# Basic tasks in Excel 2013

Excel is an incredibly powerful tool for getting meaning out of vast amounts of data. But it also works really well for simple calculations and tracking almost any kind of information. The key for unlocking all that potential is the grid of cells. Cells can contain numbers, text or formulas. You put data in your cells and group them in rows and columns. That allows you to add up your data, sort and filter it, put it in tables, and build great-looking charts. Let's go through the basic steps to get you started.

Create a new workbook

Excel documents are called workbooks. Each workbook has sheets, typically called spreadsheets. You can add as many sheets as you want to a workbook, or you can create new workbooks to keep your data separate.

1. Click **File** > **New**.

2. Under **New**, click the **Blank workbook**.
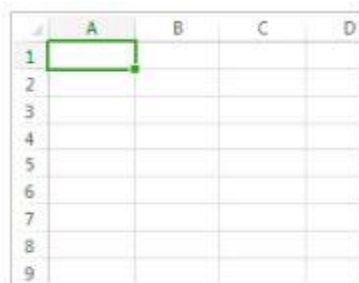
Blank workbook

Enter your data

1. Click an empty cell. For example, cell A1 on a new sheet.

   Cells are referenced by their location in the row and column on the sheet, so cell A1 is in the first row of column A.

2. Type text or a number in the cell.

3. Press Enter or Tab to move to the next cell.

Use AutoSum to add your data

When you've entered numbers in your sheet, you might want to add them up. A fast way to do that is by using **AutoSum**.

1. Select the cell to the right or below the numbers you want to add.

2. Click **Home** > **AutoSum**, or press Alt+=.
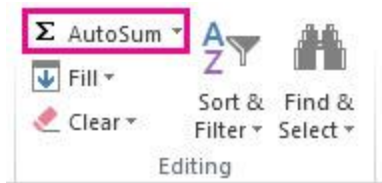
   AutoSum adds up the numbers and shows the result in the cell you selected.

Create a simple formula

   Adding numbers is just one of the things you can do, but Excel can do other math too. Try some simple formulas to add, subtract, multiply or divide your numbers.

1. Pick a cell and type an equal sign (=). That tells Excel that this cell will contain a formula.

2. Type a combination of numbers and calculation operators, like the plus sign (+) for addition, the minus sign (-) for subtraction, the asterisk (*) for multiplication, or the forward slash (/) for division.

   For example, enter **=2+4**, **=4-2**, **=2*4**, or **=4/2**.

3. Press Enter. That runs the calculation.

   You can also press Ctrl+Enter if you want the cursor to stay on the active cell.
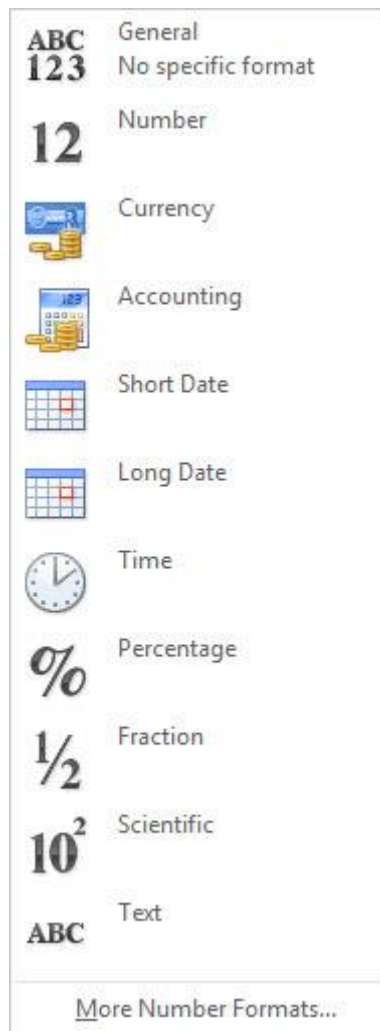
Apply a number format

   To distinguish between different types of numbers, add a format, like currency, percentages, or dates.

1. Select the cells that have numbers you want to format.

2. Click **Home** > Arrow next to **General**.

3. Pick a number format.

If you don't see the number format you're looking for, click **More Number Formats**.

Put your data in a table

A simple way to access a lot of Excel's power is to put your data in a table. That lets you quickly filter or sort your data for starters.

