Conditional Formatting in Excel

Use conditional formatting in Excel to automatically highlight cells based on their content. Apply a rule or use a formula to determine which cells to format.

✦ Highlight Cells Rules

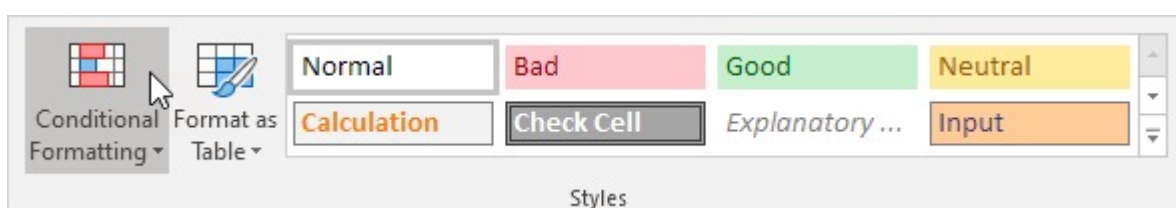To highlight cells that are greater than a value, execute the following steps.

1. Select the range A1:A10.

	A	B
1	14	
2	6	
3	39	
4	43	
5	2	
6	95	
7	5	
8	11	
9	86	
10	57	
11		

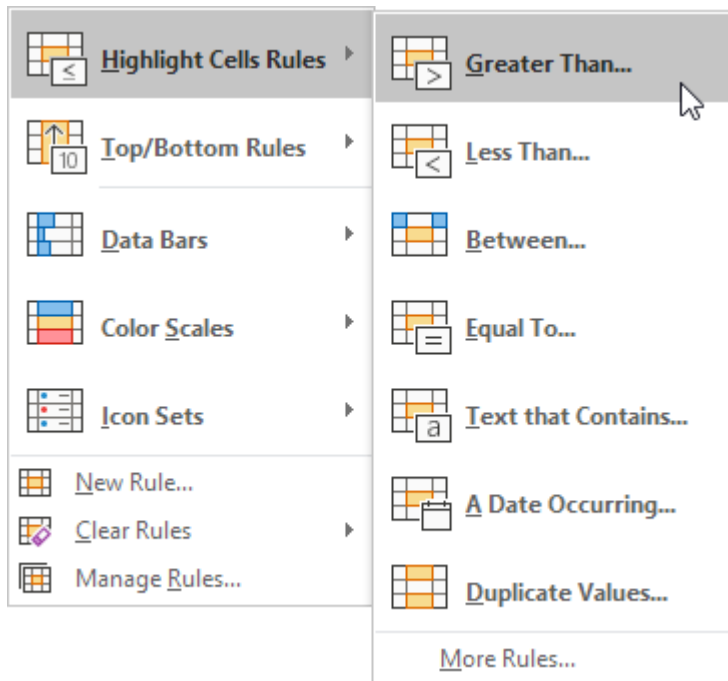**Discover more**

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Data Analysis   >

Microsoft Excel   >

2. On the Home tab, in the Styles group, click Conditional Formatting.

Normal	Bad	Good	Neutral
Calculation	Check Cell	Explanatory ...	Input

Conditional Formatting Format as Table

Styles

3. Click Highlight Cells Rules, Greater Than.

Highlight Cells Rules ▶
Top/Bottom Rules ▶
Data Bars ▶
Color Scales ▶
Icon Sets ▶
New Rule...
Clear Rules ▶
Manage Rules...

Greater Than...
Less Than...
Between...
Equal To...
Text that Contains...
A Date Occurring...
Duplicate Values...
More Rules...

4. Enter the value 80 and select a formatting style.

Greater Than   ?   ✕

Format cells that are GREATER THAN:

80 | with | Light Red Fill with Dark Red Text ∨

OK   Cancel
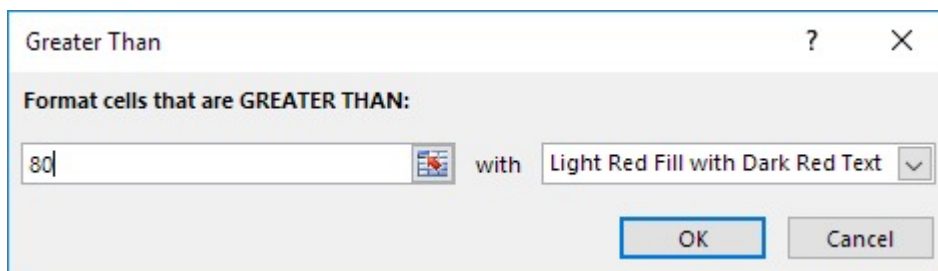
5. Click OK.

