

Starting Out

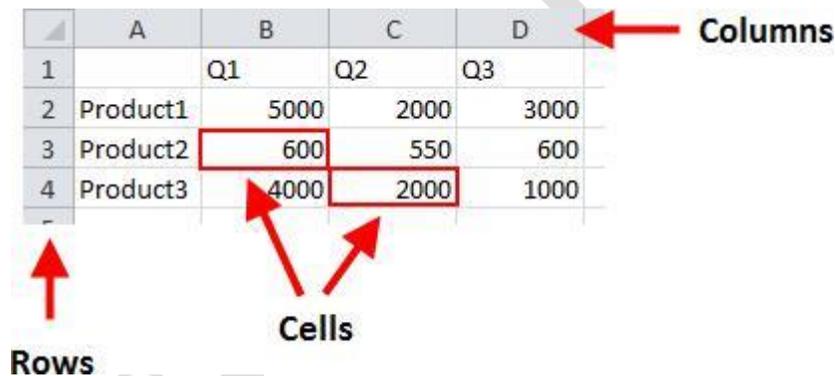
Microsoft Office Excel is a powerful and easy-to-use spreadsheet application. Nearly everyone who works with numbers has likely used Excel or some other spreadsheet application (such as Lotus 1-2-3) in one form or another. In this lesson, we will look at what's new in the 2010 version, how to open and close the program, and outline some of the things you will see in the program.

If you are new to Excel and spreadsheets in general, the vast array of features and controls can seem quite daunting. However, once we cover the workings of a spreadsheet and how to deal with the basics, you will be well on your way to becoming an expert in Excel!

What is Microsoft Office Excel 2010?

Microsoft Office Excel 2010 is the fourteenth version of Microsoft's **spreadsheet** program. A spreadsheet is essentially a large flexible grid that is used to hold information, usually numerical.

The spreadsheet is made up of **rows** and **columns**. The intersection of a row and column is called a **cell**:



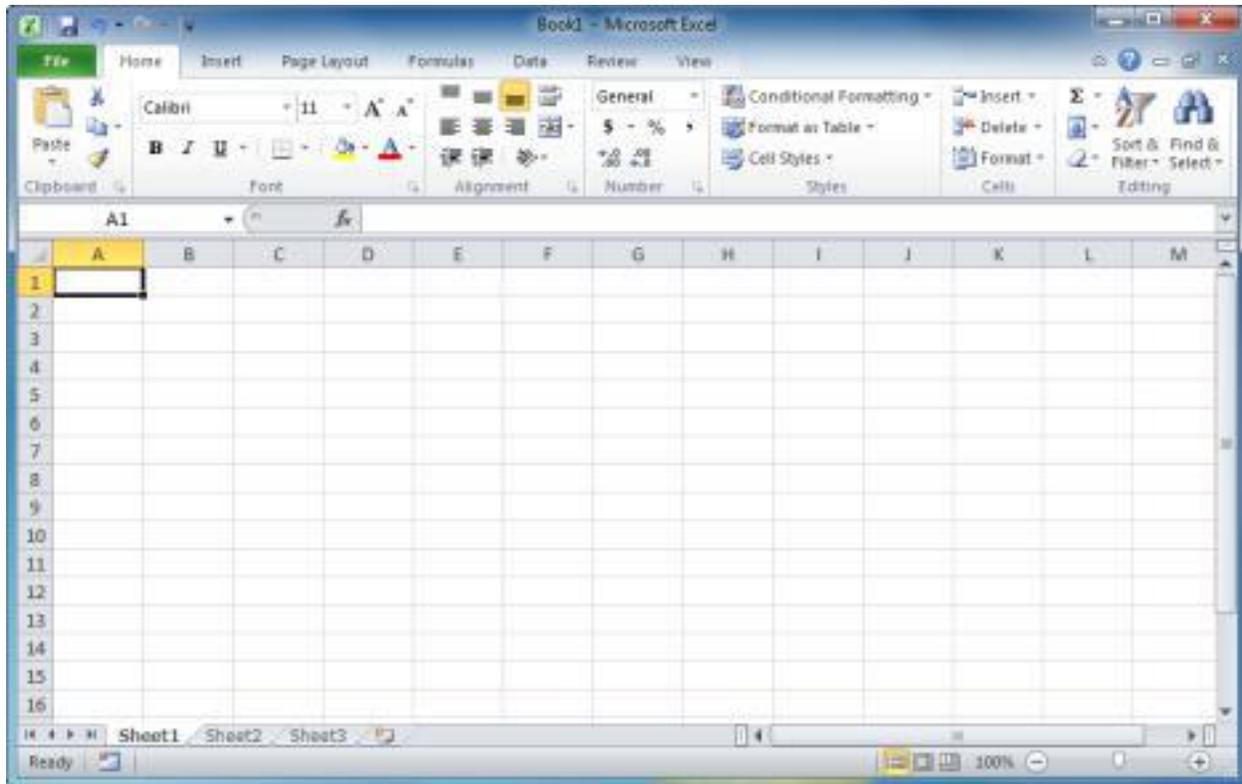
The diagram shows a 4x4 grid representing an Excel spreadsheet. The columns are labeled A, B, C, and D, and the rows are labeled 1, 2, 3, and 4. A red arrow points to the column headers with the label "Columns". A red arrow points to the row headers with the label "Rows". Two red arrows point to individual cells (B3 and C4) with the label "Cells".

