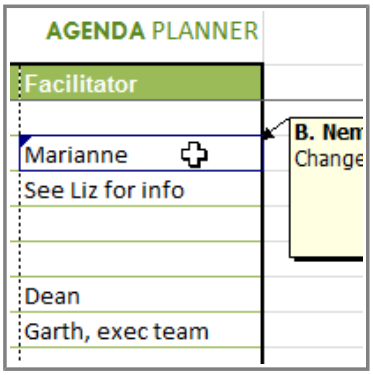
Introduction



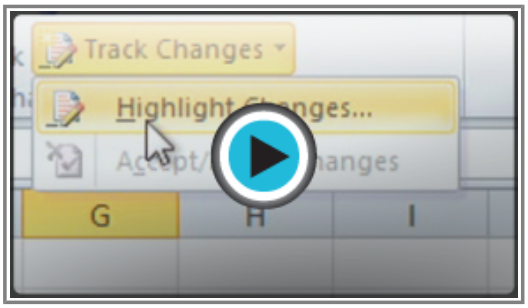
Suppose someone asked you to proofread or collaborate on a worksheet they put together. If you had a hard copy, you might use a red pen to cross out cell data, mark misspellings, or add comments in the margins. However, you could also do all of these things in Excel using the **Track Changes** and **Comments** features.

When you've finished reviewing the worksheet, the other person can choose to automatically **Accept** all of your changes, or decide whether to **Accept** or **Reject** each change one-by-one.

In this lesson, you will learn how to **track changes**, add **comments**, and **compare** two versions of a worksheet. You will also learn how to prepare a **final** version for sharing, including how to **check spelling**.

Tracking Changes

Watch the video to learn about tracking changes and adding comments to worksheets.



Watch the video (5:11). ***Need help?***

About Track Changes

When you turn on the **Track Changes** option, every change you make to the worksheet will be **highlighted** with a unique border and indicator. Hovering your mouse over a highlighted cell will display the details of the change. This allows the other person to see what changes have been made before making the changes permanent.

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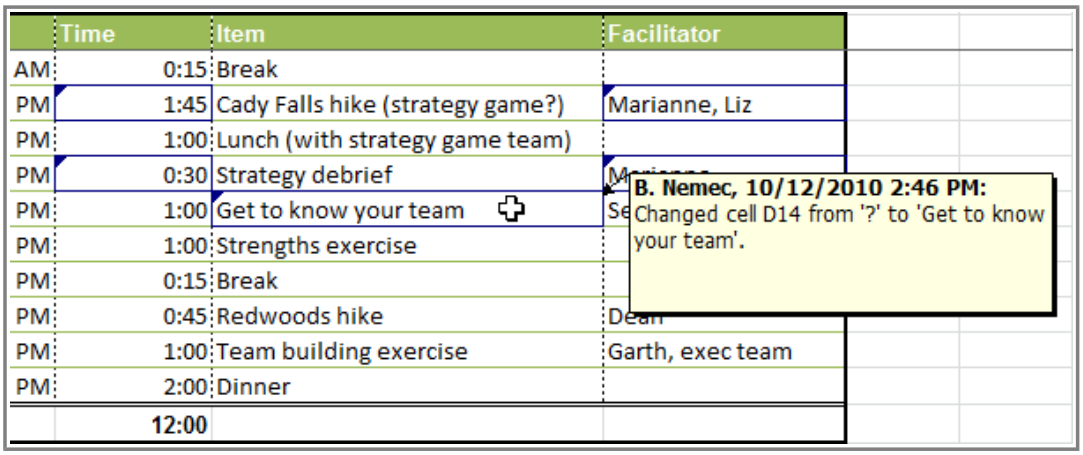


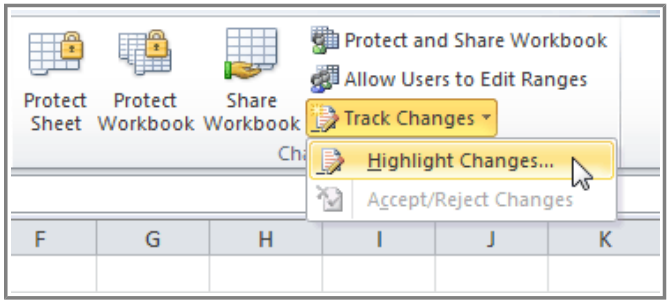
Worksheet with tracked changes

The **color** of the highlights will vary depending on who is reviewing the document, so if there are multiple reviewers, you'll be able to tell at a glance who made each change.

There are some changes that Excel **cannot** track. Familiarize yourself at changes that Excel does not track or highlight.

To Turn on Track Changes:

1. Go to the **Review** tab.
2. Click **Track Changes**, then select **Highlight Changes** from the drop-down menu.



Highlight tracked changes

3. The **Highlight Changes** dialog box will appear.
4. Check the box next to **Track changes while editing**.
5. Verify the box is checked for **Highlight changes on screen**. This will highlight your changes while you work.
6. Click **OK**.

