



University Information  
Technology Services

**ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES IN  
MICROSOFT EXCEL 2010**

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## **Introduction**

This document has been developed to provide you with information about accessibility and Microsoft Excel 2010. In this document, you will learn about the tools available for accessibility. You will also learn how to control the visual appearance of your spreadsheet. Additionally, *best practices* and *effective spreadsheet structure* are also covered to help you when using Excel.

## **Objectives**

The following learning objectives for accessibility will be covered in this document:

- The available tools
- How to use the keyboard to work with ribbon programs
- Controlling the visual appearance of the spreadsheet
- Best practices for spreadsheet design
- Effective spreadsheet structure
- How to use the accessibility checker
- How to obtain help

## Tools

The following explains how various tools can be used effectively for accessibility with Microsoft Excel 2010.

### AutoCorrect

The AutoCorrect feature in Excel 2010 is a list of words that are frequently misspelled and mistyped. This feature corrects these words when a person enters them into a document. The words can be added and deleted from the list. This is a great tool for accessibility.

This tool can also be used for abbreviation expansion. For example, suppose that you frequently type *Atlanta, Georgia*, but would like to enter an abbreviation into AutoCorrect so that fewer keystrokes are required for entry. The following explains how to use the AutoCorrect tool for abbreviation expansion:

1. Click the *File* tab (see *Figure 1*).

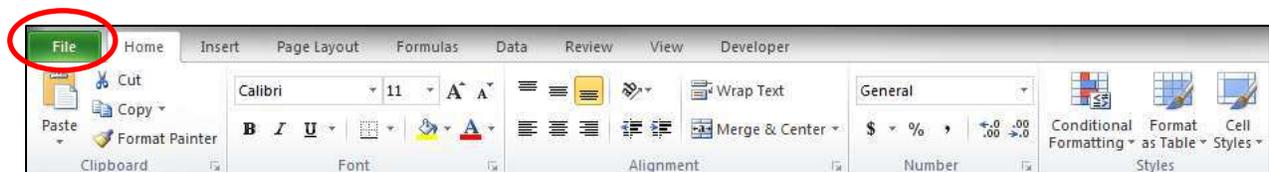


Figure 1 – File tab

2. Click the *Options* button (see *Figure 2*).

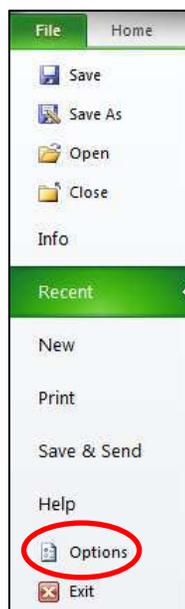


Figure 2 – Options button

3. Click the *Proofing* button (see *Figure 3*).

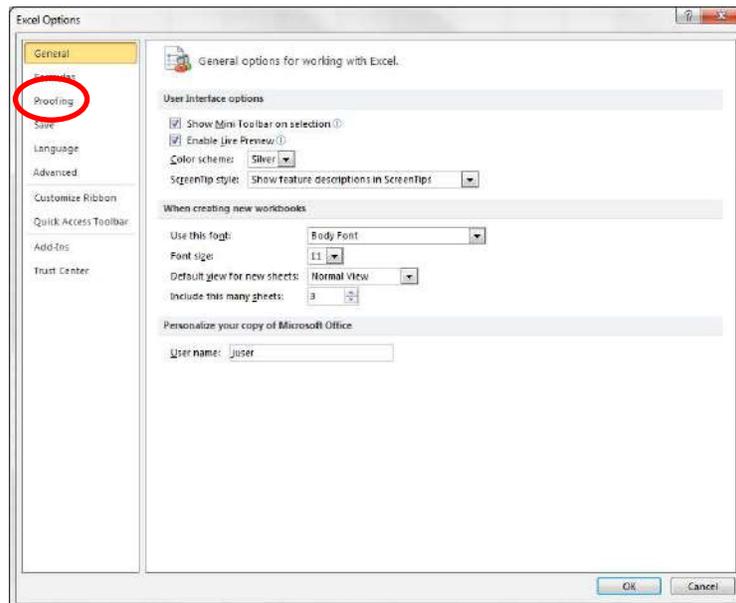


Figure 3 – Proofing button

4. Click the *AutoCorrect Options* button (see *Figure 4*).

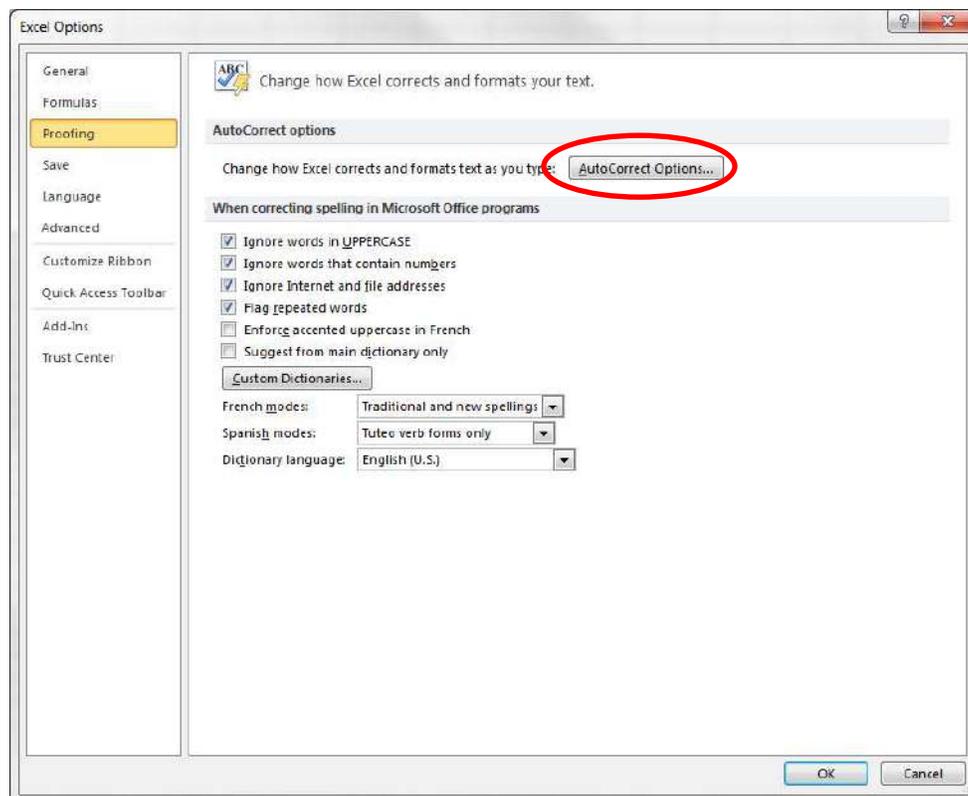


Figure 4 – AutoCorrect Options button

5. In the *Replace* box (see Figure 5), enter an abbreviation for *Atlanta, Georgia*. For example, you could enter *xAGA* (the *x* stands for expand).

