

Formatting Data

You always want your work to look great! Formatting your spreadsheets is just as important as formatting your word processing documents. The graphical user interface for formatting a spreadsheet is very similar to the GUI in a word processing application and other applications. After you format your spreadsheet, you need to make sure it is properly set up for printing.

Format Menu and Toolbar

- **Font.** You can change the font, size, and style from either the Format menu or toolbar. You should use fonts that make your data easy to read. Use bold and italic sparingly for headings or emphasis. The Format menu offers more font choices than the toolbar.
- **Alignment.** A spreadsheet automatically aligns numbers to the right of a cell and words to the left. In most cases, this makes both numbers and words easier to read. Sometimes, you may want to change the alignment of a cell. For example, it is usually a good idea to center column headings. You can change alignment from either the Format menu or toolbar.
- **Numbers and Dates.** The ability to format numbers and dates is one of the most useful features of a spreadsheet. For example, you can choose the number of decimal places to display in a cell, row, or column. Another common number format is for percentages. For example, you can format the value 0.80 display as 80%, 80.0%, 80.00%, and so forth. The value of the data does not change, only the appearance of the data in the spreadsheet. You can change some number and date formats from the Format toolbar and many more are available from the Format menu.
- **Merge and Center.** Sometimes you may want to combine two or more cells into one cell. This usually happens when you want to create a heading for two or more columns. All you have to do is select the cells you want to merge and click the Merge And Center icon on the Formatting toolbar. Make sure the text for the heading is in the left-most cell. The contents of the other cells you merge will be lost.
- **Borders.** You can create borders for cells from either the Format menu or toolbar. Borders are especially useful for separating column headings from data. You should use borders sparingly in most cases.
- **Color.** You can change font color and the background color of cells from either the Format menu or toolbar. Color can make a spreadsheet much more attractive to view, but too much color can make it difficult to read. Be smart about what colors you use and how much you use them!
- **Column Width.** You can change column width from the format menu. You can also drag the line that separates one column from the next. You want to make sure that a column is wide enough to display all the data it contains. Autofit automatically adjusts the column width to accommodate your data.
- **Row Height.** You can change row height from the Format menu. You can also drag the line that separates one row from the next. Adjusting row height can make your spreadsheet more attractive and easier to read.

File Menu

- **Page Setup.** Page Setup allows you to control how a spreadsheet will look when it is printed. You can change the page orientation from portrait to landscape when the width of your data is greater than the height. You can reduce the size of a spreadsheet to fit onto a page. You can change the margins or create a header or footer to display at the top or bottom of each printed page. You can set a print area if you only want to print a certain part of a spreadsheet. You can set print titles so that column or row headings appear on every page. This is useful when your data requires more than one page to print. Page Setup is accessible from the File menu or Print Preview mode.
- **Print Preview.** Print Preview allows you to see how a spreadsheet will look when it is printed. You can enter Print Preview mode from the File menu or the Standard toolbar.
- **Print.** You can print a spreadsheet from the File menu or while in Print Preview mode.