

HOW TO CREATE A CHART IN EXCEL

PREPARING YOUR DATA

Organize your data in columns and rows before creating any visualization. Place labels in the first row and ensure each column contains one data type (Schwabish, 2023). Remove empty cells and verify numbers format correctly. Clean data produces accurate charts.

	A	B	C
1	MONTHLY SALES DATA		
2	Month	Sales (£)	
3	January	45000	
4	February	52000	
5	March	48000	
6	April	61000	
7	May	58000	
8	June	67000	

SELECTING YOUR DATA RANGE

Highlight all cells you want to include in your chart. Click and drag from the top-left cell to the bottom-right cell. Include column headers in your selection. Excel uses this range to build your visualization.

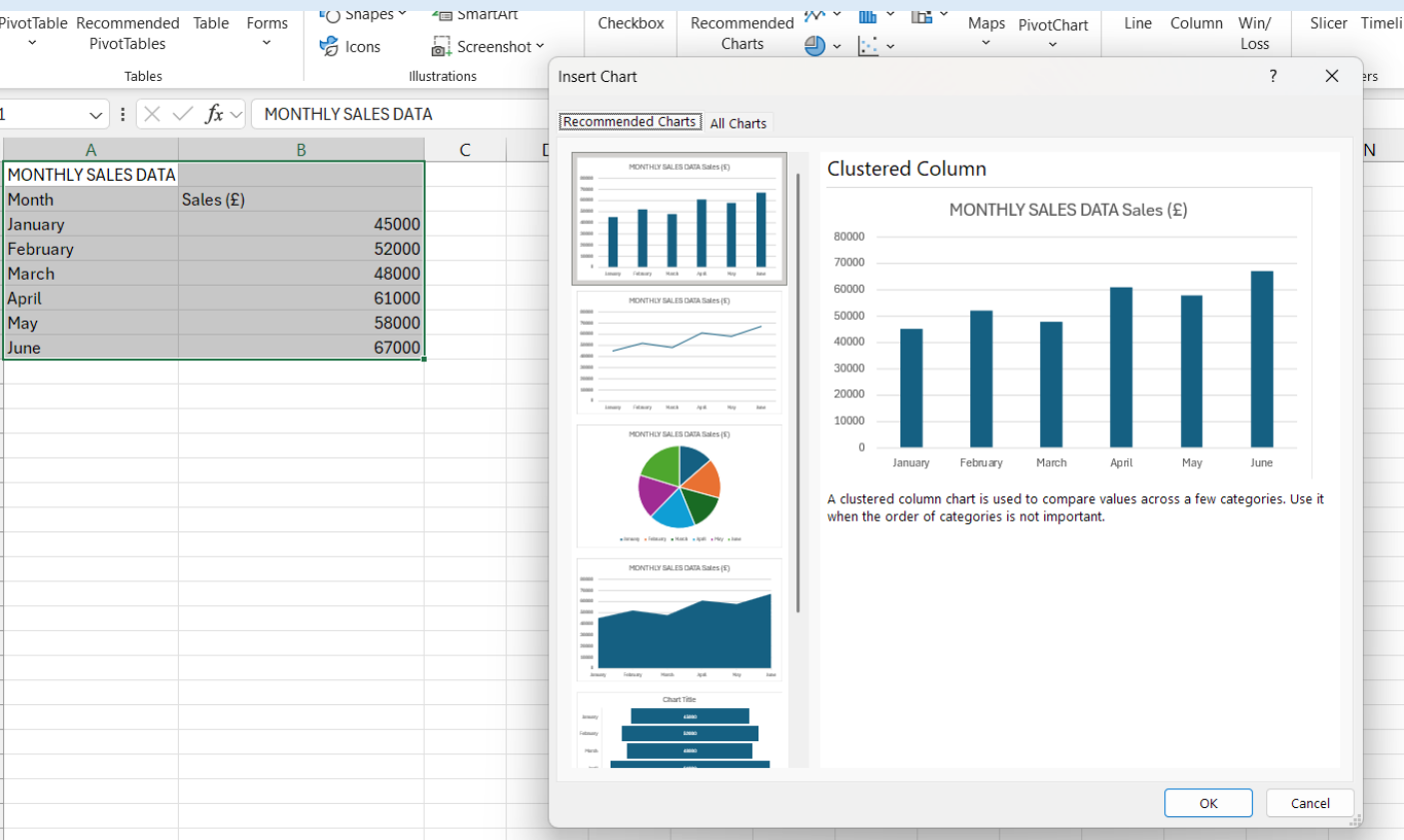
	A	B
1	MONTHLY SALES DATA	
2	Month	Sales (£)
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5	March	48000
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CHOOSING THE RIGHT CHART TYPE

Click the Insert tab in the ribbon menu. Select the Charts group. Pick the chart type that matches your data story. Bar charts compare categories. Line charts show trends over time. Pie charts display proportions (Schwabish, 2023). Students often struggle with selecting appropriate visualization methods for their datasets (Chang, Chang and Tsai, 2024).

