

Work faster by customizing Excel's default settings

When you create a workbook, do you typically change its default settings, such as font, number of worksheets, and column width? If so, consider changing Excel's defaults to the ones you want. You can change some defaults in the Options dialog box, while you can change others in a startup template. (You can change some settings in either place.)

Change defaults

Choose Tools | Options and then click on the General tab. Excel's original default font is Arial, a nice sans serif font. But if you want to always start with a different default font, open the Standard Font dropdown menu and choose the font you want, as shown in **Figure A**. While you're at it, you might want to set the Size to something other than the original default 10-point font size.

In the Default File Location text box, you can type the complete path to your preferred working folder, to which Excel automatically goes when you tell it to open or save a file. (If you type a path in the Alternate Startup File Location text box, starting Excel will automatically open all workbooks in that folder.)

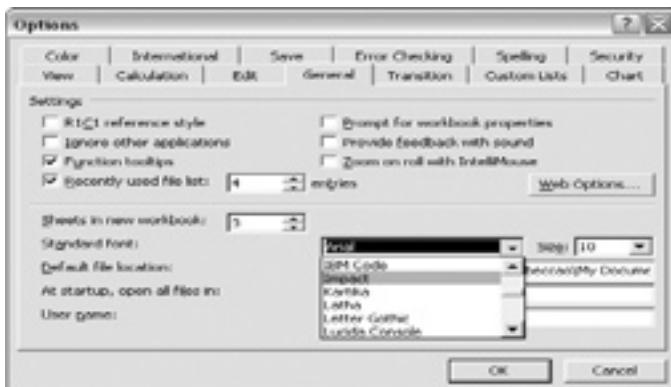


Figure A

When you start Excel or open a new file, the open workbook has three blank worksheets by default. To change this, click on the up

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Customize Excel's default settings

(continued from page 1)

PowerPoint: Crop your images so your audience knows what to focus on

You insert pictures into your slides because they help to tell your story visually. Unfortunately, when most people take pictures, they also capture unnecessary scenery that can distract your audience. To avoid this, crop pictures to remove anything in the image that isn't necessary.

Figure A shows an image you might use to demonstrate skilled cake decorating techniques. You want the audience to focus on the hand position, but the excess imagery doesn't direct the eye to the hands. In fact, the woman's face draws our attention because most people are naturally drawn to faces. To resolve the issue, we cropped the image, as shown in Figure B.



Figure A



Figure B

or down arrow on the Set Sheets In New Workbook spin box and choose the number of sheets you want, 1 to 255. Click OK.

Change the startup template

If you often increase a workbook's column width, you'll be happy to know that Column width is among the defaults you can change. You have to create a startup template with the changes, name it *Book.xlt*, and save it in the Excel startup folder, Xlstart.

To do so, open a new workbook. Change any default settings you like. For example, increase column width, delete or insert worksheets, add a header or footer, or insert a boilerplate graphic. Then choose File | Save As. In the File Name text box, type *Book*, and choose Template (*.xlt) from the Save As Type dropdown list, as shown in Figure B.

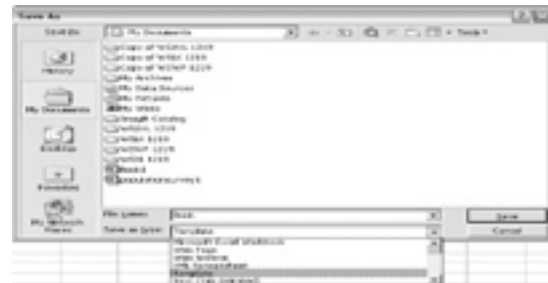


Figure B

In the Save In dropdown list, choose the Xlstart folder for your system. To find it, use the following file location list. (The second location in each pair is for systems using user profiles.)

Windows 98: C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office\Xlstart or, C:\Windows\Application Data\Microsoft\Excel\Xlstart

Windows 2000 or Windows XP: C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office\Xlstart or, C:\Documents and Settings\All Users\Application Data\Microsoft\Excel\XLSTART

Windows NT 4: C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office\Xlstart or, C:\Winnt\Profiles\All Users\Application Data\Microsoft\Excel\Xlstart

Click OK. To test your template file, exit Excel, then restart Excel. (If you want the original template back, move or delete *Book.xlt* from Xlstart.) ■

T.O.P.S. AWARD



Are you *T.O.P.S.* (The Office Problem Solver) in your office? Surely you've encountered many challenges in your job. Is there a task or project in Microsoft Office that you or a coworker found particularly difficult and then successfully solved? We want to hear about it.

