comparison value (Between, Not Between, Equal To, and so on) and set the Minimum and Maximum value.

- **Decimal**—Requires a decimal value be entered. You can select a comparison value (Between, Not Between, Equal To, and so on) and set the Minimum and Maximum value.
- **List**—Requires user to select from a predefined list, as shown in Figure 3.22. The source can be within the Data Validation dialog box or can be a vertical or horizontal range on any sheet.



Select a state South Dakota

FIGURE 3.22

Provide users with a list of entries to choose from.

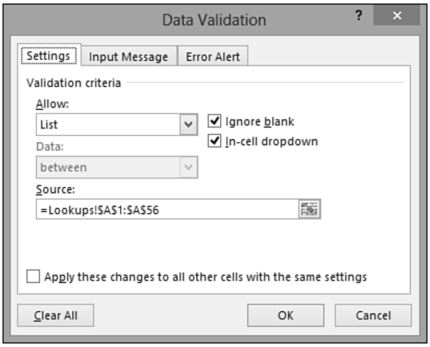
- **Date**—Requires a date be entered. You can select a comparison value (Between, Not Between, Equal To, and so on) and set the Minimum and Maximum value.
- **Time**—Requires a time be entered. You can select a comparison value (Between, Not Between, Equal To, and so on) and set the Minimum and Maximum value.
- **Text Length**—Requires a text value be entered. You can select a comparison value (Between, Not Between, Equal To, and so on) and set the Minimum and Maximum number of characters.
- **Custom**—Uses a formula to calculate TRUE for valid entries or FALSE for invalid entries.

Limiting User Entry to a Selection from a List

Data validation allows you to create a drop-down in a cell, restricting the user to selecting from a predefined list of values, as shown in Figure 3.22. To set up the source range and configure the data validation cell, follow these steps:

1. Create a vertical or horizontal list of the values to appear in the drop-down. You can place these values in a sheet different from where the drop-down will actually be placed, then hide the sheet, preventing the user from changing the list.

2. Select the cell you want the drop-down to appear in.
3. Go to Data, Data Tools, Data Validation. The Data Validation dialog box opens.
4. From the Allow field of the Settings tab, select List.
5. Place your cursor in the Source field.
6. Select the list you created in step 1, as shown in Figure 3.23. If your list is short, instead of the separate list you created in step 1, you can enter the values separated by commas directly in the Source field. For example, you could enter Yes, No in the source field (no quotes, no equal sign).



Validation criteria

Allow: List

☑ Ignore blank

☑ In-cell dropdown

Data: between

Source: =Lookups!$A$1:$A$56

☐ Apply these changes to all other cells with the same settings

FIGURE 3.23

The source for the validation list can be a different sheet. You can then hide the sheet from users.

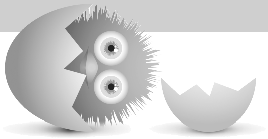
7. If you want to provide the user with an input prompt, go to the Input Message tab and fill in the Title and Input Message fields.
8. If you want to provide the user with an error message, go to the Error Alert tab and fill in the Style, Title, and Error Message fields.
9. Click OK.

NOTE The font and font size of the text in the drop-down is controlled by your Windows settings, not Excel.

THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM

By now, you should have a good idea on how to enter data in Excel. You can even design a form with drop-downs to guide your users on what entries are allowed in a cell. You've also learned some tricks for quickly entering data by using the fill handle to copy cells or fill in a series. If you receive a sheet with numbers that won't add up, you don't need to go back to the originator and tell them to try again—instead, you know how to use Text to Columns to fix those numbers.

Now that you have your data on the sheet, you probably want to sharpen it up, make a professional looking report or table, drawing the user's eye to something specific or downplaying other parts. The next chapter teaches you how to format your data, including setting things up so that the formatting changes automatically based on what is entered in the cell.



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Index

Symbols

######, 138
100% stacked charts, 257
* (asterisk), 198
= (equal sign), 115
# (pound sign), 91
? (question mark), 91

A

absolute formulas versus relative formulas, 118
access, restricting using IRM, 230
accessing SkyDrive, 358
Accounting format, 85
acquiring Microsoft accounts, 356-358
activating sheets, 37
adding
  borders around ranges, 96
  buttons to ribbon, 15-16
  chart elements, 262
  charts to sheets, 258
    Quick Analysis tool, 258-259
    viewing available charts, 260-261
    viewing recommended charts, 259
  groups to tab, 16
  images to headers/footers, 223-224
  notes to cells, 214
  page numbering to headers/footers, 224
  points to sparklines, 273
  shapes, SmartArt, 321
  space between subtotaled groups, 246-249
  sparklines to data, 272-273
  tiles to visualizations, 309
  Total Row to tables, 67
add-ins, 22-23
adjusting
  calculation settings, 114
  column widths, 76-77
  row heights, 76-77
Advanced Filter, 202
  Criteria Range, 203-206
  Unique Records Only option, 206-207
Advanced Filter Mode, Power View, 314
aligning text in cells, 79
  centering text across selection, 81
  changing the way text is oriented, 83
  indenting cell contents, 82-83
  merging two or more cells, 80-81
  wrapping text in cells to the next line, 81
#All, 130
allowing filtering on protected sheets, 201-202
AND, 162-164
applying
  chart layouts, 265
  chart styles, 264
  colors, charts, 264
  filters to data sets, 190-191
Apps for Office, 23-24
Area charts, 257
arguments, 144
arranging
  pictures, 329-331
  windows so you can see multiple sheets at the same time, 9
array formulas, 132-136
  deleting, 136
  editing, 136
artistic effects, pictures, 329
asterisk (*), 198
attachments, sending Excel files as, 233-234
AutoCorrection Options button, 69
AutoFilter drop-downs, 64
AutoSum button, 148-149
  avoiding, 341-342
  status bar for quick calculation results, 150-151
  SUM rows and columns at the same time, 149-150
Average, 150
avoiding AutoSum button, macro recorder, 341-342
axes, 255
axis, changing display units, 263

B

Bar charts, 256
bar of pie charts, creating, 271-272

BMI (body mass index), calculating, 352

borders
  adding to ranges, 96
  thick outer borders and thin inner lines, formatting tables, 97

browser view options, configuring, 367-368

bubble charts, creating, 270

built-in rules
  dynamic cell formatting with conditional formatting, 104-105
  mixing cell formats, 104

buttons, adding to ribbon, 15-16

C

calculated fields, creating (PivotTables), 296-297

Calculate Now, 115

Calculate Sheet, 115

calculating
  BMI (body mass index), 352
  commission, 351
  days between dates, 170
  overtime, 171-172

Calculation group (Formulas tab), 115

Calculation Options, 115

calculations, adjusting settings, 114

category labels, 255

cell comments, 214
  deleting, 216
  editing, 214
  formatting, 214
  hiding, 216
  images, inserting, 215-216
  inserting, 214
  showing, 216

cell references
  entering, 118
  simplifying with names, 125-126

cells
  adding notes to, 214
  aligning text, 79
    centering text across a selection, 81
    changing the way text is oriented, 83
    indenting cell contents, 82-83
    merging two or more cells, 80-81
    wrapping text in cells to the next line, 81
  changing next cell direction when pressing Enter, 51
  clearing, 63
  coloring, 98
    two-color gradient, 98-99
  controlling next cell selection, 50
  copying formulas, 123-124
  deleting, 45
  entering formulas, 116-117
  font settings, changing, 77-79
  inserting, 45
  limiting data entry, Data Validation, 71-72
  linking to SmartArt shapes, 324-325
  moving, 46
  on other sheets, using in formulas, 119
  referencing
    F4, 121
    R1C1 notation, 119-121
  selecting, 44
  unlocking, 228
  when formatting doesn’t seem to be working right, 95
  wrapping text in, 81

Cell Styles, 109

centering text across selection, 81

cent (¢) symbol, Custom Number format, 93

certifying workbooks with digital signatures, 230

changes
  lost changes, recovering, 232-233
  preventing by marking files as fine, 230

changing
  appearance of PivotTables on sheets, 286
  calculation types of field values, PivotTables, 286
  chart types, 266
  colors, Power View, 310
  data visualizations, 305
  display units in an axis, 263
  font color, 79
  font settings of cells, 77-79
  next cell direction when pressing Enter, 51
  selected layout, SmartArt, 323
  shapes, SmartArt, 324
  values field calculation, Power View reports, 303

characters, formatting in cells, 79

chart areas, 256

chart data visualizations, inserting, 306-307

Chart Elements list, 262

chart layouts, applying, 265

charts, 253
  adding to sheets, 258
    Quick Analysis tool, 258-259
    viewing available charts, 260-261
    viewing recommended charts, 259
  bar of pie charts, creating, 271-272
  bubble charts, creating, 270
  changing chart types, 266
  chart styles, applying, 264
  color, applying, 264
  creating
    with multiple chart types, 266-267
    with user-created templates, 275

- data, updating, 268-269
- elements of, 254-255, 262
- moving, 265-266
- Paste Special, 54
- pie charts, rotating, 270-271
- preparing data, 254
- sizing, 265-266
- sorting, 311
- stock charts, creating, 269
- switching rows/columns, 266
- titles
  - editing, 262-263
  - formatting, 262-263
- types of, 256-258

chart titles, 255

chart types, creating multiple, 266-267

CHOOSE function, 152-153

clearing
- cells, 63
- conditional formatting, 108
- entire sheets, 63
- filters, 191
  - PivotTables, 296
- Freeze Panes, 219

closing
- files, 12
- workbooks, 33

clustered charts, 257

collapsing
- fields in PivotTables, 289-290
- subtotals, 239

color
- applying to charts, 264
- changing with Power View, 310
- Custom Number format, 91
- filtering by, 200
- pictures, 328
- sorting data by, 180-181

color scales, 102

coloring
- cells, 98
  - two-color gradient, 98-99
- sheet tabs, 40

Column charts, 256

columns
- adjusting widths, 76-77
- copying formulas, 125
- deleting, 42
- filtering for one column, 192
- freezing, multiple, 218
- grouping, 249-251
- inserting, 41
- locking in place, 218
- moving, 42-43
- outlining, 249-251
- rearranging, 186-187
- repeating on printed pages, 220-221
- selecting entire, 40-41
- sorting by value, PivotTables, 289
- subtotaling multiple columns, 245
- switching in charts, 266

column totals, Quick Analysis, 152

COM add-ins, 22-23

combining
- conditional formatting rules, 107
- multiple subtotal results to one row, 243-244
- multiple visualizations, 309

Combo charts, 257

commands, Quick Access Toolbar
- customizing, 17-19
- removing, 19

comments, cell comments, 214

commission, calculating, 351

comparison operators, 163

compatibility, PivotTables, 279-280

Compatibility Checker, 231

Compress Pictures dialog box, 331

conditional formatting with dynamic cell formatting, 101-102
- applying multiple icon sets, 103-104
- built-in rules, 104-105
- clearing conditional formatting, 108
- combining conditional formatting, 107
- custom conditional formatting rules, 105-107
- editing conditional formatting, 108
- stopping further rules from being, 107

conditions, Custom Number format, 91

confidential information, removing, 231

configuring
- browser view options, 367-368
- page setup, 220
  - repeating rows/columns on each printed page, 220-221
  - scaling data to fit printed pages, 221-222

consolidating data, 208-211

controlling next cell selection, 50

converting
- formulas to values, 136-137
- text to dates and times, 172
- text to numbers, 69

