

How can I apply conditional formatting in Excel to highlight cells if two cells are not equal?

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Conditional formatting is a feature in Microsoft Excel that allows users to apply specific formatting rules to cells based on certain conditions. One common use of conditional formatting is to highlight cells if they do not meet a certain criteria. In the case of comparing two cells, users can apply conditional formatting to highlight cells if they are not equal. This means that if the values in the two cells do not match, the formatting rule will be applied and the cells will be visually differentiated from the rest of the data. This can be a useful tool for identifying discrepancies or differences in data sets and can help users quickly identify and address any errors or inconsistencies.

Excel: Apply Conditional Formatting if Two Cells Are Not Equal

Often you may want to apply conditional formatting to two cells in Excel if their values are not equal.

The following example shows exactly how to do so.

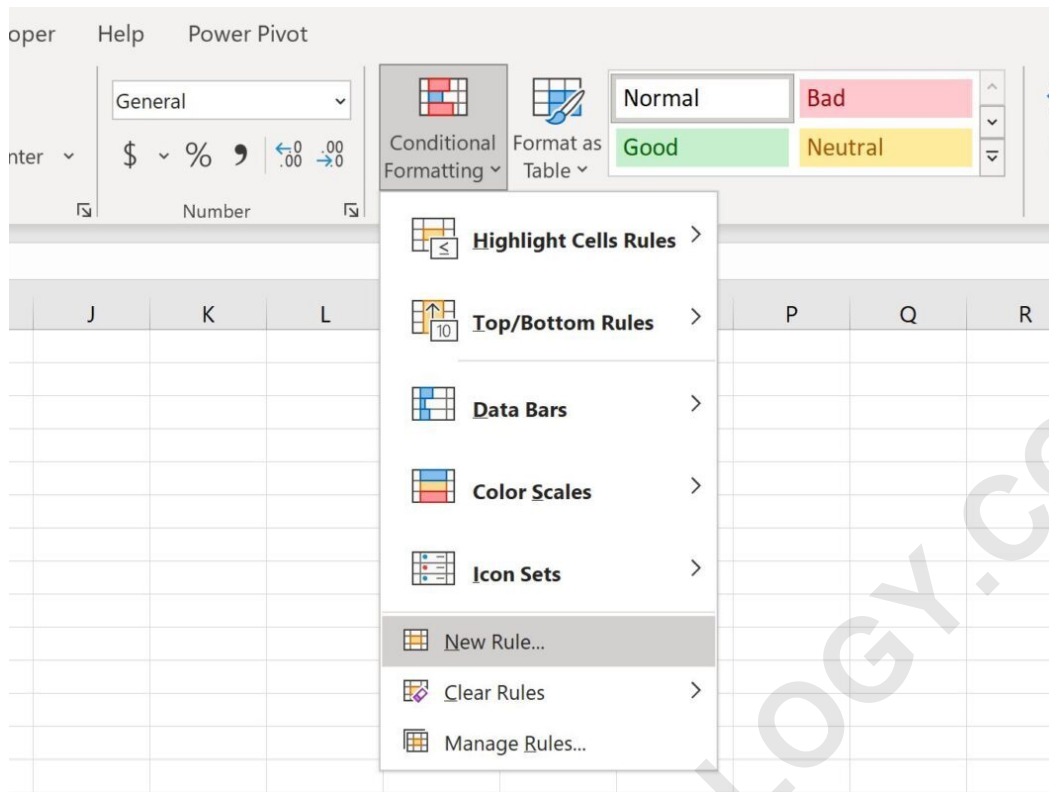
Example: Conditional Formatting if Two Cells Are Not Equal

Suppose we have the following lists in Excel that contain the names of 10 students each:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Class A	Class B			
2	Andrew	Andrew			
3	Bob	Bob			
4	Chad	Carl			
5	Derrick	Dean			
6	Eric	Eric			
7	Frank	Frank			
8	George	George			
9	Hank	Hanke			
10	Isaiah	Isaiah			
11	John	John			
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					

Suppose we would like to highlight the rows where the two names are not equal between the classes.