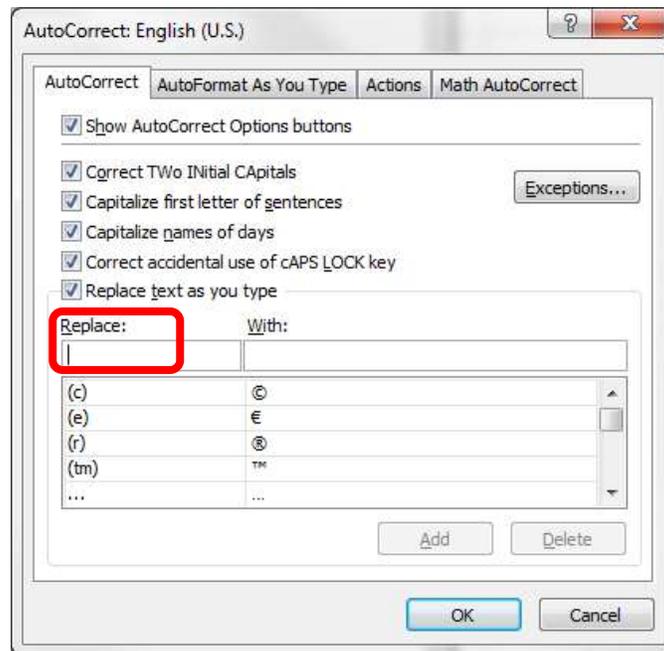


Figure 5 – Autocorrect

6. In the *With* box, enter *Atlanta, Georgia* (see Figure 6).

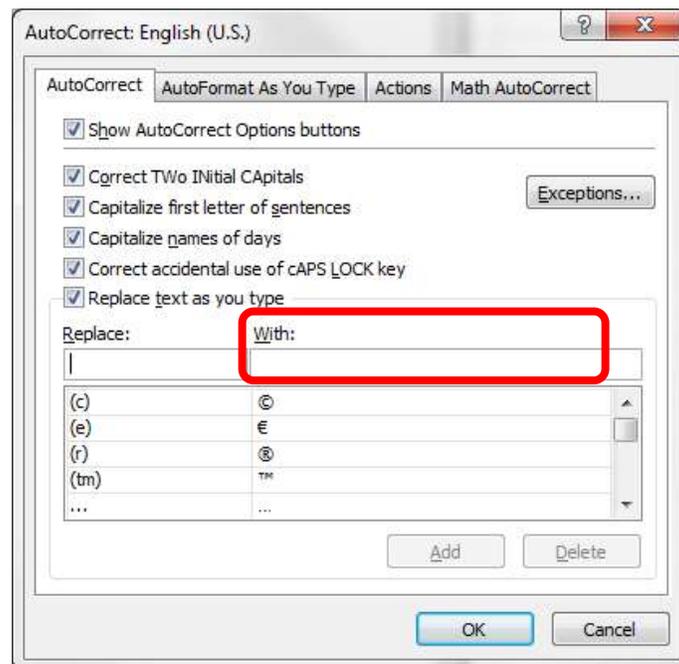


Figure 6 – Autocorrect

7. Click the *Add* button (see *Figure 7*).

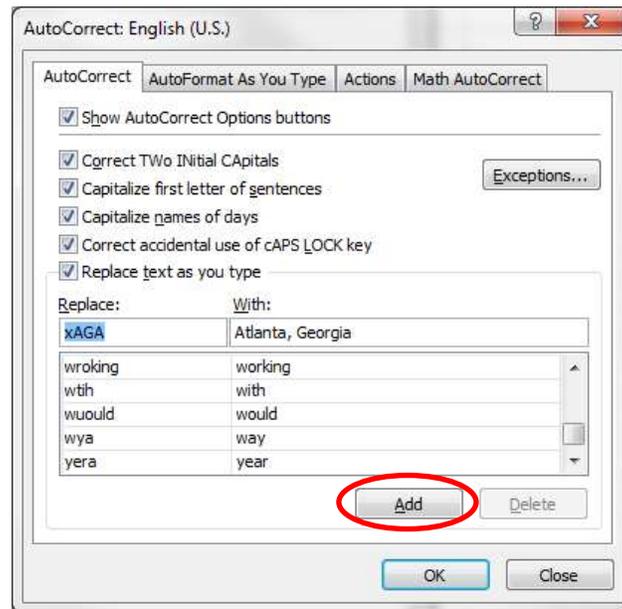


Figure 7 – Autocorrect

8. Click the *OK* button (see *Figure 8*).

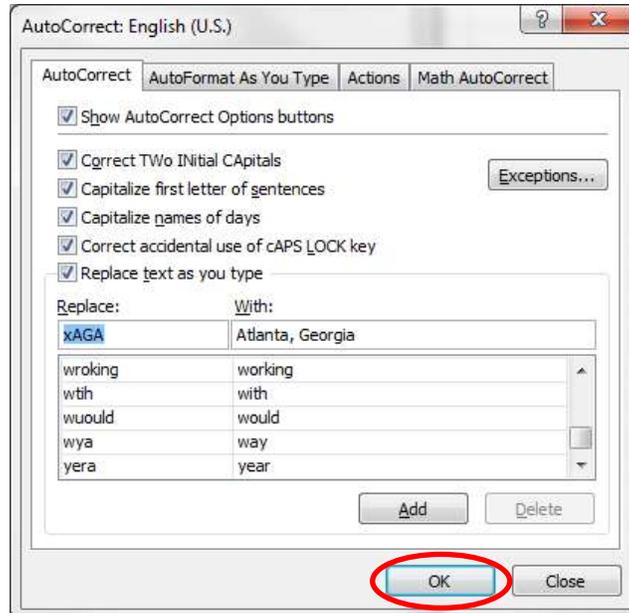


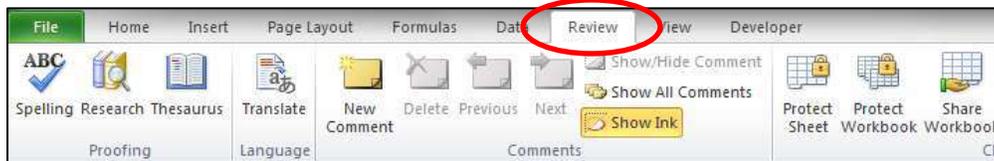
Figure 8 – Autocorrect

When **xAGA** is typed into Excel, the words **Atlanta, Georgia**, will appear on the screen. This abbreviation expansion could also be used for phrases, sentences, and paragraphs.

## Comments

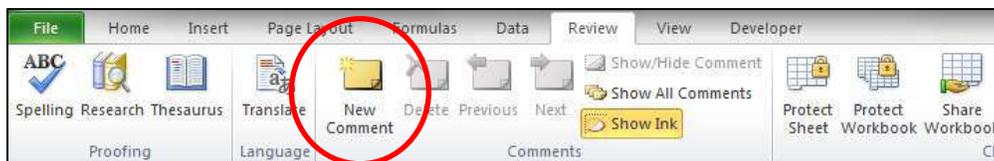
Comments are another tool that can be used for accessibility. Comments can be inserted in a spreadsheet to help improve the contents. The following instructions explain how to insert a comment.