Convert to Number, ranges, 68

copying
- formulas to other cells, 123-125
- sheets
  - between workbooks, 39
  - within same workbook, 38
- subtotals to new locations, 240-241

corrections, pictures, 328

Count Numbers, 150

Create PivotTable dialog box, 284

criteria_range, 160

Criteria Range, Advanced Filter, 203-206

cropping pictures, 327-328

Ctrl+Enter, copying formulas, 124

Currency format, 85

custom conditional formatting rules, 105-107

Custom formats, 88
  cent (¢) symbol, 93
  color and conditions, 91
  Date and Time, 93-95
  decimals and thousands separator, 91
  Number format, 88-89
  symbols, 92
  text and spacing, 89-91

customizing
  commands on Quick Access Toolbar, 17-19
  Excel window, 12
    adding buttons to ribbon, 15-16
    changing size of formula bar, 13
    minimizing ribbon to show only tab names, 13
    moving Quick Access Toolbar below the ribbon, 17
    removing groups from tabs, 15
    showing/hiding tabs in ribbon, 14
  future workbooks, templates, 35-36
  Quick Access Toolbar for the current workbook, 19

custom sequences, sorting data, 184-185

Custom Views, data, 219-220

D

dashboards, 301

#Data, 130

data
  adding sparklines, 272-273
  chart data, updating, 268-269
  consolidating, 208-211
  Custom Views, 219-220
  dates and times, 48
    tying into cells, 49-50
  editing, 62-63
  entering in multicolumn lists, 50
  filtering in PivotTables, 292
    clearing filters, 296
    Label, Value, and Date special filters, 293-295
    listed items, 292-293
    Top 10 option, 295
  finding on sheets, 70-71
  formulas, 48
  functions, 48
  importance of laying out properly, 114
  numbers, typing into cells, 48
  preparing for PivotTables, 278-279
  preparing for filtering, 190
  protecting on sheets, 228
    allowing users to edit specific ranges, 228-230
    unlocking cells, 228
  ranges, preselecting, 51
  scaling to fit printed pages, 221-222
  separating into single columns, Text to Columns, 54-55
  sorting
    by color, 180-181
    by icons, 180-181
    by values, 178-180
    fixing sort problems, 187
    preparations for, 178
    quick sort buttons, 182
    quick sorting multiple columns, 182-183
    randomly, 183-184
    Sort dialog box, opening, 178
    with custom sequences, 184-185
  summarizing with Subtotal tool, 237-240
  text, typing into cells, 48
  types of, 48

data bars, 101

data labels, 255

data sets
  applying filters to, 190-191
  removing duplicates, 207-208

Data Validation, 71-72

data visualizations
  changing, 305
  inserting chart data visualizations, 306-307
  inserting map data visualizations, 308-309
  inserting table data visualizations, 305-306

DATE(), 166-167

date and time functions, 166
  calculating days between dates, 170
  calculating overtime, 171-172
  date calculation functions, 169-170
  date conversion functions, 166-168
  time conversion functions, 168

date calculation functions, 169-170
  calculating days between dates, 170
  calculating overtime, 171-172

date conversion functions, 166-168

Date Filters, 198-199
  PivotTables, 293-295

Date format, 86
  Custom Number format, 93-95

dates
  grouped dates, Search function, 196-197
  grouped dates listing, filtering, 193-195
  grouping in PivotTables, 290-292

dates and times, 48
  typing into cells, 49-50
dates and times stored as strings, troubleshooting, 172
DATEVALUE, 167
DAY, 167
days between dates, calculating, 170
decimals, 166
  Custom Number format, 91
decreasing font size, 78
deleting
  array formulas, 136
  cell comments, 216
  cells, 45
  columns, 42
  files from SkyDrive, 359
  ranges, 45
  rows, 42
  shapes, SmartArt, 322
  share options, 365
  sheets, 38
  sparklines, 275
delimited text, 55-56
Developer tab, 335-336
diagrams, SmartArt
  inserting, 318-320
  selecting, 321
digital signatures, certifying workbooks, 230
Disable All Macros Except Digitally Signed Macros, 334
Disable All Macros with Notification, 334
Disable All Macros Without Notification, 334
display units, changing in an axis, 263
distributed files, separating subtotaled groups, 248
#DIV/0!, 138
DLL add-ins, 22-23
Document Inspector, 232
double-click, editing data, 62
downloading workbooks, 358
drilling down, 290
duplicates, removing from data sets, 207-208
dynamic cell formatting with conditional formatting, 101-102
  applying multiple icon sets, 103-104
  built-in rules, 104-105
  clearing conditional formatting, 108
  combining conditional formatting, 107
  custom conditional formatting rules, 105-107
  editing conditional formatting, 108
  stopping rules from being processed, 107

E

EDATE, 167
editing
  array formulas, 136
  cell comments, 214
  chart titles, 262-263
  conditional formatting, 108
  data, 62-63
  simultaneous editing, sharing folders, 365-366
  workbooks, allowing multiple users to edit at the same time, 216-217
elements of charts, 254-255
Enable All Macros, 335
Enter, changing next cell direction when pressing, 51
entering
  data
    in multicolumn lists, 50
    Paste Special with images and charts, 54
    Paste Special with ranges, 52-53
    Paste Special with text, 53-54
    using Paste to merge noncontiguse selection in rows or columns, 54
  formulas cell references, 118
  formulas in cells, 116-117
  functions
    Function Arguments dialog box, 146-147
    in-cell tips, 147-148
EOMONTH, 167
equal sign (=), 115
equations, 58-59
error bars, 256
error icon, 139
error messages, troubleshooting formulas, 138-139
Evaluate Formulas dialog box, 141-142
evaluating formulas, 141-142
Excel
  opening workbooks, 361
  saving to SkyDrive, 359
Excel 97, 2
Excel 2000, 2
Excel 2002, 2
Excel 2003, 2
Excel 2007, 2
Excel 2010, 2
Excel 2013, 2
Excel Help, 11
Excel versions, sharing files between, 231
Excel Web App, 355
  configuring browser view options, 367-368
  opening, 360-361
  requirements, 356
  surveys, setting up, 369-371
Excel WebApp, 2
Excel window, 6-8
  customizing, 12
    adding buttons to ribbon, 15-16

