

Getting Ready to Chart

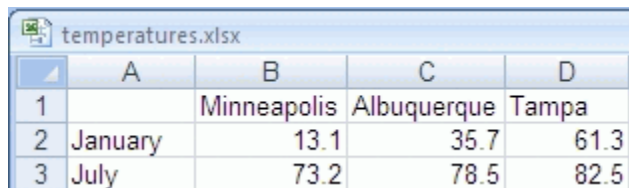
Worksheets can be formatted to make creating a new chart easy. This document gives an overview of several ways to lay out your worksheet when preparing to create a chart. However, before you make your chart, you should consider creating range names for your data. Specifying range names in advance will decrease the potential for errors and enable you to add more data later.

Designing Your Worksheet for Charting

You have two basic options for setting up your worksheet. You can choose to design your worksheet so the information to be charted is close together, or, if you want to chart only certain parts of your data, you can create a summary section for charting. The best option for you will depend on what the worksheet is designed to do.

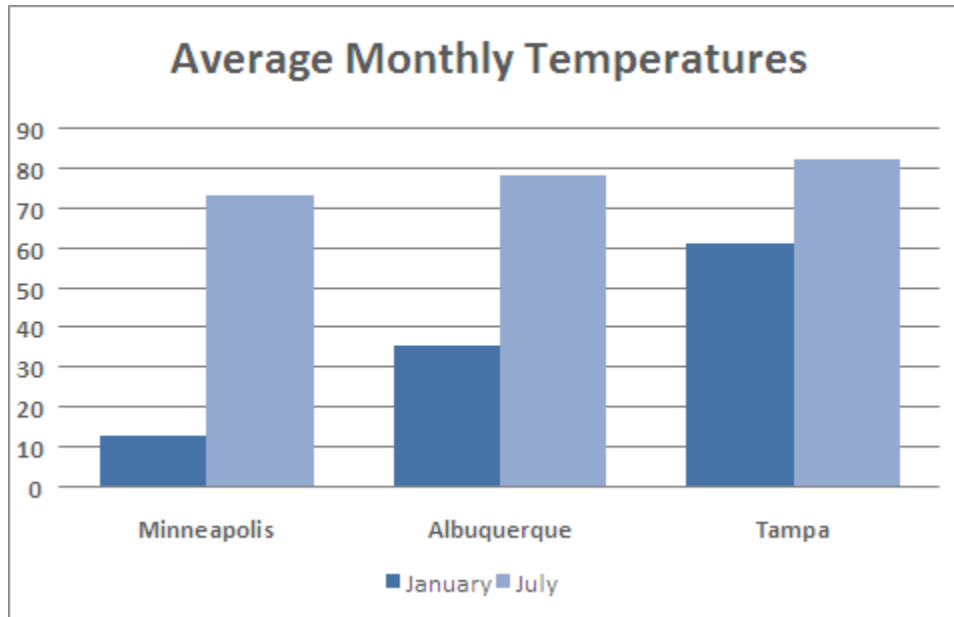
HINT: Your chart will require the least amount of manual adjustments if the information to be charted is contained in a contiguous group of cells.

The more information contained in contiguous cells for charting, the less work you will have to do when creating your chart. Based on the Charting Rules, an organization style similar to the following graphic will make automatic charting easier. While this setup may not always be appropriate, note that this format can reduce the amount of manual adjustments required for your charts.



	A	B	C	D
1		Minneapolis	Albuquerque	Tampa
2	January	13.1	35.7	61.3
3	July	73.2	78.5	82.5

The graphic on the previous page is a sample worksheet section used to create the chart below. While the user needs to place the chart within the worksheet and initiate its creation, the organization of the data allows Excel to create and format the chart automatically.



Charts can be enhanced by modifying the individual chart elements or by adding a new data series. Notice that the chart title is not included in the chart. Excel requires that this be added after the chart is created.

Working with Range Names

Before you create your chart, you should create range names to represent the data on your worksheet. Range names refer to specific groups of cells. Range names are often used for cell references in functions, charting, and printing. Using range names when creating a chart rather than using the cell references will reduce the chance of error and allow you to add data to your chart in the future. For more information on range names, refer to Referencing Cells with Names or Working with Data Series and Data Ranges.

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