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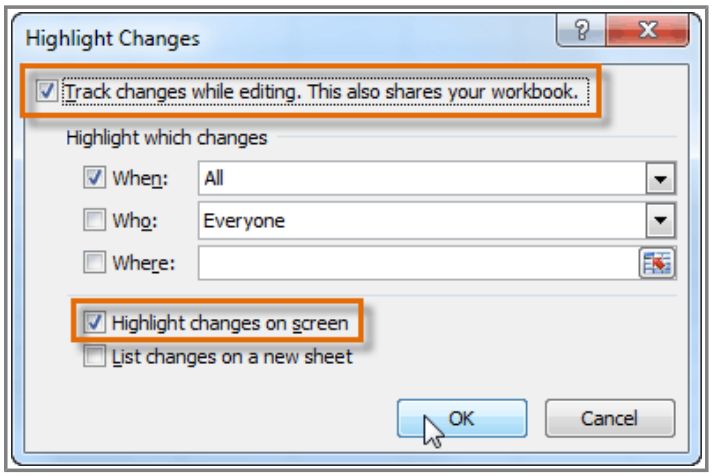
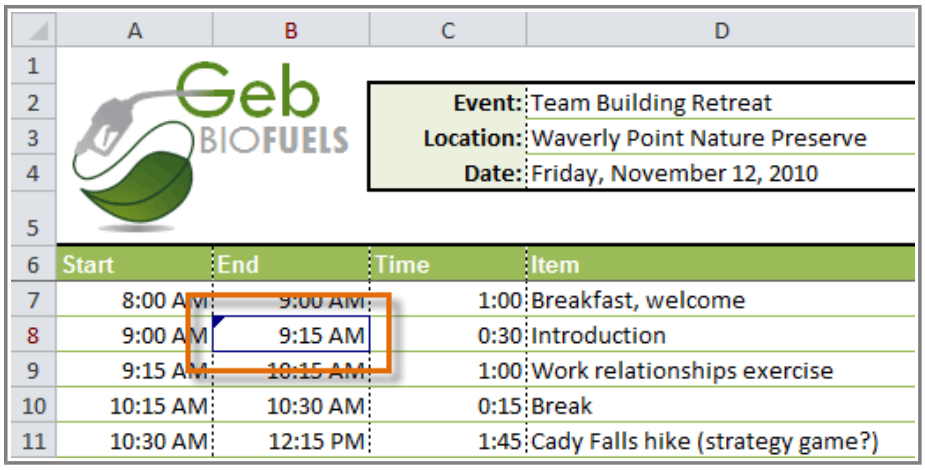


Turning Track Changes on

7. If prompted, click **OK** to allow Excel to save your workbook
8. Change tracking is now active. Any changes you make to the worksheet will be **highlighted** with a unique border and indicator.



Worksheet with tracked changes

Your workbook will be "shared" automatically when you turn Track Changes on. Shared workbooks are designed to be stored where other users (such as users on the same network) can access and edit the workbook at the same time. However, you can also track changes in a local or personal copy, as seen throughout this lesson.

To Turn off Track Changes:

1. From the **Review** tab, click **Track Changes**. Then select **Highlight Changes** from the drop-down menu.
2. Uncheck the box next to **Track changes while editing**.

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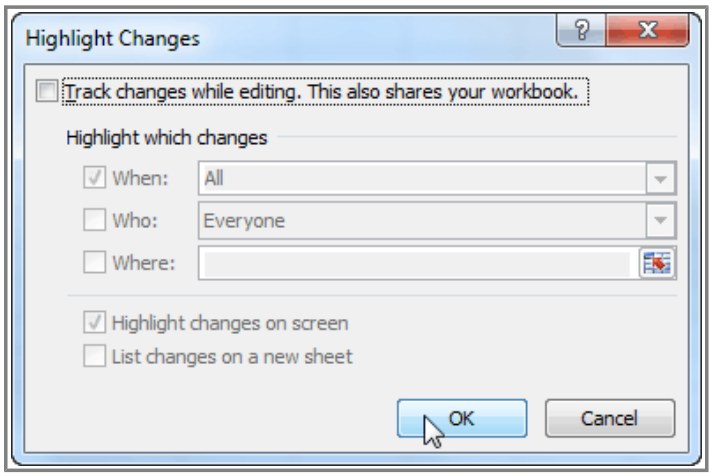
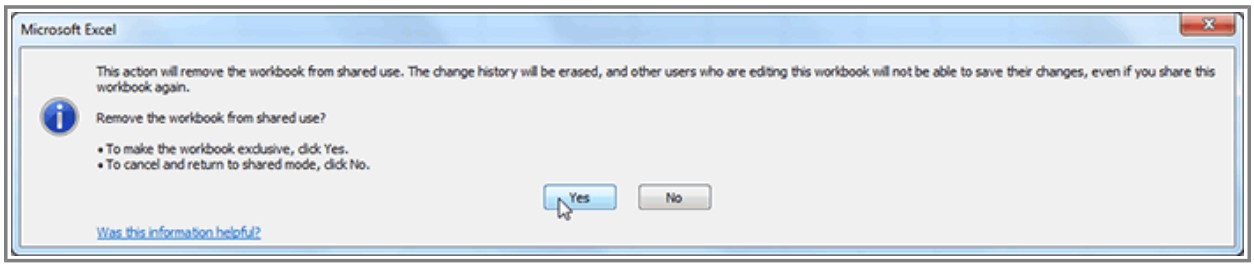


Turning Track Changes off

3. Click **Yes** to confirm that you want to turn off Track Changes and stop sharing your workbook.



Removing the workbook from shared mode

Turning off Track Changes will delete any tracking that has taken place in your workbook. You will not be able to view, accept, or reject changes; instead, they will all be applied to your workbook automatically. Always review the changes in your worksheet before turning Track Changes off.