1. Select your data by clicking the first cell and dragging to the last cell in your data.

   To use the keyboard, hold down Shift while you press the arrow keys to select your data.

2. Click the **Quick Analysis** button in the bottom-right corner of the selection.
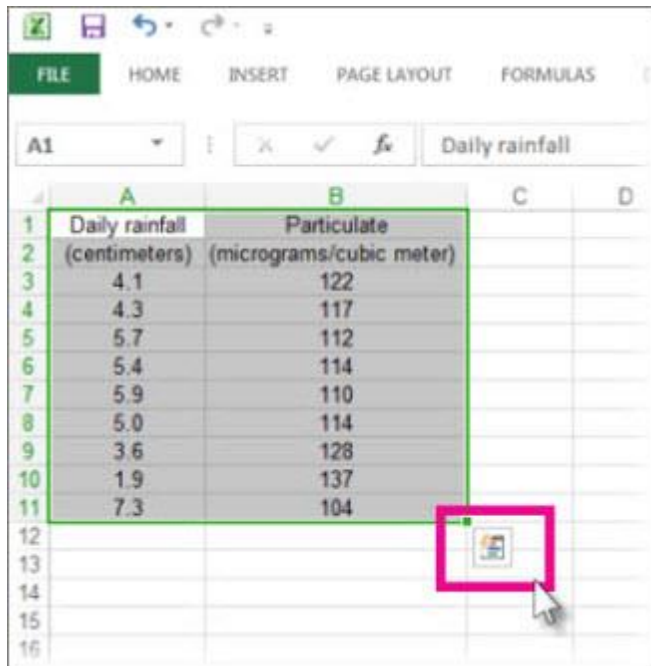
3. Click **Tables**, move your cursor to the **Table** button so you can see how your data will look. If you like what you see, click the button.

4. Now you can play with your data: Filter to see only the data you want, or sort it to go from, say, largest to smallest. Click the arrow in the table header of a column.

5. To filter data, uncheck the **Select All** box to clear all check marks, and then check the boxes of the data you want to show in your table.
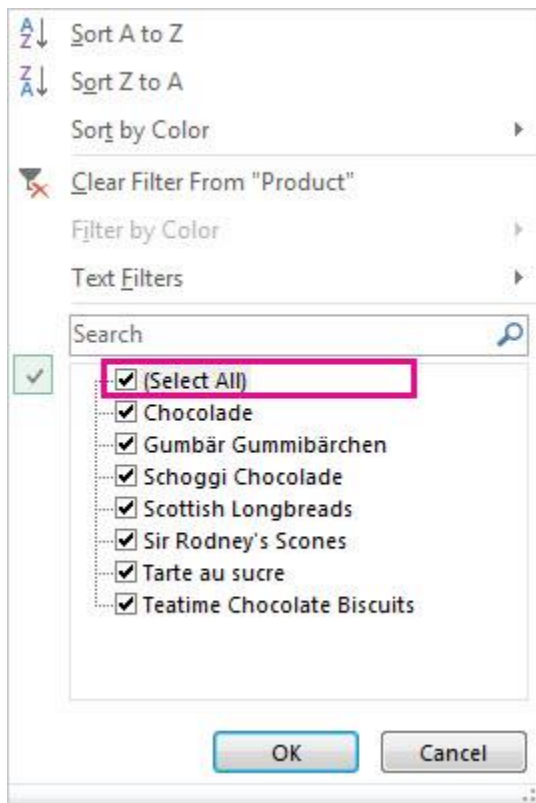
6. To sort the data, click **Sort A to Z** or **Sort Z to A**.
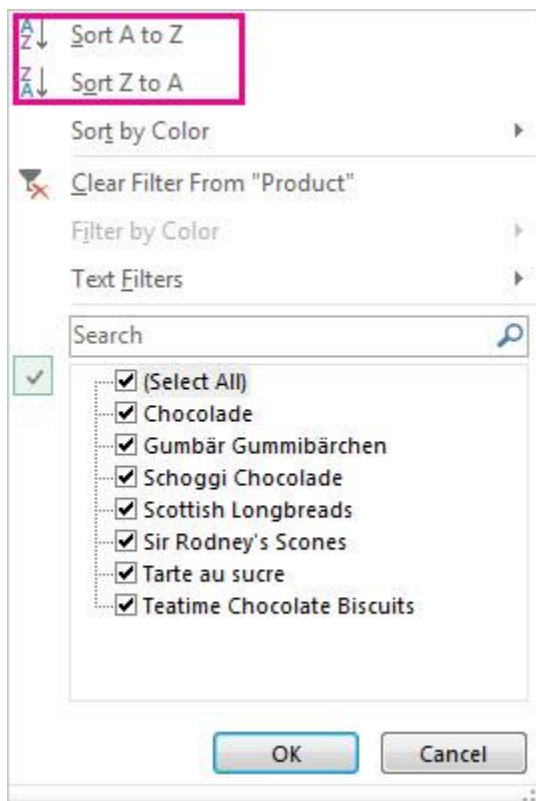
Show totals for your numbers

