

le 3.7 lists the special symbols you use to define each of these parts.

Table 3.7 Numeric Formatting Symbols

Symbol	Description
General	Displays the number with the General format.
#	Holds a place for a digit and displays the digit exactly as typed. Displays nothing if no number is entered.
0	Holds a place for a digit and displays the digit exactly as typed. Displays 0 if no number is entered.
?	Holds a place for a digit and displays the digit exactly as typed. Displays a space if no number is entered.
. (period)	Sets the location of the decimal point.
, (comma)	Sets the location of the thousands separator. Marks only the location of the first thousand.
%	Multiplies the number by 100 (for display only) and adds the percent (%) character.
E+ e+ E- e-	Displays the number in scientific format. E- and e- place a minus sign in the exponent; E+ and e+ place a plus sign in the exponent.
/ (slash)	Sets the location of the fraction separator.
\$ () : - + <space>	Displays the character.
*	Repeats whatever character immediately follows the asterisk until the cell is full. Doesn't replace other symbols or numbers.
_ (underscore)	Inserts a blank space the width of whatever character follows the underscore.
\ (backslash)	Inserts the character that follows the backslash.
"text"	Inserts the text that appears within the quotation marks.
@	Holds a place for text.
[COLOR]	Displays the cell contents in the specified color.
[COLOR _n]	Displays the cell contents in the specified color value (where <i>n</i> is a number between 1 and 56).
[condition vaLue]	Uses conditional statements to specify when the format is to be used.

Before looking at some examples, let's run through the basic procedure. To customize a numeric format, select the cell or range you want to format and then follow these steps:

1. Select Home, Number Format, More Number Formats (or press Ctrl+1) and select the Number tab, if it's not already displayed.
2. In the Category list, click Custom.
3. If you're editing an existing format, select it in the Type list box.

To hide zeros in selected cells, create a custom format that uses the following format syntax:

positive format;negative format;

The extra semicolon at the end acts as a placeholder for the zero format. Because there's no definition for a zero value, nothing is displayed. For example, the format `$#,##0.00_);($#,##0.00);` displays standard dollar values, but it leaves the cell blank if it contains zero.

TIP If your worksheet contains only integers (no fractions or decimal places), you can use the format `#,###` to hide zeros.

Date and Time Display Formats

If you include dates or times in your worksheets, you need to make sure that they're presented in a readable, unambiguous format. For example, most people would interpret the date 8/5/13 as August 5, 2013. However, in some countries, this date would mean May 8, 2013. Similarly, if you use the time 2:45, do you mean a.m. or p.m.? To avoid these kinds of problems, you can use Excel's built-in date and time formats, listed in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9 Excel's Date and Time Formats

Format	Display
m/d	8/3
m/d/yy	8/3/13
mm/dd/yy	08/03/13
d-mmm	3-Aug
d-mmm-yy	3-Aug-13
dd-mmm-yy	03-Aug-13
mmm-yy	Aug-13
mmmm-yy	August-13
mmmm d, yyyy	August 3, 2013
h:mm AM/PM	3:10 PM
h:mm:ss AM/PM	3:10:45 PM
h:mm	15:10
h:mm:ss	15:10:45
mm:ss.0	10:45.7
[h]:[mm]:[ss]	25:61:61
m/d/yy h:mm AM/PM	8/23/13 3:10 PM
m/d/yy h:mm	8/23/13 15:10

The [h]:[mm]:[ss] format requires a bit more explanation. You use this format when you want to display hours greater than 24 or minutes and seconds greater than 60. For example, suppose that you have an application in which you need to sum several time values (such as the time you've spent working on a project). If you add, say, 10:00 and 15:00, Excel normally shows the total as 1:00 (because, by default, Excel restarts times at 0 when they hit 24:00). To display the result properly (that is, as 25:00), use the format [h]:00.

