

# How can I compare two Excel sheets for differences?

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## RECOMMENDED CITATION

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PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=136577>

Comparing two Excel sheets for differences is a method of identifying discrepancies or variations between two sets of data in Microsoft Excel. This can be used to ensure the accuracy of data, identify any missing or extra information, and detect any changes that may have been made. There are several ways to compare two Excel sheets, such as using the "Compare and Merge Workbooks" feature, using formulas to highlight differences, or using third-party add-ins. By comparing two Excel sheets, users can easily identify and resolve any inconsistencies, ensuring the integrity and reliability of their data.

## **Compare Two Excel Sheets for Differences**

**Occasionally you may want to compare two different Excel sheets to identify the differences between them.**

**Fortunately this is fairly easy to do and this tutorial explains how.**

### **How to Identify Differences Between Two Excel Sheets**

**Suppose we have the following two sheets in Excel with some information about basketball players:**

	A	B	C	D	E
1	<b>Player</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Rebounds</b>		
2	A	8	4		
3	B	12	5		
4	C	12	5		
5	D	13	5		
6	E	15	6		
7	F	16	7		
8	G	17	7		
9	H	22	8		
10	I	23	9		
11	J	23	10		
12	K	24	11		
13	L	26	11		
14	M	27	12		
15	N	28	13		
16	O	32	15		
17					
18					
19					
20					

◀ ▶
**Sheet1**
Sheet2
Sheet3
+

	A	B	C	D	E
1	<b>Player</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Rebounds</b>		
2	A	8	2		
3	B	12	5		
4	C	12	3		
5	D	10	5		
6	E	15	5		
7	F	16	7		
8	X	17	7		
9	H	19	8		
10	Y	23	9		
11	J	23	12		
12	Z	18	11		
13	L	20	13		
14	M	27	14		
15	N	28	15		
16	O	32	16		
17					
18					
19					
20					

Sheet1 **Sheet2** Sheet3 (+)

**To compare the differences between the two sheets, we can create a third sheet and use the following formula**

in cell A2:

**=IF(Sheet1!A1 <> Sheet2!A1, "Sheet1:"&Sheet1!A1&", Sheet2:"&Sheet2!A1, "")**

We can then copy this formula to each cell, which results in the following:

	A	B	C	D
1				
2				
3			Sheet1:4, Sheet2:2	
4				
5			Sheet1:5, Sheet2:3	
6		Sheet1:13, Sheet2:10		
7			Sheet1:6, Sheet2:5	
8				
9	Sheet1:G, Sheet2:X			
10		Sheet1:22, Sheet2:19		
11	Sheet1:I, Sheet2:Y			
12			Sheet1:10, Sheet2:12	
13	Sheet1:K, Sheet2:Z	Sheet1:24, Sheet2:18		
14		Sheet1:26, Sheet2:20	Sheet1:11, Sheet2:13	
15			Sheet1:12, Sheet2:14	
16			Sheet1:13, Sheet2:15	
17				
18				
19				
20				

If the corresponding cells in Sheet1 and Sheet2 are identical, then the cell in Sheet3 will be blank. However, if the cells are different between the two sheets then the differences will be shown in Sheet3.

	A	B	C	D
1				
2				
3			Sheet1:4, Sheet2:2	
4				
5			Sheet1:5, Sheet2:3	
6		Sheet1:13, Sheet2:10		
7			Sheet1:6, Sheet2:5	
8				
9	Sheet1:G, Sheet2:X			
10		Sheet1:22, Sheet2:19		
11	Sheet1:I, Sheet2:Y			
12			Sheet1:10, Sheet2:12	
13	Sheet1:K, Sheet2:Z	Sheet1:24, Sheet2:18		
14		Sheet1:26, Sheet2:20	Sheet1:11, Sheet2:13	
15			Sheet1:12, Sheet2:14	
16			Sheet1:13, Sheet2:15	
17				
18				
19				
20				

