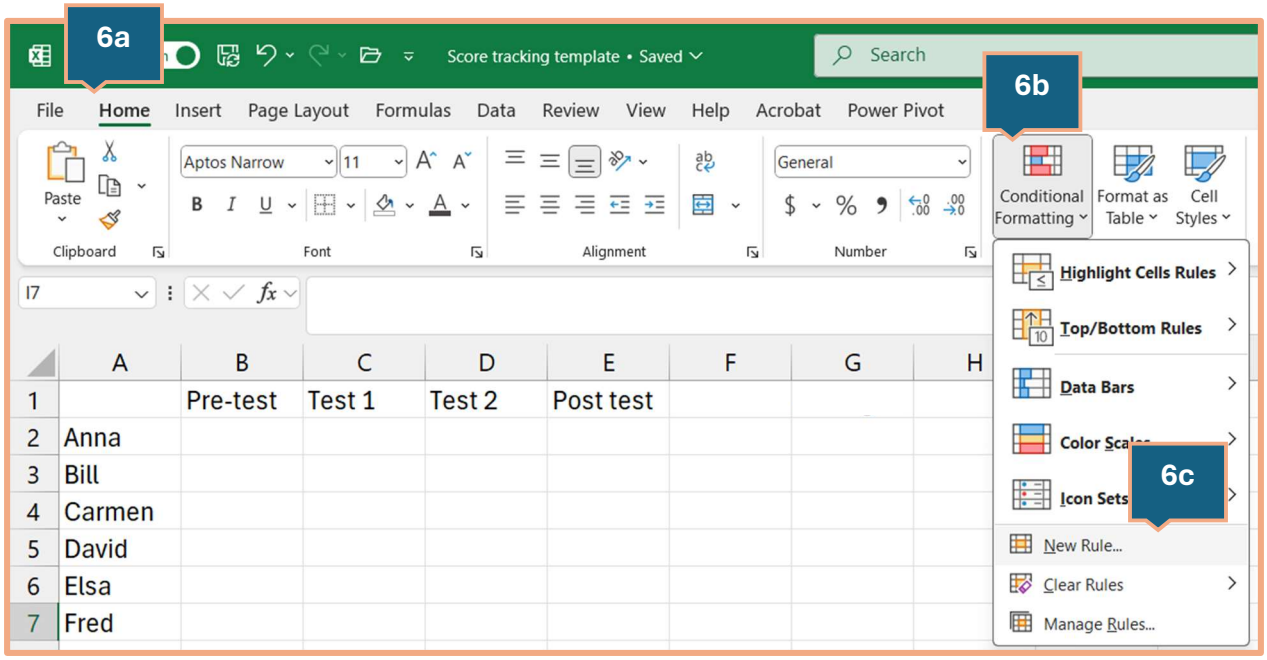
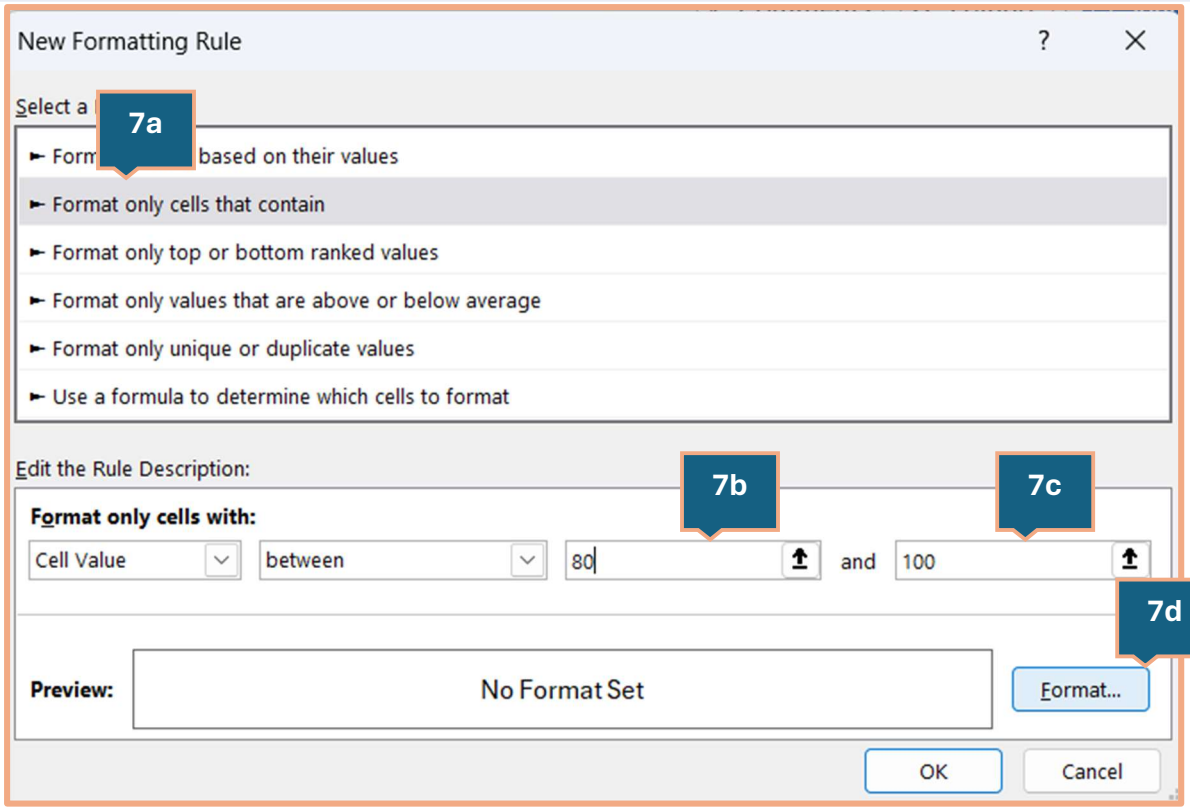
How to Create a Score Tracking Spreadsheet