1. Place your cursor in the cell where the comment will be inserted.
2. Click the *Review* tab (see *Figure 9*).



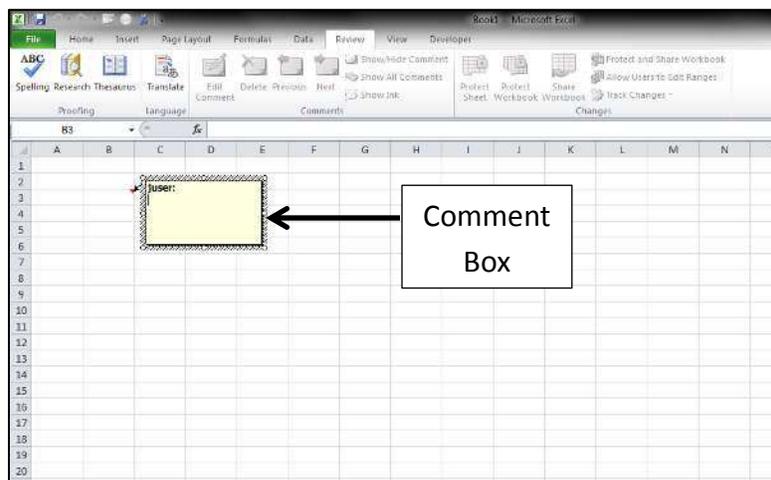
*Figure 9 – Review Tab*

3. Then, click *New Comment* (see *Figure 10*).



*Figure 10 – New Comment Button*

4. Enter a comment in the box that appears (see *Figure 11*).



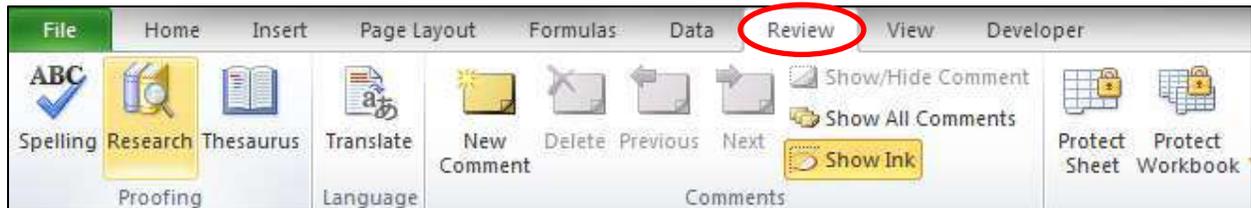
*Figure 11 – Comment Bubble*

To remove a comment, right-click on the cell containing the comment and then select *Delete Comment*.

## Spelling

The spelling feature in Excel 2010 allows you to double-check the spelling to strengthen your spreadsheet. To start the spelling feature, follow the steps below.

1. Click the *Review* tab (see *Figure 12*).



*Figure 12 – Review Tab*

2. Click the *Spelling* button (see *Figure 13*).



*Figure 13 – Spelling*

3. The Spelling feature will start and give you the option to accept or reject the suggestions offered.

## Thesaurus

The thesaurus is a great tool to improve the vocabulary used within the spreadsheet. To display the thesaurus, follow the instructions listed below.

1. Place the cursor on the target word.
2. Click the *Review* tab (see *Figure 14*).



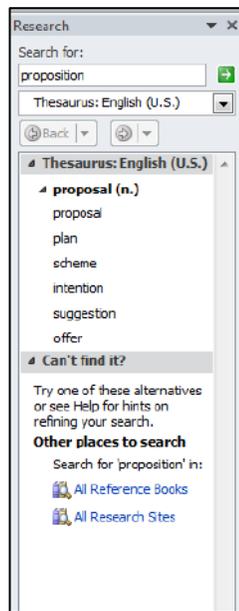
*Figure 14 – Review Tab*

3. In the *Proofing* area, click *Thesaurus* (see *Figure 15*).



*Figure 15 – Thesaurus*

4. A window will appear on the screen showing other potential words that could be used in the place of the selected word (see *Figure 16*).



*Figure 16 – Thesaurus*

## **Templates**

The template feature is another great tool for accessibility. Templates allow the user to have a spreadsheet available that has been customized with items such as name, date, etc. The background color, font style, font color, text size, etc. can be customized for the user as well. To create a template, follow the instructions below.

1. Open a spreadsheet.
2. Enter any necessary text in the spreadsheet as desired.
3. Apply settings to the spreadsheet, such as background color, text size, etc.

4. Click the *File* tab (see *Figure 17*).

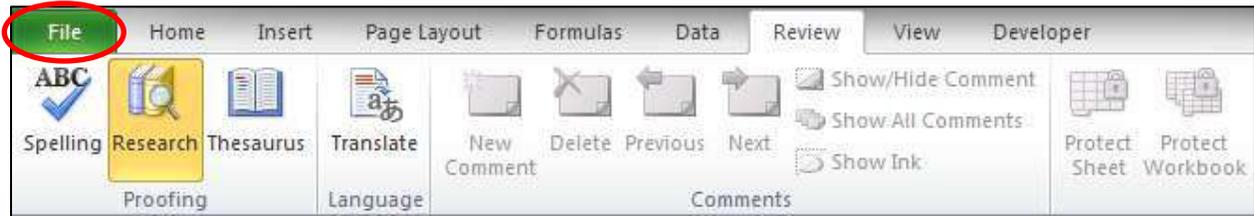


Figure 17 – File Tab

5. Click *Save As* (see *Figure 18*).



Figure 18 – Save As

6. In the *Save As* dialogue box, enter the filename. Then, for *Save as type*, select *Excel Template* (see *Figure 19*).

