

# Custom Formatting in Excel

## ***Special Formats***

Excel has predefined formats for phone numbers, social security numbers and Zip codes.

1. Highlight the cell.
2. Choose Format -> Cells -> Number -> Special.
3. Choose the format you want from the list at right.
4. Click OK.

If you'd rather not use the menus, right-click on the cell and choose "Format Cells." Then click "Special" in the left-hand menu.

Note the Locale menu at right; this gives you different Special choices depending on language and country.

## ***Custom Formats for special purposes (phone numbers, leading zeroes, etc.)***

Excel interprets many entries as numbers, but we may want to format them differently, and some numbers are supposed to have leading zeros (like ISU ID numbers). We can solve this with custom formatting.

1. Highlight a cell.
2. Choose Format -> Cells -> Number -> Custom
3. Enter how you'd like the number to appear, using zeroes for each digit. You can use punctuation marks, spaces, etc. in your format if you need to.
4. Click OK.

You can have different formats for positive and negative numbers by separating them with semicolons as shown below. The first is for positive numbers; the second for negative numbers, and the third for those cases that are actually zero:

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

Pound signs display digits only if they're needed; zeroes display zeroes even if the number doesn't need it (which is why they're used for Zip codes and Social Security numbers). The "[Red]" tag says that the negative numbers should be red (accountants like that). See Excel's help on "custom formats" for more possibilities.

## ***Copying just the format***

1. Highlight a cell with the correct format.
2. Choose Edit -> Copy.
3. Highlight the cells to copy the format to.
4. Choose Edit -> Paste Special.
5. Click "Formats".
6. Click OK.

If you're copying formats to adjacent cells, you can also drag the fill handle on the bottom right of the cell, then click the button at the lower right-hand corner of the highlighted range and choose "Fill Formatting Only."

## ***Aligning text in cells***

Yeah, you can use the buttons in the Formatting toolbar. But you can get more control using the Alignment tab in Format Cells:

1. Choose Format -> Cells -> Alignment.
2. Select a horizontal alignment (including an indentation from the left margin)
3. Select a vertical alignment (for cells larger than one text line)
4. Click OK.

## ***Adjusting Row Height/Column Width***

1. Click on the row number or column letter.
2. Position mouse pointer on bottom of row number box or right of column letter box (the cursor will change to a two-headed arrow).
3. Click, hold and drag to the new height or width.

Use click/shift-click to highlight multiple rows or columns if you'd like to quickly set their height or width the same.

## ***Wrapping text within cells***

1. Choose Format -> Cells -> Alignment.
2. Turn on "Wrap Text"
3. Click OK.

## ***Text rotation within cells***

1. Choose Format -> Cells -> Alignment.
2. Select text rotation
3. Click OK.

You can wrap rotated text (even with weird angles) if the cell isn't tall enough.

## ***Merging cells***

1. Highlight the cells to be merged.
2. Choose Format -> Cells -> Alignment.
3. Turn on "Merge cells"
4. Click OK.

## ***Splitting cells that have been merged***

1. Highlight the merged cell.
2. Choose Format -> Cells -> Alignment.
3. Turn off "Merge cells"
4. Click OK.