	A	B	C	D
1		Q1	Q2	Q3
2	Product1	5000	2000	3000
3	Product2	600	550	600
4	Product3	4000	2000	1000

Using Excel, you can analyze large amounts of data, move sets of data around to get a different picture of your figures, and generate a number of different charts and diagrams to help summarize the data.

What's New in Excel 2010?

Excel 2010's interface does not make use of menus like you may be familiar with. Instead, Excel uses a tab system that groups like commands at the top. This interface, called the **ribbon**, was first used in some programs with the Office 2007 suite:



There is a lot to see and do in Excel. Before we get down to the basics, let's take a few moments to go over some new features:

Slicer

Slicers are visual controls that allow for faster filtering of data. They “float” above PivotTable and CUBE objects, allowing you to quickly filter the data shown in that object.

Spark Lines

Spark Lines are mini-charts that fit into a single cell. They offer quick information about the data specified in a row or column and are very useful when spotting trends in large groups of data. For example, it is easy to see without even looking at the numbers that sales of Product3 are declining:

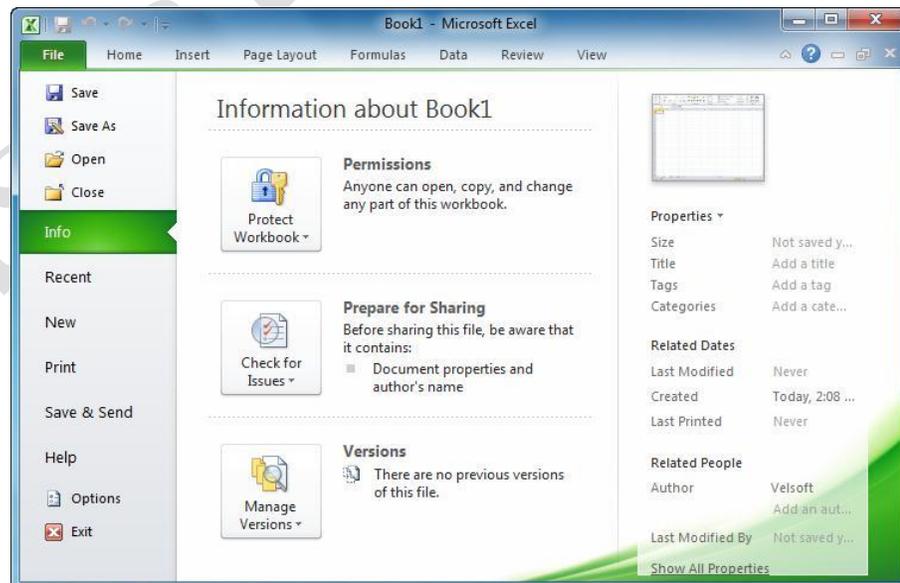
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		Q1	Q2	Q3		
2	Product1	5000	2000	3000		
3	Product2	600	550	600		
4	Product3	4000	2000	1000		

Easier collaboration via SharePoint

Excel 2010 is capable of interacting with a SharePoint server. This allows for easy sharing and storage of documents, team communication, and simultaneous editing of documents.

Backstage View

The File menu offers an all-in-one location to view and manage the file as a whole. You can preview a file for printing, change document properties, and collaborate with SharePoint users in Backstage view:



Integrated Screen Capture

Excel (and many other Office 2010 programs) has an integrated screen clipping tool. This tool lets you insert a picture from anything you can see on your screen including Web information, data from another program, or a technical diagram:



Equation Editor

Excel offers a robust equation editor, allowing you to create equations of any size. Excel is also compatible with the Windows 7 Math Input Panel.

