Excel Part 2 - The Ribbon

The Ribbon is the strip of tools at the top of Excel. It is built from tabs, groups, and buttons. The tabs run along the top. Each tab holds groups, and each group holds buttons, which are also called commands. The name of every group sits at the bottom of the group. Some buttons have a small arrow, which opens a list. Some groups have a small launcher in the corner, which opens a dialog box with more options. To get more room for the sheet, you can collapse the Ribbon with Control and F1. Press the same keys again to bring it back.

1. The tabs, from left to right

On this Ribbon the tabs are, from left to right, File, Home, Edit, Insert, Draw, Page Layout, Formulas, Data, Review, View, Automate, Developer, and Help. File is not a normal tab. It opens a full screen where you manage the file itself. Home holds the tools you use most. Edit is a custom tab that was added to this Ribbon, and a later video explains it. Insert adds things to your sheet, such as tables, pictures, and charts. Draw is for writing and drawing by hand. Page Layout prepares the sheet for printing. Formulas holds the functions and the tools for calculations. Data helps you sort, filter, and bring in data. Review checks spelling, adds comments, and protects the sheet. View changes how you see the sheet. Automate runs Office Scripts, which repeat steps for you. Developer is for macros and advanced tools. Help opens help and support.

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2. Tabs that come and go

Some tabs appear only when you need them. When you click inside a table, a Table Design tab appears at the right end of the tab row. When you select a chart, chart tabs appear in the same way. They disappear when you click away. Add-ins that you install can add tabs of their own. So your Ribbon may show more tabs, or fewer tabs, than this one.

Example: Let us say you want more room for your data on the screen. What you do is press Control and F1. The Ribbon collapses, and only the tab names stay. Press Control and F1 again, and the Ribbon comes back.

Example: Let us say you want to see the tools of a table. What you do is click inside the table. A new tab, Table Design, appears at the right end of the tab row.

Summary

You now know how the Ribbon is built: tabs, groups, and buttons. You know the thirteen tabs, from File to Help, and that some tabs appear only when you need them. Control and F1 collapses the Ribbon. Next, we customize the Ribbon.

Sources

- Microsoft Support - The Ribbon in Office (tabs, groups, commands, dialog box launcher, collapse and expand) – https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/customize-the-ribbon-in-office-00f24ca7-6021-48d4-9b21-5c2c1bb2b9e5
- Microsoft Support - Show the Developer tab – https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/show-the-developer-tab-406c0207-f711-40ef-9ae8-36349f0ab292
- Microsoft Support - Keyboard shortcuts in Excel (Control and F one collapses or expands the Ribbon) – https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/keyboard-shortcuts-in-excel-1798d9d5-842a-42b8-9c99-9b7213f0040f
- Screens checked in a real copy of Microsoft Excel for Windows (November 2026)

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