Submit your story and examples of your work, and we'll choose a *T.O.P.S.* winner based on creativity and resourcefulness. We will announce the winner and print their story in a future issue. The winner will receive a free 6-month subscription to one of our other publications. Check out our titles at <http://www.workingsmartertraining.com>.

Email your submissions to editor@working-smarter.com with the subject line, "The Office Problem Solver."

Never forget that important email or meeting by using Outlook Flags

Do you know at a glance which messages in your Outlook Inbox you need to follow up on? To jog your memory, consider using Outlook's flags.

Flags are icons you can display next to messages that you want to remind yourself or the recipient about. For example, you might add a Follow Up flag by a message that contains the instructions for a task you must complete. Or, you can add a Call flag to a message that requires a follow-up phone call.

• **Add a flag.** To add a flag to a message, open the message you want to mark. (You can also add a flag to a message before you send it.) On the email's Standard toolbar, click the Message Flag tool. From the Flag To dropdown list, choose any of the flags listed, as shown in Figure A.

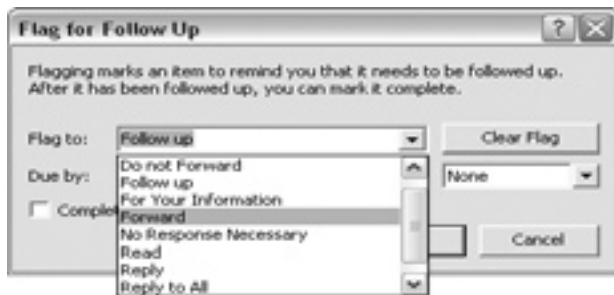


Figure A

To set a date and time as the deadline for the flag action, choose the desired date from the Due By dropdown list. Once the date is set, you can edit the time next to the Due By dropdown list. Click OK. Note the info flag above the From field, then close the message. Now the message has a red flag icon in its Flag column.

• **Reminder alerts.** If you set a By date and time for a flag, and Outlook is running at the set time, a reminder message pops up. In the Reminder dialog box, you can choose Dismiss, Snooze, or Open Item. If you click Snooze, you can choose to be reminded again in minutes, hours, days, or weeks.

• **Cancel a flag.** After completing a follow-up action, right-click on the message and choose Flag Complete or Clear Message Flag. Or, open the message and click Message Flag. In the dialog box, choose Clear Flag, or select Completed and click OK. (The message's flag icon turns white.) ■

Stop Access confusion! Get the lowdown on modal vs. modeless

Don't have to tell you that working in Access can be tricky. One aspect that might confuse you is the fact that there are two types of pop-up forms. The first type are forms that stay on top of all other forms and objects regardless of which object is active. In Form view, a *modeless* pop-up form lets you access other objects, but a *modal* pop-up doesn't. You *must* respond to a modal pop-up form before Access will release it and let you continue.

With your form in Design view, click the form selector or the Properties tool to open the form's property sheet, and click on the Other tab. To make this a

modal form, set both the Pop Up and Modal properties to Yes. To make it a *modeless* form, set the Pop Up property to Yes and the Modal property to No.

Here's a real power user tip: if you use OpenForm to open a modal form, you must specify the *acDialog* constant as:

```
DoCmd.OpenForm  
"formname", , , , acDialog.
```

If you omit the *acDialog* constant, Access ignores the Modal property setting. ■

Word: Yank all hyperlinks and their display text

If you want to remove all of the hyperlinks in your document and you aren't interested in keeping the associated display text for each link, here's how to do so:

1. Select your entire document, or just the text that contains your hyperlinks.
 2. Press [Shift][F9] to reveal the hyperlink code.
 3. Select Edit | Replace from the menu bar to open the Find And Replace dialog box.
 4. Click the More button to expand the dialog box.
 5. With the insertion point in the Find What text box, click Special and select Field from the dropdown list, as shown in Figure A. This places ^d in the Find What text box.
 6. Leave the Replace With text box empty.
 7. Click Find Next, and then click Replace to replace the first instance.
 8. Once you're sure Find And Replace is working properly, you can click Replace All to change all remaining hyperlinks.
- This procedure leaves no trace of the hyperlinks. It removes any other type of field as well, if you selected that field along with all your hyperlinks.