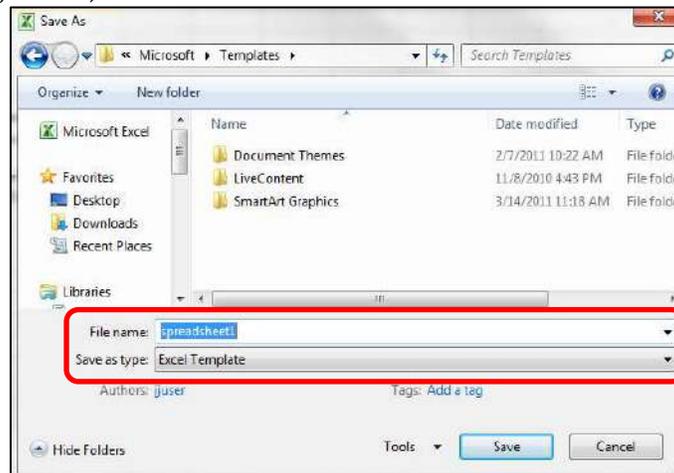


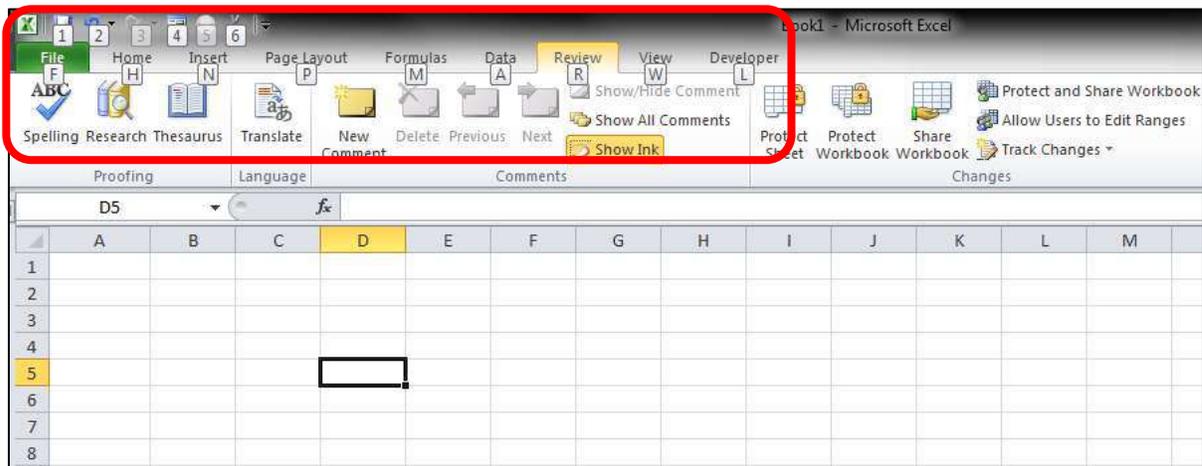
Figure 19 – Save As

7. Click the *Save* button.

## Using the Keyboard to Work with Ribbon Programs

Some users may prefer using the keyboard as they work with Microsoft Excel. *Access Keys* allow you to control each button on the ribbon with the keyboard. The following instructions explain how to use *Access Keys*.

1. Press and release the *Alt* key on the keyboard.
2. You will see letters and numbers appear next to the buttons on the ribbon (see *Figure 20*).



*Figure 20* – Letters and Numbers on the Ribbon

3. Press the number or letter of your choice. If you select a letter for one of the tabs on the ribbon, the tab will become selected and you will see a letter or number for each command on the selected tab.
4. Continue to press letters or numbers until you accomplish your goal. If a window opens in Excel, use the tab key to move the cursor throughout the window. The space bar will allow you to place a check-mark in the check boxes that are available.

## Controlling the Visual Appearance of your Spreadsheet

Excel 2010 has many features available to control the visual appearance of your document, which can help with accessibility.

### Highlight Tool

The highlight tool allows you to draw attention to a certain part of the spreadsheet. The highlight tool can be found on the *Home* tab in the *Font* category (see *Figure 21*).

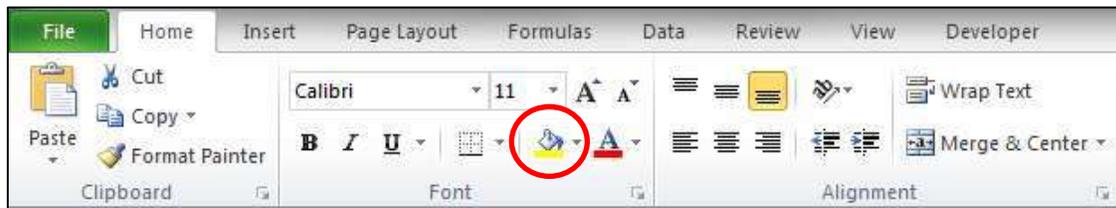


Figure 21 – Highlight Tool

### Fonts

You can determine what font you want included within your spreadsheet. The active font may be changed on the *Home* tab in the *Font* category (see *Figure 22*).

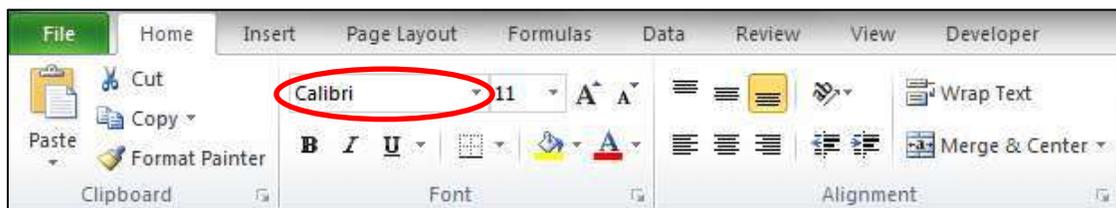


Figure 22 – Fonts

The following fonts are considered easy to read: *Arial*, *Verdana*, and *Helvetica*. Fonts that are bold make the words appear larger. The *Bold* button is found on the *Home* tab in the *Font* category.

### Font Color

This tool gives you the ability to change the color of your text. You will find this tool on the *Home* tab in the *Font* category (see *Figure 23*).

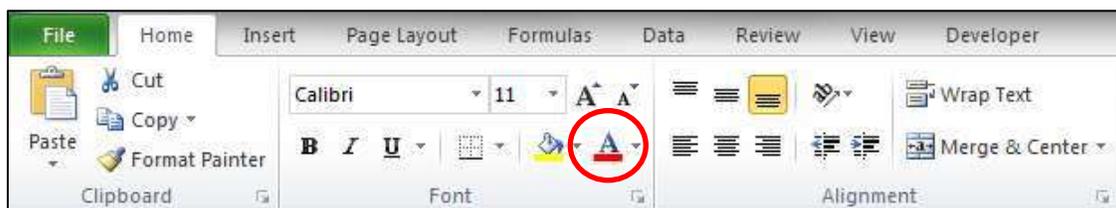


Figure 23 – Font Color

## Cell Spacing

Cell spacing will increase/decrease the amount of space within a cell. The following instructions explain how to adjust the size of the cell.

1. To increase/decrease the height of the cell, allow your mouse pointer to hover between the numbers on the left side of the spreadsheet so that it appears as a double-arrow (see *Figure 24*).

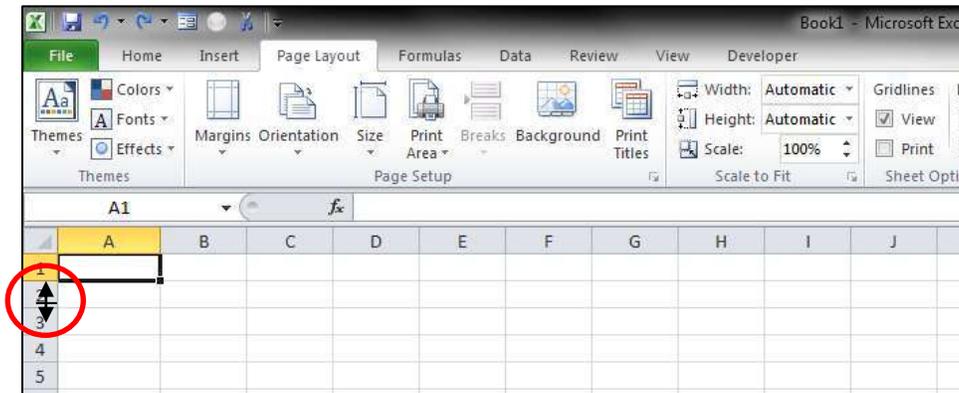


Figure 24 – Cell Spacing

2. Hold the mouse button down and move the mouse up or down. This will change the height of the cell.
3. To increase/decrease the width of the cell, allow your mouse pointer to hover between the letters on the top of the spreadsheet so that it appears as a double-arrow (see *Figure 25*).

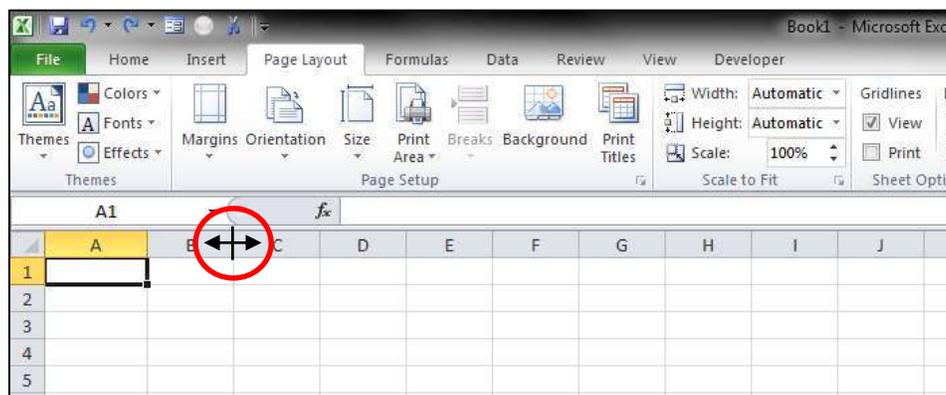


Figure 25 – Cell Spacing

4. Hold the mouse button down and move the mouse to the left or right. This will adjust the width of the cell.

## Zoom

The *Zoom* tool magnifies the spreadsheet on the screen. However, this will not change the appearance of the spreadsheet when it is printed. The tool can be found on the *View* tab in the *Zoom* category (see *Figure 26*).



*Figure 26 – Zoom*

## Zoom to Selection

The *Zoom to Selection* button can help to improve accessibility for users by increasing the size of text on the screen. The following steps explain how to use this feature.

1. Select a cell on the spreadsheet.
2. Click the *Zoom to Selection* button (see *Figure 27*).



*Figure 27 – Zoom to Selection*

3. The spreadsheet will zoom to the selected cell.
4. To return to the normal view, click the button labeled *100%* (see *Figure 28*).



*Figure 28 – 100% Button*

## **Best Practices**

The following should always be considered when developing a spreadsheet to make it accessible to everyone.

### **Page Layout**

Place the data on a spreadsheet so that it appears tightly connected together. It is best to avoid spacing data on the spreadsheet with blank cells, blank rows, and blank columns.

### **Alternate Text (alt text)**

Be certain to use *alt text* for your graphics so that those with visual impairments will be able to understand the purpose of the graphics in the document.

To add *alt text* to a graphic in Excel, follow the instructions below.

1. Right-click the graphic.
2. Select *Format Picture*.
3. In the window that appears, click *Alt Text*.
4. Enter your title and description.
5. Click the *Close* button.

Remember the following when developing *alt text*.

- Use concise wording (do not exceed 100 characters).
- Avoid sentences and capitalize only the first letter.
- Avoid punctuation.
- Avoid bold or italicized formatting.

### **Font Size and Color Schemes**

Remember the following when developing spreadsheets so that they will be accessible.

- Make all font sizes at least ten points.
- Avoid using light or pale font colors with light backgrounds within a cell.
- Limit the use of the following font variations: *bold*, *italics*, and *capital letters*.

## **Spreadsheet Structure**

The following explains how to better structure your spreadsheet for accessibility.

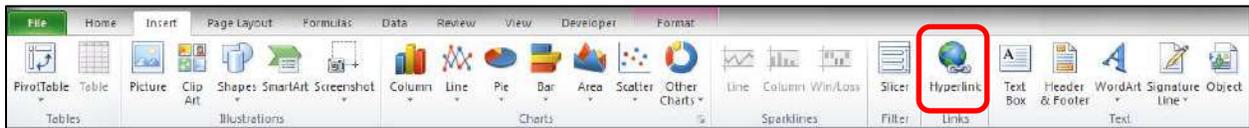
### **Headings**

When developing the spreadsheet, be certain to use descriptive headings for rows and columns. Also, use headings for different sections of data on the spreadsheets. This will help people with screen readers to quickly and easily understand each section of the spreadsheet without having to read the details in each section.

## Hyperlinks

When inserting a hyperlink in a spreadsheet, the hyperlink will be more effective if the user sees a descriptive title for the URL. For example, if you have a link to Kennesaw State University in your spreadsheet, it would be more effective to use *Kennesaw State University* instead of non-descriptive text such as, *Click Here*.

In Microsoft Excel, the hyperlink button is found on the *Insert* tab in the *Links* category (see *Figure 29*).



*Figure 29* – Hyperlink button

## Graphs and Charts

Users of screen readers will not be able to see graphs and charts created with Excel. Consider providing tables with words and numbers as an alternative.

When including a graph and/or chart on the spreadsheet, be certain that it is effectively labeled.

## Highlighting

Highlight important areas of the spreadsheet to help users see these sections quickly and easily.

## Sorting

Often, it can be effective to sort data within the spreadsheet. The following explains how to sort.

1. Select the data to be sorted (don't select the column headings).
2. On the *Data* tab, click the *Sort* button (see *Figure 30*).



*Figure 30* – Sort button

3. In the *Sort* window that appears, select the column to be sorted. Then, select the order to be used for sorting (see *Figure 31*).

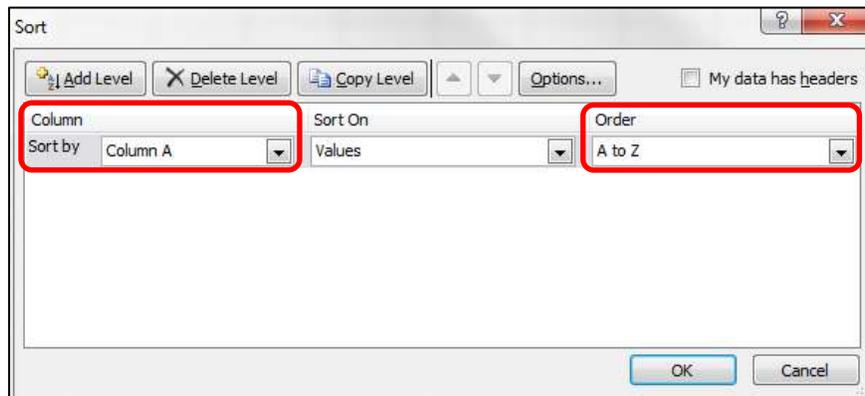


Figure 31 – Sort

4. Click OK to sort the data.

## Worksheets

To make worksheets more accessible, it is important to give each sheet a meaningful name (the default names are *Sheet1*, *Sheet2*, and *Sheet3*). In *Figure 32*, the worksheets have been renamed *Monday*, *Tuesday*, and *Wednesday*.

