08   Conditional Formatting: Highlight Cells

1. In this tutorial, we'll continue our discussion of visualization of data within Excel, but moving beyond charts to discuss conditional formatting in Excel more generally. Highlighting Cells involves the adding color or other format properties to specific cells.   Returning to the deliveries.xlsx file, remember we has a simple worksheet with two columns. We generated random numbers to create the number of deliveries, so our data will not be the same.

A	B
Date	Deliveries
1-Jan	63
2-Jan	51
3-Jan	99
4-Jan	75
5-Jan	51
6-Jan	53
7-Jan	21
8-Jan	95
9-Jan	86
10-Jan	97
11-Jan	31
12-Jan	26
13-Jan	5
14-Jan	44
15-Jan	72
16-Jan	70
17-Jan	89
18-Jan	38
19-Jan	99
20-Jan	28
21-Jan	64
22-Jan	20
23-Jan	8
24-Jan	48
25-Jan	69
26-Jan	16
27-Jan	84
28-Jan	38
29-Jan	57
30-Jan	92
31-Jan	21

2. In the last tutorial, we revisited how to make a chart of data. Charts are very good at giving us a visualization of our data, rather than trying to make heads or tails of data like this in a long list. But sometimes we don't have a lot of space to devote to charts, so Excel provides us with several ways of using conditional formatting within the data cells themselves to give us visual

indicators.

From the Home tab in Excel, if I select the data cells, Cells B2:B32, I have two options (at least) to access conditional formatting.
One way is by clicking on the small icon that appears in the lower right corner of my last selected cell, B32, which takes me to the Quick Analysis Tool (also accessible by selecting the data cells and pressing CTRL-Q on the keyboard). Another way is by selecting the large Conditional Formatting in the Ribbon near the top (again from the Home tab).
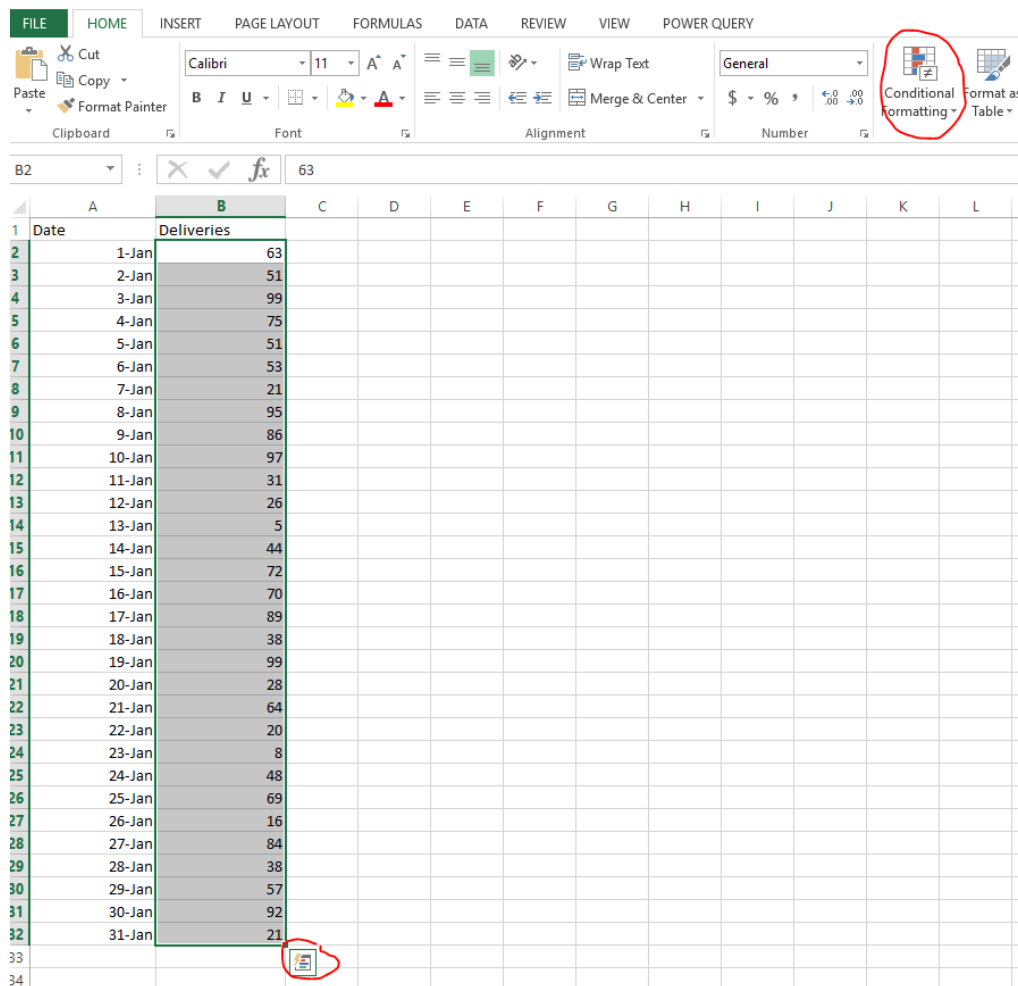
3. We'll choose Conditional Formatting in the Ribbon, which gives us several options. The most simple of which is 'Highlight Cells Rules':
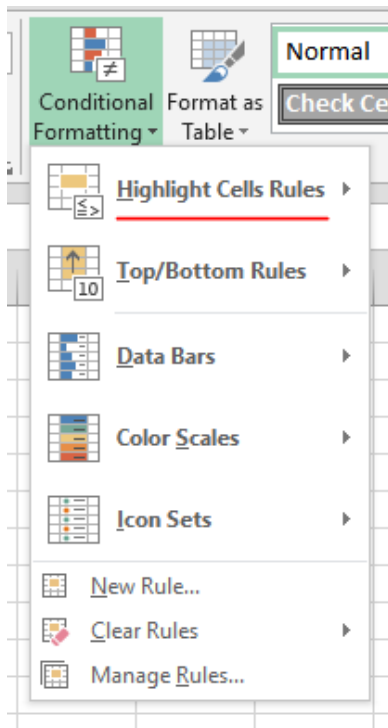
Choosing Highlight Cells Rules then gives us other options. If we wanted to see at a glance, the quarters in which a particular location performed under or over a certain revenue point, or benchmark, we could use these rules to highlight the cell data.
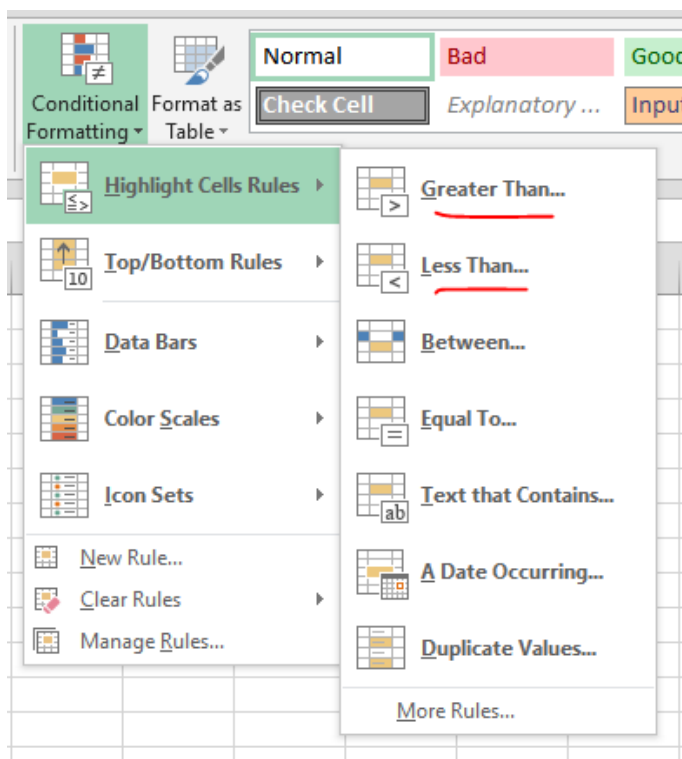
If I wanted to see which days had fewer than 25 deliveries, I would select all the data cells, choose Conditional Formatting, then Highlight Cells Rules, then Less Than and change the suggested value to 25.