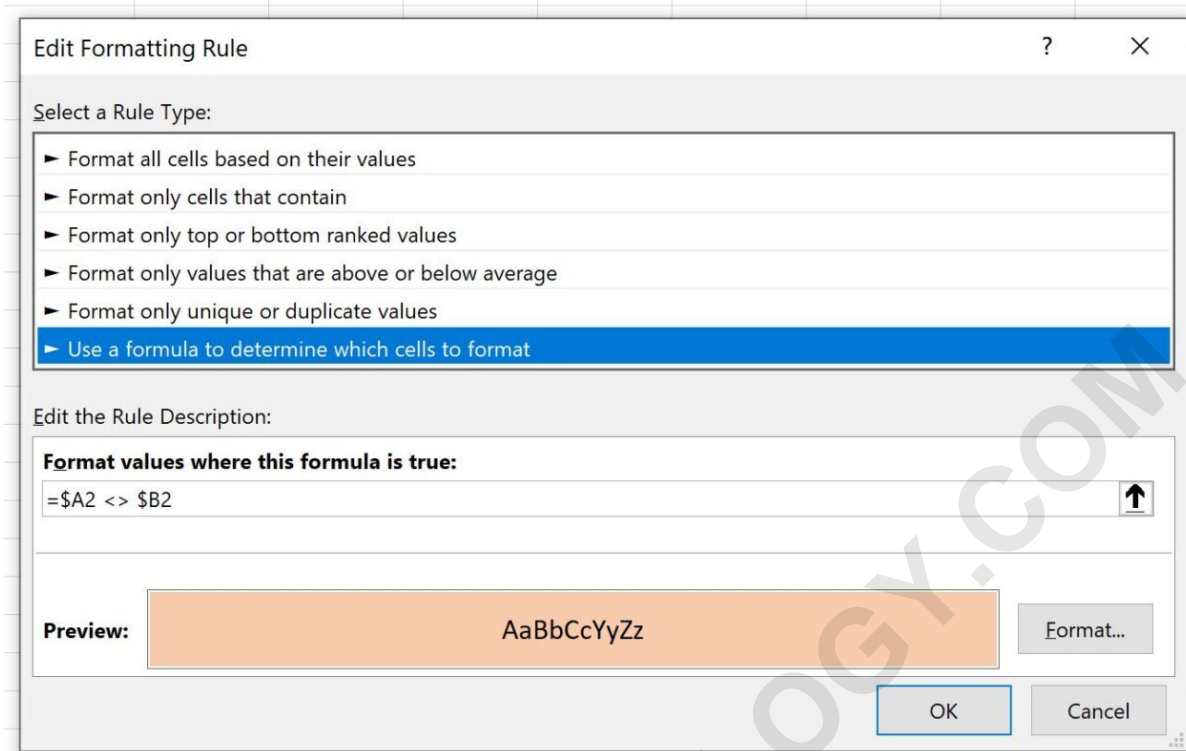
To do so, highlight the values in the range A2:B11, then click the Conditional Formatting icon on the Home tab, then click New Rule:



In the new window that appears, click **Use a formula to determine which cells to format**, then type in the following formula into the box:

= $\$A2 <> \$B2$

Then click the **Format** button and choose a fill color to use, then click **OK**:



Each row where the names are not equal will automatically be highlighted:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Class A	Class B				
2	Andrew	Andrew				
3	Bob	Bob				
4	Chad	Carl				
5	Derrick	Dean				
6	Eric	Eric				
7	Frank	Frank				
8	George	George				
9	Hank	Hanke				
10	Isaiah	Isaiah				
11	John	John				
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20						

Note that this formula is case-insensitive. This means if we have "john" in one column and "John" in the other, the formula will assume these values are equal.

However, you can use the following formula to apply a case-sensitive search:

=NOT(EXACT(\$A2,\$B2))

Additional Resources

The following tutorials explain how to perform other

common tasks in Excel:

Excel: Apply Conditional Formatting if Cell Contains Text

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