    - changing size of formula bar, 13
    - minimizing ribbon to show only tab names, 13
    - moving Quick Access Toolbar below the Ribbon, 17
    - removing groups from tabs, 15
    - showing/hiding tabs in ribbon, 14
  - ribbon, making selections from, 9
- excluding items, Search Function, 195-196
- exiting Excel, 12
- expanding
  - fields in PivotTables, 289-290
  - subtotals, 239
  - tables, 66-67
- Extend Selection option, 21
- extensions, 32-33

F

- F2, editing data, 62
- F4, referencing cells, 121
- F9, evaluating formulas, 142
- FALSE, 163
- fields, PivotTables
  - expanding/collapsing, 289-290
  - removing, 285
  - renaming, 285
- file-level protection, protecting workbooks, 227
- file permissions, setting, 365
- files
  - closing, 12
  - deleting from SkyDrive, 359
  - saving to local drives, 362
  - sharing between Excel versions, 231
  - sharing files online, 234
- file size of pictures, reducing, 331
- Fill Color, 98
- Fill Effects dialog box, 99
- fill handle, copying formulas, 124
- filtering
  - by color, 200
  - by icon, 200
  - by selection, 200-201
  - data in PivotTables, 292
    - clearing filters, 296
    - Label, Value, and Date special filters, 293-295
    - listed items, 292-293
    - Top 10 option, 295
  - for listed items, 192-193
  - for one column, 192
  - grouped dates listing, 193-195
  - on protected sheets, allowing, 201-202
  - Power View, 312-314
    - Advanced Filter Mode, 314
    - highlighting, 315
    - slicers, 315
  - with Search function, excluding items, 195-196
- filters
  - Advanced Filter, 202-203
    - Criteria Range, 203-206
    - Unique Records Only option, 206-207
  - applying to data sets, 190-191
  - clearing, 191
    - in PivotTables, 296
  - Date Filters, 198-199
  - Number Filters, 198-199
  - reapplying, 192
  - special filters, 198-199
  - Text Filters, 198-199
- finding
  - data on sheets, 70-71
  - functions, 144-145
- fixed-width text, 57
- fixing
  - numbers stored as text, 67-69
  - sort problems, 187
- folder permissions, setting, 363-365
- folders, sharing, 362
  - creating new, 363
  - setting permissions, 363-365
  - simultaneous editing, 365-366
- font color, changing, 79
- font settings of cells, changing, 77-79
- font size
  - adjusting row height, automatically, 77
    - decreasing, 78
    - increasing, 78
    - font typefaces, selecting, 78
    - footers
  - adding
    - images, 223-224
    - page numbering, 224
  - creating custom, 222-223
- format cells, number formats, 85
  - Accounting, 85
  - Currency, 85
  - Date, 86
  - Fraction, 87
  - General, 85
  - Number, 85
  - Percentage, 87
  - Scientific, 87
  - Special, 88
  - Text, 88
  - Time, 86
- Format Cells dialog box, 80
- Format Painter, 101
- formatting
  - cell comments, 214
  - Cell Styles, 109
  - characters/words in cells, 79
  - chart elements, 262
  - chart titles, 262-263
  - dynamic cell formatting with conditional formatting, 101-102
    - applying multiple icon, 103-104
    - built-in rules, 104-105

    - clearing conditional, 108
    - combining conditional, 107
    - custom conditional, 105-107
    - editing conditional, 108
    - stopping further rules, 107
  - with Format Painter, 101
  - placeholder text, SmartArt, 323
  - subtotals, 241
  - tables with thick outer borders and thin inner lines, 97
  - titles, reports (Power View), 305
  - values, PivotTables, 298
- form controls, running macros, 346-347
- formula bar
  - changing size of, 13
  - editing data, 62
- formulas, 48, 113
  - applying names, 126-127
  - array formulas, 132-136
    - deleting, 136
    - editing, 136
  - converting to values, 136-137
  - copying to other cells, 123
    - columns, 125
    - Ctrl+Enter, 124
    - fill handle, 124
  - entering cell references, 118
  - entering into cells, 116-117
  - evaluating, 141-142
  - inserting into tables, 128-129
  - relative versus absolute, 118
  - Table formulas, Table names, 129-130
  - tracking with Watch Window, 140-141
  - troubleshooting, 137
    - error messages, 138-139
    - Trace Precedents, 139-140
    - with Function Arguments dialog box, 174-175
  - using cells on other sheets, 119
  - using names to simplify references, 125-126
  - versus values, viewing, 115-116
- Formulas tab, Calculation group, 115
- Formula Wizard, 145
- Fraction category, 87
- Freeze First Column, 218
- Freeze Panes, 218
  - clearing, 219
- Freeze Top Row, 218
- freezing multiple rows and columns, 218
- Function Arguments dialog box, 146-147
  - troubleshooting formulas, 174-175
- functions, 48, 143
  - AutoSum button, 148-149
    - status bar for quick calculation results, 150-151
    - SUM rows and columns at the same time, 149-150
  - date and time, 166
    - calculating days between dates, 170
    - calculating overtime, 171-172
    - date calculation functions, 169-170
    - date conversion functions, 166-168
    - time conversion functions, 168
  - entering
  - with Function Arguments dialog box, 146-147
  - with in-cell tips, 147-148
  - finding, 144-145
  - Goal Seek, 173-174
  - IFERROR, 165-166
  - logical functions, 162-163
    - IF/AND/OR/NOT, 163-164
  - lookup functions, 152
    - CHOOSE, 152-153
    - INDEX, 155-156
    - INDIRECT, 158-159
    - MATCH, 155-158
    - OFFSET, 157-158
    - VLOOKUP, 153-155
  - nested IF statements, 164-165
  - overview, 144
  - Quick Analysis tool, 152
  - RAND, 183-184
  - SUMIFS, 159-160
  - SUMPRODUCT, 160-162

