

Formatting Your Chart

In Excel 2007, adding formatting to your chart can enhance its overall appearance and clarity. Formatting is also a way to emphasize important areas of your chart.

NOTE: This document assumes that the chart has already been created. To create a chart, refer to Creating a Basic Chart.

What Can Be Formatted

Since the options in the *Format* dialog box change depending on what chart item you choose to customize, it is important to understand what chart items can and cannot be customized.

The following chart items can be filled with colors, patterns, or pictures, as well as adding and/or formatting borders and lines, shadows, and 3-D effects:

- The *Chart Area* (i.e., the charting space that the plot area and all label boxes rest on)
- The *Plot Area* (i.e., the area that the graph image appears on)
- All label boxes (i.e., chart titles, axis titles, legends, data labels, and data tables)
- Data series in an *Area* chart
- Data series in a *Surface* chart

The following graphical items cannot be filled with colors, patterns, or pictures, but can add and/or format their borders and connection lines, shadows, or 3-D effects:

- Columns and bars
- Lines
- Pie and doughnut slices
- Bubbles
- Radar lines


If you are formatting any chart items from the Analysis group (in the *Layout* command tab), note that the following options are available for each function:

- Trendlines can only format their lines and add shadows
- Lines and Error Bars can only format their lines
- Up/Down Bars can add and/or format colors, patterns, and pictures, borders and lines, shadows, and 3-D effects

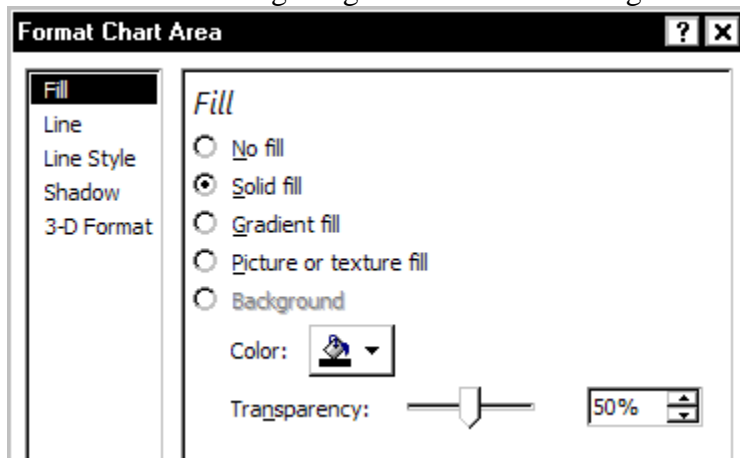
The Format Dialog Box

The *Format* dialog box is the primary tool you will use to format your charts. The options in this dialog box change depending on what chart item you choose to customize.

To access the *Format* dialog box:

1. Right click the chart item you want to customize » select **Format (chart item)**  the *Format* dialog box appears.


NOTE: The following image is the *Format* dialog box for the *Chart Area*:



2. Select the desired options
3. Click **CLOSE**


Applying Chart Layouts

Excel provides several preformatted chart layouts to help you stylize your chart. Chart layouts can change the positioning of chart items, such as the title, legend, axes.

1. Select your chart by clicking it
2. From the *Design* command tab, in the *Chart Layouts* group, click **MORE**  a list of layouts appears.
3. Click the layout you prefer the layout is applied to your chart.

Applying Chart Styles

Excel provides several preformatted chart styles to help you stylize your chart. Chart styles are pre-formatted colors, backgrounds, shading, gradients, and other formatting elements that can give your charts a consistent aesthetic appeal.

1. Select your chart by clicking it
2. From the *Design* command tab, in the *Chart Styles* group, click **MORE**  A list of styles appears.

3. Click the style you prefer the style is applied to your chart.



Filling Areas with Colors, Patterns, and Pictures

Many chart items can be filled with a color, picture, or texture. These items are normally in areas where information is placed. To apply fill effects to your chart, refer to Using Fill Effects in Excel and PowerPoint.

