

Lesson 4-18: Create a formula driven conditional format

While the built-in conditional format options are very powerful, you will occasionally have a conditional format requirement that is not catered for.

For example, I've lost count of the number of times I have been asked if it is possible to highlight an entire row, rather than a single cell within a row, based upon the value in one of the row's cells.

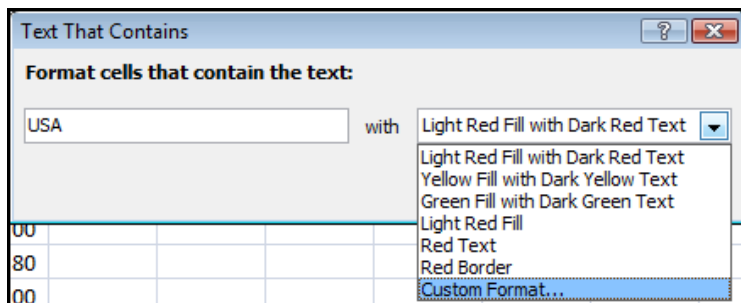
This lesson will show you how to achieve this using a formula-driven conditional format.

- 1 Open *Sales Summary First Quarter 2008* from your sample files folder.

Our challenge will be to highlight the entire row when the Country column contains the value: *USA*.

- 2 Apply a conditional format to Column C to change the background color to light Red when the text contains the text: *USA*.

1. Select column C and apply the following conditional formatting rule selecting Custom Format as the fill color:



This was covered in: *Lesson 4-15: Use simple Conditional Formatting.*

2. Click the Fill tab and select a light red color for the conditional fill



3. Click the OK Button.

Every instance of *USA* in the worksheet now has the cell in column C highlighted.

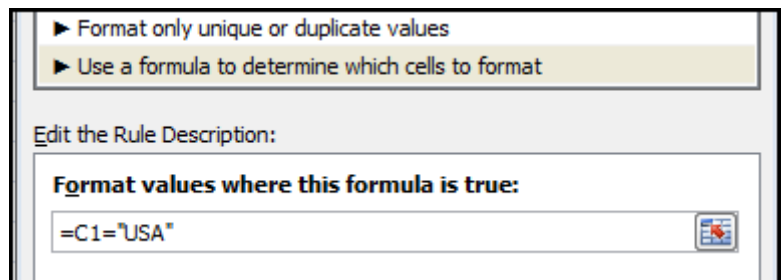
	B	C	D
40	Familia Arquibaldo	Brazil	100.00
41	Hungry Coyote Import Store	USA	62.40
42	Hungry Coyote Import Store	USA	40.00
43	Wartian Herkku	Finland	146.00

**Sales Summary First
Quarter 2008**

3 Apply a formula-driven conditional format to column B so that the same rows are highlighted.

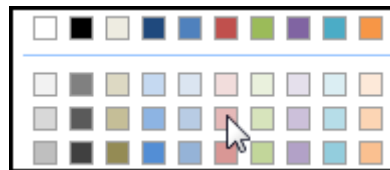
This is a lot more difficult than the simple conditional format applied to column C.

1. Select column B.
2. Click Home→Styles→Conditional Formatting→New Rule...
The New Formatting Rule dialog appears.
3. Select *Use a formula to determine which cells to format* from the Select a Rule Type list.
4. Type the formula =C1="USA" into the formula text box.



See sidebar for a discussion of this formula.

5. Click the Format button, then the Fill tab and apply the same light red fill color.



6. Click the OK button once, and then again, to close both dialogs.

Both columns now have a light red fill when the country is USA.

	A	B	C	D
40	14-Jan-08	Familia Arquibaldo	Brazil	100.00
41	15-Jan-08	Hungry Coyote Import Store	USA	62.40
42	15-Jan-08	Hungry Coyote Import Store	USA	40.00
43	16-Jan-08	Wartian Herkku	Finland	146.00

4 Apply the same formula-driven conditional format to columns A and D so that the whole row is highlighted.

	A	B	C	D
40	14-Jan-08	Familia Arquibaldo	Brazil	100.00
41	15-Jan-08	Hungry Coyote Import Store	USA	62.40
42	15-Jan-08	Hungry Coyote Import Store	USA	40.00
43	16-Jan-08	Wartian Herkku	Finland	146.00

5 Save your work as Sales Summary First Quarter 2008-1.

tip

Why does the formula relate to cell C1?

At first it seems rather odd that we refer to cell C1 in the conditional formatting formula.

C1 is in the title row so how can this be right?

The answer is to be found in Excel's treatment of absolute and relative cell references (originally explained in: *Lesson 3-12: Understand absolute and relative cell references*).

Excel regards the cell reference to be relative to the first row in the selected range.

Since we selected an entire column, row 1 is the reference row used to adjust the formula for every other row within the column.

In other words, Excel will look at cell C2 when applying row 2 conditional formatting, row 3 when applying row 3... and so on.

This is exactly what we want to happen.