

note

The screen grabs shown in this lesson may differ from those you see on your screen

The Excel 2016 help system is delivered online. This means that Microsoft are able to constantly correct and update help topics.

For this reason, the information you see on your screen may differ from the screen grabs shown in this lesson.

note

You can also use the <Alt>+<Q> shortcut keys to instantly move the cursor into the *Tell Me* help box.

note

You need an Internet connection to use Excel 2016's help features

In previous versions of Excel, it was possible to access offline help when no Internet connection was available.

Support for offline help has been dropped from Excel 2016. If you have no Internet connection, you will not be able to access Excel's help features.

The Wealth of Nations

Lesson 1-18: Use the Tell Me help system

Microsoft have completely re-designed the help system for Excel 2016 and they really have done a wonderful job. Help is now delivered in a far more sophisticated way than in any previous Excel version. Microsoft call this new feature: *Tell Me* help.

Tell Me help is novel because it not only provides information about Excel features but also enables you to execute Ribbon commands directly from inside the help system. This can be a huge time saver.

- 1 Open the *Wealth of Nations* from your sample files folder (if it isn't already open).
- 2 Click inside the *Tell Me* help box located on the right-hand side of the Ribbon tabs.



When you click inside the *Tell Me* help box, a flashing cursor appears and you can type a question.



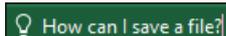
- 3 Ask Excel how you can save a file.

You learned how to save a file in: *Lesson 1-6: Save a workbook to a local file*. In that lesson, you clicked the *Save* button on the *Quick Access Toolbar*.

Imagine that you have forgotten how to save a file.

Type your question into the *Tell Me* help box.

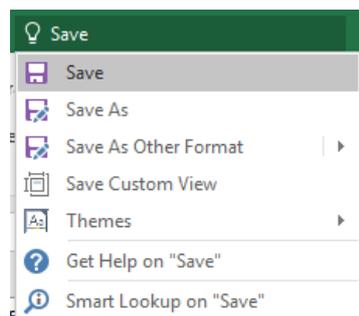
You could ask Excel the question in several ways. You could use a plain English sentence such as:



Or you could just ask using a single word:



No matter which way you ask the question the result will, in this case, be the same. Excel simply latches on to the *Save* keyword and displays a menu of choices. Note that this will only work if you are connected to the Internet (see sidebar).



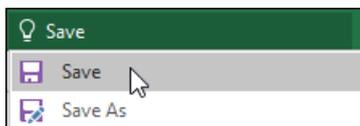
Excel commands (these can be executed directly)

A regular help topic you can read
Research the word "Save" on the Internet

Notice that the list is delineated into three sections. The first section contains commands. The second has the type of regular help topic that you are used to reading in traditional help systems, and the third allows you to research the topic using a wider Internet search.

4 Execute the Save command directly from *Tell Me* help.

Click the *Save* command at the top of the menu:



In a traditional help system, you would have expected to see some text explaining how the *Save* command works. Instead *Tell Me* help executes the command. The workbook is saved in the same way it would have been if you had clicked the *Save* button on the *Quick Access Toolbar*.

You can see that *Tell Me* help also allows you to execute four other commands:

- *Save As*. You learned how to use the *Save As* command in: *Lesson 1-6: Save a workbook to a local file*.
- *Save As Other Format*. You learned about different file formats in: *Lesson 1-7: Understand common file formats*.
- *Save Custom View*. Custom Views is an expert-level skill that isn't used by most Excel users but is covered in depth in the *Expert Skills* book in this series.
- *Themes*. Themes are not covered in depth in this *Basic Skills* book. The *Essential Skills* book in this series covers the Themes feature in depth (in *Session Four: Making Your Worksheets Look Professional*).

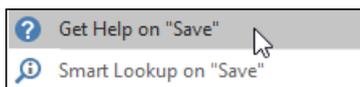
You can see how useful *Tell Me* help is when you can't remember where a command is situated on the Ribbon and want to execute the command as quickly as possible.

You can also see that it could be dangerous to execute commands that you don't understand.

Fortunately, *Tell Me* help also offers regular help that you can read as a reference.

5 Read the Excel help topic relating to the Save command.

Click: *Get Help on "Save"*



Save a file
When you save a file, you can save it to a folder ... For example you might want to save your Word 2016 document as a Rich ...

Save a workbook in another file format
Lists file formats (file types) that are supported in Excel, their extensions, and how to save workbooks to a different format ...

Save or convert to PDF
To see the Save As dialog box in Excel ... Word opens the PDF content in a new file. You can ... return to your original 2007...

All Help and Support

Links to several topics from the Excel 2016 reference manual are shown. You can click on any of these links to read Microsoft's own help topics about *Save* related features.