

Getting Help with Excel

Before we get into the nuts and bolts of working with Excel, it is probably a good idea to learn about Excel's help features. Almost anyone who works with a program with many functions and options will find themselves needing help at some point. You may know exactly what you want to do, but not how to do it.

In this lesson, you will learn how to get help by using the Help file. You will also learn about online and offline Help. Knowing how to use these features can help you access the information and instructions you need to accomplish your Excel goals.

Opening Help

To open the Help file, click the blue question mark icon at the top of the window or press F1 on your keyboard:



Using the Help Screen

The Help file will open in a separate window:

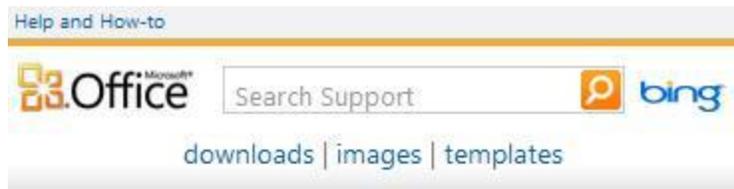


Note that you may see a list of suggestions appear at the top of the Help file depending on what you were doing when the Help file was opened. For example, if you opened the Help file while viewing the File menu, you would see a number of items referring to the management of Excel files, things new users to Excel 2010 should know, etc.

In the top right-hand corner, you will see the Minimize, Maximize/Restore, and Close buttons. Also at the top is the title bar, toolbar, and search bar:



The main part of the window shows the help content, which is laid out like a Web page. There are links at the top to the different sections of the Microsoft Office Support portal, and links to the main Help topics:



Getting started with Excel 2010



- Getting started with Excel 2010
- Use sparklines to show data trends
- Use slicers to filter PivotTable data
- Keyboard shortcuts

Browse Excel 2010 support

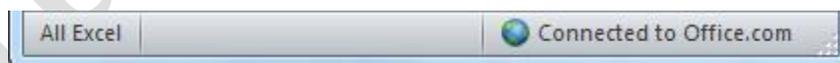
- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| ▪ Charts | ▪ Getting help |
| ▪ Customizing | ▪ Getting started |
| ▪ Formulas | ▪ Macros |
| ▪ Function reference | ▪ Worksheets |

[see all](#)

Browse through the Help content by clicking the blue text. This text is linked to relevant information described by the hyperlink text. For example, the “Getting Started with Excel 2010” link will take you to a page that lists subcategories for the topic. Continue clicking the links to follow the information path. Notice too that at the very top of the Help file you will see a “breadcrumb trail” that shows which location in the Help file you are viewing:



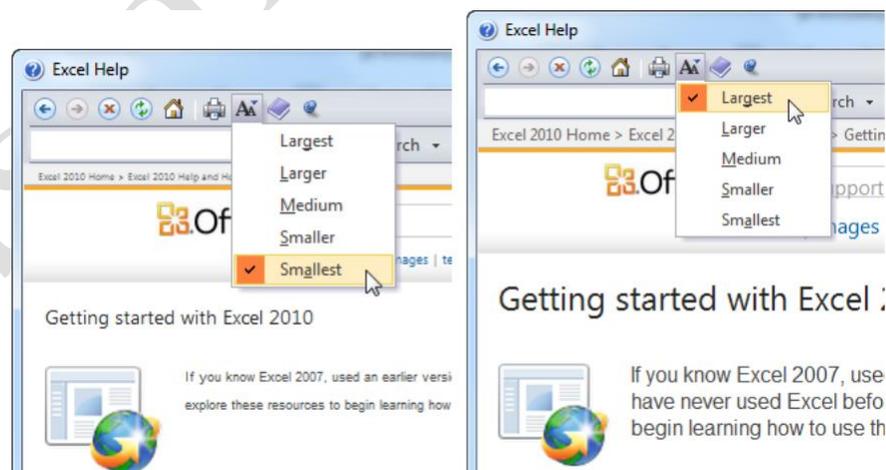
At the bottom there is a status bar which shows you where Help is searching. As you can see in the picture below, the Help file is Connected to Office.com. This means that the Help file is using your Internet connection to get the latest help right from Microsoft. We will explore the difference between online and offline help in a moment.



The Help Toolbar

The Help toolbar contains commands similar to those you would find in a Web browser. In fact, the Help window behaves very much like a Web browser that only searches for information relevant to Excel.

- Back**  Move back one step at a time through the help topics you have previously read.
- Forward**  If you click the Back button, the Forward button will become active. This lets you step forward one step at a time through the topics you have visited.
- Stop**  If you are searching for a help topic and the Help file is taking a long time to show results, you can click the Stop button to stop Word from searching. You might then revise your search or search for something else.
- Refresh**  Use this button to reload the information on the current page.
- Home**  Click this button to return to the main list of information you saw when you opened the Help file.
- Print**  Prints the current topic.
- Text Size**  Use this to make the text in the help file larger or smaller:



- Table of Contents**  Use this button to browse the entire alphabetical list of Help topics. We will explore the table of contents in a moment.

Keep on Top

By default, the Help window will always display itself on top of the Excel window. Even if you are doing something in Excel, the Help window will remain on top until you close it or click this icon to make the Help window behave like any other window.

Toolbar Options

Use this command to add or remove buttons from this toolbar. By default, all of the commands we have listed are shown.

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