SkyDrive and Expanded File Types

Using the Backstage view, you can save a document to the Windows Live SkyDrive service, save the document in PDF/XPS format, send the file in an e-mail, or change the file type without closing the file.

PowerPivot

PowerPivot is a data analysis tool for Excel which is capable of pulling information from anywhere in the world with minimum effort. It is specifically designed to connect with large database sources and give you access to large amounts of data in an easy-to-use interface.

Pivot Table and Pivot Chart Improvements

PivotTables and Pivot Charts are a way to examine a group of data in a number of different ways. As the names imply, you can “pivot” names and values of data around the X and Y axes of a chart and look at the data in different ways. This makes it easier to explore trends of one item against others.

Block Certain File Types

Administrators have the ability to prevent Excel users from opening/viewing certain file types. This helps the overall health and safety of a network.

Better Print Interface

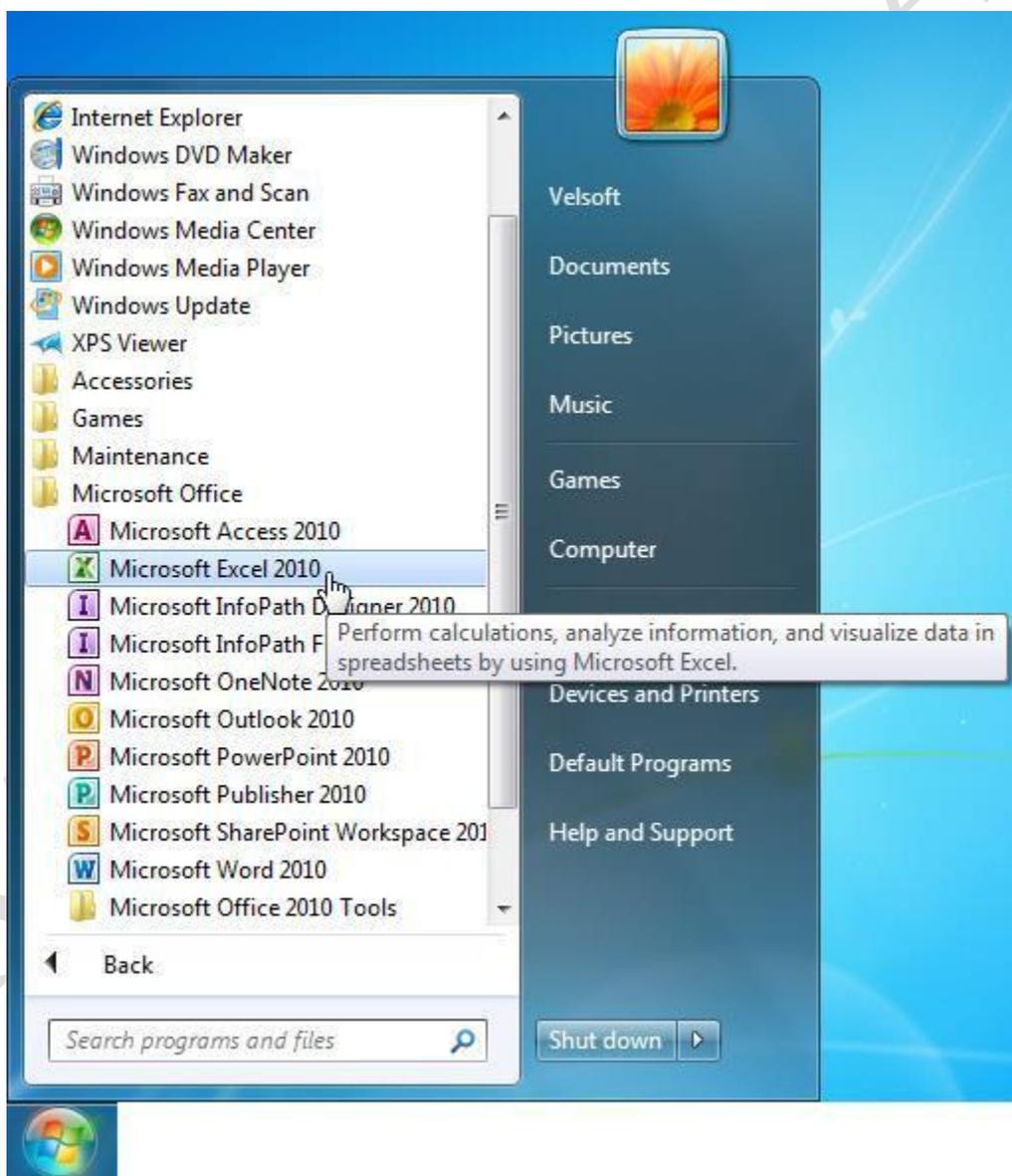
In the Backstage view, the Print Preview dialog and Print dialog have been combined into a single location. This makes viewing and printing a file much easier.