To the right of the dialog box, after 'with' you can change what kind of formatting will be applied to the cell. In this case, the default is Light Red Fill with Dark Red Text.

Less Than	? ☓
Format cells that are LESS THAN:	
25	with Light Red Fill with Dark Red Text ⌄
	OK Cancel
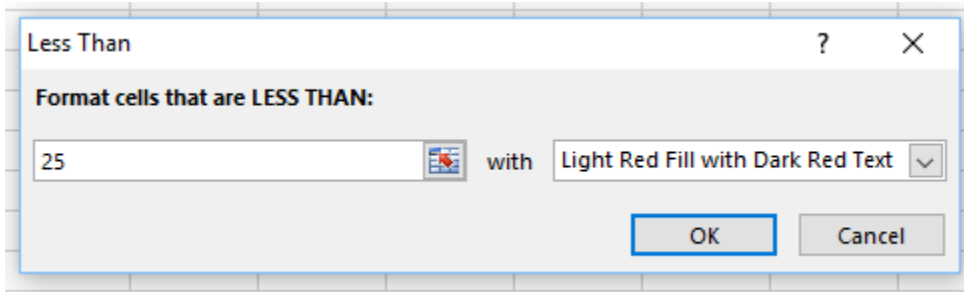
Note that when you change the value to 25 the formatting of the cells happens in real time, even before you press OK.

The results are here:

Date	Deliveries
1-Jan	63
2-Jan	51
3-Jan	99
4-Jan	75
5-Jan	51
6-Jan	53
7-Jan	21
8-Jan	95
9-Jan	86
10-Jan	97
11-Jan	31
12-Jan	26
13-Jan	5
14-Jan	44
15-Jan	72
16-Jan	70
17-Jan	89
18-Jan	38
19-Jan	99
20-Jan	28
21-Jan	64
22-Jan	20
23-Jan	8
24-Jan	48
25-Jan	69
26-Jan	16
27-Jan	84
28-Jan	38
29-Jan	57
30-Jan	92
31-Jan	21

Multiple Conditional Formatting rules are possible. Here I have added a Greater Than rule to highlight any days exceeding 75 deliveries in green.

Date	Deliveries
1-Jan	63
2-Jan	51
3-Jan	99
4-Jan	75
5-Jan	51
6-Jan	53
7-Jan	21
8-Jan	95
9-Jan	86
10-Jan	97
11-Jan	31
12-Jan	26
13-Jan	5
14-Jan	44
15-Jan	72
16-Jan	70
17-Jan	89
18-Jan	38
19-Jan	99
20-Jan	28
21-Jan	64
22-Jan	20
23-Jan	8
24-Jan	48
25-Jan	69
26-Jan	16
27-Jan	84
28-Jan	38
29-Jan	57
30-Jan	92
31-Jan	21

4. If you'd like to remove the Highlight Cells formatting, simply select the data cells, choose Conditional Formatting, and scroll down to Clear Rules.