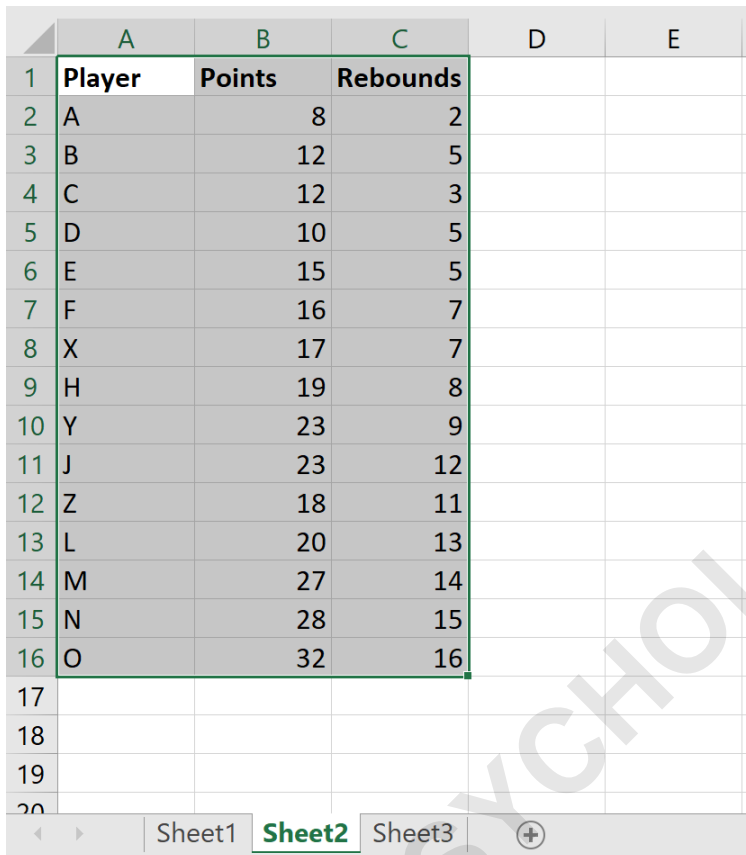
## How to Highlight Differences Between Two Excel Sheets

In addition to identifying the differences between the two sheets, you can also highlight the differences using conditional formatting.

For example, suppose we want to highlight each cell in Sheet2 that has a different value from the corresponding cell in Sheet1. To do this, we can use the following steps:

**Step 1: Select the range of cells.**

**First, select the entire range of cells that we're interested in applying conditional formatting to:**

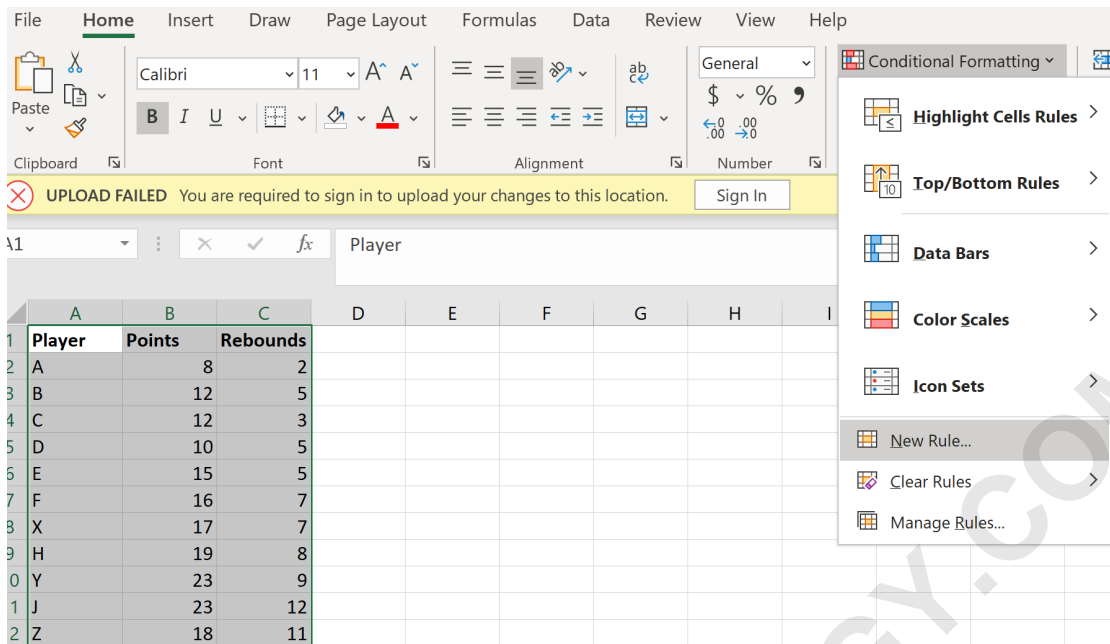


	A	B	C	D	E
1	<b>Player</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Rebounds</b>		
2	A	8	2		
3	B	12	5		
4	C	12	3		
5	D	10	5		
6	E	15	5		
7	F	16	7		
8	X	17	7		
9	H	19	8		
10	Y	23	9		
11	J	23	12		
12	Z	18	11		
13	L	20	13		
14	M	27	14		
15	N	28	15		
16	O	32	16		
17					
18					
19					
20					

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with a table of player statistics. The columns are labeled 'Player', 'Points', and 'Rebounds'. The rows are numbered 1 through 20. The range A1:C16 is selected, indicated by a green border. The sheet name 'Sheet2' is visible in the bottom left corner.

