

Excel Help

Use the tips below to help you organize your graphs and data in each Excel document. Please refer to our MLB Project page on our Wikispace with questions.

The Basics

Change the Orientation

If the normal up and down (or Portrait) setting is not how you think your document should look, you can change the orientation to left to right (or Landscape) by going to File then Page Setup. Click on the orientation that works best for you!

Change the Margins

Sometimes the data you want to display needs a bit more space to fit on the page. You can decrease (or increase) your margins by going to File then Page Setup. You will see a tab for Margins. Click it and change any of your top, right, left or bottom margins.

View the Toolbars

Life is a little easier when you have shortcuts to all the tools you'll need. To make sure all the toolbars you need are showing, click View then scroll down to Toolbars. Make sure Standard and Formatting are both checked on this menu.

Increase/Decrease Font Size

To change the font size of the entire worksheet, click on the diamond in the left hand corner of the worksheet then in the smaller write box next to the font name. Type in the size you want for your document.

Change Font

To change the font of the entire worksheet, click the diamond then click the drop-down menu of the larger white box. The document should default to Veranda. If you want to change a single cell, click on that cell and follow the above directions.

Cell Alignment

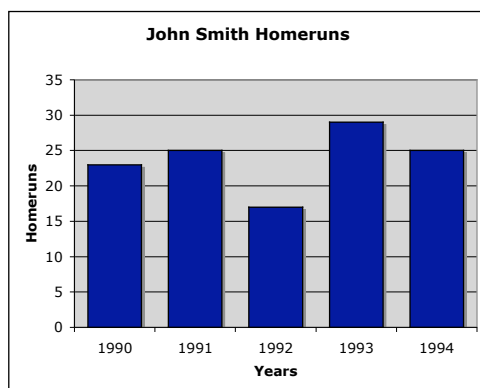
You can align any and all cells in three different ways: left, center, and right. Highlight the cell(s) that you want to align then click the appropriate alignment from the toolbar menu.



Making Charts and Graphs

Sometimes it is necessary to make graphical representations of data to see how it changes over time or how it relates to other information. Excel gives us a quick and (relatively) easy way to do that.

Before you begin making your graph, be sure that you have entered all your information correctly and in the correct order. If you are using years as part of your data, make sure that you enter an apostrophe (') before the year so that Excel knows the information is text and not a value. If you do not do this, the labels for your graph will not show up correctly. Make sure you choose a graph that is appropriate for your information. For example, you should use an XY Scatterplot should be used for plots over time.



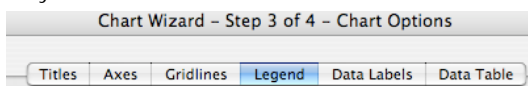
Making a Graph

- Highlight the information that you want included in your graph (not including labels).
- Click on the Chart Wizard icon on the Standard

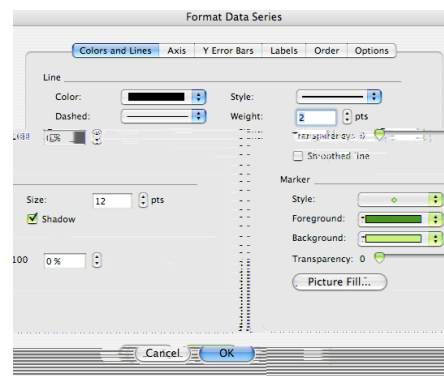
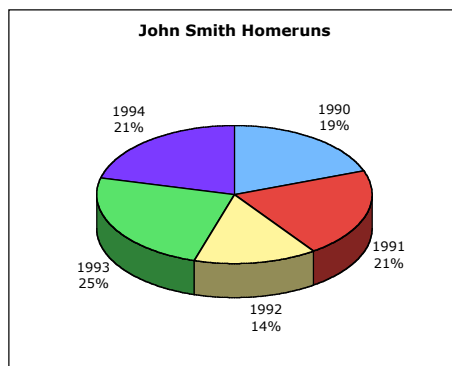
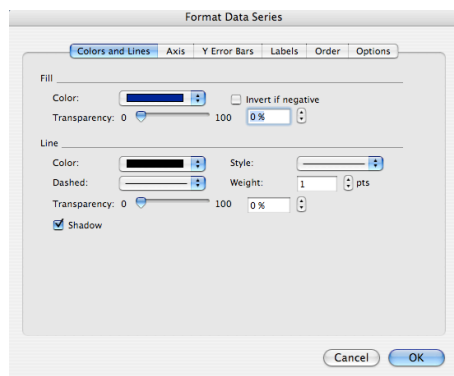


Toolbar at the top of your screen.

- Choose a graph that is appropriate for your information then click Next.
- The next screen asks for your data range. This should already be completed if you highlighted your data. Click Next.



- On the Chart Options window (shown above), highlight the Titles Tab and enter the title for your graph as well as labels for your x and y axes (if needed)
- On this same window, click on the Legend tab and select whether or not you want your Legend (or key) to be visible. On the Data Labels tab, you can select which (if any) labels you want shown for your data. Make your selection then click Finish.
- Your graph will be entered directly onto your active worksheet. You can resize the graph or change fonts, colors, or the size of your bars. (See Additional Tips for more directions.)



Tips for Bar and Column Graphs

There are several ways to make your bar and column graphs more visually pleasing. You can change the color of the bars, outline the bars, and change the font size and color of the title and labels.

Changing the Appearance of the Bars

Once your graph is completed, double-click on one of the bars. A Format Data Series window will pop up (pictured above).

On the Colors and Lines tab...

- Click the drop down menu next to Color and choose which color you would like the bars to be.
- If you want to see the grid lines behind your bars, slide the Transparency bar to the right. This will allow you to see through the bar. Putting it past 20% will make it nearly invisible.
- Click on the drop down menu next to Lines to choose the outline color of the bars. You can also choose a Style (or thickness) for the outline and whether or not you want the line to be Dashed.
- Clicking on the Invert if Negative box will show any negative values as upside down bars.
- Checking the Shadow box will show a gray shadow behind each bar on your graph.
- On the Labels tab, you can choose to show the value or label of each bar.
- On the Options tab, you should have overlap set to zero. Gap is set at 150 making a space between the bars. You can make this gap smaller by reducing this value. You can eliminate these gaps altogether by setting this value to zero. This will cause the bars to touch.

Tips for Pie Charts

Pie Charts are often useful when you are trying to visualize the percentage for pieces of data. This can be helpful in planning your future finances and making a budget.

Changing the Appearance of the Pie

After highlighting your data and clicking chart wizard, you can choose from several different pie charts. A 3-D pie adds more depth to your chart while the 2-D version is a bit more basic. Both graphs will show you the same information.

Once your graph is completed, double-click on the pie to change its appearance.

- In the Format Data Series window, click on the Colors and Lines tab to outline your pie pieces. Click on the drop down menu next to lines and choose a color. You can also choose a Style and whether the line will be dashed (similar to the menu for column and bar graphs). Once you've made your selection, click OK.
- Do not change the color from this window. It will change all your pie pieces to the same color.
- To change the color scheme of the pie graph, open the Formatting Palette by going up to View then Formatting Palette. Click the arrow next to Chart Colors, Lines, and Fills. There is a drop down menu labeled Scheme. Click on it to change the colors of your pie pieces.
- In this window, you can also change the Title of your chart and labels for your x and y axes (if needed) by clicking the arrow next to Chart Options.

Tips for Line Graphs and Scatterplots

When decided to use either a line plot or a scatterplot (XY Scatter), it is important to understand your purpose for the graph. If you are trying to see how two things relate to each other, you may want to use a scatterplot. If you are trying to track trends in the graph over time, you should use a line graph. The only difference between the two is that a line graph will connect the points.

Changing the Appearance of the Line Graph

After picking the appropriate type of line graph, you can change the color and thickness or your line and/or your points.

- Once your graph is completed, click on any line between two of your points. This will open up the Format Data Series window.
- Use the drop down menu next to color to choose the color you want for your line. You can also choose the Style (or thickness) and well as whether the line will be solid or dashed.
- Under the Marker menu on this window, you can choose any marker that you want for your graph. Click the drop down menu next to Style and choose your marker.
- To change the color of the marker, click the drop down menu next to Foreground. This will change the color of the outline of the marker. Clicking background will change the inside color of the marker. These do not have to be the same color.
- To make the marker either larger or smaller, change the value in the Size box.

D O N ' T F O R G E T

- Make sure that the graph you choose makes sense for your information!
- Check to make sure all your graphs are labeled correctly and have titles!
- If you are using years, make sure to type an apostrophe before the year so that Excel sees it as text and not a number. If instead of years you get numbers starting at 1 in your graphs, you forgot the apostrophe!
- If you make a mistake on your chart/graph, click anywhere in the background of your graph, click Chart then Chart Options. This will open up the Chart Options window where you can change the titles, axes, gridlines, legends, and data labels.