

Making Excel Work for Your Tribal Community

Excel Basics:
Navigating Excel



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MAKING EXCEL WORK FOR YOUR TRIBAL COMMUNITY

Excel Basics: Navigating Excel

If you're a first-time or infrequent Excel user, just opening an Excel file might feel like getting dumped in the middle of a big, foreign city with no map—and all of the road signs are in another language. However, once you learn your way around, you'll feel right at home. In this document, we'll map out the basic areas of Excel and the tools you'll find there. In the rest of this learning series, we'll talk about how to use these tools to create or enhance your own spreadsheets.

Finding Excel

Excel comes as part of the standard Microsoft Office suite. If you have Microsoft Word, you probably have Excel. Look for a green icon with a white "X" on it. The icon might look slightly different depending on what version of Office you have.



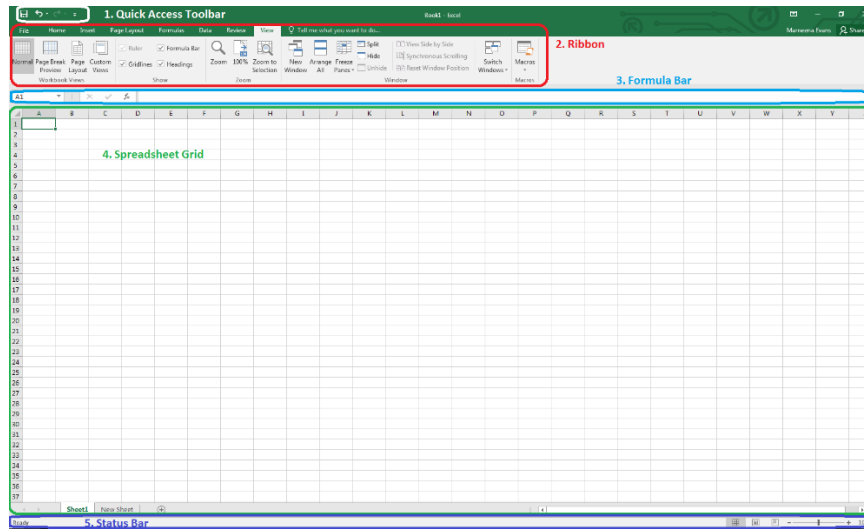
For this learning series, we will be using instructions and examples based on Office 2016. If you have an older or newer version of Excel, the menus might look a little different, but the basic functions of Excel haven't changed.

If you don't have Microsoft Office, you can purchase it relatively inexpensively anywhere that sells computers or software.

Tip: Microsoft has introduced Office 365, which is an internet-based subscription version of Office. Unlike other versions of Office that you pay for only once, Office 365 requires you to pay every year to continue using it. Be sure you know which version you're buying!

Navigating Excel

When you open an Excel file, you'll see five basic areas on the screen:



1. **Quick Access Toolbar:** This small toolbar at the top of the screen has little icons for the most commonly used features, like Save and Undo. By clicking on the dropdown arrow on the right-hand side of the toolbar, you can add other icons you'd like to have easily available.
2. **Ribbon:** The ribbon displays menus of Excel's various tools. The Home ribbon displays by default because it contains the groups of tools you will use most often:
 - Cut and Paste tools
 - Formatting tools
 - Data management tools
3. **Formula Bar:** When you type numbers, text, or formulas into any cell, they will also show up in the Formula Bar at the same time. You can also type directly into the Formula Bar to enter information into a cell. The Formula Bar can be especially useful when typing something long because it displays more text than you'll see while typing in a cell.
4. **Spreadsheet Grid:** The spreadsheet grid is where all your data goes. It's made up of rows (going across the screen) and columns (going up and down and identified by numbers). Cells are the spaces where the rows and columns intersect (e.g., cell A1 is the first cell on the top left corner of the spreadsheet).
5. **Status Bar:** The status bar can give you information about what Excel is doing, what page you're on, or whether you have the caps lock on. However, the most useful feature of the status bar are the view controls on the right side; these let you zoom in or out and switch to different helpful views of your spreadsheet.