Result: Excel highlights the cells that are greater than 80.

	A	B
1	14	
2	6	
3	39	
4	43	
5	2	
6	95	
7	5	
8	11	
9	86	
10	57	
11		

6. Change the value of cell A1 to 81.

Result: Excel changes the format of cell A1 automatically.

	A	B
1	81	
2	6	
3	39	

4	43	
5	2	
6	95	
7	5	
8	11	
9	86	
10	57	
11		

Note: you can also use this category (see step 3) to highlight cells that are less than a value, between two values, equal to a value, cells that contain specific text, dates (today, last week, next month, etc.), duplicates or unique values.

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✦ Clear Rules

To clear a conditional formatting rule, execute the following steps.

1. Select the range A1:A10.

	A	B
1	81	
2	6	
3	39	
4	43	
5	2	
6	95	
7	5	
8	11	
9	86	
10	57	
11		

2. On the Home tab, in the Styles group, click Conditional Formatting.

Normal	Bad	Good	Neutral
Calculation	Check Cell	Explanatory ...	Input

Conditional Formatting ▾   Format as Table ▾

Styles

3. Click Clear Rules, Clear Rules from Selected Cells.
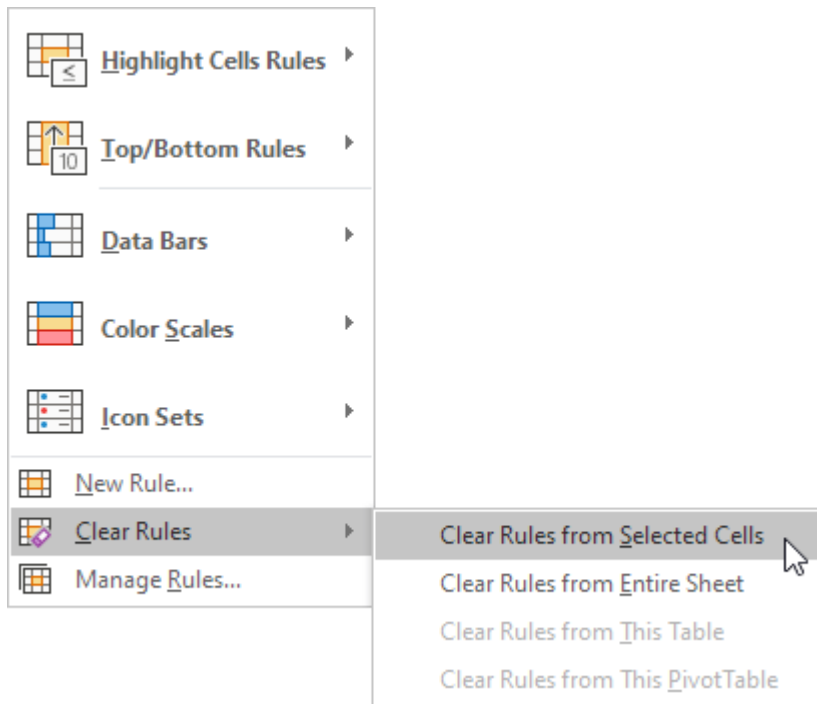
✦ Top/Bottom Rules

To highlight cells that are above average, execute the following steps.