**Step 2: Choose conditional formatting.**

**Next, on the Home tab within the Styles group, click Conditional Formatting and then click New Rule.**

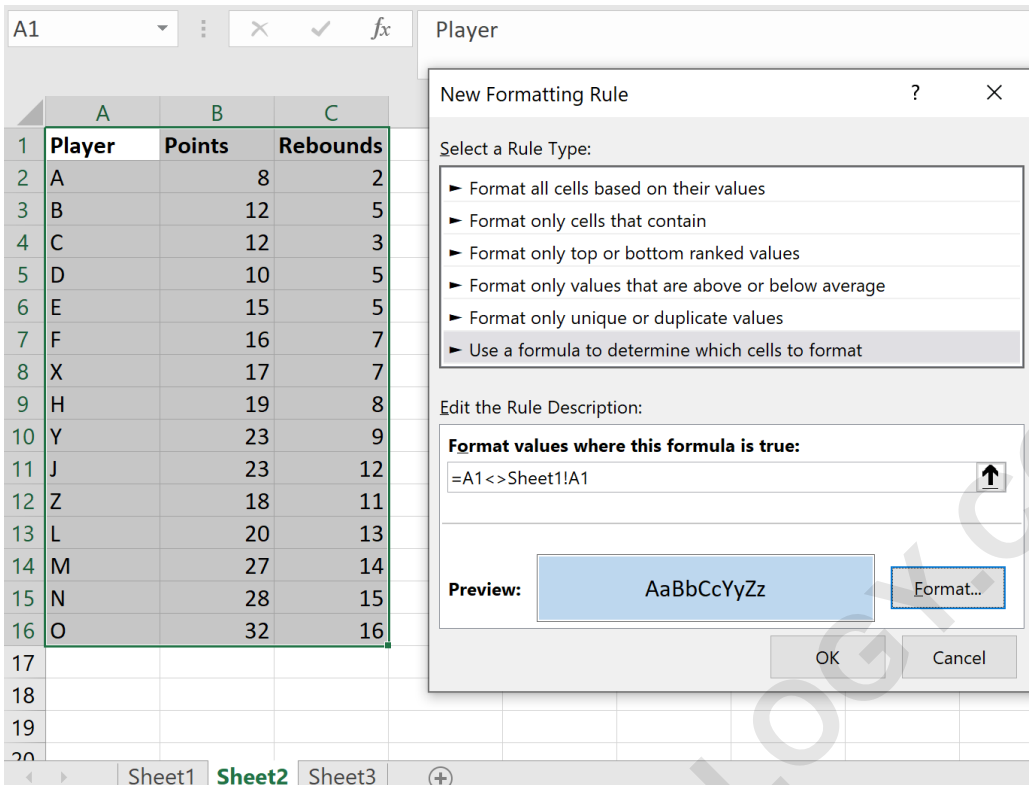


### Step 3: Choose conditional formatting.

Choose the option titled Use a formula to determine which cells to format. Then type in the following formula:

**=A1<>Sheet1!A1**

Then click Format and choose a color you'd like to use to highlight the cells that are different. Then click OK.



The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with the following data:

Player	Points	Rebounds
A	8	2
B	12	5
C	12	3
D	10	5
E	15	5
F	16	7
X	17	7
H	19	8
Y	23	9
J	23	12
Z	18	11
L	20	13
M	27	14
N	28	15
O	32	16

The 'New Formatting Rule' dialog box is open, showing the following configuration:

- Select a Rule Type:** Use a formula to determine which cells to format
- Edit the Rule Description:** Format values where this formula is true:  
Formula: `=A1<>Sheet1!A1`
- Preview:** AaBbCcYyZz

Once you click OK, the cells in Sheet2 that have different values than the corresponding cells in Sheet1 will be highlighted: