

video

This lesson is very difficult to explain using only words. It is a lot easier for me to show you (and explain in words what I am doing) using the medium of video.

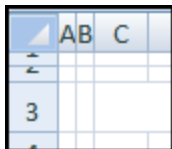


You can watch a free video for this lesson at:

www.LearnMicrosoftExcel.com

I've recorded a video walk-through for all of the lessons in this book.

The videos show you a full-size recorded Excel screen with my voice-over as I walk you through each lesson.



Mortgage Calculator-9

Lesson 8-9: Improve form appearance and usability

An elegant form-based user interface enables you to create utilities for users with no Excel skills. The form should be so intuitive that staff training is not needed. In its present form the Mortgage Calculator might intimidate non-technical users. We need to do a few more things to make this into a really professional form. They are:

- Improve the appearance of the form.
- Hide irrelevant worksheets and cells. In this case we need to hide the *Input Cells*, *Result Cells* and the *Data worksheet*.
- Protect the form so that users cannot alter the functionality or layout.

1 Open *Mortgage Calculator-9* from your sample files folder.

2 Add a pie chart to show the *Amount Financed* and *Total Interest*.

1. Click cell D33, hold down the <Ctrl> key and click cell D36.

2. Click: Insert→Charts→Pie→3-D Pie→Pie in 3D.

3. Move and re-size the chart so that it fills cells H9:L20.

4. Right-click on the center of the Pie Chart.

5. Click *Select Data...* from the shortcut menu.

6. Click the *Edit* button at the top of the *Horizontal (Category) Axis Labels* list box.

7. Click on cell B33, hold down the <Ctrl> key and click cell B37.

8. Click OK, and then click OK again.

3 Surround the form area with two narrow padding columns.

It is useful for a form to be clearly delineated from the worksheet. This is best achieved by adding two narrow padding columns to each border of the form (see sidebar and the front cover of this book).

The borders can then be shaded to clearly mark the form edges.

1. Add two very narrow columns to the left of column A.

2. Add two very narrow rows above row 1.

3. Add two very narrow rows above row 24.

4. Make columns P and Q very narrow.

4 Shade the form area (excluding controls and cells that the user will enter data into) light yellow.

1. Click in cell D22.

2. Set the background color to very light yellow.

3. Double-click: Home→Paste→Clipboard→Format Painter.

4. Click once in each cell that should be yellow (see cover of this book for guidance).

You may have to move the checkbox control in order to shade the cells behind it, and then move it back again.

5. Click: Home→Paste→Clipboard→Format Painter to switch the format painter off.

5 Use a similar technique to format the worksheet to match the design shown (in color) on the cover of this book.

You will have to add padding columns around the temperature gauge chart.

Sample file *Mortgage Calculator-10* has the end result as shown on the book cover. You can use different formatting and colors if you think that they look better.

6 Switch off the gridlines.

The gridlines are spoiling the appearance of the group boxes.

Click: View→Show/Hide→Gridlines.

7 Unlock cells F5, F10, F20, E29, E31 and E32.

In a moment we will protect the workbook. At this point it will only be possible to change unlocked cells.

Notice that you have to unlock cells E29, E31 and E32 because a control cannot change a value in a locked cell.

1. Select all of the cells to be unlocked.
2. Right-click one of the selected cells.
3. Click *Format Cells...* from the shortcut menu.
4. Click the *Protection* tab and clear the *Locked* check box.

Cell locking and protection was covered in: *Lesson 6-11: Restrict the cells users are allowed to change.*

8 Configure the charts to use data in hidden rows and columns.

See sidebar if you are unsure how to do this.

9 Hide the *Data worksheet, Input Cells* and *Result Cells* (rows 27:41).

1. Right-click the *Data* tab and click *Hide* on the shortcut menu.
2. Select rows 27:41.
3. Right-click in the selected area and click *Hide* on the shortcut menu.

10 Protect the worksheet.

1. Click: Review→Changes→Protect Sheet.
2. Add a password if you want greater security.
3. Check the *Select Unlocked cells* check box.
4. Uncheck the *Select Locked cells* check box.
5. Click OK.

11 Save your work as *Mortgage Calculator-10*.

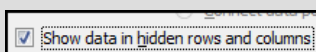
note

Charting data in hidden rows and columns

By default a chart cannot use source data that is in a hidden row or column.

To chart data in hidden rows and columns:

1. Right-click in the centre of the chart.
2. Click *Select Data...* on the shortcut menu.
3. Click the *Hidden and Empty Cells* button.
4. Check the *Show data in hidden rows and columns* check box.



5. Click OK and OK again.

Charting was covered in depth in the *Essential Skills* book in this series.