G

- General format, 85
- global names versus local names, 127-128
- Goal Seek, 173-174
- gridlines, 255
- grouped dates, Search function, 196-197
- grouped dates listing, filtering, 193-195
- grouping
  - columns, 249-251
  - dates, PivotTables, 290-292
  - rows, 249-251
- Grouping dialog box, 291
- groups
  - adding to tab, 16
  - removing, 240
    - from tabs, 15

H

- handles, 327
- #Headers, 131
- headers
  - adding
    - images, 223-224
    - page numbering, 224
  - creating custom, 222-223
- Help, 10-11
- hidden information, removing, 231

hiding
  cell comments, 216
  sheets, 217
  tabs in ribbon, 14
  totals, PivotTables, 298

highlighting, Power View, 315

HOUR, 169

hyperlinks, creating, 99-100

I

icons
  filtering by, 200
  sorting data by, 180-181

icon sets, 102
  dynamic cell formatting with conditional formatting, 103-104

IF, 162-164
  nested IF statements, 164-165

IFERROR, 162, 165-166

images
  adding to headers/footers, 223-224
  inserting
    into cell comments, 215-216
    into SmartArt, 320-321
  Paste Special, 54

importance of laying data out properly, 114

in-cell tips, 147-148

increasing font size, 78

indenting cell contents, 82-83

INDEX function, 155-156

INDIRECT function, 158-159

Insert Function dialog box, 145

inserting
  cell comments, 214
  cells, 45
  chart data visualizations, 306-307
  columns, 41
  equations, 58-59
  formulas into tables, 128-129
  images
    into cell comments, 215-216
    into SmartArt, 320-321
  map data visualizations, 308-309
  modules, 337
  pictures, 326-327
  ranges, 45
  rows, 41
  sheets, new, 37
  SmartArt diagrams, 318-320
  symbols, 58-59
  table data visualizations, 305-306
  tabs, new, 15
  titles, reports (Power View), 305
  WordArt, 325-326

installing add-ins, 22

interacting with sheets online, 366

IRM, restricting access, 230

italic, applying to finds, 78

items, excluding with Search function, 195-196

K

keyboard shortcuts for moving around on sheets, 20

L

Label Filter, PivotTables, 293-295

legends, 255

limitations of PivotTables, 279

limiting
  data entry in cells, Data Validation, 71-72
  user entry to selections from a list, 72-73

Line charts, 256

linking cells to SmartArt shapes, 324-325

listed items, filtering for, 192-193
  in PivotTables, 292-293

List Range, 206
  Advanced Filter, 203

lists
  creating custom, 61
  limiting user entry to selections from, 72-73

local drives, saving files to, 362

local names versus global names, 127-128

locking rows/columns in place, 218

logical functions, 162-163
  IF/AND/OR/NOT, 163-164

lookup functions, 152
  CHOOSE, 152-153
  INDEX, 155, 156
  INDIRECT, 158-159
  MATCH, 155-158
  OFFSET, 157-158
  VLOOKUP, 153-154
    troubleshooting, 154-155

lost changes, recovering, 232-233

M

macro recorder, 338
  avoiding the AutoSum button, 341-342
  navigating while recording, 338

macro recording, relative references, 339-341

macros
  recording, 342-343
  running, 343
    from form controls, text boxes, or shapes, 346-347
    from the Quick Access Toolbar, 345-346
    from the ribbon, 344

map data visualizations, inserting, 308-309

Mark as Final, 230
markers, spacing in sparklines, 273-274
MATCH function, 155-158
mathematical operators, 122
  order of operations, 123
matrix visualizations, sorting, 311
Max, 150
Merge Across, 80
Merge Cells, 80
Merge & Center, 80
Merge & Center drop-down, 80
merging cells, 80-81
Microsoft accounts, acquiring, 356-358
Microsoft online templates, workbooks, 33-34
Min, 150
minimizing ribbon to show only tab names, 13
mini toolbar, 12
Mini toolbar, 79
MINUTE, 169
modules, 337
  inserting, 337
MONTH, 167
mouse, rearranging columns, 186-187
moving
  cells, 46
  charts, 265-266
  columns, 42-43
  on sheets, 19-21
  Quick Access Toolbar, below the ribbon, 17
  ranges, 46
  rows, 42-43
  sheets, 38-39
  visualizations, reports (Power View), 303
multicolumn lists, entering data, 50
multiple visualizations, combining, 309

N

#N/A, 138
Name box, selecting cells, 44
#NAME?, 138
named ranges, indicating data entry cells, 51
names
  applying to formulas, 126-127
  global versus local, 127-128
  simplifying references, 125-126
navigating while recording, macro recorder, 338
nested IF statements, 164-165
  replacing with Select Case, 350-353
NETWORKDAYS, 170
NETWORKDAYS.INTL, 170
next cell selection, controlling, 50
NOT, 162-164
notes, adding to cells, 214
NOW(), 166
#NULL!, 138
#NUM!, 138
Number Filters, 198-199
Number format, 85
  Custom formats, 88-89
    cent (¢) symbol, 93
    color and conditions, 91
    Date and Time, 93-95
    decimals and thousands separator, 91
    symbols, 92
    text and spacing, 89-91
Number Format drop-down, Number group, 95-96
number formats, applying with format cells, 85-88
Number group, ribbon, 95-96
numbers, 48
  extending numerical series, 61
  stored as text, fixing, 67-69
  typing into cells, 48

O

OFFSET function, 157-158
online
  creating new workbooks, 361-362
  interacting with sheets, 366
  sharing files, 234
opening
  locally saved templates, 34-35
  Sort dialog box, 178
  workbooks, 28-31, 360
    in Excel, 361
    in Excel Web App, 360-361
Options button, 70
OR, 162-164
order of operations, mathematical operators, 123
orientation, changing the way text is oriented, 83
Orientation button, 83
outlining columns/row, 249-251
overtime, calculating, 171-172

P

Page Break Preview, 8
  setting page breaks, 225-226
page breaks, setting with Page Break Preview, 225-226
Page Layout view, 8
page numbering, adding to headers/footers, 224

- page setup, configuring, 220
  - repeating rows/columns on each printed page, 220-221
  - scaling data to fit printed pages, 221-222
- paragraphs, reflowing text, 83-84
- Paste, merging noncontiguous selection in rows and columns, 54
- Paste Special
  - converting text to dates and times, 172
  - forcing numbers, 68
  - using with images and charts, 54
  - using with ranges, 52-53
  - using with text, 53-54
- PDF (Portable Document Format), 33
- Percentage format, 87
- permissions
  - file permissions, 365
  - folder permissions, 363-365
- Picture Color Options, 329
- Picture Corrections Options, 328
- pictures
  - arranging, 329-331
  - artistic effects, 329
  - color, 328
  - corrections, 328
  - cropping, 327-328
  - file size, reducing, 331
  - inserting, 326-327
  - resizing, 327-328
- pie charts, 256, 270-272
- PivotTable Field List, 280-281
- PivotTables, 277
  - calculated fields, creating, 296-297
  - changing appearance on sheets, 286
  - changing calculation types of field values, 286
  - compatibility, 279-280
  - creating, 281
    - from scratch, 283-285
    - with Quick Analysis tool, 281
  - fields
    - expanding/collapsing, 289-290
    - removing, 285
    - renaming, 285
  - filtering data, 292
    - clearing filters, 296
    - Label, Value, and Date special filters, 293-295
    - listed items, 292-293
    - Top 10 option, 295
  - grouping dates, 290-292
  - limitations of, 279
  - preparing data for, 278-279
  - slicers, 299
  - sorting, 287
    - by value, 289
    - quick sort, 287
    - Sort (Fieldname) dialog box, 288-289
  - totals, hiding, 298
  - values, formatting, 298
  - viewing recommended PivotTables, 282
  - viewing records used to calculate values, 290
- placeholders, SmartArt (reordering), 322-323
- placeholder text, SmartArt (formatting), 323
- plot areas, 256
- points, adding to sparklines, 273
- pound sign (#), 91
- PowerPivot, 278
- Power View
  - colors, changing, 310
  - combining multiple visualizations, 309
  - filtering, 312-314
    - Advanced Filter Mode, 314
    - highlighting, 315
    - slicers, 315
  - reports
    - changing values field calculation, 303
    - creating, 302-303
    - moving and resizing visualizations, 303
    - sharing, 315
    - titles, 305
    - undoing changes, 304
  - requirements, 302
  - sorting visualizations, 311
  - themes, 310
- preparing
  - data
    - for charts, 254
    - for PivotTables, 278-279
  - data for filtering, 190
- preselecting, data ranges, 51
- preventing changes by marking files as final, 230
- printing sheets, 226-227
- Project Explorer, Visual Basic Editor, 337
- protected sheets, allowing filtering on, 201-202
- protecting
  - data on sheets, 228-230
  - workbooks from unwanted changes, 227

Q

- QAT (Quick Access Toolbar), 8
- question mark (?), 91
- Quick Access Toolbar
  - customizing
    - commands, 17-19
    - for current workbook, 19
  - moving below the ribbon, 17
  - removing commands from, 19
  - running macros, 345-346
- Quick Access Toolbar (QAT), 8
- Quick Analysis, column totals, 152

Quick Analysis tool
  adding charts to sheets, 258-259
  PivotTables, creating, 281

quick sort, PivotTables, 287

quick sort buttons, 182

quick sorting multiple columns, 182-183

R

R1C1 notation, referencing cells, 119-121

RAND function, 183-184

ranges
  borders, adding, 96
  Convert to Number, 68
  deleting, 45
  filling quickly with series, 60-61
  inserting, 45
  moving, 46
  Paste Special, 52-53
  preselecting, 51
  selecting noncontiguous, 44
  selecting a range of cells, 20-21

reapplying filters, 192

rearranging columns
  with Sort dialog box, 186
  with the mouse, 186-87

Recent Workbooks list, 31

recording macros, 342-343

records, used to calculate value (viewing (PivotTables), 290

recovering lost changes, 232-233

reducing file size of pictures, 331

referencing cells
  F4, 121
  R1C1 notation, 119-121

#REF!, 138

reflowing text in paragraphs, 83-84

relative formulas versus absolute formulas, 118

relative references, macro recording, 339-341

relative referencing, 118

Remove duplicates, 207

removing
  chart elements, 262
  commands from Quick Access Toolbar, 19
  duplicates from data sets, 207-208
  fields from PivotTables, 285
  groups, 240
    from tabs, 15
  hidden/confidential information, 231
  subtotals, 240

renaming
  fields in PivotTables, 285
  sheets, 39

reordering placeholders, SmartArt, 322-323

repeating rows/columns on printed pages, 220-221

replacing nested IF statements with Select Case, 350-353

reports, Power View
  changing values field calculation, 303
  creating, 302-303
  moving and resizing visualizations, 303
  sharing, 315
  undoing changes, 304

requirements
  Excel Web App, 356
  for Power View, 302

resizing
  charts, 265-266
  pictures, 327-328
  visualizations, reports (Power View), 303

restricting access, IRM, 230

ribbon
  making selections from, 9
  minimizing to show only tab names, 13
  Number group, 95-96
  running macros, 344

rotating pie charts, 270-271

rows
  adjusting heights, 76-77
  deleting, 42
  freezing multiple, 218
  grouping, 249-251
  inserting, 41
  locking in place, 218
  moving, 42-43
  outlining, 249-251
  repeating on printed pages, 220-221
  selecting entire, 40-41
  sorting by value, PivotTables, 289
  switching in charts, 266

running macros, 343
  from form controls, text boxes, or shapes, 346-347
  from the Quick Access Toolbar, 345-346
  from the ribbon, 344

