

How can I use Google Sheets' conditional formatting to highlight cells if the date is before today?

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Google Sheets' conditional formatting feature allows users to automatically highlight cells based on certain criteria. In this case, you can use it to highlight cells if the date is before today. This means that any cell with a date that has already passed will be visually distinguished from the rest. This can be useful for managing tasks, schedules, or tracking deadlines. The conditional formatting feature offers a simple and efficient way to organize and prioritize your data, making it easier to stay on top of important dates and events. By setting up the appropriate rules and formatting options, you can customize the highlighting to suit your specific needs. This feature is available to all users of Google Sheets and can be accessed through the "Format" menu.

Google Sheets: Conditional Formatting If Date is Before Today

You can use the Conditional formatting option within the Format tab in Google Sheets to apply conditional formatting to cells if their date value is before today.

The following step-by-step example shows how to do so in practice.

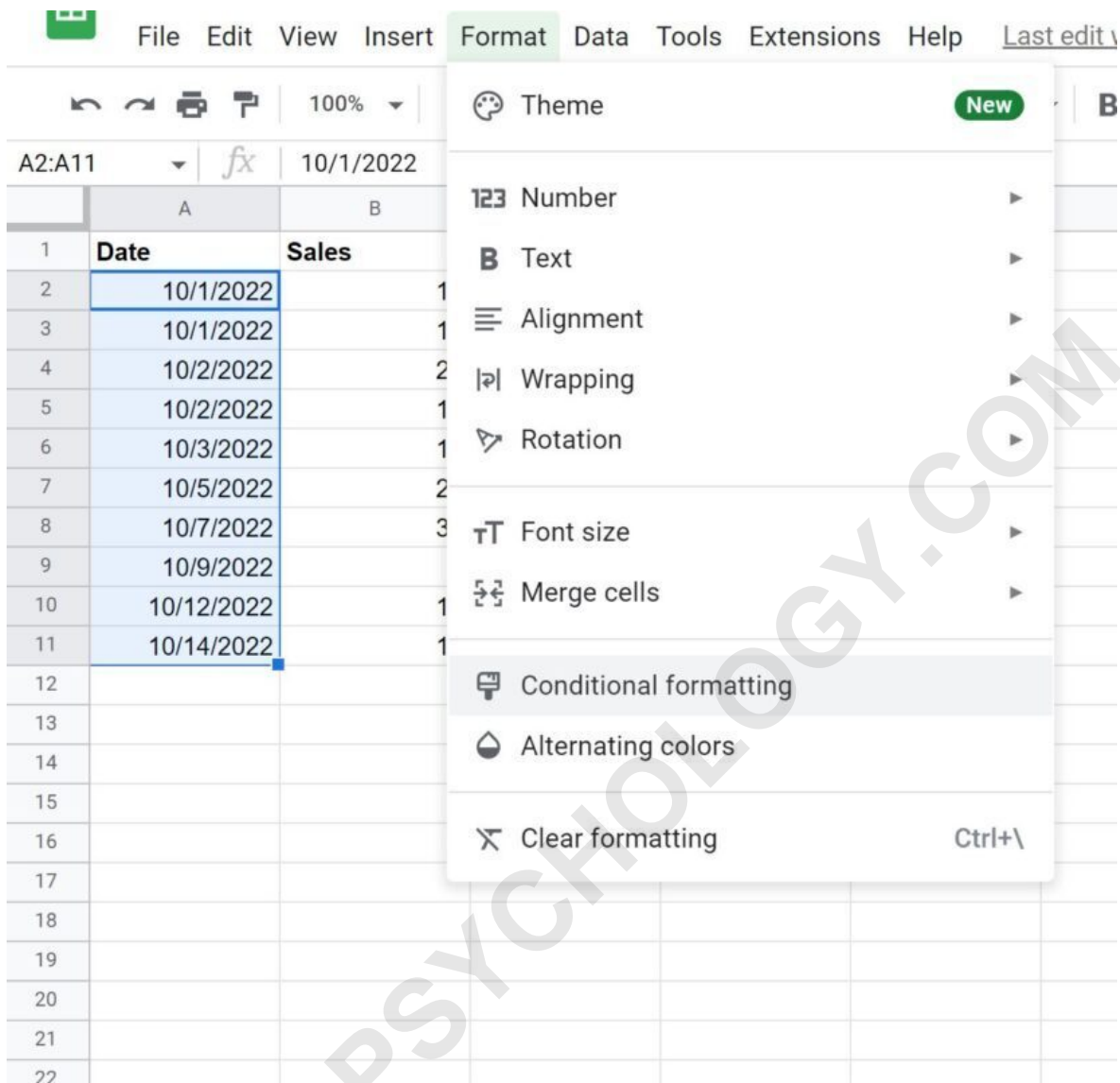
Step 1: Enter the Data

First, let's enter the following dataset that shows the sales made at some retail store during various days:

	A	B	C	D
1	Date	Sales		
2	10/1/2022	12		
3	10/1/2022	15		
4	10/2/2022	20		
5	10/2/2022	13		
6	10/3/2022	19		
7	10/5/2022	29		
8	10/7/2022	31		
9	10/9/2022	8		
10	10/12/2022	10		
11	10/14/2022	14		
12				
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Step 2: Apply Conditional Formatting to Cells if Date is Before Today

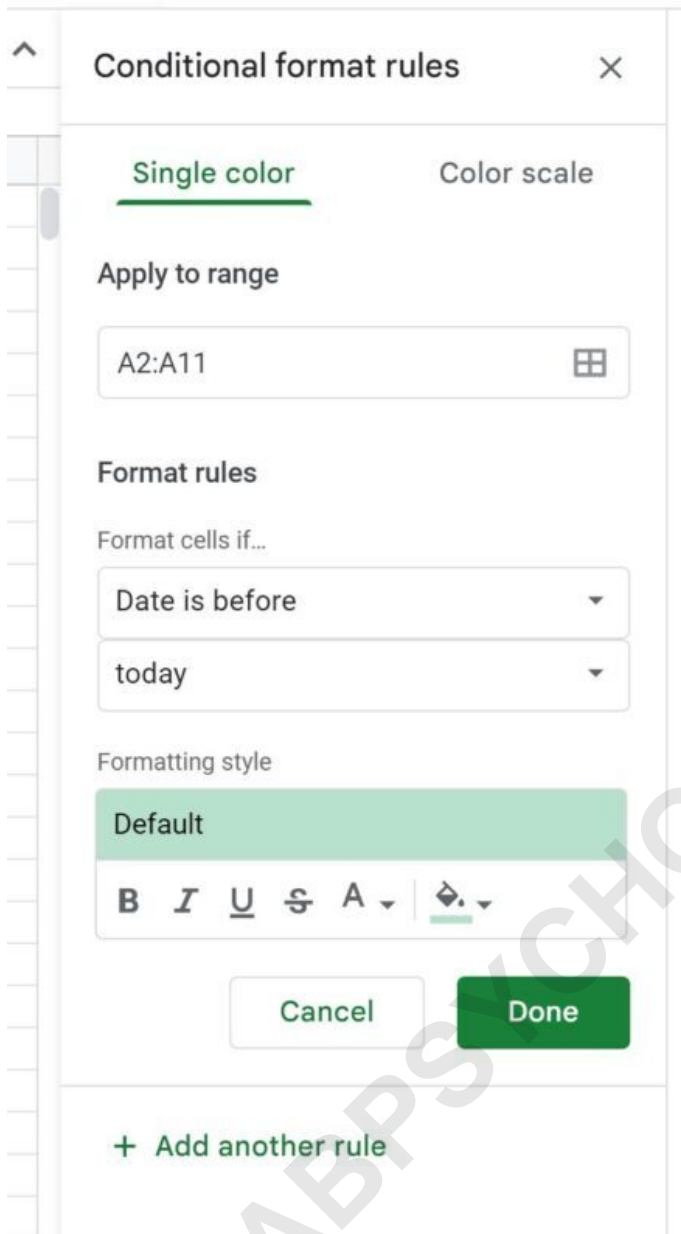
Next, highlight the cell range A2:A11, then click the Format tab, then click Conditional formatting:



The screenshot shows the Google Sheets interface with the 'Format' menu open. The menu items are: Theme (New), Number, Text, Alignment, Wrapping, Rotation, Font size, Merge cells, Conditional formatting (highlighted), Alternating colors, and Clear formatting (Ctrl+\). The spreadsheet data is as follows:

