

Beginning Excel Tips

Screen Appearance

Where are my scroll bars?

Click these menu choices: Tools, Options, Screen

Where is the Main Toolbar or Formatting Toolbar?

Click these menu choices: View, Toolbars

Where is the Borders Toolbar?

There isn't one. Click the down-arrow on the button showing a dashed rectangle.

Why does the screen scroll instead of the cursor?

You have your Scroll Lock on (keyboard).

Adding buttons to a toolbar

Click these menu choices: View, Toolbars, Customize
Find the button, such as shading or superscript, and drag it to a toolbar

How do I get shading?

See below how to put up a button. You can also use the gray colors (see colored button to left of red T button), but it's difficult to know how they will print.

How do I put up a Shading Button?

If you do not have a light-shading button on a toolbar, "merely" (don't you love that word?) click:
View, Toolbars, Customize, Formatting
and click the light-shading button and drag it up on any toolbar. Then use it as a toggle (on/off).
Make sure you do not accidentally click off your Formatting Toolbar when doing this.

I have lost my Sheet Tab row at the bottom of the screen

Look at the x squares in the upper right corner of the screen. If one has an open square to the right of it (as opposed to a double-window icon), click the open square to expand the display.

I want another sheet, but no extra sheet tabs appear at the bottom of the screen

Use the menu: Insert, Worksheet

Multiple spreadsheets

Can I work on two spreadsheets at once?

Yes, just choose to make a new one or open another one while you still have a spreadsheet on the screen. Switch between them by clicking on the menu item, "Window."

Can I have two or more spreadsheets in the same file?

Yes, just click on the "Sheet 2" tab at the bottom of the screen. You can switch back and forth between sheets and reference different sheets in formulas. You can also right-click the sheet tab and choose to rename it, like January, February, etc.

Printing

Getting a spreadsheet to print on one page

To see how it will print, use Print Preview. When you quit Print Preview, dashed lines will indicate the edges of the printed page. Techniques for making it fit on one page are:

- Make it landscape orientation (sideways), (File, Page Setup, Sheet)
- Print to fit 1 page (File, Page Setup, Sheet)
- Reduce font size. For whole sheet, click between 1 and A in upper left corner.
- Narrow some columns. D-click to the right of the column letter to get minimum.
- Narrow margins (File, Page Setup, Margins)

Centering the print on the page (horizontally, vertically or both)

File, Page Setup, Margins

Removing headers or footers (like "Sheet 1" and "Page 1")

File, Page Setup, Header/Footer

Removing or adding gridlines (light gray lines as seen on screen)

File, Page Setup, Sheet

What print setup is recommended for this class?

Remember, when starting any new spreadsheet for class, go to PAGE SETUP and remove gridlines, headers, and footers.

Formatting Numbers

How do I reduce or increase the number of decimals displayed?

Highlight the cells and click one of the buttons with a triangle of zeros.

Some numbers in a column do not line up correctly on the right

By default, numbers are right-justified. If the \$ or comma buttons are used to format, those numbers will be not quite justified right. They are formatted for negatives to be in parentheses, therefore leaving room for a parenthesis. How to change this?

Use the \$ and comma buttons for all numeric formatting

Or, use menus to change any format:

Format, Cells - then change the negatives from () to -

How do I change the font or point size for the whole spreadsheet?

You can select a whole spreadsheet for changing the font and/or size by clicking once in the upper left corner beside column letter A.

Some cells seemingly can not be formatted; they just stay the same!

This is an unexplained problem that does crop up once in a while. We think it has to do with a cell retaining a format of another cell that has been referenced. But, whatever the cause, first try FORMAT, CELLS, GENERAL, and then try the format you want. If no success, use FORMAT, CELLS and try to modify the format or try others, such as NUMBER. Finally, delete the cells (not blank), and reinsert them (RT MOUSE, DELETE, INSERT), and start over with the referencing. So, nothing works for sure here.

Using Subscripts and Superscripts in Excel

This is tricky because it must be implemented through a rt-click:

- Type in the text and then place the cell cursor on that cell
- Highlight the text to be sub or superscripted
- Rt-click and select to Format Cells
- Then click super or subscript

Getting symbols

- Click the START button (lower left of screen) and choose Accessories, Character Map.
- Choose the font you want (Symbols or Wingdings usually).
- Find the symbol you want and choose COPY.
- Go back to the spreadsheet and choose PASTE.
- Finally, highlight the symbol (which is probably showing a normal character) and select the font to match the one it came from in the character map (Symbol or Wingding usually).

Math Syntax

Precedence of operators

1. - (reverse sign), ^ (to a power)
2. * / %
3. + -
4. Parentheses override all

Examples

- $4*(8+3*2)*3^2 = 504$
- $6/2+1 = 4$
- $16-3*5 = 1$
- $-2*4*(-1) = 8$
- $-2^2 = 4$

Formatting Multiple Columns the Same Width

On the gray column letters at the top:

- Click, hold and slide across the first set of columns you want (may be only one column)
- Then with CTRL-key held down, click all other columns you want
- Let up on CTRL and mouse. All the columns you wanted should now be black
- Place the cursor for a double-arrow between two columns (in gray) and slide to desired width

Problem solutions:

- Did not hold CTRL-key for second and third groups
- DID hold CTRL-key on first group. NO CTRL-key while selecting FIRST group of columns

Excel Errors

| | |
|--------------|--|
| #DIV/0! | Divided by zero |
| #NAME? | Misspelled function or name wrong or text in " |
| #VALUE? | Math formula refers to text cell |
| #REF! | Cell needed in formula has been deleted |
| #N/A | Information not available |
| #NUM! | Invalid argument in a function |
| #NULL! | Space between two ranges in a formula to indicate an intersection, but the ranges have no common cells |
| 309680 | Date as a serial number - needs to be formatted as a date |
| Circular Ref | Formula refers to itself in the formula |
| ##### | Number too long for the cell - widen to see problem, format fewer decimals or widen column |