S

Save AutoRecover, 232

saving
  files to local drives, 362
  templates, 35
  to SkyDrive from Excel, 359
  workbooks, 31-32

scaling data to fit printed pages, 221-222

Scatter charts, 257

Scientific category, 87

searches, wildcard searches, 71

Search field, 197

Search function
  filtering for or excluding items, 195-196
  grouped dates, 196-197

SECOND, 169

security, VBA security, 334-335

Select Case, replacing nested IF statements, 350-353 selected layout, changing in SmartArt, 323

selecting
- cells
  - controlling next cell selection, 50
  - with Name box, 44
  - noncontiguous, 44
- chart elements, 262
- columns, entire, 40-41
- font typefaces, 78
- multiple sheets, 38
- range of cells, 20-21
- ranges, noncontiguous, 44
- rows, entire, 40-41
- SmartArt diagrams, 321

selection, filtering by, 200-201

sending Excel files as attachments, 233-234

separating
- data into a single column, Text to Columns, 54-55
- subtotaled groups for distributed files, 248
- subtotaled groups for print, 246

series
- creating, 61-62
- filling in quickly, 60-61

series name, 255

series values, 255

shapes
- changing in SmartArt, 324
- running macros, 346-347
- SmartArt, 321-322

share options, deleting, 365

sharing
- files
  - between Excel versions, 231
  - online, 234
- folders, 362
  - creating new, 363
  - setting permissions, 363-365
  - simultaneous editing, 365-366
- Power View reports, 315
- themes, 112
- UDFs, 350
- workbooks, 362

sheets, 36
- activating, 37
- adding charts, 258
  - Quick Analysis tool, 258-259
  - viewing available charts, 260-261
  - viewing recommended charts, 259
- changing appearance of PivotTables, 286
- clearing entire, 63
- coloring sheet tabs, 40
- copying, 38-39
- deleting, 38
- editing multiple sheets at one time, 63
- finding data on, 70-71
- hiding/unhiding, 217
- inserting new, 37
- interacting with online, 366
- moving, 38-39
- moving around on, 19-21
- printing, 226-227
- renaming, 39
- selecting multiple, 38
- using cells on other sheets in formulas, 119

showing
- cell comments, 216
- tabs in ribbon, 14

Silverlight, 302

simultaneous editing, sharing folders, 365-366

sizing
- charts, 265-266
- formula bar, 13
- pictures, 327-328

SkyDrive, 234-356
- accessing, 358
- deleting files from, 359
- saving to from Excel, 359
- uploading to, 359

slicers
- PivotTables, 299
- Power View, 315

SmartArt, 318
- diagrams, selecting, 321
- inserting
  - diagrams, 318-320
  - images, 320-321
- linking cells to shapes, 324-325
- placeholders, reordering, 322-323
- placeholder text, formatting, 323
- selected layout, changing, 323
- shapes
  - adding, 321
  - changing, 324
  - deleting, 322

Sort dialog box
- opening, 178
- rearranging columns, 186

Sort (Fieldname) dialog box, PivotTables, 288-289

sorting
- charts, 311
- data
  - by color, 180-181
  - by icons, 180-181
  - by values, 178-180
- fixing problems, 187
- PivotTables, 287
  - by value, 289
  - quick sort, 287
  - Sort (Fieldname) dialog box, 288-289
- preparations for, 178
- quick sort buttons, 182
- quick sorting multiple columns, 182-183
- randomly, 183-184
- Sort dialog box, opening, 178
  - with custom sequences, 184-185
- subtotals, 246
- visualizations, 311

source data, 254

space, adding between subtotaled groups, 246-249

spacing
  Custom Number format, 89-91
  markers in sparklines, 273-274
sparklines, 253
  adding points, 273
  adding to data, 272-273
  deleting, 275
  spacing markers, 273-274
Special category, 88
special filters, 198-199
  PivotTables, 293-295
spellchecking, 69
stacked charts, 257
status bar, quick calculation results, 150-151
stock charts, creating, 269
Stock charts, 257
stopping rules from being processed, conditional formatting, 107
strikethrough, 79
structure of UDFs, 348-349
subscript, 79
subtotal, separating groups for print, 246
SUBTOTAL, 236-237
subtotaling multiple columns, 245
subtotals
  adding space between subtotaled groups, 246-249
  applying different subtotal function types, 241-242
  combining multiple subtotal results to one row, 243-244
  copying to new locations, 240-241
  expanding/collapsing, 239
  formatting, 241
  placing above the data, 239
  removing, 240
  sorting, 246
Subtotal tool
  summarizing data, 237-239
    expanding/collapsing subtotals, 239
    placing subtotals above the data, 239
    removing subtotals/ groups, 240
SUM, rows and columns at the same time, 149-150
SUMIF, 131
SUMIFS, 159-160
summarizing data with Subtotal tool, 237-240
SUMPRODUCT, 160-162
sum_range, 160
superscript, 79
Surface charts, 257
surveys, setting up, 369-371
switching rows and columns, charts, 266
symbols
  Custom Number format, 92
  inserting, 58-59