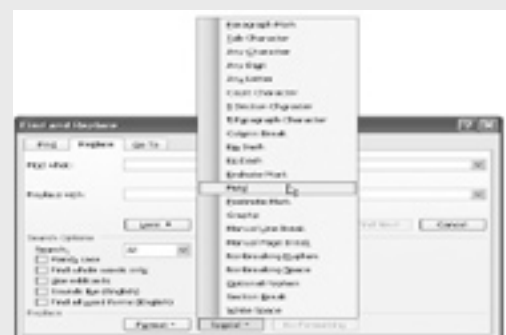


Figure A

Don't duplicate your work: Insert an already formatted Excel chart into your PowerPoint presentation

A chart is often the best way to condense information and present it so audience members quickly grasp your message. Creating a chart in PowerPoint is often unnecessary for two primary reasons: First, more robust charting programs, such as Excel, are easier to use and have more formatting flexibility. Second, there's no reason to re-create a chart that already exists in another program. Fortunately, copying and pasting a chart from Excel to PowerPoint is simple. On the other hand, retaining or updating the chart's formatting in the process can be tricky. So, in this article, we'll take a look at several techniques that help you integrate an imported chart with your slide's design. We'll even show you how to add new effects to an imported chart, as illustrated in **Figure A**.

Variations on a theme

The first step in getting an Excel chart into PowerPoint is to copy it to the Clipboard. To do so, launch Excel and open the workbook with the chart you wish to copy. Select the entire chart, and press [Ctrl]C. Now, launch PowerPoint and navigate to the slide on which you want the chart in Slide or Normal view. Press [Ctrl]V to paste the chart. Leave the default option, Excel Chart (Entire

Workbook), selected in the Paste smart tag for now.

To resize a chart without distorting the text, drag one of its corner editing handles to increase or decrease the chart's size proportionately. To update the chart's colors to match your presentation's color scheme, make sure the chart is still selected and click the Recolor Excel Chart button on the Picture toolbar. (If your Picture toolbar isn't displayed, choose View | Toolbars | Picture from the menu bar.) Then, select the Entire Color Scheme or the Only Text And Background Colors option button in the resulting Recolor Excel Chart dialog box, as shown in **Figure B**.

Now, PowerPoint updates your chart's colors to match your slide each time you change your color scheme. For more formatting flexibility, you can double-click on the chart to open Excel's tools in your PowerPoint environment. Or, another attractive formatting option is to ungroup your chart.

Ungrouping for all the right reasons

There are many reasons to ungroup a pasted chart. First, you can easily correct any distortions in text due to application

incompatibility. Second, you increase your formatting and design opportunities in a variety of ways.

Warning: You can't ungroup a chart that you've linked to an Excel workbook because ungrouping breaks the link.

Fix distorted text by ungrouping

To ungroup a selected chart, choose Ungroup from the Draw menu on the Drawing toolbar. When a message box appears asking if you want to convert the imported object to a Microsoft Drawing object, click Yes. Repeat this step until the Ungroup option is no longer available. When you do so, PowerPoint automatically corrects any distorted text and converts it to the nearest font size. As you can see in **Figure C**, however, you often still need to edit the size of the text and the layout of the text boxes.

Since ungrouping breaks down the chart into its individual components, you now have more design and editing flexibility. In fact, all of the effects shown in **Figure A** were made possible by ungrouping the chart. (Note that the opaque patterns in our sample chart are only possible to create and view in PowerPoint 2002 and later.) Here's some things you can try to jazz up one of your own charts:

- Use the Font and Font Size dropdown lists on the Formatting toolbar, and the Font Color button on the Drawing toolbar to customize the label for a charted item you want to stand out.

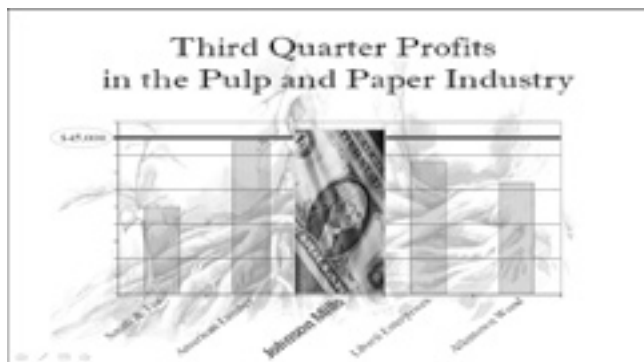


Figure A



Figure B

- Remove the background component of the chart by selecting it and pressing [Delete] so your slide design bleeds through.

- Use the Line Style button on the Drawing toolbar to add thickness to the appropriate gridline to illustrate a set value or goal.