1. Outline your categories – learners, tests, chapters, topics, averages? What is the important information that you need to see?
    a. In my example, I have 10 tests broken down by each chapter (or topic). I use one sheet for each learner.
2. What are your scores and score ranges? I've used percentages and have created a scale of 'good/green' scores that are between 81-100, ok/yellow' scores that are between 65-80, and 'needs work/red' scores that are below 65. Need to do a pass/fail? Choose 2 colors.
3. Decide on your colors! If you don't use the ones generated by Microsoft, be sure to check for accessibility.
4. Create your labels for the rows and columns. This will tell you where to create your conditional formatting rules.
5. So that Excel can format the text, you want to enter made up scores on your sheet. Be sure to include cells from all your score ranges so you can see the effects of the formatting.
6. Highlight all the cells that you will have your data in (excluding the labels), and from the home menu, select Conditional Formatting > Create New Rule.

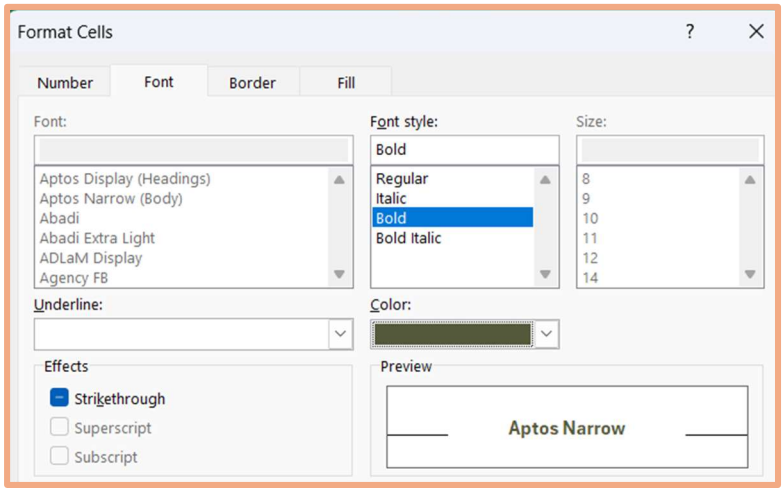


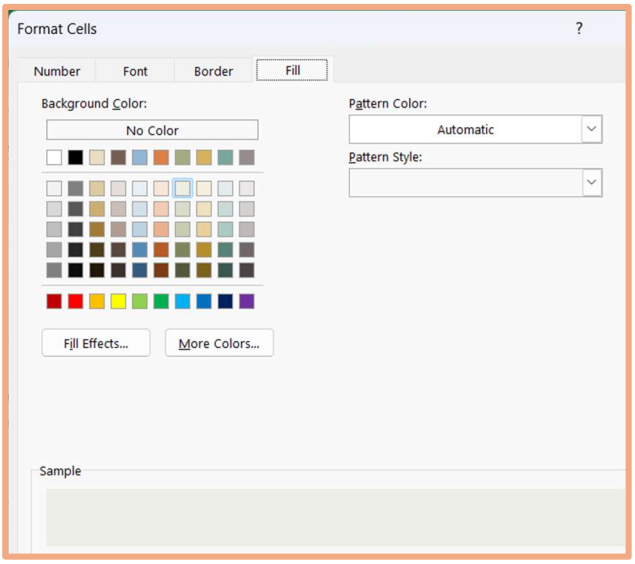
7. Rule will be "Format only cells that contain"
   Under Edit the Rule Description:
   Cell Value | Between | 80 | 100
   Then select "Format…" next to the preview box.

Created by Daisy Urso 1/2025



8. As this score range is the passing, or green scores, select a bold, dark green font, and for the fill, a lighter shade of the same green hue so you keep the assortment of colors to a minimum. When you've chosen your colors, Select OK on the Format Cells dialogue, then OK on the New Formatting Rule dialogue. You should see your changes in the cells with scores between 81 and 100.[1]





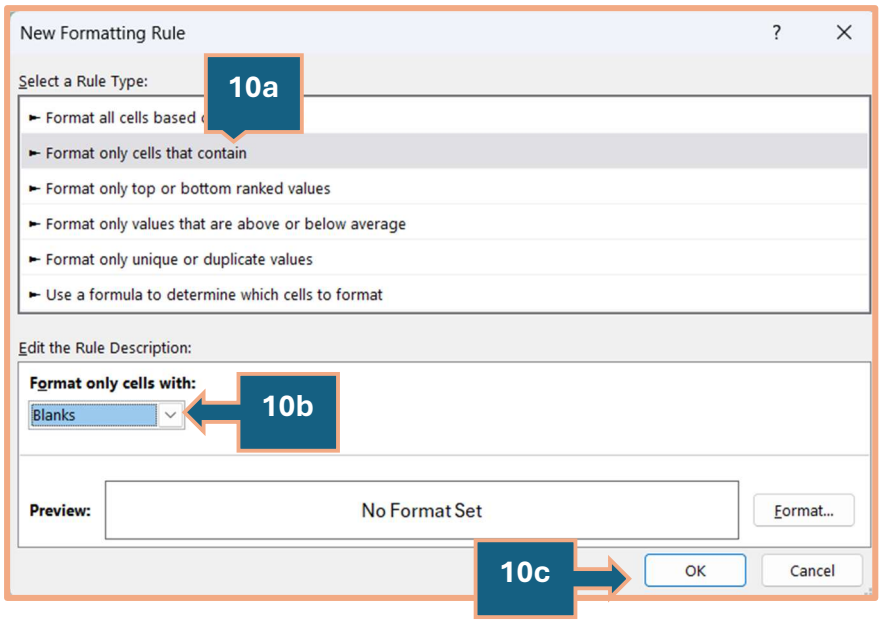
[1] The excel formula for "Between" is only going to change the formatting when the score is above 80. That's why there's a difference between the scores that I want to see as passing (81 and up), and the formatting rule starting at 80.

9. Repeat steps 6-8 for your other score range criteria – for scores between 65 and 80, select a yellow tone, and for scores between 0 and 65, use a red tone. [2]

However, depending on how many cells you filled with scores, Excel may have your formatting set up on the blank cells, making those all show your last fill color.

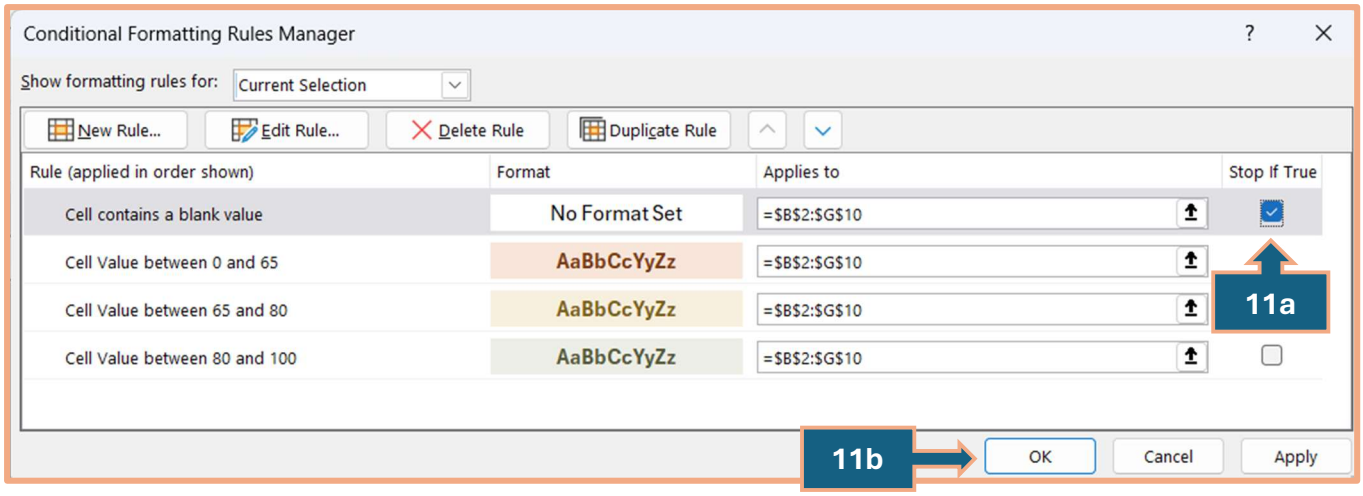
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		Pre-test	Test 1	Test 2	Post test	
2	Anna	65	65	70	80	
3	Bill	72	75	75	83	
4	Carmen	85	86	90	100	
5	David	50	60	70	80	
6	Elsa					

10. You can add an additional rule to remove the formatting using the same techniques. In the "Select a Rule Type" choose, "Format only cells that contain" and in the Edit the Rule Description" section, change the drop down under "Format only cells with:" to read Blanks. You can leave the format alone.



[2] Same concept here with the formatting rule – while I've said to use 65 as the cut off for "red," Excel will start showing red at the scores of 64 and below.

11. Now that you have that rule set up, you'll want to go back to the conditional formatting drop down box, and have that blank value rule on the top, clicking on the box to "Stop if True."

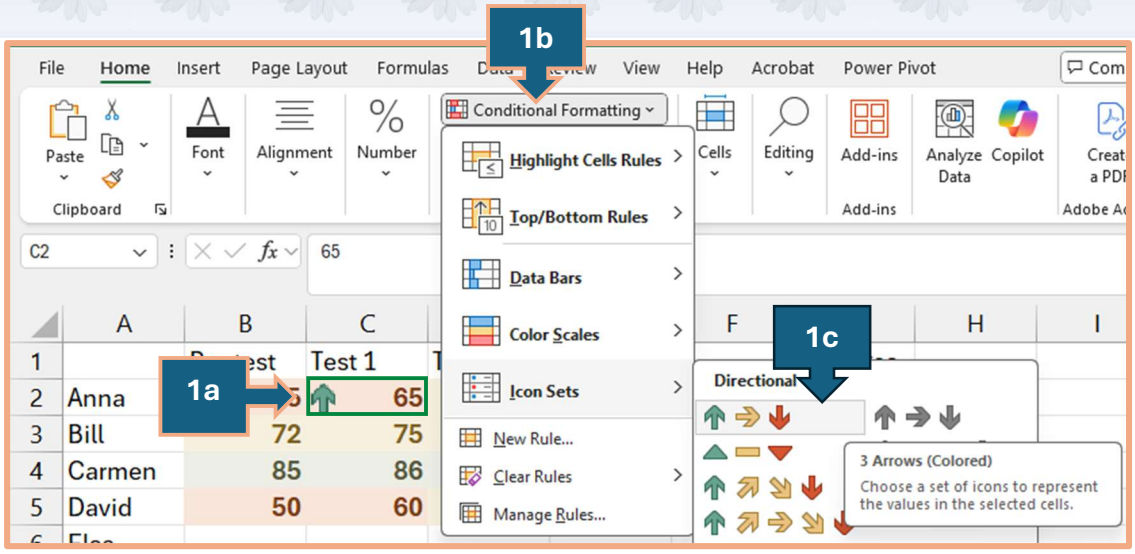


This is a perfectly fine place to stop, if you're just looking at scores.

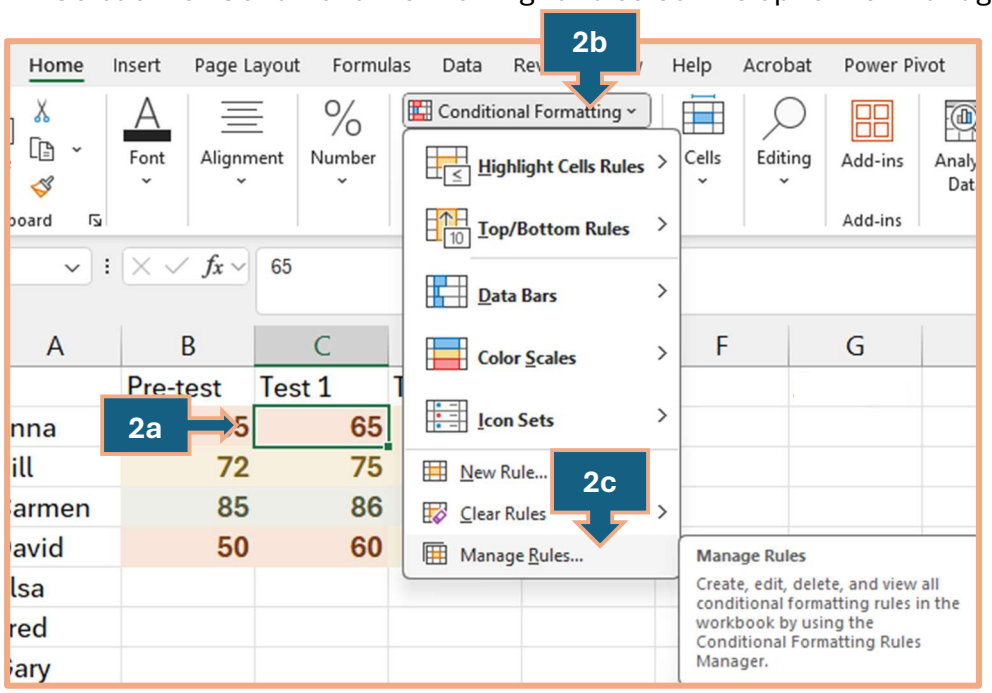
However, in my example spreadsheet, I needed to review the data over time, so I added icon sets to show the change from the earlier test. Again, this created a very visual, easy to use system for me to quickly see where to direct a learner to study. For each cell, I had to enter formatting conditions as it was dependent on the previous cell. I was not able to select all the cells to format and make the formula work, but knowing excel, that may become a possibility at some point

To add the icon sets

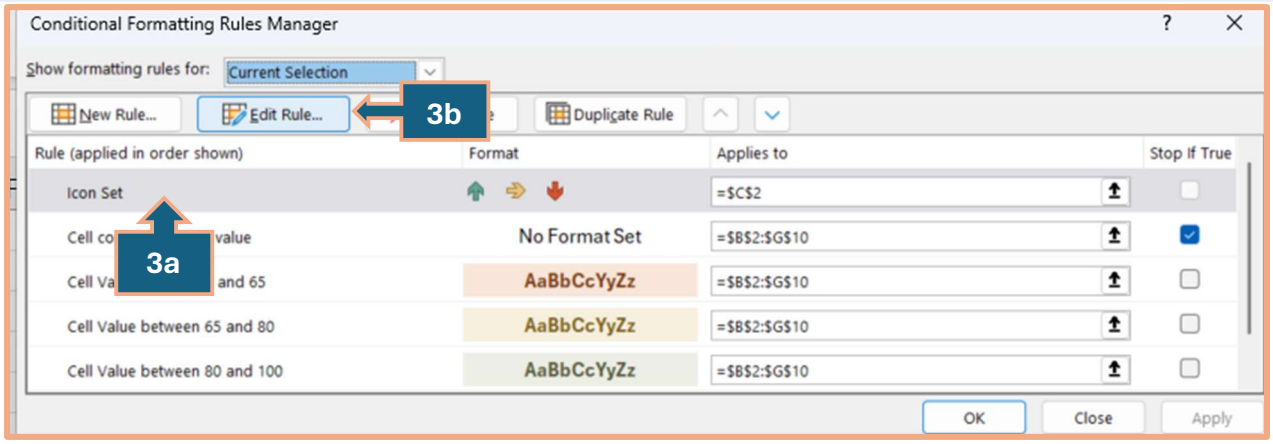
1. Highlight your top cell in the 2nd column of data (this should be cell C2 if you've used one row/column for labels). We are using this because the icon will show on the left side of the cell, and we want to look at the difference between the data in the first and the second cells. Select "Conditional Formatting," then "Icon Sets" and select the set that will best serve you. I chose the colored three arrows to visually stand for the increase, decrease, or steadiness (+/- 1) of the scores. This step adds the rule with the standard conditions that the formatting will work in, but we need to adjust those rules to show not the value of cell C2, but how the value of cell C2 relates to the value in cell B2.



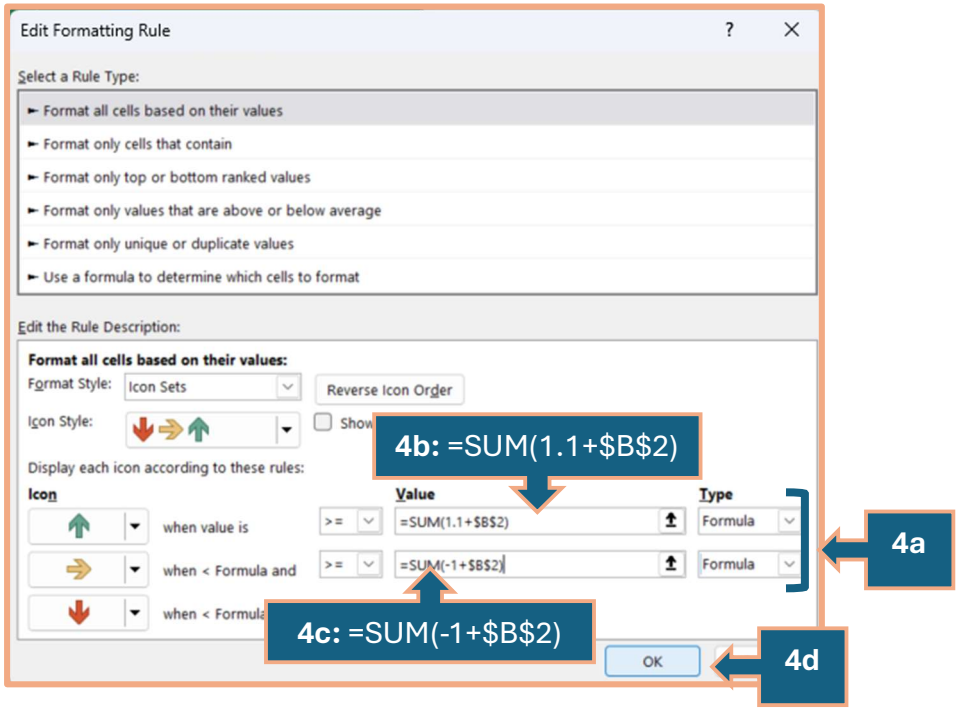
2. Go back to "Conditional Formatting" and select the option to "Manage rules."



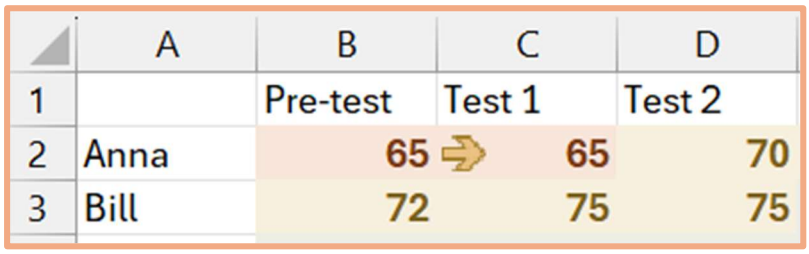
3. Select your Icon set rule and select the "edit rule" button. In your new dialog box, you'll see that it's like what we have used before with the formatting rule set up. Here, however, we want to compare the value in cell B2 with the value in Cell C2, so we need to adjust a few things.
    a. Word of caution. When I was using this, I wanted to see only the score changes that were significant. So, a one-percentage point and smaller change wasn't that telling, compared with a 5 percentage point change. You'll want to consider where your score change becomes important – if they drop 2 percentage points vs. if they drop 10 percentage points, but there are many factors to keep in mind. How many questions are on your test? Ten questions will get you a 10-percentage point change for each answer, but if you have 100 questions, the numbers will change at a smaller interval.



4. The bottom half of the dialog box is where we want to adjust our information. Under the section "Icon" you'll see your upward, green arrow. Next to that is a statement "When value is" and a drop-down box that for me is pre-selected to ">=". That is what we want. The next box will clear out when we adjust the last drop down to "Formula," instead of "Percent ". You can change both TYPE boxes to formula.
    a. In the sample template, the icon in column C cells is based on the value in column B cells. The formula for the green upwards arrow is =SUM(1.1+$B$2), meaning it shows if cell C2 is more than 1 above the value of cell B2. For larger changes, use 10+ or 2+. The Yellow sideways arrow formula is =SUM(-1+$B$2), showing when cell C2 is +/- 1 from the value of B2. Excel calculates the formula for the red down arrow based on these.



b. Select OK in the Edit Formatting Rule box and select OK again on the Conditional Formatting Rules Manager box. Look at the spreadsheet and be sure your arrow aligns with the data in cells B2 and C2.



	A	B	C	D
1		Pre-test	Test 1	Test 2
2	Anna	65	65	70
3	Bill	72	75	75

5. You will repeat this process for each cell in your template that you are adding an icon set to, adjusting the cell reference to be the cell (score) that your learner took earlier. In the above image, when setting the icon rules for cell D2, I would use $C$2 as the reference cell in the formulas. Also, for cell C3, my formula reference cell would be B3, and for cell D3, I would reference cell C3.

Please be sure to watch the training video! This job aid is meant to help with recalling the complicated pieces of this task, not to explain all of the ways that Excel is set up to work!

Thank you so much for taking the time to learn a new skill!