T

Table, 64
  defining, 64-65
  expanding, 66-67
table data visualizations, inserting, 305-306
Table formulas
  Table names, 129-130
  writing outside the table, 130-132
Table names in Table formulas, 129-130
tables, 64
  adding Total Row, 67
  defining, 64-65
  expanding, 66-67
  formatting with thick outer borders and thin inner lines, 97
  formulas, inserting, 128-129
  writing Table formulas outside, 130-132
tabs, 36
  adding groups, 16
  inserting new, 15
  removing groups from, 15
  showing/hiding in ribbon, 14
templates
  for creating workbooks, 33
  customizing future workbooks, 35-36
  Microsoft online templates, 33-34
  opening locally saved templates to enter data, 34
  opening locally saved templates to make changes to, 35
  saving, 35
  user-created templates, creating charts, 275
text, 48
  aligning in cells, 79
    centering text across a selection, 81
    changing the way text is oriented, 83
    indenting cell contents, 82-83
    merging two or more cells, 80-81
  centering across selection, 81
  converting to dates and times, 172
  converting to numbers, 69
  Custom Number format, 89-91
  delimited text, 55-56
  extending series, 60
  fixed-width text, 57
  fixing numbers stored as, 67-68
    Convert to Number, 68
    Paste Special, 68
    Text to Columns, 69
  Paste Special, 53-54
  reflowing in paragraphs, 83-84
  typing into cells, 48-49
  wrapping in cells, 81

text boxes, running macros, 346-347

Text category, 88

Text Filters, 198-199

Text to Columns
  converting text to dates and times, 172
  delimited text, 55-56
  fixed-width text, 57
  separating data into a single column, 54-55

Text to Columns wizard, 69

themes, 109
  applying new, 110
  creating, 110-112
  Power View, 310
  sharing, 112

ThisWorkbook module, 337

@ (This Row), 131

thousands separator, Custom Number format, 91

tiles, adding to visualizations, 309

TIME, 168

time conversion functions, 168

Time format, 86

Time format separator, Custom Number format, 93-95

time serial numbers, 166

TIMEVALUE, 168

titles, reports (Power View), 305

Top 10 option, filtering PivotTables, 295

Total Row, adding to tables, 67

#Totals, 131

totals, hiding in PivotTables, 298

Trace Dependents, 139

Trace Precedents, 139
  troubleshooting formulas, 139-140

tracking formulas, Watch Window, 140-141

trendlines, 256

troubleshooting
  dates and times stored as strings, 172
  Excel options, 11
  formulas, 137
    error messages, 138-139
    Trace Precedents, 139-140
    with Function Arguments dialog box, 174-175
  sort problems, 187
  VLOOKUP function, 154-155

TRUE, 162

two-color gradient, applying to cells, 98-99

types of data, 48

typing in cells
  dates and times, 49-50
  numbers, 48
  text, 48-49

U

UDFs (User Defined Functions), 347
  how to use, 349
  sharing, 350
  structure of, 348-349
  (User-Defined Functions), 333
  using Select Case to replace nested IF, 350-353

underline, applying to fonts, 78

undoing changes to reports (Power View), 304

unhiding sheets, 217

uninstalling add-ins, 22

Unique Records Only option, Advanced Filter, 206-207

unlocking cells, 228

Unmerge Cells, 80

updating chart data, 268-269

uploading
  to SkyDrive, 359
  workbooks, 358

user-created templates, creating charts, 275

User-Defined Functions. *See* UDFs

user entry, limiting to selections from a list, 72-73

userforms, 337

users, allowing to edit specific ranges, 228-230

V

#VALUE!, 138

Value Filter, PivotTables, 293-295

values
  converting formulas to, 136-137
  formatting in PivotTables, 298
  sorting data by, 178-180
  versus formulas, viewing, 115-116

values field, changing calculations (Power View reports), 303

VBA security, enabling, 334-335

viewing
  available charts, 260-261
  formulas versus values, 115-116
  PivotTables, recommended, 282
  recommended charts, 259
  records used to calculate value, PivotTables, 290

Visual Basic Editor, 336
  inserting modules, 337
  Project Explorer, 337

visualizations
  adding tiles to, 309
  combining multiple, 309
  moving and resizing, Power View reports, 303
  sorting, 311

VLOOKUP function, 153-154
  troubleshooting, 154-155

W

Watch Window, tracking formulas on other sheets, 140-141

web queries, 59

WEEKDAY, 167

WEEKNUM, 168

wildcard searches, 71

windows, arranging so you can see multiple sheets at the same time, 9

wizards
  - Formula Wizard, 145
  - Text to Columns, 69

WordArt, inserting, 325-326

words, formatting in cells, 79

workbook-level protection, protecting workbooks, 227

workbooks
  - certifying with digital signatures, 230
  - closing, 33
  - coloring sheet tabs, 40
  - creating new, 28
  - creating new online, 361-362
  - creating with templates, 33
    - customizing future workbooks, 35-36
    - Microsoft online templates, 33-34
    - opening locally saved templates to enter data, 34
    - opening locally saved templates to make changes to, 35
    - saving, 35
  - customizing Quick Access Toolbar for, 19
  - customizing future workbooks, 35-36
  - downloading, 358
  - editing, allowing multiple users to edit at the same time, 216-217
  - extensions, 32
  - opening, 28-31, 360
    - in Excel, 361
    - in Excel Web App, 360-361
  - protecting from unwanted changes, 227
  - Recent Workbooks list, 31
  - saving, 31-32
  - sharing, 362
  - sheets
    - activating, 37
    - copying between workbooks, 39
    - copying within same workbook, 38
    - deleting, 38
    - inserting new, 37
    - moving between workbooks, 39
  - moving within same workbook, 38
  - renaming, 39
  - selecting multiple, 38
  - uploading, 358

WORKDAY, 169

WORKDAY.INTL, 170

wrapping text in cells, 81

writing Table formulas, outside the Table, 130-132

X

XLS, 32

XLSM, 33

XLSX, 33

XLSX extension, 32

Y

YEAR, 167

YEARFRAC, 170

Z

zooming, 10

Zoom slider, 8-10