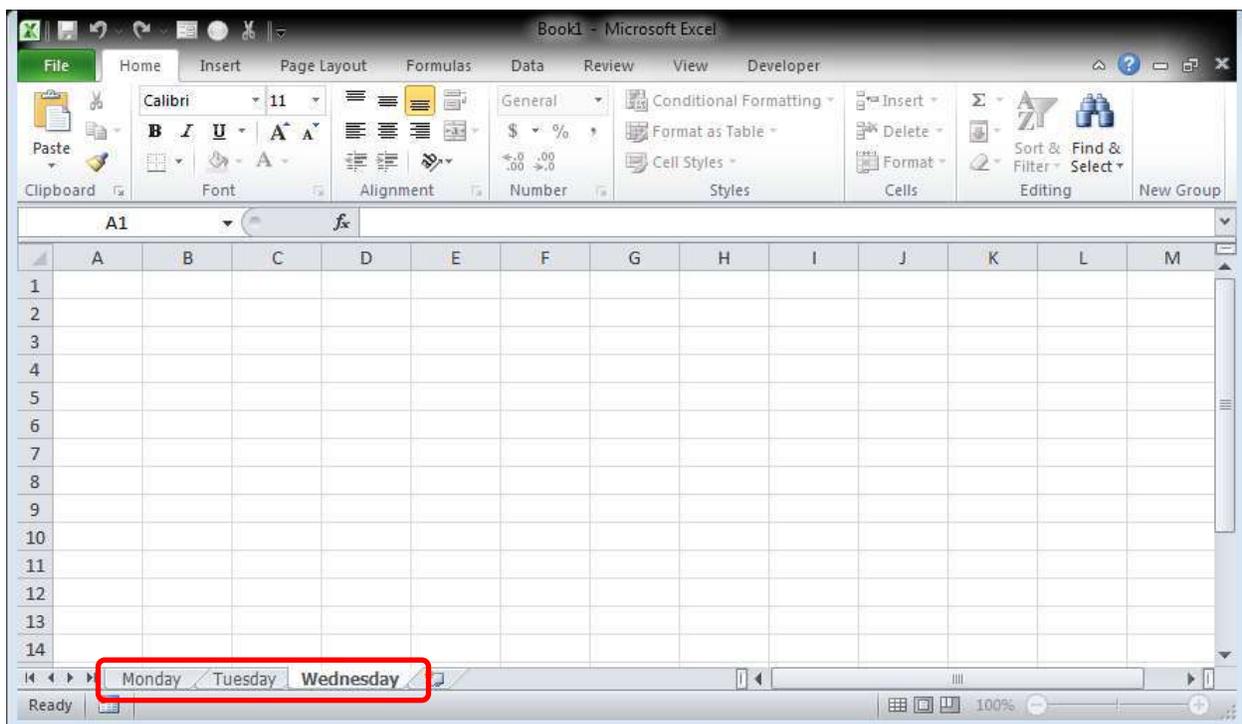


Figure 32 – Worksheets

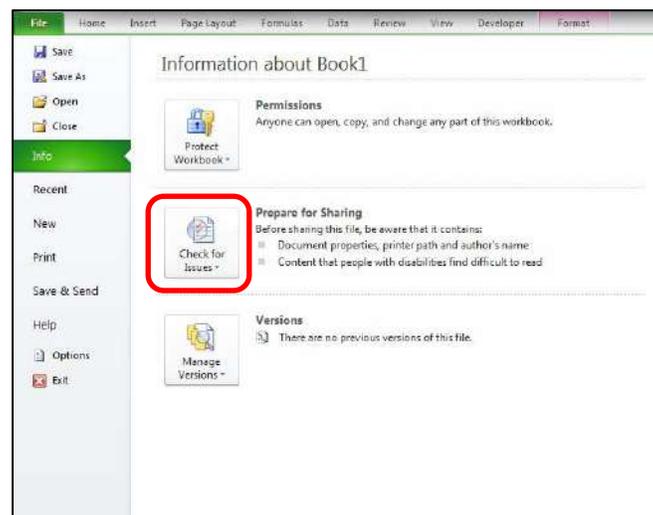
The following instructions explain how to rename the worksheet(s):

1. Allow your mouse pointer to hover over the tab (*Worksheet1, Worksheet2, Worksheet3, etc.*).
2. Right-click the mouse and select *Rename* from the menu that appears.
3. The tab will become selected. Type the new name for the tab (example: *Monday*).
4. Press the *Enter* key on the keyboard.

## Accessibility Checker

The accessibility checker will scan your spreadsheet to check for potential accessibility problems. The following explains how to use this tool:

1. Click the *File* tab. Then, click the *Check for Issues* button (see *Figure 33*).



*Figure 33* – Accessibility Checker

2. Then, select *Check Accessibility*.
3. A report will be created for you containing a list of possible accessibility issues within your spreadsheet.

## Getting Help

If you need additional help, you may contact the KSU Service Desk by phone or email at the following:

FACULTY/STAFF: 470-578-6999 - [service@kennesaw.edu](mailto:service@kennesaw.edu)

STUDENTS: 470-578-3555 - [studenthelpdesk@kennesaw.edu](mailto:studenthelpdesk@kennesaw.edu)

### **UITS Outreach & Distance Learning Technologies Training**

**Team** *Email:* [uitstechout@kennesaw.edu](mailto:uitstechout@kennesaw.edu)

*Twitter:* <http://www.twitter.com/odlt>

*Website:* <http://uits.kennesaw.edu/techoutreach>