1. Select the range A1:A10.

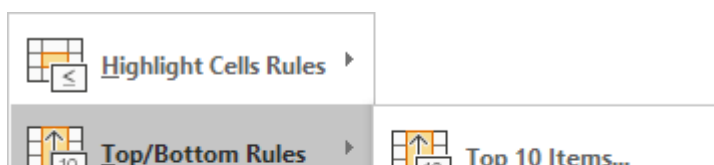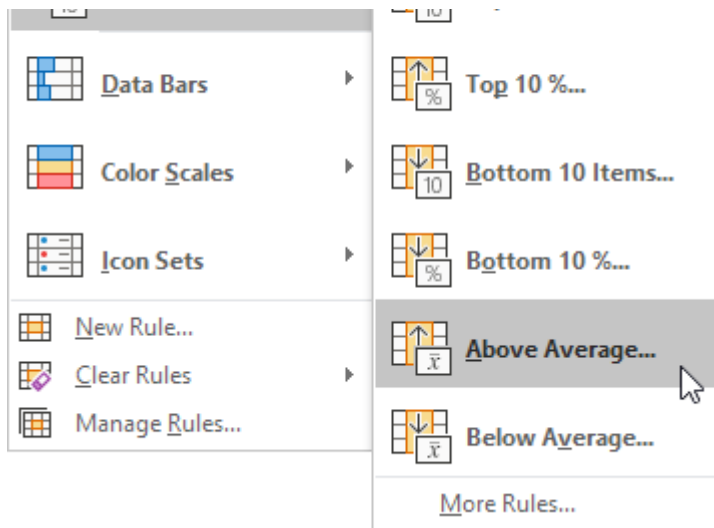2. On the Home tab, in the Styles group, click Conditional Formatting.

3. Click Top/Bottom Rules, Above Average.

4. Select a formatting style.

5. Click OK.

Result: Excel calculates the average (42.5) and formats the cells that are above this average.

Note: you can also use this category (see step 3) to highlight the top n items, the top n percent, the bottom n items, the bottom n percent or cells that are below average.

✦ Conditional Formatting with Formulas

Take your Excel skills to the next level and use a formula to determine which cells to format. Formulas that apply conditional formatting must evaluate to TRUE or FALSE.

1. Select the range A1:E5.

2. On the Home tab, in the Styles group, click Conditional Formatting.
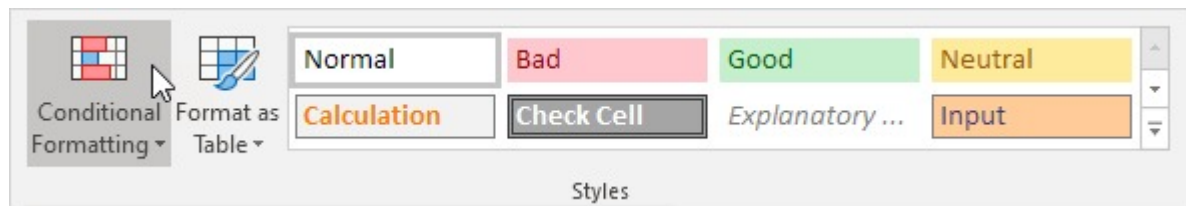
3. Click New Rule.

4. Select 'Use a formula to determine which cells to format'.

5. Enter the formula =ISODD(A1)

6. Select a formatting style and click OK.

Result: Excel highlights all odd numbers.

Explanation: always write the formula for the upper-left cell in the selected range. Excel automatically copies the formula to the other cells. Thus, cell A2 contains the formula =ISODD(A2), cell A3 contains the formula =ISODD(A3), etc.

Here's another example.

7. Select the range A2:D7.

8. Repeat steps 2-4 above.

9. Enter the formula =$C2="USA"

10. Select a formatting style and click OK.

Result: Excel highlights all USA orders.

Explanation: we locked the reference to column C by placing a $ symbol in front of the column letter ($C2). As a result, cell B2, C2 and cell D2 also contain the formula =$C2="USA", cell A3, B3, C3 and D3 contain the formula =$C3="USA", etc.

✦ Color Scales

Use awesome color scales to assign different colors to different values. This allows you to quickly identify high and low points in your dataset.

Tip: learn more about color scales and learn how to create this heat map.

✦ Highlight Blank Cells

You can also use conditional formatting in Excel to format blank cells. This is useful for ensuring data completeness and quickly shows where information is missing.

Tip: learn how to highlight blank cells on our page about blanks.

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Chapter

Learn more, it's easy

- Manage Rules

- Data Bars

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- Icon Sets

- Find Duplicates

⬇ Download Excel File

- conditional-formatting.xlsx

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