Quick Analysis tools let you total your numbers quickly. Whether it's a sum, average, or count you want, Excel shows the calculation results right below or next to your numbers.

1. Select the cells that contain numbers you want to add or count.

2. Click the **Quick Analysis** button [icon] in the bottom-right corner of the selection.

3. Click **Totals**, move your cursor across the buttons to see the calculation results for your data, and then click the button to apply the totals.
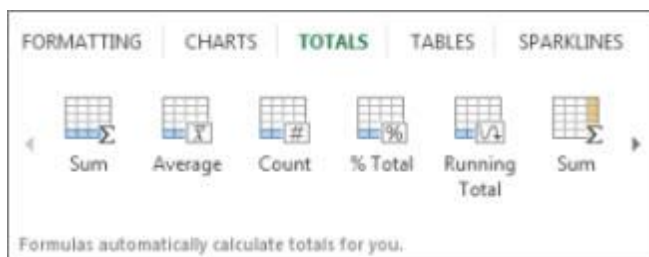
Add meaning to your data

Conditional formatting or sparklines can highlight your most important data or show data trends. Use the Quick Analysis tool for a Live Preview to try it out.

1. Select the data you want to examine more closely.

2. Click the **Quick Analysis** button [icon] that appears in the lower-right corner of your selection.

3. Explore the options on the **Formatting** and **Sparklines** tabs to see how they affect your data.
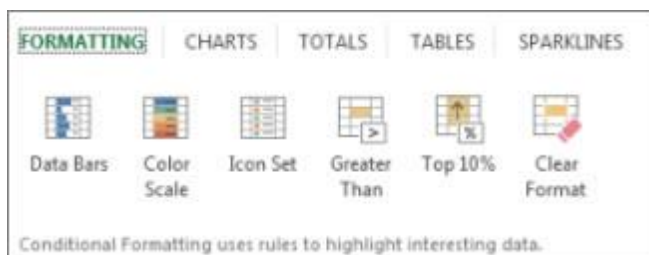
For example, pick a color scale in the **Formatting** gallery to differentiate high, medium, and low temperatures.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	Avg High	40	38	44	46	51	56	67	72	70	59	45	41
3	Avg Low	34	33	38	41	45	48	51	55	54	45	41	38
4	Record High	61	69	79	83	95	97	100	101	94	87	72	66
5	Record Low	0	2	9	24	28	32	36	39	35	21	12	4

4. When you like what you see, click that option.

Show your data in a chart

The Quick Analysis tool recommends the right chart for your data and gives you a visual presentation in just a few clicks.

1. Select the cells that contain the data you want to show in a chart.

2. Click the **Quick Analysis** button that appears in the lower-right corner of your selection.

3. Click **Charts**, move across the recommended charts to see which one looks best for your data, and then click the one that you want.

FORMATTING **CHARTS** TOTALS TABLES SPARKLINES

Clustered Column   Pie   Clustered Bar   More Charts

Recommended Charts help you visualize data.

NOTE   Excel shows different charts in this gallery, depending on what's recommended for your data.

Save your work

1. Click the **Save** button on the **Quick Access Toolbar**, or press Ctrl+S.

If you've saved your work before, you're done.

2. If this is the first time, go on to complete the next steps:

1. Under **Save As**, pick where to save your workbook, and then browse to a folder.

2. In the **File name** box, enter a name for your workbook.

3. Click **Save** to finish.

Print

1. Click **File** > **Print**, or press Ctrl+P.

2. Preview the pages by clicking the **Next Page** and **Previous Page** arrows.

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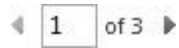
   The preview window displays the pages in black and white or in color, depending on your printer settings.

3. Click **Print**.