- Adjust the Transparency slider or select the Semitransparent check box in the Format AutoShape dialog box to make chart components opaque. With your AutoShape selected, choose Format | AutoShape to access the Format AutoShape dialog box.

- Create a new effect, such as a Pattern or Picture fill, for any or all of the chart bars (or other components) by selecting Fill Effects from the Fill Color tool's dropdown menu.

When your chart looks the way you want it to, select all of its pieces and choose Group (Regroup in Excel 2003) from the Draw menu on the Drawing toolbar. Once you've put your chart back together again, you can continue with your presentation's design.

Tip: The easiest way to make sure all of your pieces are selected to regroup your chart is to press [Ctrl]A.

Paste a picture-perfect chart

Although converting a chart to a Microsoft Drawing object can greatly reduce your presentation's file size, another alternative is to paste a chart onto your slide as a picture. To do so in PowerPoint 2002/2003, choose Picture Of Chart (Smaller File Size) from the Paste smart tag when you paste the chart on your slide, as shown in **Figure D**. If you're using PowerPoint 2000, choose Edit | Paste

Special, select Picture or Picture (Enhanced Metafile) in the Paste Special dialog box, and then click OK.

When you're inserting a chart as a picture, you can also launch the Recolor Picture dialog box by clicking the Recolor Picture button, which appears in place of, and looks the same as, the Recolor Excel Chart button on the Picture toolbar. (Note that the Recolor Picture dialog box doesn't offer the same amount of recoloring and design flexibility as the ungrouping method.)

Charts with form and function

Although you can simply copy and paste an Excel chart onto a slide, there are many ways to tweak and embellish it throughout the process. If time is an issue, you may just want to update the colors to match your slide's color scheme. But with a little creativity and a little work, you can maintain a chart's informative function while transforming it into an eye-catching design element. ■



Figure C



Figure D

Outlook: Insert a picture for easier viewing

If you're sending a picture in an email message, why not make it easier for your recipient to view it? Instead of adding the picture as an attachment to the email message, include it directly with the message text. To do so:

1. Click on the Mail icon in the Navigation Pane (click on the Inbox folder in the Folder List in 2000 and 2002).
2. Click the New button on the Outlook Standard toolbar to launch a new Message form.
3. Enter any text you'd like in the message area of the Message form.
4. Click in the message area where you want the inline picture to appear.
5. Choose Insert | Picture | From File from the Message form's menu bar.
6. Click the Browse button in the Picture dialog box and locate the file you want to include. Then, click Open and OK (click Insert in 2000 and 2002).
7. Resize the picture if needed by dragging the sizing handles.
8. Send the message as you normally would.

When the recipient opens the email message, she can already see the picture without having to open an attachment, as shown in **Figure A**. The picture will even show in the Reading Pane (Preview Pane in 2000 and 2002) without opening the message.



Figure A



Word: Switch page number placement to meet your tastes

Q *How do I set up page numbering so that some pages show their numbers at the top, while others show it at the bottom?*

A The trick is to divide the document into separate document sections—one for each different page numbering style you want. Then set the page number position for each section.

- **Insert sections.** Click on the page where you want a new section to begin, then choose Insert | Break. In the Section Break Types panel, select a Page Type other than Continuous, such as Next page. In the same way, divide the rest of the document into sections as needed.

- **Insert page numbers.** You must do the sections in order, starting with the first one. Let's assume that Section-1 has numbering where you want it, whether on the top or the bottom of the page. Choose View | Header And Footer. On the Header And Footer toolbar, click Show Next to go to Section 2, where you want to switch the page number position.

Use Switch Between Header and Footer as needed to switch to the location of the existing page number and delete that number. Then switch back, set the insertion point where you do want the number, and click the Insert Page Number tool. Here's the key step: at the top-right of the Header or Footer area is the label Same As Previous. Click the Header and Footer toolbar's Same As Previous tool to turn that feature off. Do this for both the header and footer. If you want to make more changes, click Show Next, and move on to the next one.

PPT: Format AutoShapes for more visual appeal

Q *I use several AutoShapes in my PowerPoint slides, but I can't figure out how to format them. Can you help?*

A In PowerPoint, display a slide with an AutoShape on it. Right-

click on the shape and choose Format AutoShape.

On the Color And Lines tab, you can set Fill and Line colors (including fill effects) and styles. If the shape is an arrow, you can change various arrow attributes here.

