

Use conditional formatting rules in Google Sheets

Cells, rows, or columns can be formatted to change text or background color if they meet certain conditions. For example, if they contain a certain word or a number.

1. On your computer, open a spreadsheet in [Google Sheets](#).
2. Select the cells you want to apply format rules to.
3. Click **Format** and then **Conditional formatting**. A toolbar will open to the right.
4. Create a rule.
 - **Single color**: Under "Format cells if," choose the condition that you want to trigger the rule. Under "Formatting style, choose what the cell will look like when conditions are met.
 - **Color scale**: Under "Preview," select the color scale. Then, choose a minimum and maximum value, and an optional midpoint value. To choose the value category, click the Down arrow Down Arrow.
5. Click **Done**.

[Example](#)

A teacher can highlight test scores to see which students scored less than 80%.

1. On your computer, open a spreadsheet in [Google Sheets](#).
2. Select the test scores.
3. Click **Format** and then **Conditional formatting**.
4. Under "Format cells if," click **Less than**. If there's already a rule, click it or **Add new rule** and then **Less than**.
5. Click **Value or formula** and enter 0.8.
6. To choose a red color, click Fill Color fill.
7. Click **Done**. The low scores will be highlighted in red.

Use advanced conditional formatting

[Use custom formulas with conditional formatting](#)

You can use custom formulas to apply formatting to one or more cells based on the contents of other cells.

1. On your computer, open a spreadsheet in [Google Sheets](#).
2. Select the cells you want to format.
3. Click **Format** and then **Conditional formatting**.
4. Under the "Format cells if" drop-down menu, click **Custom formula is**. If there's already a rule, click it or **Add new rule** and then **Custom formula is**.
5. Click **Value or formula** and add the formula and rules.
6. Click **Done**.

Note: Formulas can only reference the same sheet, using standard notation "(='sheetname'!cell)."

To reference another sheet in the formula, use the [INDIRECT](#) function.

Example 1

To highlight when there's more than one occurrence of the same value in your data:

1. On your computer, open a spreadsheet in [Google Sheets](#).
2. Select the range you want to format. For example, cells A1 to A100.
3. Click **Format** and then **Conditional formatting**.
4. Under the "Format cells if" drop-down menu, click **Custom formula is**. If there's already a rule, click it or **Add new rule** and then **Custom formula is**.
5. Write the rule for the first row. In this case the rule would be, "`=COUNTIF(A1:A100,A1)>1.`"
6. Choose other formatting properties.
7. Click **Done**.

Example 2

To format an entire row based on the value of one of the cells in that row:

1. On your computer, open a spreadsheet in [Google Sheets](#).
2. Select the range you want to format, for example, columns A:E.
3. Click **Format** and then **Conditional formatting**.
4. Under the "Format cells if" drop-down menu, click **Custom formula is**. If there's already a rule, click it or **Add new rule** and then **Custom formula is**.
5. Write the rule for the first row. For example, if you want to make the whole row green if the value in column B is "Yes", write a formula like "`=$B1="Yes".`"
6. Choose other formatting properties.

7. Click **Done**.

Absolute vs. relative references

Often, you will need to add dollar signs (\$) in front of letters and numbers in formulas so that the formatting is applied using absolute references as opposed to relative references (A1 to B1, A2 to B2).

[Use wildcard characters with conditional formatting](#)

You can use wildcard characters to match multiple expressions. Wildcard characters can be used with the "Text contains" or "Text does not contain" fields while formatting.

- To match any single character, use a question mark (?). For example, a text rule containing "a?c" would format cells with "abc," but not "ac" or "abbc."
- To match zero (0) or more characters, use an asterisk (*). For example, a text rule containing "a*c" would format cells with "abc," "ac," and "abbc" but not "ab" or "ca."
- To match a question mark or asterisk in text, you can escape the wildcard characters by adding a tilde (~) in front of them. For example, a text rule containing "a~?c" would format cells with "a?c" but not "abc" or "a~?c."

Notes:

- To remove a rule, point to the rule and click Remove Remove.
- Rules are evaluated in the order listed. The first rule found to be true will define the format of the cell or range. To reorder rules, click and drag them.
- If you copy and paste from a cell or range that has formatting rules, these rules will be applied when you paste the copied data.

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