Adding and Deleting Comments

Sometimes, you may want to add a **comment** to a worksheet, to provide feedback for the author instead of changing the contents. Comments are highlighted by a unique indicator and can be read by the original author or by any other reviewers.

To Add a Comment:

1. Select the cell where you want the comment to appear.

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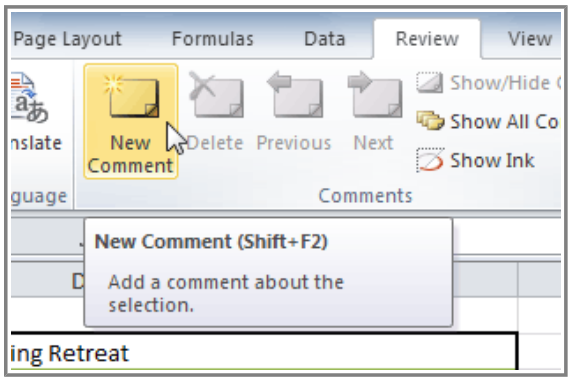
6	Time	Item	Facilitator
9	1:00	Work relationships exercise	Garth, Dean, Liz
10	0:15	Break	
11	1:45	Cady Falls hike (strategy game?)	Marianne, Liz
12	1:00	Lunch (with strategy game team)	
13	0:30	Strategy debrief	Marianne
14	1:00	Get to know your team	See Liz for info
15	1:00	Strengths exercise	

Selecting a cell

2. From the **Review** tab, click the **New Comment** command.



New Comment command

3. Type your comment.

6	Time	Item	Facilitator
9	1:00	Work relationships exercise	Garth, Dean, Liz
10	0:15	Break	
11	1:45	Cady Falls hike (strategy game?)	
12	1:00	Lunch (with strategy game team)	
13	0:30	Strategy debrief	
14	1:00	Get to know your team	
15	1:00	Strengths exercise	

B. Nemec:
This would be a great time to do the strategy game.

Typing a comment

4. The red **indicator** in the upper right corner shows that there is a comment in that cell.

6	Time	Item	Facilitator
9	1:00	Work relationships exercise	Garth, Dean, Liz
10	0:15	Break	
11	1:45	Cady Falls hike (strategy game?)	Marianne, Liz
12	1:00	Lunch (with strategy game team)	
13	0:30	Strategy debrief	Marianne
14	1:00	Get to know your team	See Liz for info
15	1:00	Strengths exercise	

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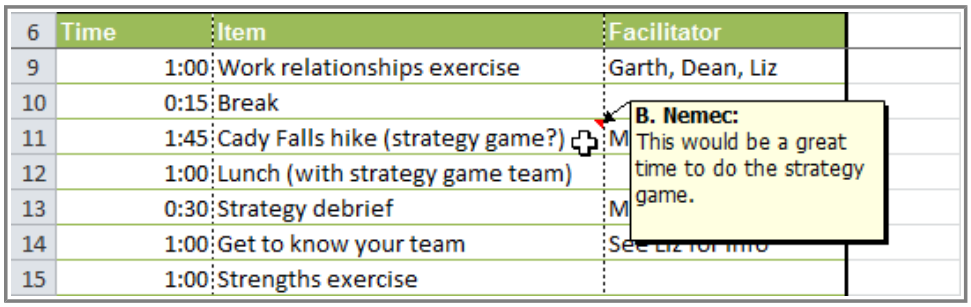
Comment indicator

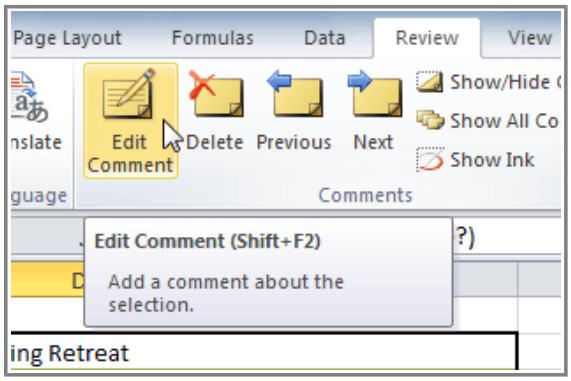
5. Hover your mouse over the cell to **view** the comment.



Viewing a comment

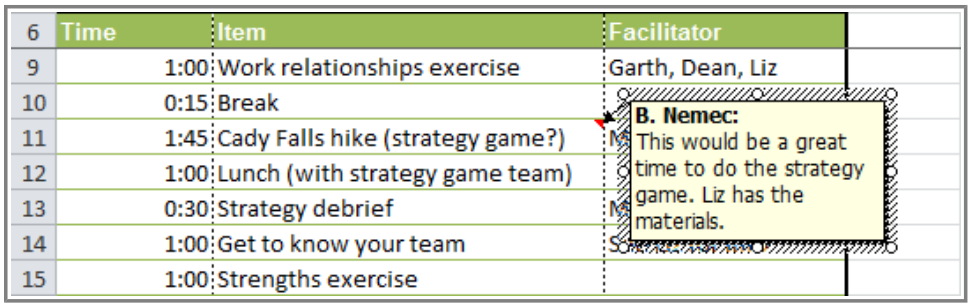
To Edit a Comment:

1. Select the cell containing the comment you wish to edit.
2. From the **Review** tab, click the **Edit Comment** command (where the New Comment command used to be).



