

# Custom Format Codes

**Used For:** There are tricks involving Excel's obsolete format-coding language which format numbers in ways that can't be duplicated with regular formatting.

**Prerequisite:** Numeric Formatting, optionally Styles

## How To:

- Select the numbers to be formatted.
- From the **Format** menu, select the **Cells...** Choice.
- In the dialog box that Excel shows pick **Custom** on the left, then backspace over the word **General** that's in the middle of the right side. Into that newly empty slot type:
  - **#,##0;[Red]#,##0** and positive numbers will be displayed in black while negative numbers will be displayed in red. You don't have to use red either; the other colours you can put in the brackets are **[Blue]**, **[Green]**, and **[Yellow]**.
  - **#,##0;#,##0;"-"** and zeroes in the cells will be shown as dashes.
  - **#,##0" km"** and numbers will be shown with the added text on the end. This particular code is good for mileage sheets, but you can change the text in the quotes to anything you want.
  - **;;;** and all entries in the cell will not display on the screen or on printouts. This is useful if you need to enter some "scratch numbers" somewhere on the sheet so you can calculate with them, but you don't want other people to see them!
  - **#,** and Excel will show only the thousands digits of the number (e.g., **12,000** would be displayed as **12**), yet still use the correct number in calculations.
  - **00000** to force Excel to keep leading zeroes on items like invoice numbers (e.g., **752** would be shown as **00752**). You can increase or decrease the number of zeroes in the code if your numbers need to be "padded" longer or shorter than five digits.
- Once you have used any of these codes, you can optionally select the cell where it was applied and create a **Style** so you can use it again more easily.