

note**Themes and Backgrounds affect every Office application on all of your devices**

When you set a theme or background in Excel you are actually changing the theme and background for the entire Office 2013 application.

This means that you will have a consistent experience when using other Office applications such as *Word* and *PowerPoint*.

note**Themes and Cloud Computing**

Excel 2013 now includes features that are useful to users with multiple devices (such as a work computer, home computer, laptop, tablet and smartphone).

If you are logged in to a *Microsoft Account*, the theme you select will also magically change on all of your devices.

Cloud computing is a challenging concept that isn't yet widely used, so don't worry if all of this sounds rather confusing at the moment.

Cloud Computing is beyond the scope of this *Basic Skills* book but is covered in depth in the *Essential Skills* book in this series (in *Session Eight: Cloud Computing*).

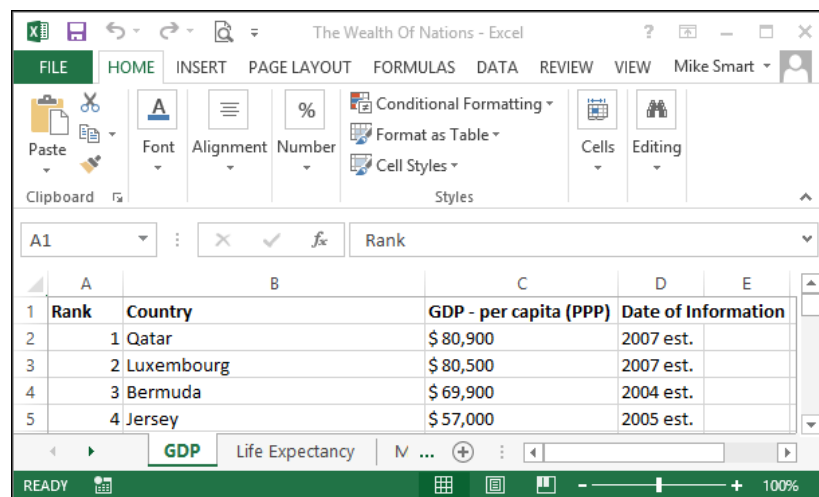
Lesson 1-3: Change the Office Theme

If you are coming to Excel 2013 from an earlier version of Excel, you'll immediately notice that the Excel screen now has very little use of color and contrast. A very large number of Excel users (myself included) feel that this lack of contrast causes more eye strain, and is more difficult to work with, than earlier Excel versions.

Fortunately you are able to change Excel's default "White" color scheme to one with higher contrast using the new *Office Themes* feature.

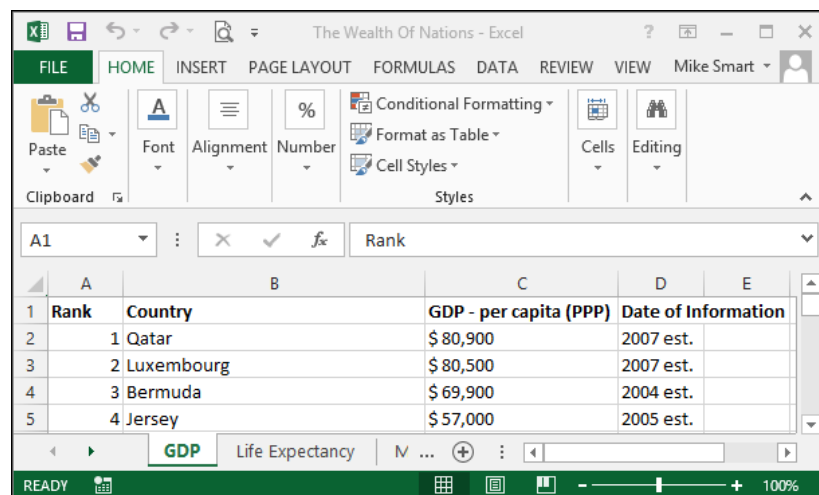
Three *Office Themes* are available to customize the look and feel of Excel.

White



This is the default theme with very low contrast and shading. Some designers feel that this gives Excel a modern and "minimalist" appearance but it has been criticized by some users:

Light Gray



note

You can also personalize Excel by changing the background

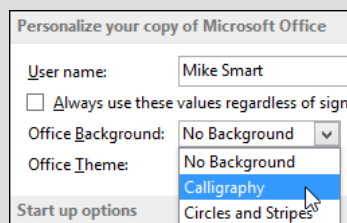
Background customization can only be done if you are connected to the Internet and logged into a Microsoft Account.

I personally find the *Background* feature a little frivolous for a serious business application.

For this reason, I always leave it set to *No Background*.

Perhaps you feel differently and would like to stamp your own identity onto your copy of Office.

If you are logged into your Microsoft Account, you will see another drop-down list (above the *Office Theme* setting) that enables backgrounds to be set:

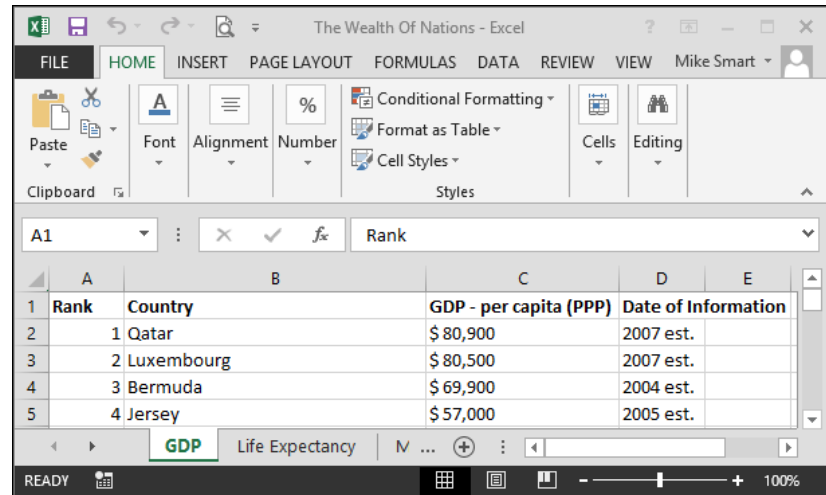


When you choose a background a “tattoo” is added to the area above the Ribbon with your chosen design:





The *Light Gray* theme has a little more contrast that helps to separate screen elements.

Dark Gray



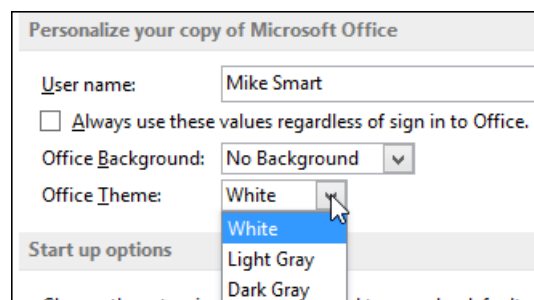
This is my personal preference. I find the higher contrast a lot easier to work with.

- 1 Open Excel.
- 2 Change the *Office Theme*.

1. Click the *File* button  at the top-left of the screen.
2. Click the *Options* button  at the bottom of the left-hand menu bar.

The Excel *Options* dialog box appears.

In the *Personalize your copy of Microsoft Office* section you'll see an *Office Theme* drop-down list. Click the drop-down arrow to see the three different themes available.



3. Click the *Dark Gray* theme.
4. Click *OK* to return to the Excel Screen.

Experiment with each theme until you discover the one you prefer. All of the screen grabs in this book were done using the *Dark Gray* theme. If you choose a different theme the screen grabs in the book may look slightly different to what you see on your computer screen.

- 3 Close Excel.