

Learning Microsoft Excel

Name:

Period:

Introduction:

Microsoft Excel is a program that allows you to enter data, analyze data and make graphs quickly and easily. As a scientist at the University, I use Excel almost every week. Practically every business uses Excel or a similar spreadsheet program, to keep track of sales, inventory and profits. Learning computer spreadsheets is a great job skill. We will enter some make-believe weather data today and make some graphs. Later, you will enter your own data.

Getting started:

From the “Start” Menu, click on Excel. After the program is running, you will see a grid of boxes. On the top is the familiar Microsoft toolbar. Running down the left hand side is a column of numbers. These numbers identify “rows” in the spreadsheet. Across the top is a list of letters. These letters identify “columns” in the spreadsheet.

Entering data:

Begin in the grid box A1 and working down the A column. Click on this box and type Day and hit enter. Each time you put data or a label in a grid box, hit enter to move to the next grid box. Below, in grid box A2 and working down, enter the dates Sept 20 through Sept 25 down the column. Excel will automatically change your entry into its date format. The A column should look like this when you are done:

Day

20-Sep
21-Sep
22-Sep
23-Sep
24-Sep
25-Sep

In the next column over, enter label the grid box B1 as Temp. Going down the column, enter the temperature data for each of those 5 dates below. I’ve made up some data for this exercise for you to use. Your B column should look like this:

Temp

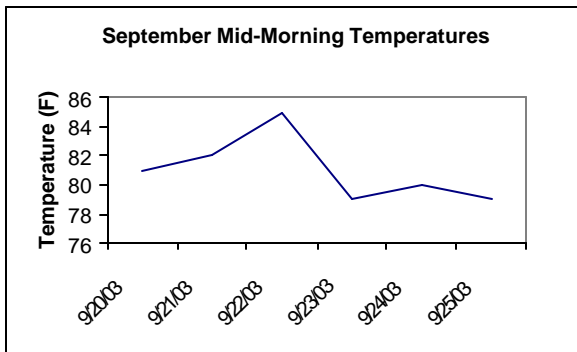
81
82
85
79
80
79

Making a Line Graph:

Left click and drag your cursor over both columns, highlighting all of the data. Click on the graph icon on the tool bar. It’s the one that looks like a bar graph with blue, yellow

and red bars. You will be presented with lots of choices for which kind of graph you would like to make. For this kind of data, the best graph is a Line graph. Highlight “Line” and click the “next” button. There are several types of line graphs to choose from. This time, choose the one that’s already highlighted (Excel looks at your data and suggests the best type of line graph for your data). Click “next”. You will see your new graph and now have options for adding labels, changing scales etc.

When you’ve got the graph the way you like it, click “finish”. You can always modify your graph by left clicking on it and then right clicking while the cursor is still on the graph to open a menu of options. Here is an example graph of that data:

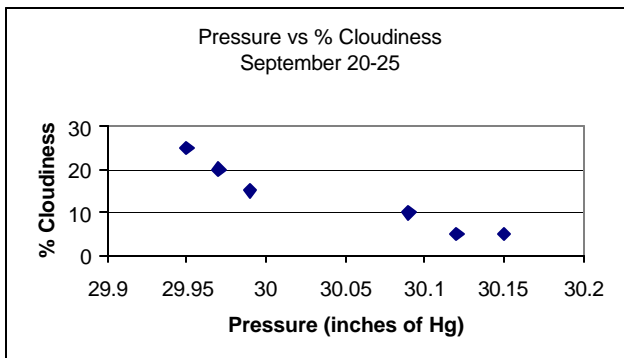


A good graph has all the information the reader needs and NOTHING EXTRA to distract them. Keep colors and fonts simple and titles and labels clear and concise.

Comparing datasets:

Say you are interested in the relationship between atmospheric pressure and temperature. Lets add a third column of pressure data and compare it with temperature. In the “C” column, label the C column Pressure and the D column % Clouds and enter this data so your columns look like:

Pressure	% Clouds
30.09	10
30.12	5
30.15	5
29.95	25
29.99	15
29.97	20



Highlight the Temp and Pressure columns by right clicking and dragging the cursor over them. Click the graph icon on the toolbar. Select “XY (scatter)” and click next. Add titles, labels and change the colors if you’d like. Here’s an example. What is the relationship between pressure and cloudiness?