

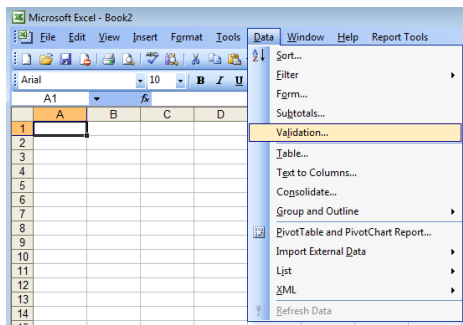
**Question:** How can I avoid duplicate entries in a range of cells?

**Answer:** By using Data Validation and some custom formulas

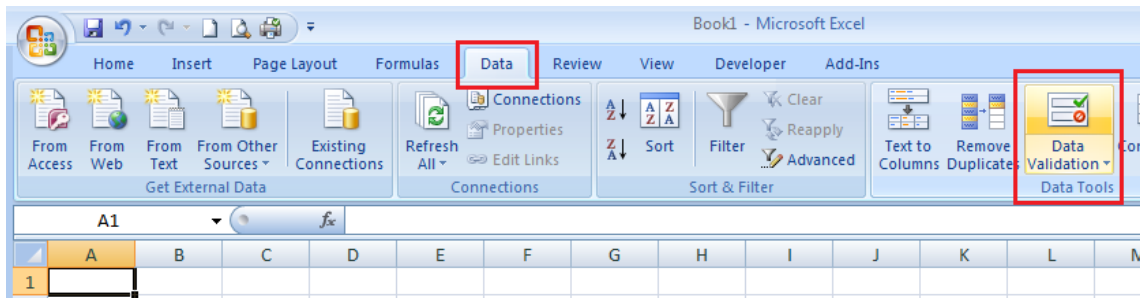
**Process (Excel 2003 and 2007):**

In this example, we will apply some data validation rules to check whether a value entered into a cell already exists in the range. The range that we will use is A1:A10; however you can extend the second value to cover any range.

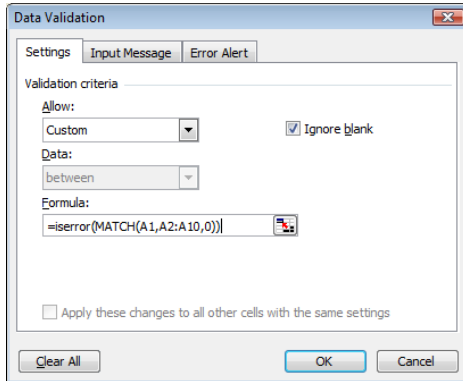
- 1 Select cell A1
- 2 **Excel 2003:** From the Menu bar, select **Data** then **Validation...**



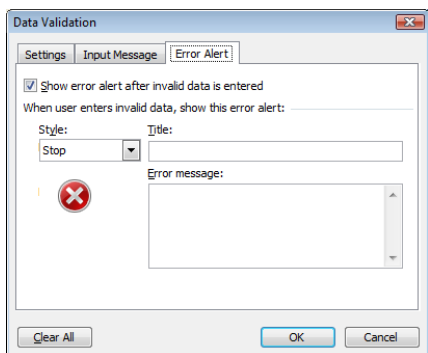
**Excel 2007:** Select the **Data** Tab on the Ribbon, and then select **Data Validation**



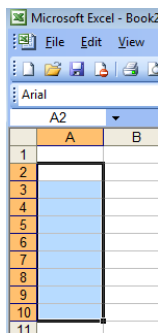
- 3 On the **Settings** tab, set the **Allow** option to **Custom**
- 4 In the **Formula** field enter in the following formula: `=ISERROR(MATCH(A1,A2:A10,0))`



5 Select the **Error Alert** tab and set the **Style** option to **Stop**, then select **OK**



6 Select cells A2 to A10

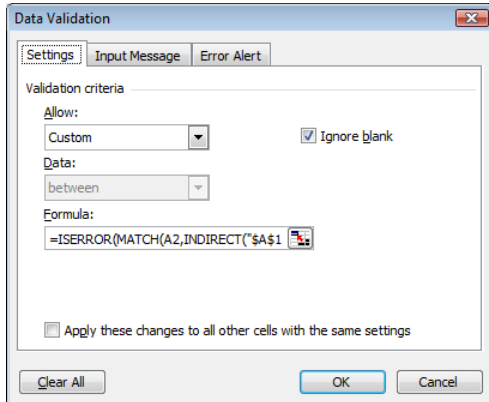


7 Open the **Data Validation** box (as described in Step 1)

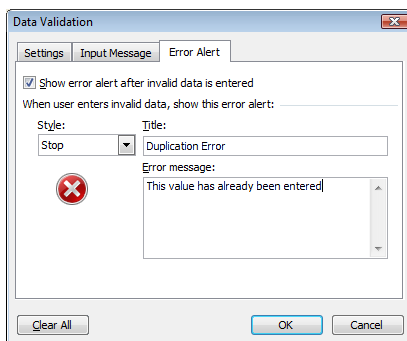
8 On the **Settings** tab, set the **Allow** option to **Custom**

9 In the **Formula** field enter in the following formula:

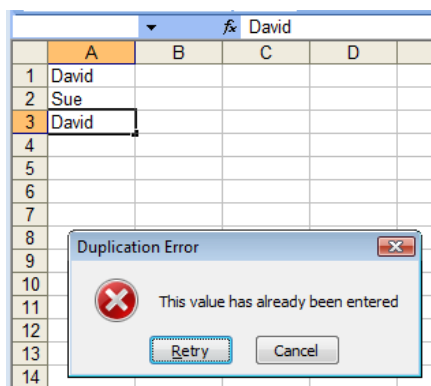
`=ISERROR(MATCH(A2,"$A$1:$A$"&ROW()-1),0))`



10 Select the **Error Alert** tab and set the **Style** option to **Stop**. In the **Title** field enter **Duplication Error**, and in the **Error Message** field enter “The value has already been entered” then select **OK**



You can now enter any information into cells A1 through to A10. If the value you enter already exists anywhere in that range, you will receive the following message:



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