

How do I use “Not Equal” in Google Sheets for Conditional Formatting?

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Conditional formatting in Google Sheets allows users to customize the appearance of cells based on certain conditions. One condition that can be applied is the "Not Equal" function, which highlights cells that are not equal to a specific value or formula. To use this function, select the cells you want to apply it to, go to the "Format" menu, and choose "Conditional formatting." Then, select "Custom formula is" and enter the formula " $A1 \neq B1$ " where A1 is the cell reference and B1 is the value or formula you want to compare it to. This will highlight any cells that are not equal to the value or formula in B1. This feature can be useful for identifying discrepancies or deviations in data sets.

Google Sheets: Use "Not Equal" in Conditional Formatting

You can use the custom formula function in Google Sheets to apply conditional formatting to cells that are not equal to a specific value.

The following example shows how to use the custom formula function in practice.

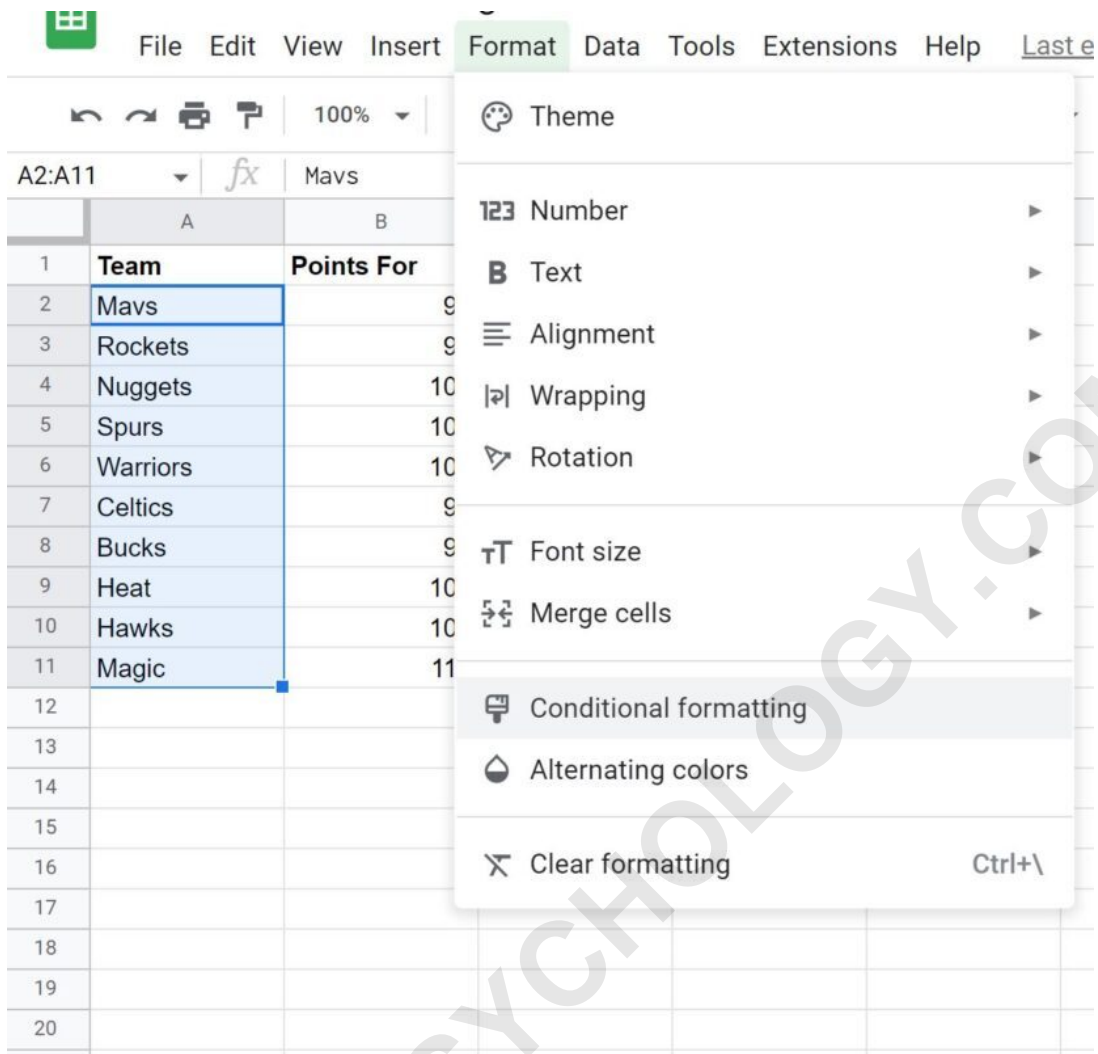
Example: How to Use "Not Equal" in Conditional Formatting

Suppose we have the following dataset in Google Sheets:

| | A | B | C | D | |
|----|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Team | Points For | Points Against | | |
| 2 | Mavs | 99 | 99 | | |
| 3 | Rockets | 94 | 92 | | |
| 4 | Nuggets | 104 | 100 | | |
| 5 | Spurs | 105 | 105 | | |
| 6 | Warriors | 100 | 100 | | |
| 7 | Celtics | 95 | 103 | | |
| 8 | Bucks | 98 | 98 | | |
| 9 | Heat | 104 | 104 | | |
| 10 | Hawks | 109 | 109 | | |
| 11 | Magic | 114 | 106 | | |
| 12 | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | |
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Suppose we'd like to highlight each of the cells in the Team column where the corresponding values in the Points For and Points Against columns are not equal.

To do so, we can highlight the cells in the range A2:A11, then click the Format tab, then click Conditional formatting:



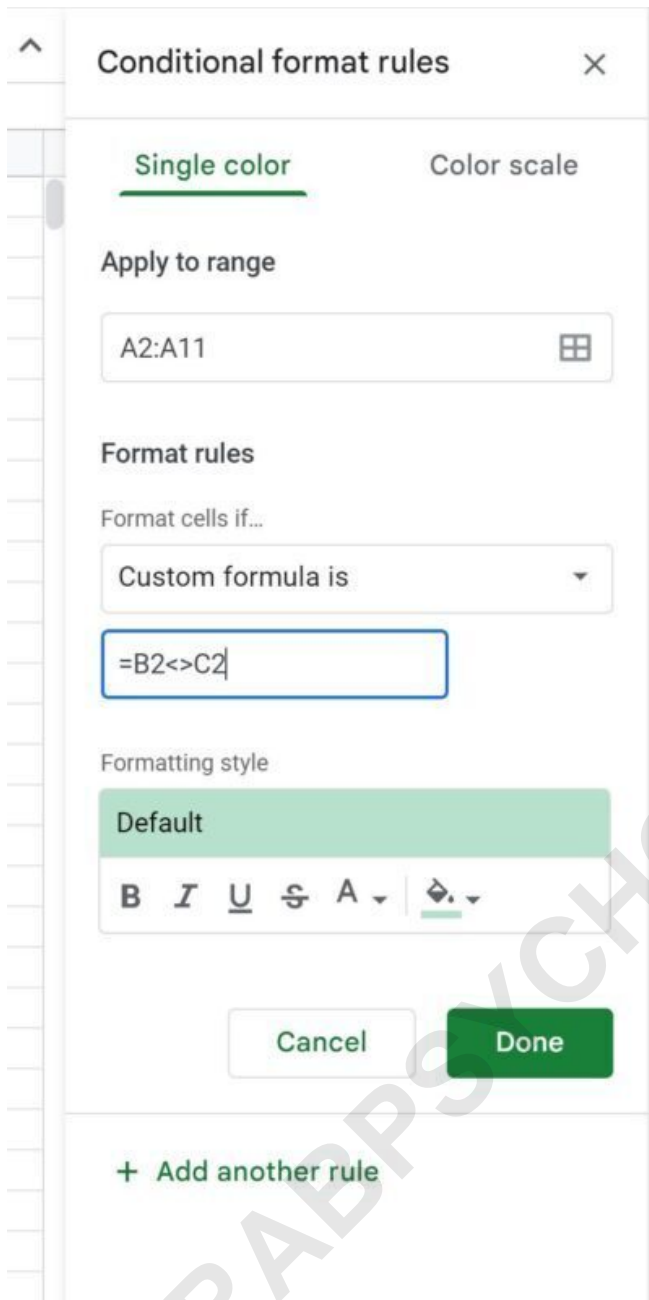
The screenshot shows a Google Sheets spreadsheet with two columns: 'Team' (A) and 'Points For' (B). The data is as follows:

| | A | B |
|----|----------|------------|
| 1 | Team | Points For |
| 2 | Mavs | 9 |
| 3 | Rockets | 9 |
| 4 | Nuggets | 10 |
| 5 | Spurs | 10 |
| 6 | Warriors | 10 |
| 7 | Celtics | 9 |
| 8 | Bucks | 9 |
| 9 | Heat | 10 |
| 10 | Hawks | 10 |
| 11 | Magic | 11 |
| 12 | | |
| 13 | | |
| 14 | | |
| 15 | | |
| 16 | | |
| 17 | | |
| 18 | | |
| 19 | | |
| 20 | | |

The 'Format' menu is open, showing options like Theme, Number, Text, Alignment, Wrapping, Rotation, Font size, Merge cells, Conditional formatting (highlighted), Alternating colors, and Clear formatting (Ctrl+\).

In the Conditional format rules panel that appears on the right side of the screen, click the Format cells if dropdown, then choose Custom formula is, then type in the following formula:

=B2<>C2



Note: The symbol <> represents "not equal" in Google Sheets.

Once you click Done, each of the cells in the Team column where the corresponding values in the Points For and Points Against columns are not equal will be

highlighted:

| | A | B | C | D | |
|----|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Team | Points For | Points Against | | |
| 2 | Mavs | 99 | 99 | | |
| 3 | Rockets | 94 | 92 | | |
| 4 | Nuggets | 104 | 100 | | |
| 5 | Spurs | 105 | 105 | | |
| 6 | Warriors | 100 | 100 | | |
| 7 | Celtics | 95 | 103 | | |
| 8 | Bucks | 98 | 98 | | |
| 9 | Heat | 104 | 104 | | |
| 10 | Hawks | 109 | 109 | | |
| 11 | Magic | 114 | 106 | | |
| 12 | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | |
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| 21 | | | | | |

By default, Google Sheets uses a light green background as the conditional formatting style.

However, you change the conditional formatting to appear however you'd like by changing the default settings in the Formatting style box.