Adding Borders and Formatting Lines

If the chart item you want to customize rests in a box or is a box, you can add and format a border. If the item is a line, you can format the line. If the item is a series of points, you can add and format its connection line.

NOTE: Since the steps to format borders, connection lines, and lines are similar, Excel uses the term *line* to categorize each term. The following steps will also refer to these chart items as *lines*.

1. On your chart, right click the chart item you want to format » select **Format (Chart Item)**
 the *Format* dialog box appears.
2. From the categories list, select **Line** the *Format* dialog box refreshes to display *Line* options.
3. To delete any line formatting, click **NO LINE**
4. For a single line
 - a. Select **Solid Line**
 - b. To add a color to your line, click **COLOR**  » select the color you prefer
 - c. To change the transparency of the line, move the *Transparency* slider
5. For a line with a color blend
 - a. Select **Gradient Line**
 - b. To choose a gradient color scheme, click **PRESET COLORS** » select the colors you prefer
 - c. To choose a style of gradient flow, click **TYPE** » select the style you prefer
 - d. To choose a different gradient starting point, click **DIRECTION** » select the direction you prefer
6. To give your line-rounded corners, select **Rounded Corners**
NOTE: Not all chart items that can format their lines have this option available.
7. From the categories list, select **Line Style** the *Format* dialog box refreshes to display *Line Style* options.
8. To change the width of the line, in the *Width* text box, type the width you prefer
OR use the nudge buttons to select the desired width
9. To add multiple lines to your line, click **COMPOUND TYPE** » select the style you prefer
10. To add dashes to your line, click **DASH TYPE** » select the style you prefer


11. To change the appearance of line caps (i.e., corners at the end of a line), from the *Cap type* pull down-list, select the style you prefer
12. To change the appearance of line joints, from the *Join type* pull-down list » select the style you prefer
13. When finished, click **CLOSE** the formatting is applied.

Creating an Exploding Pie or Doughnut Slice

In pie and doughnut charts, slices can be pulled out from their original positions to draw attention to them. This is effective when indicating significance to one or more slices.

NOTE: With doughnut charts, you may only explode the outermost ring.

If you have already created your chart, you can change the chart type to a pie or doughnut chart that has pre-exploded slices. If your chart is an unexploded pie or doughnut chart, you may customize the exploded pieces by following these steps:

1. Select the pie chart by clicking it
2. On the pie chart, click and hold the slice you want to explode the cursor changes to become a four-headed arrow .
3. Drag the slice away from the chart
4. Release the mouse button the slice is exploded.
5. OPTIONAL: To explode more slices, repeat steps 2–4

Adding Shadows

Adding shadows to your chart items brings depth to your chart. A chart item that has a shadow seems to rise away from the page, which is useful to denote significance. For this reason, use shadows sparingly. To add shadows, refer to *Modifying Objects in Excel and PowerPoint: Adding Shadows*.

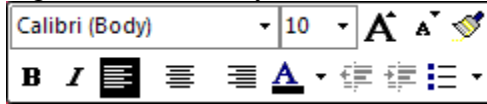
Adding 3-D Effects

3-D effects can give your chart the effect of roundness, texture, and depth. Where shadows give the appearance of information rising off the chart area, bevels give the appearance of information standing taller than other material on the chart area. Chart items with a 3-D effect appear to be more significant than items without a 3-D effect. For this reason, use 3-D effects sparingly. To add 3-D effects, refer to *Modifying Objects in Excel and PowerPoint: Adding 3-D Effects*.

Adjusting Chart Fonts

You may customize the type specifications (e.g., font, size, color) of your chart elements.

1. Right click the text you want to format the *Mini Toolbar* appears.



2. Make your formatting changes

HINT: For more information, refer to [Working with Text Options: Changing Font, Size, and Color](#).

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