Hiding and Unhiding Columns and Rows in Excel

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Selective Unhiding

A very useful feature in Excel is the ability to Hide and Unhide rows and columns within a worksheet without it affecting calculations. But what if you have several columns (or rows) hidden and you only want to unhide one column or row and not all of them? I have seen many users unhide all of the columns in the hidden set and then manually re-hide the ones they don’t want to display. Excel has a quick and easy way to handle this by using the GoTo feature. (To apply to rows, just substitute the word row for columns.)

1. First select the columns you want to hide (for this example we will select columns C, D, & E).
2. With the columns selected, right click your mouse and select Hide to hide them. You will see that all three columns are hidden. 
   **Shortcut Tip:** (To hide columns hit CTRL+0 (zero. To hide rows hit CTRL+9). To unhide you just add the Shift key (CTRL+SHIFT+9).)
3. Now we want to unhide just the D column. To access the GoTo Dialog box hit the <F5> function key.
4. In the Reference field box type in a cell address for that column we want to display, use D1.
5. From the Home tab, go to the Cells group, select Format, and then select Hide & Unhide, choose Columns.
6. Because we specified a particular cell address in the GoTo Dialog box, only the column indicated was revealed and not all the other hidden columns.
7. HINT: It is often difficult to remember what column or row you want to unhide from among a group of hidden columns. You can name a cell within the column (e.g. “2ndQtr”) and then use that name in the GoTo Dialog Box.
Easy Way to Retrieve First Column

I am often asked how to recover column A when it is accidentally hidden. If you try to recover it by using select all, then right clicking to Unhide, often column A will remain hidden. There are a couple of ways to retrieve.

Option 1:

1. Highlight column A and hide it by right clicking on your mouse with the column highlighted and selecting Hide.
2. If you select column B – F, right click, and select unhide Column A will still be hidden.
3. To unhide column type A1 in the Name Box and hit enter. Home Tab, Cells Group, Format, Hide and Unhide, Unhide Columns.

Option 2:

1. Hide column A again.
2. Place your cursor at the beginning of the columns and when the cursor changes to the double design, double click to unhide column.

Hide Unused Areas of Your Worksheet

We usually hide columns or rows to conceal or protect data and formulas, but sometimes we may want to hide everything except the working area of the worksheet. This is beneficial to keep users within the work area or to improve the appearance of your worksheet by making it look cleaner. Personally I like to use this for Dashboards, charts, and templates designed for use by others.

1. To hide unused columns, select the column header right of the last used column of the worksheet with data.
2. Hit the CTRL+SHIFT+Right Arrow to select the remaining columns in the worksheet.
3. Right click anywhere within the selected range and choose Hide. (Alternate path: you could go to the Home Ribbon and select, Format, Hide/Unhide, select Columns.) Notice that the cells
outside of your work area are now grayed out.

4. Repeat to hide unused rows by selecting the row header of the blank row below your last row of data. With the row header selected, press \textit{CTRL+SHIFT+Down arrow}. As with columns, this will highlight all the rows to the last row in the worksheet. Right click and select \textit{Hide}. Now the cells below your work area are grayed out.

5. If you want to \textbf{Unhide the rows and columns} first select the entire sheet (CTRL+A) or you can use the Select All Button which is located between the intersection of the columns and rows (upper left hand corner). Now from the Home ribbon, Format menu, select Row or Column and choose Unhide.

6. If you just want to unhide the columns, click the last column heading and drag your mouse to the right, release the mouse button, right click the column heading and select Unhide (positioning your mouse correctly may take practice). To unhide rows that are hidden below your work area, click the last row heading and drag your mouse down, release the mouse button, right-click the row heading and choose Unhide.

\textbf{Group Feature}

Excel's group feature is an alternative to hiding and unhiding columns and rows and allows you to quickly expand and collapse which can sometimes be more useful. This feature is useful for large spreadsheets.

1. \textbf{Select the rows you want to hide.}
   Note that when you use grouping, your rows or columns need to be continuous. You cannot group non-continuous rows or columns.

2. From the Data ribbon, Outline group, click on the Group icon. Grouping sections 1 and 2 will appear to the left.

3. Collapse specific sections by clicking on the "-" sign, or expand them by clicking on the "+" sign.

4. Collapse all similar sections by clicking on the 1 in the column label row. The 2 will expand all of the similar sections.

5. To \textbf{Undo Grouping}, select the Ungroup icon in the Outline group on the Data ribbon.