On the Size tab, you can set a specific size for the AutoShape, scale it, or rotate the AutoShape. On the Position tab, you can control where on the slide the AutoShape appears. If you need to set it at a specific position, instead of dragging it freehand, set the Horizontal and Vertical settings to the distance you desire from the Top Left Corner or from the Center of the slide, as shown in **Figure A**. After adjusting your settings, click OK.



Figure A

Excel: Format and wrap text in cells for an easy read

Q *I'd like to add a sentence of text to a cell, but I can't get it to format correctly. How can I add text that I can format easily?*

A As you've discovered, Excel doesn't handle text as easily as a word processing program does. For instance, if you add a line of text inside a cell and want to start a new paragraph, you can't just press Enter. If you do, the insertion point moves to the next cell. This is Excel's natural behavior, since it is designed to handle rows and columns of numbers.

If your text entry is longer than a few characters, and you want it to appear in a single cell, you can:

- Increase the cell's row height and/or column width to fit the text.
- Type the text, pressing [Alt+Enter] to start a new line within the cell.

- Type the text, press Enter, click on the cell, and choose Format | Cells. Click on the Alignment tab and select the Wrap Text option and click OK.

- Use a text box: Display the Drawing toolbar by clicking the Standard toolbar's Drawing tool. Then, click on the Text Box tool and draw a rectangular text box wherever you want the text. Type text in the text box just as you would in a word processor; press Enter at the end of a line.

To format text in a cell, select the text in the Formula bar. Or, in a text box, select the text, right-click on it, and choose Format Text Box. Here you can set the font, font style, size, color, and various effects.

Outlook: Create folders for better contact organization

Q *I created an Outlook folder for email messages, but I want to change it to store contact information. How can I change the folder type for this folder?*

A Outlook does not allow you to change a folder's type, but it sounds as though all you really need to do is to create a folder of the type you want.

To do this, choose File | New | Folder. In the Name text box, type a folder name. Set the Folder Contains menu to the type of items to be stored there—one type per folder—this sets the folder type. For instance, to store Contacts, select Contact Items. Select a location for the new folder, such as under your current Contacts folder. Click OK.

To delete an unwanted folder, click on it in the Folder List and examine its contents. Move any items in that folder that you want to save to another folder, then right-click on the previous folder, and choose Delete "[name of folder]". Then, click Yes. ■

Give Excel ranges an identity by naming them

Excel lets you select a range of one or more cells and give that range a descriptive name. Then you can type or paste the range name into a formula instead of using hard-to-remember cell references. For example, if D6:E9 has been named Sales, you can use =SUM(Sales), instead of =SUM(D6:E9).

To name a range, select the cells and choose Insert | Name | Define. (Or, use the Collapse/Expand Dialog buttons to select the cells.) Type a name—without any spaces—and click Add. Define more names if desired. Click OK.

If the selected data includes column and row labels, you can use them to name ranges: choose Insert | Name | Create, select the label location check boxes, e.g., Top Row, and click OK.

It's easy to paste a range name while typing a formula. Choose Insert | Name | Paste, select the name, and click OK. For example, to add all values in the Qtr_1 and Qtr_2 ranges, type =SUM(Qtr_1 - OK, type a comma, then paste Qtr_2, and press Enter.

To delete or change a range name, choose Insert | Name | Define. Select the unwanted name. To delete it, click Delete. Or, to change the selected name, type the new name in the top box and click Add, then select the old name, and click Delete and then OK. ■

TEST YOUR PC IQ

Outlook: Become a View menu master

Outlook provides users with different ways to view email, Contacts, and the like. In this quiz, we test your knowledge of the View menu when you're working with the Inbox. Can you associate the View menu commands with their respective tasks?

Tasks

- A. Displays a list of choices to view, e.g., Inbox, Calendar, Contacts
- B. Displays a submenu of toolbar choices
- C. Displays up to three lines of each message in your Inbox
- D. Displays email message in bottom half of screen
- E. Displays meeting reminders in a dialog box
- F. Hides or displays your list of folders
- G. Hides or displays the Outlook Bar
- H. Hides or shows the status bar
- I. Provides a submenu of several different views, such as Last Seven Days

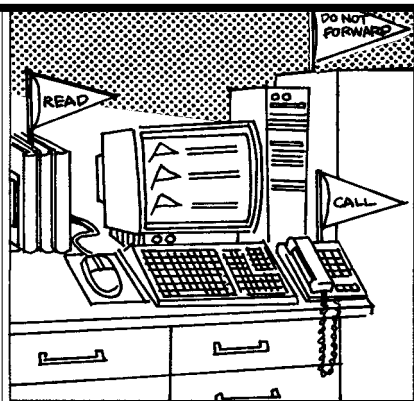
View Menu Commands

- ___ 1. AutoPreview
- ___ 2. Current View
- ___ 3. Folder List
- ___ 4. Reminders Window
- ___ 5. Outlook Bar
- ___ 6. Go To
- ___ 7. Preview Pane
- ___ 8. Status Bar
- ___ 9. Toolbars