Opening Excel

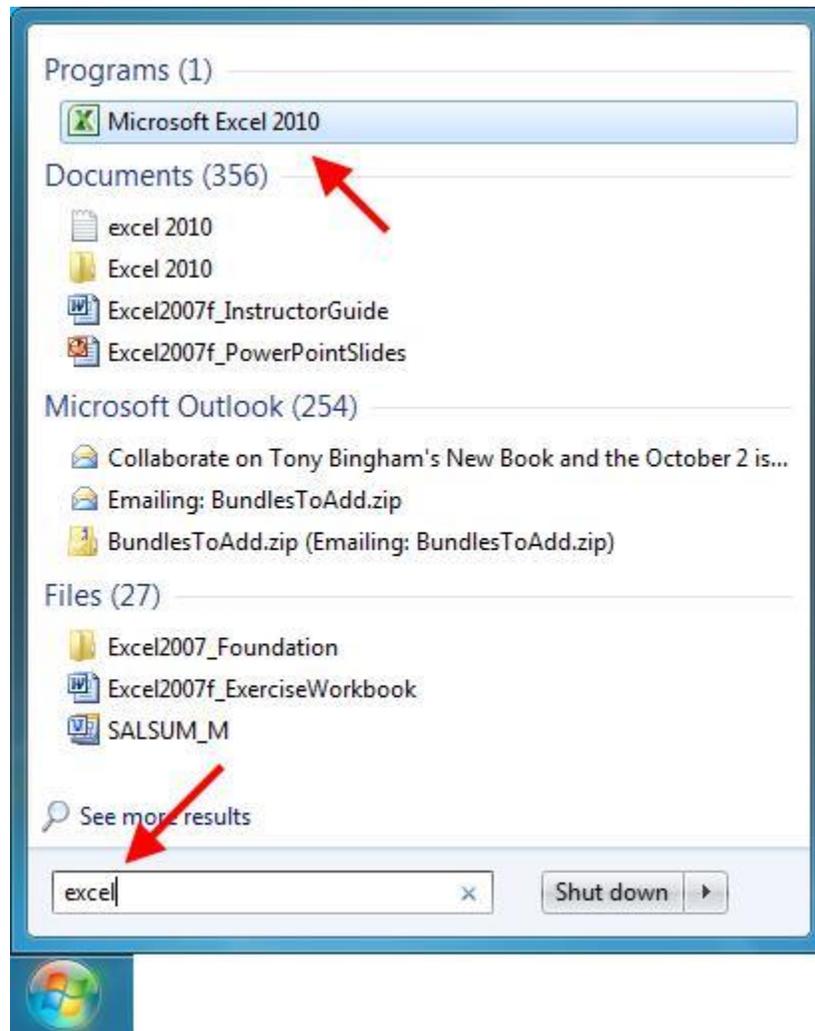
You can open Excel in a number of different ways. If the Excel icon is visible on the desktop, double-click the icon to open the program:



You can also click Start → All Programs → Microsoft Office → Microsoft Excel 2010:

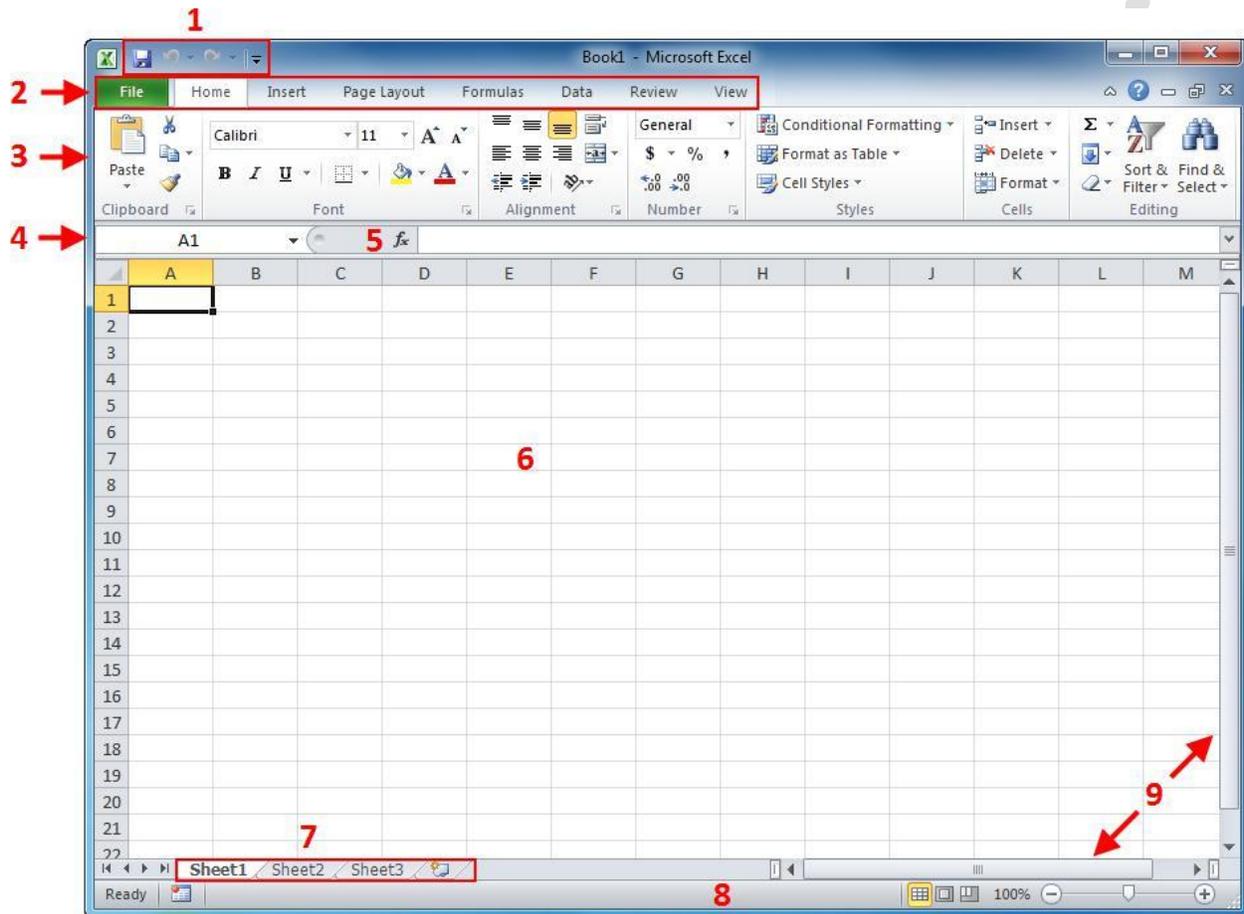


If you are used to using the keyboard more than the mouse, press the Windows key and type “excel.” As you type, Windows will search for files/programs/locations with “excel” as part of the name. The actual Excel program will be first in the list (and already highlighted in blue), so press Enter to open the program:



Interacting with Excel

When you open Excel, you will see something like the following image. This is the user interface. Let's go over the basics of what you will see and how to interact with the interface. As we progress through the manual, we will cover these items in more detail:



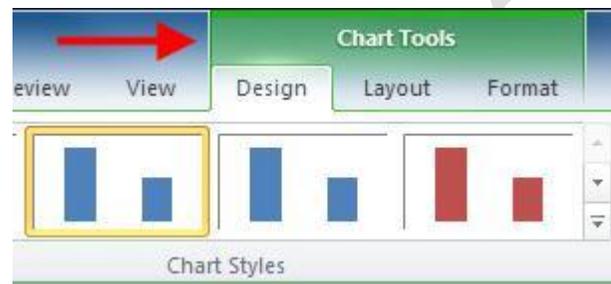
1 Quick Access Toolbar As the name implies, the Quick Access Toolbar gives you quick access to frequently-used commands. This toolbar is completely customizable and can be positioned above or below the Ribbon commands.

2 Tabs Groups of like commands are organized under tab names. Click a tab to view the commands in the Ribbon. If you are familiar with older versions of Excel, these tabs roughly correspond to the menus used in the older interface.

3 Ribbon Commands

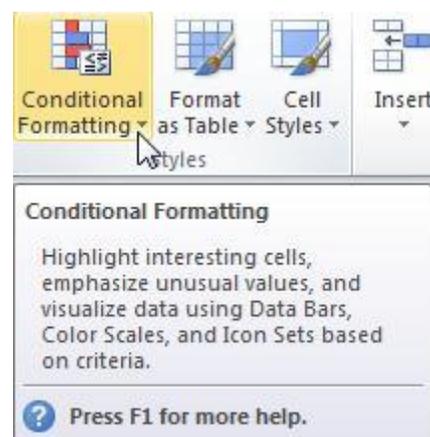
Displays tab commands. If you click the different tabs, you will see the commands change. Notice that some of the commands might be grayed out. This is because those commands are only usable under certain situations.

Excel 2010 also features **contextual tabs**. These are special tabs that only appear when you are working with a specific object or group of information. For example, if you were to select a bar graph based on your data, three contextual tabs would appear that allow you to change the aspects of the graph:



Once you switch back to working with something else, these tabs would disappear.

You can also hover your mouse pointer above a command to see the command name. Many commands also include a short description:



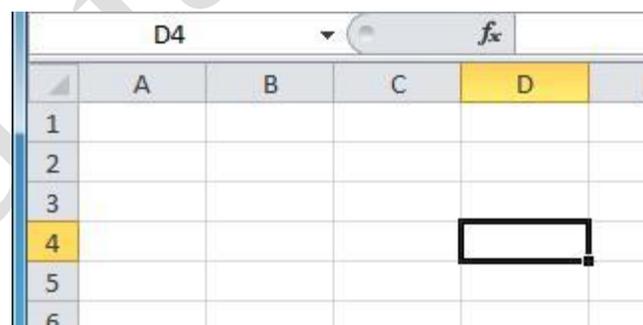
4 Name Box

Every cell has a name in the format <ColumnRow>. The name of the currently selected cell, called the **active cell**, is shown in the Name Box. In the image on page 9, the active cell is A1.

- 5 Formula Bar** The Formula Bar allows you to enter data in a cell. Data can be alphanumeric, pictures, symbols, or (as the name suggests) formulae.
- 6 Working Area** The data contained in the file will be shown here.
- 7 Workbook Tabs** Every Excel file is properly referred to as a **workbook**. A workbook can contain one or more **worksheets**, just like an accounting ledger can contain one or more pages. Click these tabs to switch between the different worksheets.
- 8 Status Bar** This bar is used to display information about the workbook. Any running calculations will be shown here. There are also some zoom and view commands here which we will explore later.
- 9 Scroll Bars** As you grow more accustomed to working with Excel, you will no doubt begin to work on larger files. Not all of the information in a worksheet will fit on the screen, so use these scroll bars to scroll horizontally/vertically through the data.

To move the active cell, use the arrow keys on your keyboard or click your mouse somewhere in the working area of the screen. The active cell will be referenced in the Name Box, and the row/column headers will highlight showing the active cell's location.

For example, if you click cell D4, the Name Box and column/row headers will change to show the position of the active cell:



Closing Excel

If you look in the upper right-hand corner of the Excel window, you will see two close buttons:



The top button is used to close the program. The bottom button is used to close the currently open file, but leave Excel open. (We will explore more about file and window management later in this manual.)

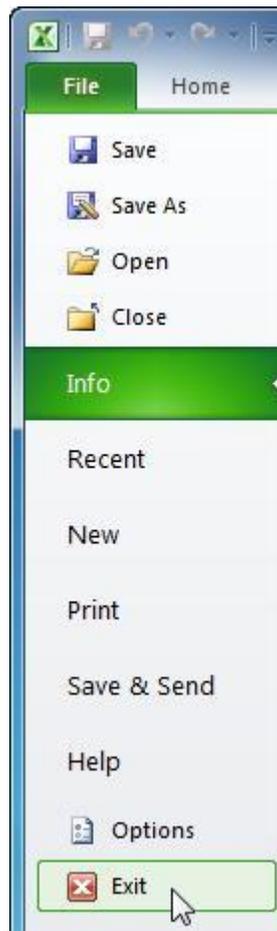
To close Excel, click the top close button:



You can right-click the Excel icon and click Close window in the Jump List:



You can also close Excel by clicking File → Exit:



No matter which method you use, if you haven't already done so, you will be asked to save any changes you have made to the file. We will cover saving files in the next