

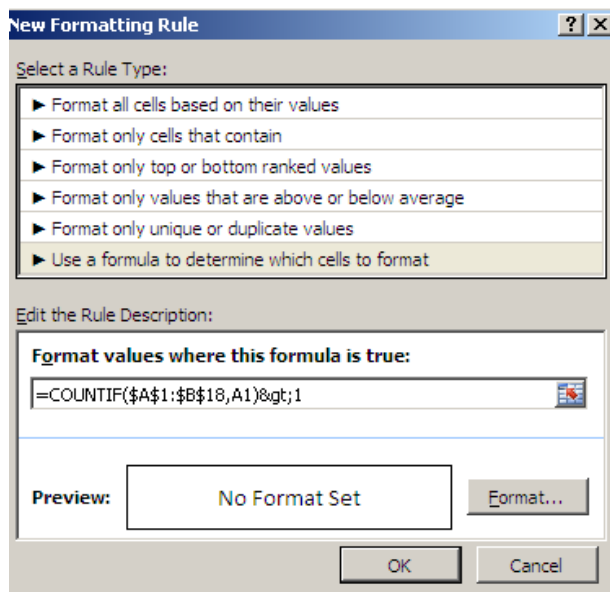
Question: Say that you've been saddled with the job of organizing the seating list for the company dinner party. You have the list of assignments in range A1:B18. Obviously, the same person should not be assigned to more than one table. Here's a quick way to determine if the range contains duplicate names.

Answer: This tip describes a way to use the Conditional Formatting feature to quickly identify duplicates in a range.

Process (Excel 2007 and Excel 2003):

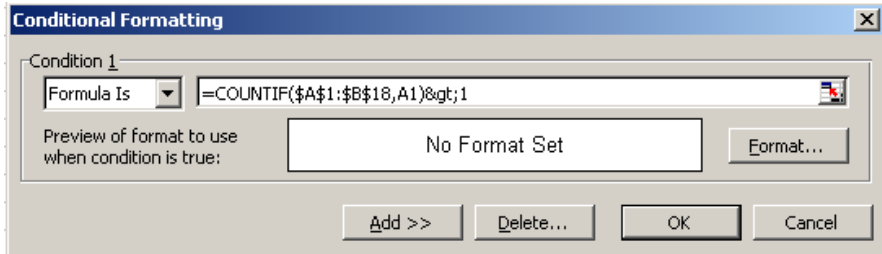
Here is how to do it:

1. Select the range (in this case, A1:B18).
2. Choose Home Tab, Styles Group, Conditional Formatting Drop Down, New Rule (2003 - *Format, Conditional Formatting*) to display the Conditional Formatting dialog box.



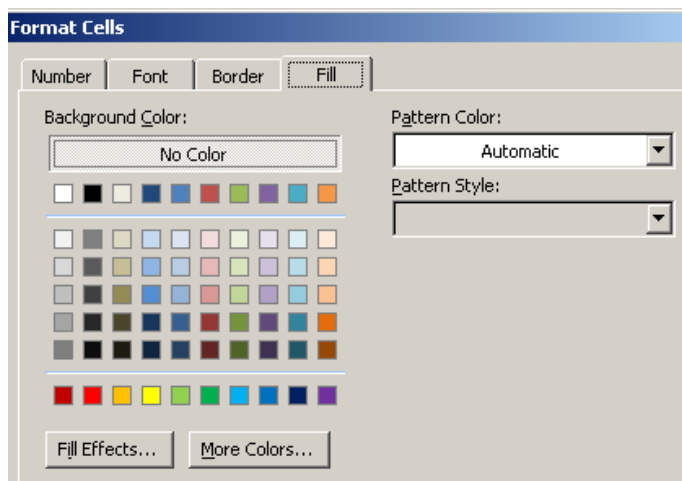
2007

3. Select Use a Formula to determine which cell to format (2003 -*Formula Is*) from the first drop-down list box, and enter `=COUNTIF(A1:B18,A1)>1` in the second box.



2003

4. Click the *Format* button to bring up the Format Cells dialog box.
5. Select the *Patterns* tab, and specify a background colour.



6. Click *OK* twice to return to your worksheet.
7. If the range contains any duplicate entries, they will be flagged with the background colour you

	A	B
1	Table 1	Table 4
2	Ralph	Amy
3	Melissa	Glenn
4	Tony	Maria
5	Susan	Peter
6	John Z.	John R.
7	Table 2	Table 5
8	Richard	Russell
9	Pam	Hugh
10	Dennis	Sally
11	Amy	Donald
12	Troy	Anne
13	Table 3	Table 6
14	Scott	Lisa
15	Kate	Ron
16	Terry	Cliff
17	Geoff	John Z.
18	Jill	Nick
19		

chose in Step 5.



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You can adapt this technique to any other worksheet by changing the ranges used in the COUNTIF function. The first argument should be the full address of the range you selected--and make sure that you use the dollar signs to signify an absolute reference. The second argument should be the address of the upper left cell of your range, expressed as a relative reference (no dollar signs).

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