	A	B
1	Date	Sales
2	10/1/2022	1
3	10/1/2022	1
4	10/2/2022	2
5	10/2/2022	1
6	10/3/2022	1
7	10/5/2022	2
8	10/7/2022	3
9	10/9/2022	
10	10/12/2022	1
11	10/14/2022	1
12		
13		
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22		

In the Conditional format rules panel that appears on the right side of the screen, click the dropdown menu under Format rules and choose Date is before, then choose today:

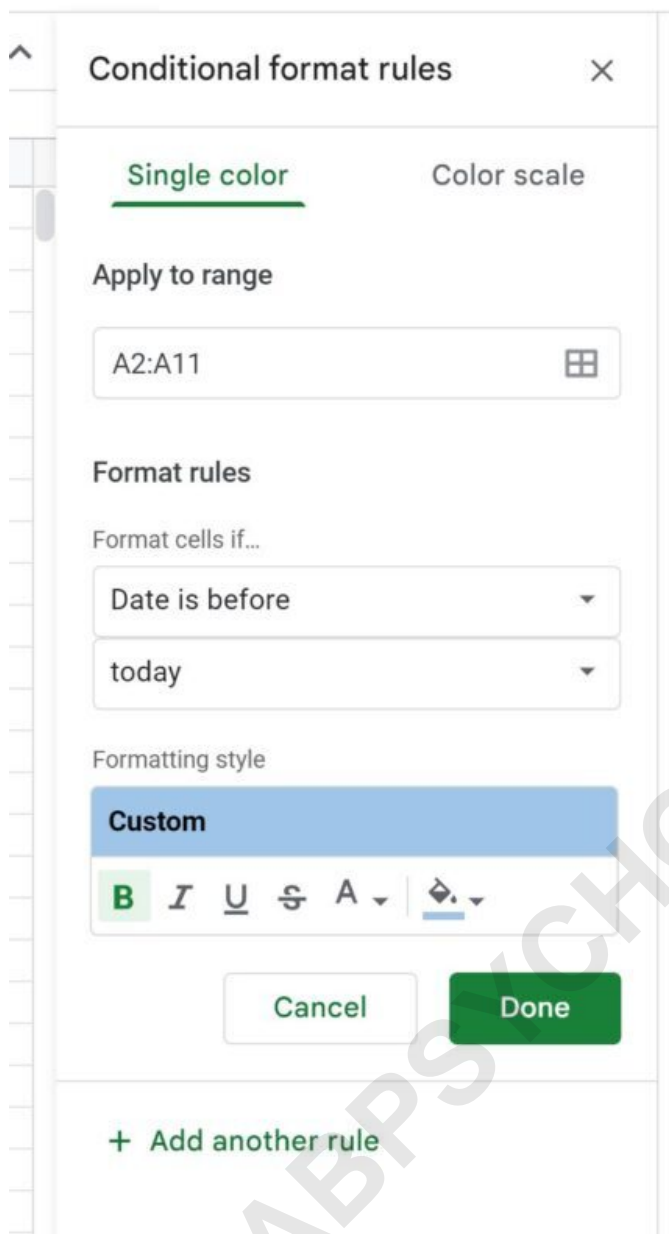


Assuming that today is 10/3/2022, all cells that are before this date will be highlighted:

	A	B	C	D
1	Date	Sales		
2	10/1/2022	12		
3	10/1/2022	15		
4	10/2/2022	20		
5	10/2/2022	13		
6	10/3/2022	19		
7	10/5/2022	29		
8	10/7/2022	31		
9	10/9/2022	8		
10	10/12/2022	10		
11	10/14/2022	14		
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Note that you can apply whatever conditional formatting rules you'd like to the cells that have a date before today.

For example, you might choose to make their font bold and their background light blue:



The formatting of the cells will automatically be changed:

	A	B	C	D
1	Date	Sales		
2	10/1/2022	12		
3	10/1/2022	15		
4	10/2/2022	20		
5	10/2/2022	13		
6	10/3/2022	19		
7	10/5/2022	29		
8	10/7/2022	31		
9	10/9/2022	8		
10	10/12/2022	10		
11	10/14/2022	14		
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The following tutorials explain how to perform other common tasks in Google Sheets: