



Now that we know how to create a pivot shell and we know what the different areas of our pivot table are, let's make it more visually appealing. You might have noticed these 2 extra tabs on your ribbon when you're working on a PivotTable. These tabs (PivotTable Analyze and Design) are contextual tabs – they are only there when the PivotTable is active. If you don't see these 2 ribbon tabs, click on your PivotTable and they'll appear.

These 2 tabs contain all of the commands you might need when working on your PivotTable, the Analyze tab provides all of the tools for customising the data analysis, and the Design tab provides all of the tools for changing the format or layout of your PivotTable. There are 3 distinct groups of commands on the Design tab: Layout, PivotTable Style Options and PivotTable Styles.

We're going to customise the design of our PivotTable first, so let's start with the style options.

Our PivotTable is currently quite plain as all of the style options (Row Headers, Column Headers, Banded Rows and Banded Columns) are turned off. Each of these check boxes is a toggle button. Clicking it once will turn it on, clicking it a second time will turn it off. So let's click them.

First we'll click the row headers checkbox to turn it on and notice in your PivotTable that the formatting has been applied to the first level row field (each of the states). The functionality of your pivotable hasn't changed just the appearance.

The column headers option is the same, click the column headers checkbox to turn on the column headers and notice the formatting applied just to the column headers of your PivotTable.

Banded Rows: Let's turn on the banded rows style option by checking the box. Notice your PivotTable now has different formatting (shading) applied only to every alternate row. Although applying banded rows doesn't change the results displayed, shading alternate rows or columns like this can make the data in your PivotTable easier to read or at least easier to scan.

Banded columns works in much the same way. Let's turn off Banded Rows first, by clicking the checkbox. and turn on the banded columns on by clicking the Banded Columns checkbox. Notice that formatting (shading) has been applied to each alternate column only.

Nice. Now we understand what each of the options does, let's apply only the ones that enhance our analysis. Row Headers and Column Headers we'll leave turned on, and Banded Rows and Banded Columns we will turn off – for now.

Next we'll look at changing the style.

The PivotTable style gallery we see on the design tab is quite comprehensive. We can see a few styles on the ribbon, as we hover our cursor over any of these styles, our PivotTable will provide a live preview of what it would look like with any of the styles applied.

To the right of the style gallery is 2 down arrows. The first one is a spin button that will cycle the styles to show the next row of available styles. The bottom arrow is a drop-down that will display the entire gallery.

Each of the styles in the gallery is a collection of items formatted in different ways. In some the row headers are bold and in some they are shaded, the same applies to the column headers. In some the data cells are shaded in others they're not.

With the whole gallery displayed, hover over any of the styles for a live preview and apply whichever style you think enhances your data visualisation.

So there we have it. Easily update the look of your whole PivotTable by applying a style from the gallery in the PivotTable Design tab. Customise the appearance further using the PivotTable Style options for applying formatting to header rows, alternate rows, column headings or alternate columns.

Excel really does make it super easy to make your analysis look really good.