Edit Comment command

3. Edit your comment.



Editing a comment

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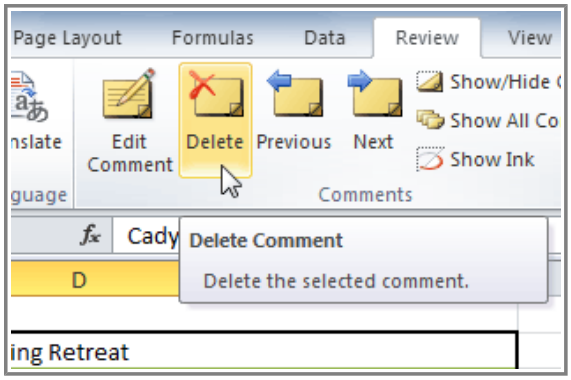
To Delete a Comment:

1. Select the cell containing the comment you wish to delete.
2. From the **Review** tab, click the **Delete** command.



Delete command

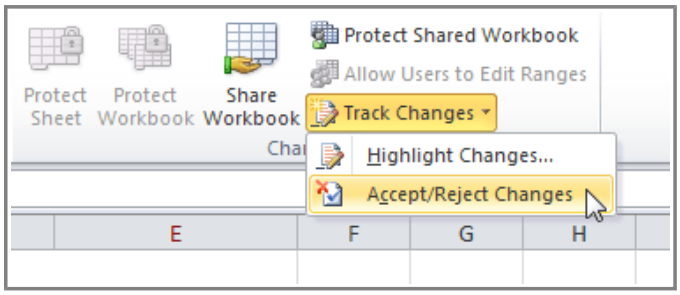
3. The comment will be deleted.

Accepting or Rejecting Changes

Tracked changes are really just "suggested" changes. To become permanent, they have to be **Accepted**. On the other hand, the original author may disagree with some of the tracked changes and choose to **Reject** them.

To Accept or Reject Changes:

1. From the **Review** tab, click **Track Changes**. Then select **Accept/Reject Changes** from the drop-down menu.



Accept/Reject Changes command

2. If prompted, allow Excel to save your workbook.

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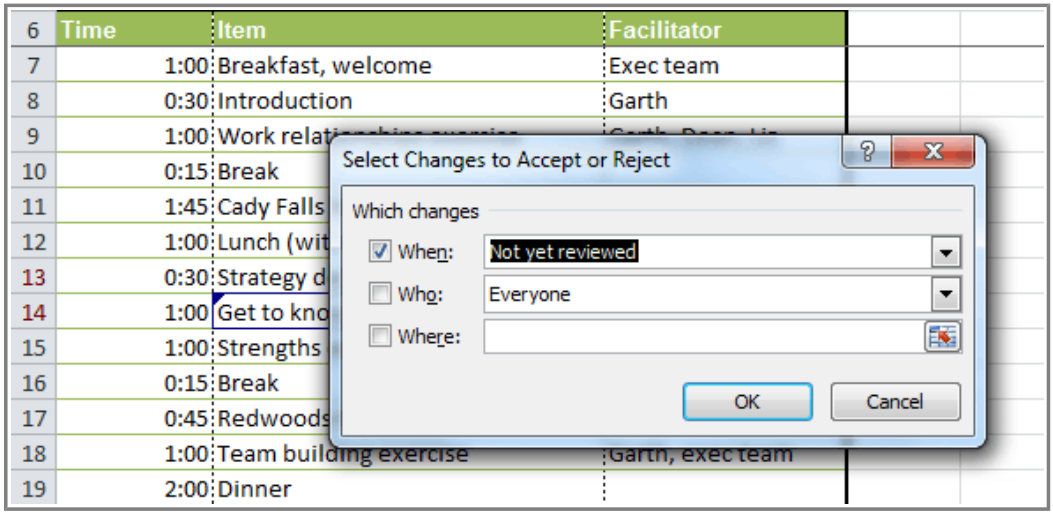
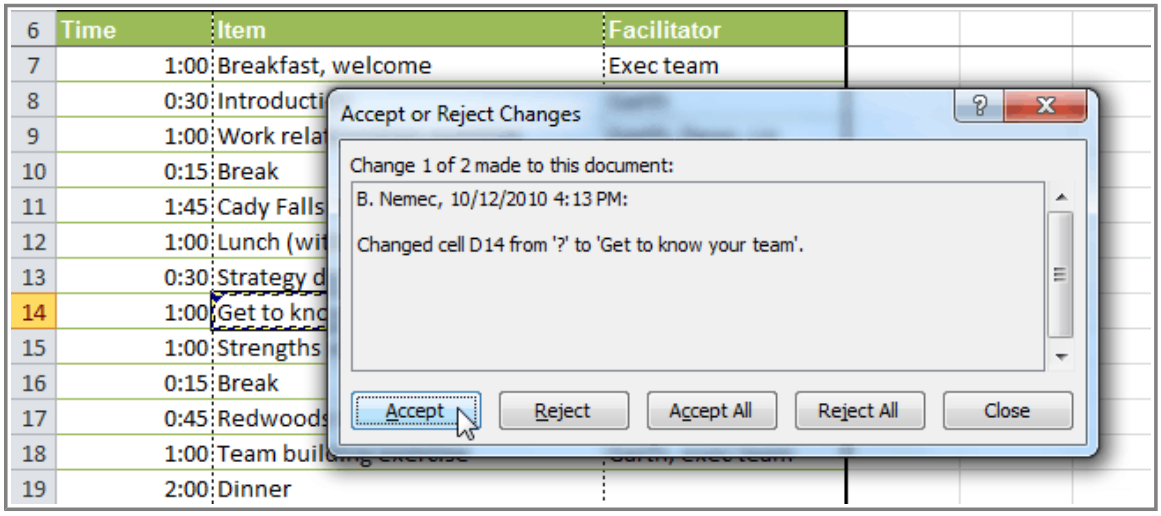
3. Identify **which changes** you want to accept or reject. In this example, we will address all the changes that we have **not yet reviewed**.



Identifying which changes to accept or reject

4. Click **OK**.
5. The **Accept or Reject Changes** dialog box will appear.
6. Click **Accept** or **Reject** for each change in the document. Excel will cycle through each change automatically until you have addressed them all.



Accepting or rejecting each change

7. When you're done, the cell highlights will disappear, and the worksheet will appear "normal."

To accept or reject all the changes at once, click **Accept All** or **Reject All** in the Accept or Reject Changes dialog box.

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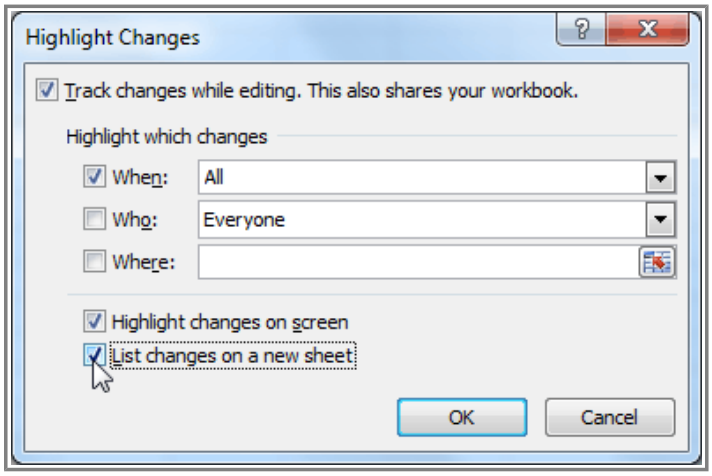
Adjusting How Changes are Viewed

Sometimes it's hard to see exactly what has been changed in a shared workbook. Taking in the meaning of a large amount of feedback can also be problematic if your worksheet contains many comments. There are a couple of settings you can use to adjust the way changes and comments are viewed.

To List Changes on a Separate Worksheet:

An alternative to viewing them as highlights on your worksheet, you can view changes on a new worksheet of their own, sometimes called the **change history**. The change history lists everything in your worksheet that has been changed, including the "old value" (what the cell used to contain) and the "new value" (what the cell contains now).

1. **Save** your workbook.
2. From the **Review** tab, click **Track Changes**. Then select **Highlight Changes** from the drop-down menu.
3. Check the box next to **List changes on a new sheet**.



Listing changes on a separate worksheet

4. Click **OK**.
5. The changes will be listed in a new sheet of their own, titled **History**.

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Action Number	Date	Time	Who	Change	Sheet	Range	New Value
2	1	10/12/2010	5:04 PM	B. Nemec	Cell Change	Agenda Planner	E13	Marianne
3	2	10/12/2010	5:04 PM	B. Nemec	Cell Change	Agenda Planner	D14	Get to know your team
4	3	10/12/2010	5:04 PM	B. Nemec	Cell Change	Agenda Planner	D15	Team building exercise
5	4	10/12/2010	5:04 PM	B. Nemec	Cell Change	Agenda Planner	D18	Strengths exercise
6	5	10/12/2010	5:04 PM	B. Nemec	Cell Change	Agenda Planner	D11	Cady Falls hike (strategy game)
7								
8	The history ends with the changes saved on 10/12/2010 at 5:04 PM.							
9								

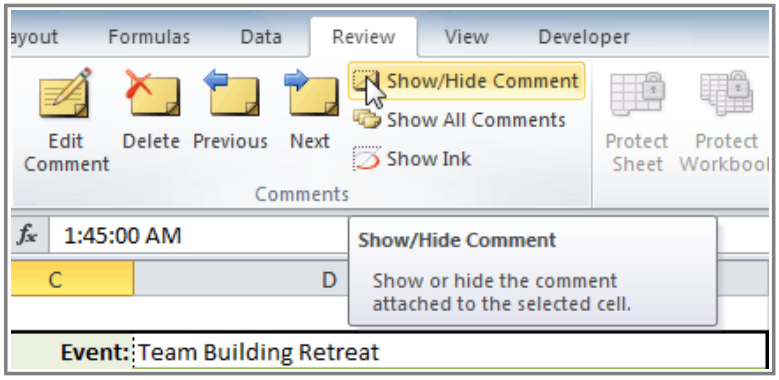
Agenda Planner | Sheet2 | Sheet3 | History

The change history worksheet

To **remove** the History worksheet from your workbook, you can either **save** your workbook again, or uncheck the box next to **List changes on a new sheet**.

To Show or Hide Comments:

1. Select a cell that contains a comment.
2. From the **Review** tab, click the **Show/Hide Comment** command to show the comment.



Show/Hide Comment command

3. The comment will remain on display without you having to mouse over the cell.

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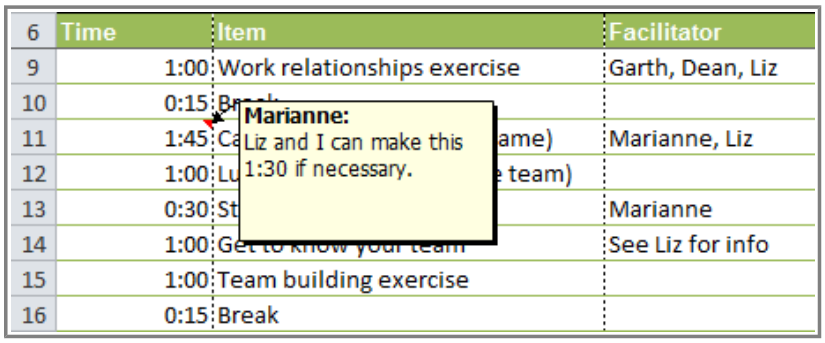


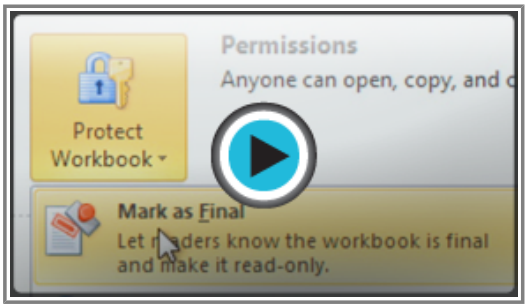
Comment on display

4. Click the **Show/Hide Comment** command again to hide the comment.

Click the Show All Comments command to view every comment in your worksheet at once.

Finalizing and Protecting Your Workbook

Before you send your workbook out, take a minute to prepare a final copy. Excel has tools that might save you from sharing a workbook that contains spelling errors, or information about the workbook itself that you do not want the recipient to see. Use the **Spelling** command to find and edit any **misspelled words**; use the **Document Inspector** to find and delete any **hidden data or personal information** that is stored in the workbook, such as hidden comments, invisible objects, and file paths; and consider your **Protect Workbook** options, designed to keep other users from making unwanted changes to your workbook.



Watch the video (3:51). Need help?

Watch the video to learn how to finalize and protect your workbook.

To Check Spelling:

1. Select the cells you want to spell check.
2. Click on the **Spelling** command from the Review tab.

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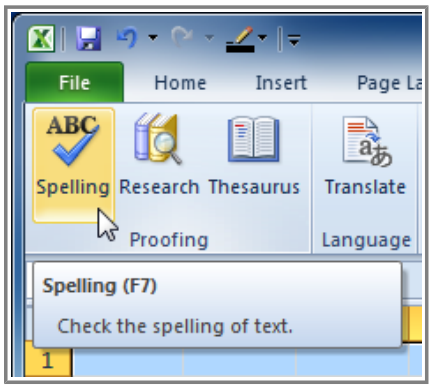

Selecting the Spelling command

3. The **Spelling** dialog box will open. From the Spelling dialog box, you can review and edit any misspelled words.

You can also check the spelling of every cell in an active worksheet by selecting any empty cell in the worksheet and then clicking on the **Spelling** command.

Ignoring Spelling "Errors"

There are times when Excel will say something is an error when it is not. This often happens with people's names, which may not be in the dictionary. Even if Excel says that something is an error, you can choose not to change it. There are three options you can choose from:

- **Ignore Once:** This will skip the word without changing it.
- **Ignore All:** This will skip the word without changing it, and it will also skip all other instances of this word in the worksheet.
- **Add to Dictionary:** This adds the word to the dictionary so that it will never come up as an error again. Make sure that the word is spelled correctly before choosing this option.

To Use the Document Inspector:

1. In **Backstage view**, click **Info**.
2. Click on the **Check for Issues** button. A drop-down menu will appear.
3. Select **Inspect Document**. A dialog box will appear.

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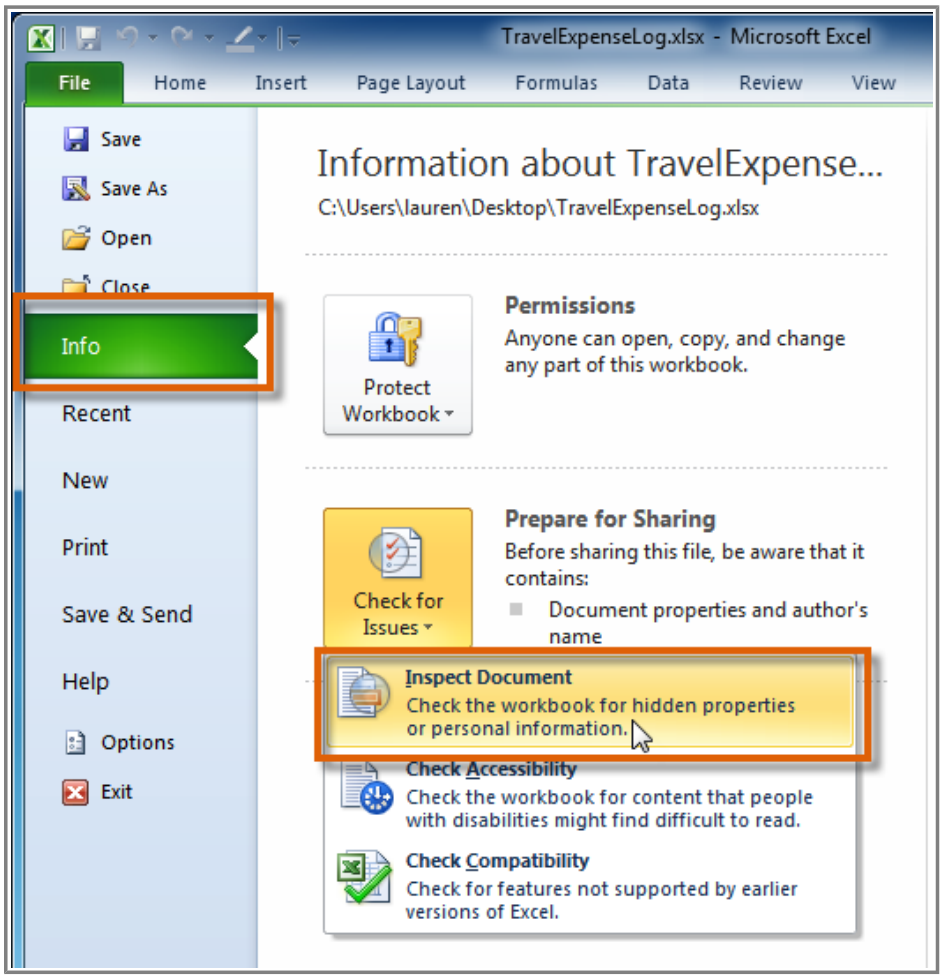

Selecting the Inspect Document command

4. Check the boxes beside the content you want to inspect. To unselect a box, simply click it again and the check mark will disappear.
5. Click **Inspect**.

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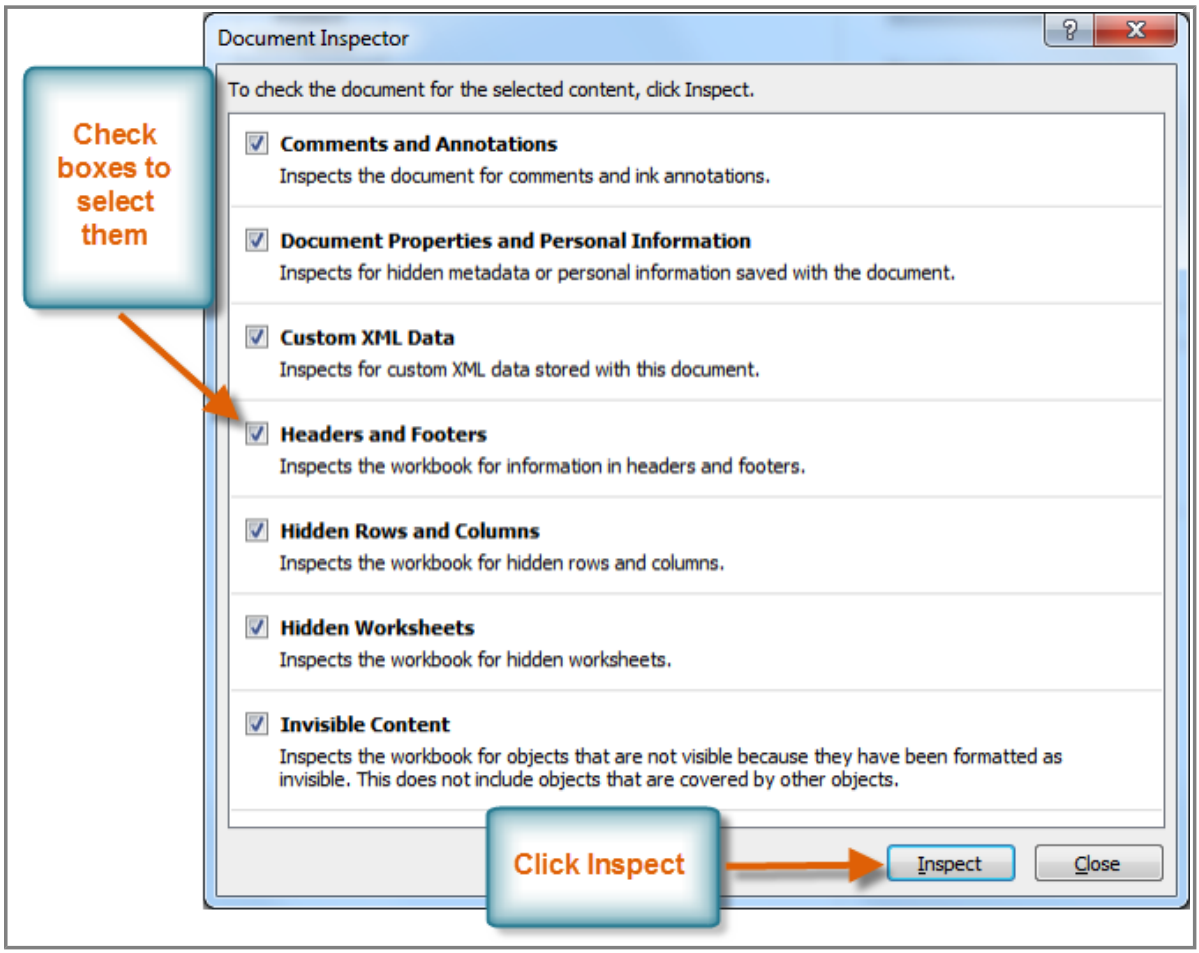

Document Inspector dialog box

6. After the Document Inspector finishes, a new dialog box will appear where you can **review the inspection results**. Click the **Remove All** command beside any information you want to remove.

It is a good idea to save an additional copy of your workbook before you use the Document Inspector to remove information, because some changes cannot be undone.

Protecting Your Workbook

By default, anyone with access to your workbook will be able to open, copy, and change any part of it unless you protect it. There are many ways you can protect your workbook depending on your needs. For example, you can mark your workbook as final, set it up with a password, put restrictions on who can make changes, or make it so that only certain cells or features of the workbook are changeable.

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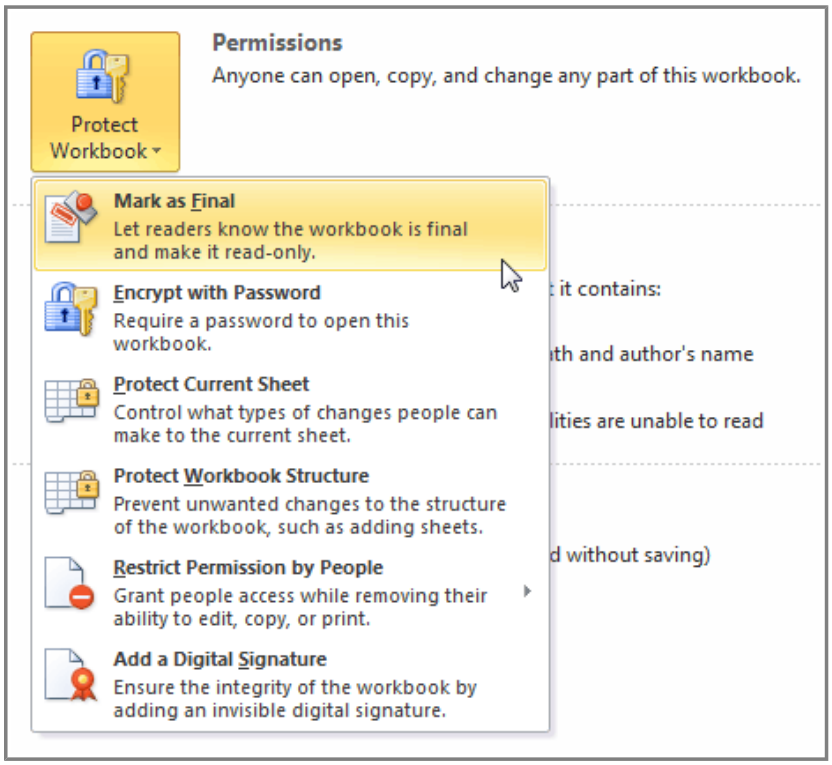
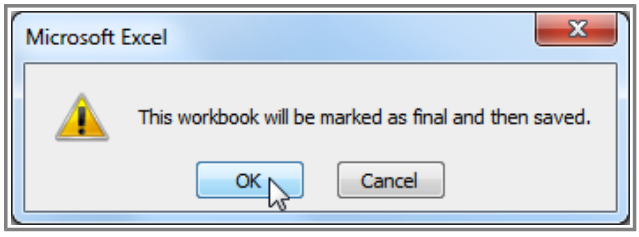
To Protect Your Workbook:

1. Click the **File** tab to access the **Backstage view** .
2. From the **Info** pane, click the **Protect Workbook** command.
3. Choose the **option** that best suits your needs. In this example, we will select Mark as Final. Marking your workbook as final is a way to discourage others from making any changes to the workbook. It will alert whoever opens it that typing, editing, and proofreading commands are unavailable.



Selecting a Protect Workbook option

4. Click **OK**.



Marking the workbook as final

5. Another dialog box will appear. Click **OK** to confirm.

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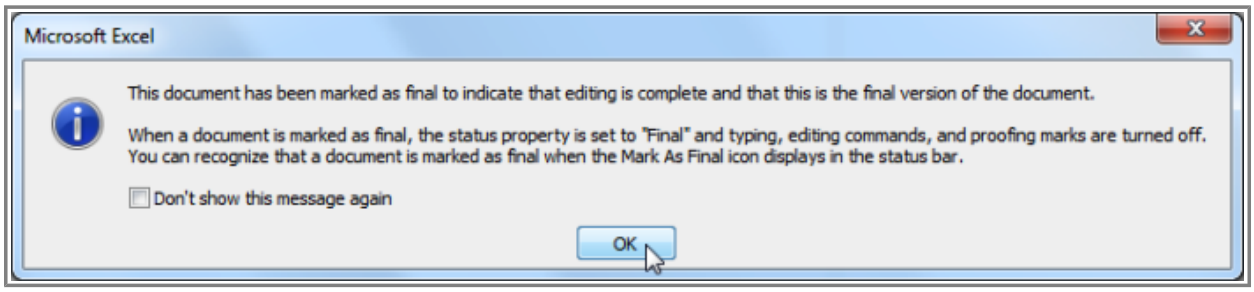

Selecting the Inspect Document command

Challenge!

1. Open an existing Excel workbook. If you want, you can use this example.
2. Turn on Track Changes.
3. Delete, add, or edit the text in several cells.
4. Add several comments.
5. Show all of the comments, then hide them.
6. List the changes on a separate worksheet, also known as the change history.
7. Accept all of the changes.
8. Perform a spell check to prepare the final copy.
9. Use the Document Inspector to check the workbook.
10. Mark the workbook as Final.

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