Answers

1-C 2-I 3-F 4-E 5-G 6-A 7-D 8-H 9-B

SUITE SUCCESS



Joan went overboard with her Outlook flags

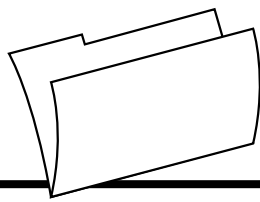
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working smarter®

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft Excel | <input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft Outlook |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft Word | <input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft PowerPoint | <input type="checkbox"/> MS Excel for Advanced Users |

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Word: Spice up your printed report with a customized AutoShape

Word offers many pre-drawn shapes called *AutoShapes*. They include geometric shapes, arrows, starbursts, banners, and even flowchart elements.

In this tutorial, we look at the various types of AutoShapes, how to insert them in a document, and how to modify them. To follow along, open a blank document in Word, and make sure that you are in Print Layout view. Also, if necessary, display the Drawing toolbar by clicking the Standard toolbar's Drawing tool.

Preview AutoShapes

To access AutoShapes, click the Drawing toolbar's AutoShapes button. This displays a menu with submenus, including Lines, Block Arrows, and Flowchart, as shown in **Figure A**. Each submenu is a different AutoShape category. They all offer individual shapes that you can add to your documents.

With the AutoShapes menu open, choose Lines. You see a palette of six types of lines. In the same way, review the shapes offered on the next five submenus.

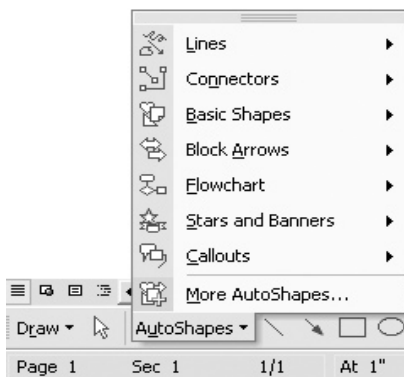


Figure A

Insert an AutoShape

Let's insert a star. Choose AutoShapes | Stars And Banners, and in the second row, click the 16-Point Star. The mouse pointer changes to the Precision Select pointer (looks like a plus sign). Let's put this star in the top-left corner of the document. Click at about the 0" point on both the horizontal and vertical rulers, drag down and right to about the 3" point on each ruler, then release the mouse button.

Format an AutoShape

By default, your AutoShape has a thin black border but no fill color. To change these characteristics, right-click on the shape and choose Format AutoShape. Then, click on the Color And Lines tab. Here we can add a fill color to the shape, as well as change the shape's border.

In the Fill panel, open the Color dropdown list. For this example, choose Dark Blue as the color to fill the shape. Click OK and see how your shape looks.

Add some transparency

One common way to use AutoShapes is to combine shapes to create a unique drawing object. For instance, you could stack one shape on top of another. To add a different touch to the coloring of the top shape, you can use the semi-transparent option.

Choose AutoShapes | Stars And Banners | 5-Point Star. Draw the new shape on top of the 16-point star—make it about an inch square. Drag it as

needed to position it in the middle of the larger star.

Right-click on the smaller star and choose Format AutoShape, then click on the Color And Lines tab. In the Fill panel, adjust the Transparency slider to about 80%.

Let's give the star a border that contrasts well with the dark blue. In the Line panel, choose Yellow from the Color dropdown list.

Next, to make the line heavier, set the Weight spin box to 4.5 points. Also, open the Dashed dropdown list and select the fifth dash line, Long Dash, to give your five point star a dashed instead of a solid black outline.

Click OK. The semitransparent top star lets just some of the bottom star's dark blue show through.

Make them one

If you wanted to move your creation now, you would have to move each shape—the top star and the bottom star—separately. To join the shapes into a single object, you can group them. Click on the top shape, then [Shift+Click] on the bottom shape. Now, with both shapes selected, right-click on them and choose Grouping | Group.

Now grab the unified shape and drag it to another location on your page. You're ready to apply these techniques to your own drawing shapes. You may close the document without saving. ■