INSERTING YOUR CHART

Click your chosen chart type from the Insert menu. Excel generates a preview immediately. The chart appears on your worksheet. You control where to place the visualization by clicking and dragging.



CUSTOMIZING YOUR CHART

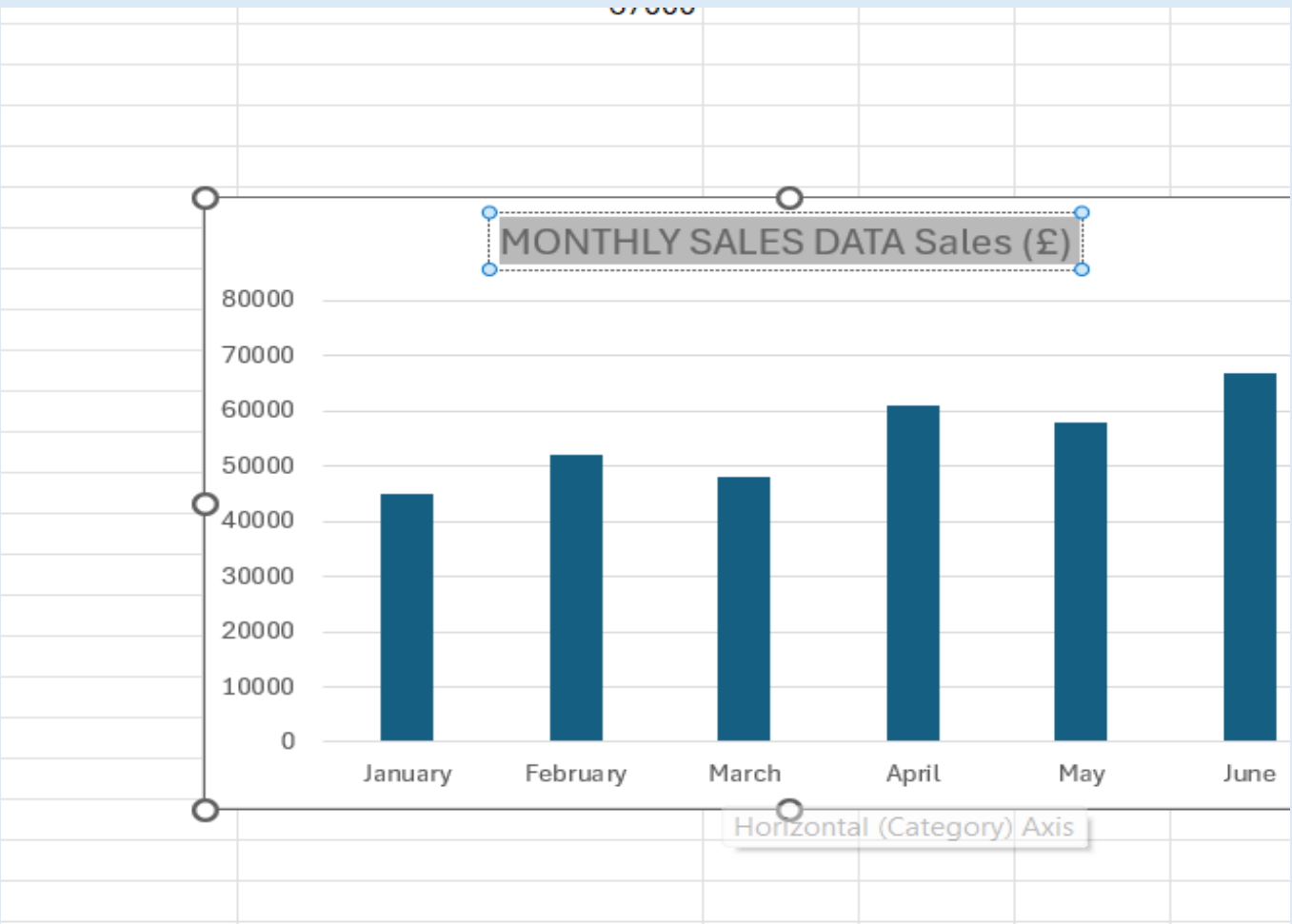
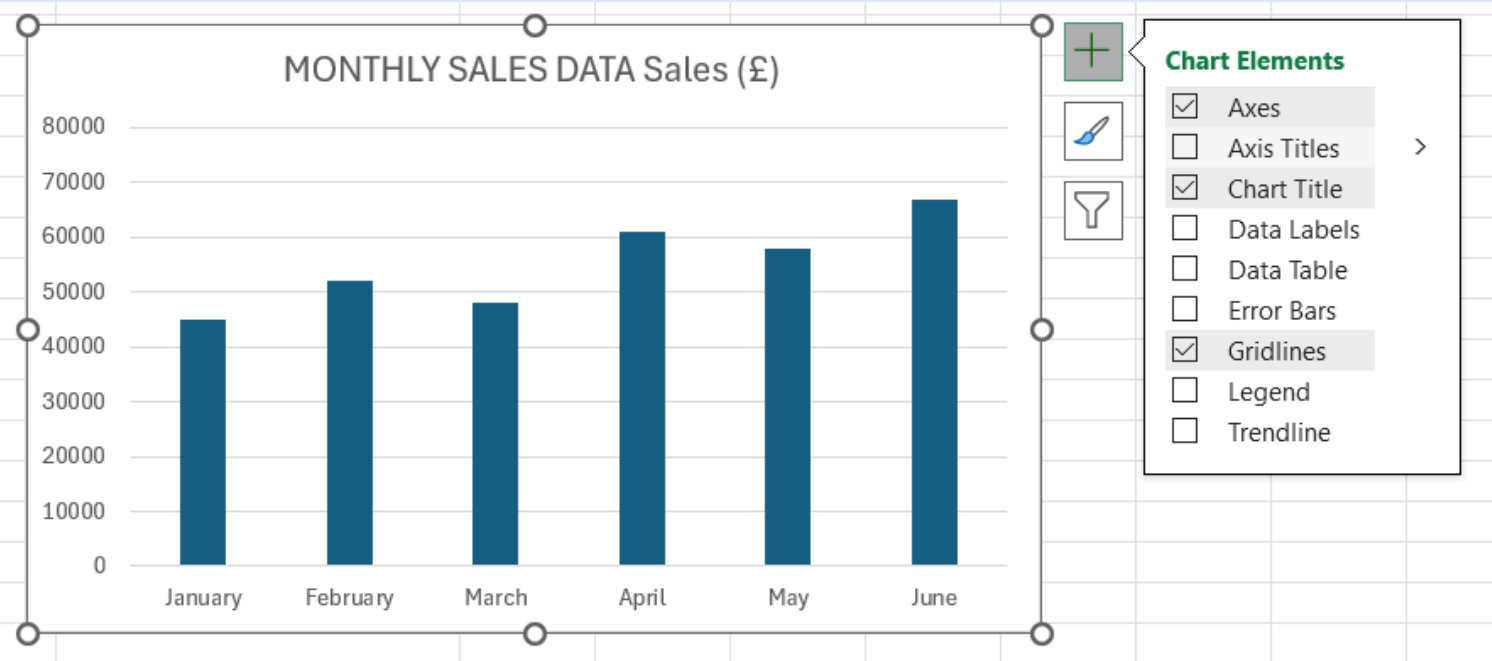
Add a descriptive title by clicking the Chart Title box. Label your axes through the Chart Elements button (plus icon). Remove gridlines if they create clutter. Change colors using the Chart Styles button (paintbrush icon). Developing visualization skills requires practice with different customization options (Asamoah, 2022).

EDITING YOUR CHART

Right-click any chart element to access formatting options. Double-click axes to adjust scale and intervals. Click data points to modify individual values. Use the Chart Design tab to switch chart types without starting over.

BEST PRACTICES

Keep designs simple and focused. Use contrasting colors for clarity. Limit the number of data series to prevent confusion (Schwabish, 2023). Label all elements clearly. Test your chart by asking if viewers understand the message within five seconds.



References

Asamoah, D. A. (2022). Improving data visualization skills: A curriculum design. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology*, 18(1), pp. 213–235. Available at: https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/infosys_scm/170 (Accessed 22 November 2025).

Chang, H. Y., Chang, Y. J. and Tsai, M. J. (2024). Strategies and difficulties during students’ construction of data visualizations. *International Journal of STEM Education*, 11(1), Article 11. Available at: <https://stemeducationjournal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40594-024-00463-w> (Accessed 23 November 2025).

Schwabish, J. A. (2023). *Data Visualization in Excel: A Guide for Beginners, Intermediates, and Wonks*. Boca Raton: CRC Press/Taylor & Francis. Available at: <https://www.routledge.com/Data-Visualization-in-Excel-A-Guide-for-Beginners-Intermediates-and-Wonks/Schwabish/p/book/9781032343266> (Accessed 25 November 2025).