You use the same methods you used for numeric formats to select date and time formats. In particular, you can specify the date and time format as you input your data. For example, entering `Jan-07` automatically formats the cell with the mmm-yy format. Also, you can use the following shortcut keys:

Shortcut Key	Format
Ctrl+#	d—mmm—yy
Ctrl+@	h:mm AM/PM
Ctrl+;	Current date (m/d/yy)
Ctrl+:	Current time (h:mm AM/PM)

TIP Excel for the Macintosh uses a different date system than Excel for Windows uses. If you share files between these environments, you need to use Macintosh dates in your Excel for Windows worksheets to maintain the correct dates when you move from one system to another. Select File, Options, click Advanced, scroll down to the When Calculating This Workbook section, and then select the Use 1904 Date System check box.

Customizing Date and Time Formats

Although the built-in date and time formats are fine for most applications, you might need to create your own custom formats. For example, you might want to display the day of the week (for example, `Friday`). Custom date and time formats generally are simpler to create than custom numeric formats. There are fewer formatting symbols, and you usually don't need to specify different formats for different conditions. Table 3.10 lists the date and time formatting symbols.

Table 3.10 The Date and Time Formatting Symbols

Symbol	Description
<i>Date Formats</i>	
d	Day number without a leading zero (1–31)
dd	Day number with a leading zero (01–31)
ddd	Three-letter day abbreviation (<code>Mon</code> , for example)
dddd	Full day name (<code>Monday</code> , for example)
m	Month number without a leading zero (1–12)
mm	Month number with a leading zero (01–12)
mmm	Three-letter month abbreviation (<code>Aug</code> , for example)
mmmm	Full month name (<code>August</code> , for example)
yy	Two-digit year (00–99)
yyyy	Full year (1900–2078)
<i>Time Formats</i>	
h	Hour without a leading zero (0–24)
hh	Hour with a leading zero (00–24)
m	Minute without a leading zero (0–59)
mm	Minute with a leading zero (00–59)
s	Second without a leading zero (0–59)
ss	Second with a leading zero (00–59)
AM/PM, am/pm, A/P	Displays the time using a 12-hour clock

Symbol	Description
<i>Date Formats</i>	
/ : . -	Symbols used to separate parts of dates or times
[COLOR]	Displays the date or time in the color specified
[condition value]	Uses conditional statements to specify when the format is to be used

Figure 3.16 shows some examples of custom date and time formats.

Figure 3.16
Sample custom date and time formats.

Custom Format	Cell Entry	Result
dddd, mmmm d, yyyy	8/23/2013	Friday, August 23, 2013
mmmm, yyyy	8/23/2013	August, 2013
dddd	8/23/2013	Friday
mm.dd.yy	8/23/2013	08.23.13
mmddyy	8/23/2013	082313
yymmdd	8/23/2013	130823
[>8/15/13]"OVERDUE!";mm/dd/yy	8/23/2013	OVERDUE!
hhmm "hours"	3:10 PM	1510 hours
hh"h" mm"m"	3:10 PM	15h 10m
[=5]"12 Noon";[=0]"12 Midnight";h:mm AM/PM	0	12 Midnight
[=5]"12 Noon";[=0]"12 Midnight";h:mm AM/PM	12:00	12 Noon
[=5]"12 Noon";[=0]"12 Midnight";h:mm AM/PM	3:10 PM	3:10 PM

Deleting Custom Formats

The best way to become familiar with custom formats is to try your own experiments. Just remember that Excel stores each format you try. If you find that your list of custom formats is getting a bit unwieldy or that it's cluttered with unused formats, you can delete formats by following the steps outlined here:

1. Select Home, Number Format, More Number Formats.
2. Click the Custom category.
3. Click the format in the Type list box. (Note that you can delete only the formats you've created yourself.)
4. Click Delete. Excel removes the format from the list.
5. To delete other formats, repeat steps 2-4.
6. Click OK. Excel returns you to the spreadsheet.

From Here

- To learn about conditional formatting, **see** “Applying Conditional Formatting to a Range,” **p. 25**.
- To learn how to solve formula problems, **see** Chapter 5, “Troubleshooting Formulas.”
- To get the details on text formulas and functions, **see** Chapter 7, “Working with Text Functions.”
- If you want to use logical worksheet functions in your comparison formulas, **see** “Adding Intelligence with Logical Functions,” **p. 163**.
- To learn how to create and use data tables, **see** “Using What-If Analysis,” **p. 345**.

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