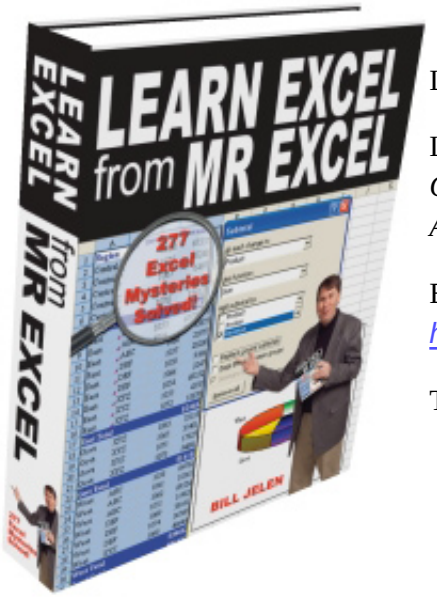

Learn Excel from MrExcel - Week 48

Learn Excel from Mr Excel

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This week - 7 topics about Autoshapes.

ADD AN AUTOSHAPE TO YOUR WORKSHEET

Problem: Excel offers an excellent calculation tool. However, some people are more visually oriented, and their eyes glaze over when given a large white sheet with black numbers. You can use graphics to call attention to certain numbers.

Strategy: Use AutoShapes. If the Drawing toolbar is not displayed, use View – Toolbars – Drawing. The Drawing toolbar is typically docked to the bottom of the worksheet, as shown in Fig. 1334.

Fig. 1334

1) The Drawing toolbar itself offers five standard shapes – Line, Arrow, Rectangle, Oval, and Textbox. Choose the Oval tool in the toolbar, as shown in Fig. 1335.

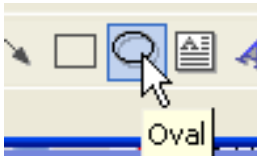

Fig. 1335

2) Left-click in the worksheet and drag to draw an oval, as shown in Fig. 1336. You can drag down or right to make the ellipse more portrait or landscape.

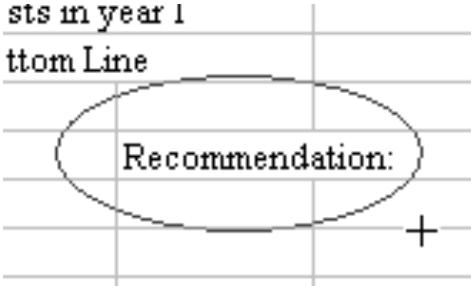

Fig. 1336

As shown in Fig. 1337, by default, the AutoShape is filled with white and covers up text.

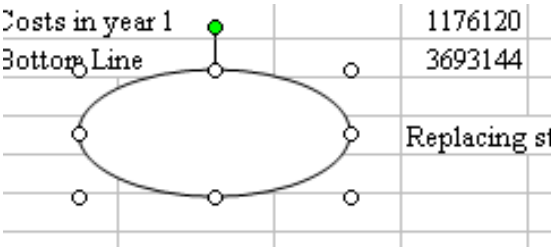

Fig. 1337

3) Use the dropdown next to the paint bucket in the Drawing toolbar. Select No Fill from the list, as shown in Fig. 1338.

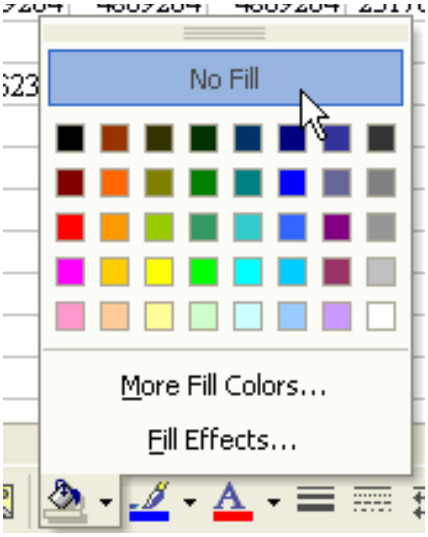

Fig. 1338

4) Use the LineStyle icon and choose a thicker line, perhaps 3 point, as shown in Fig. 1339.

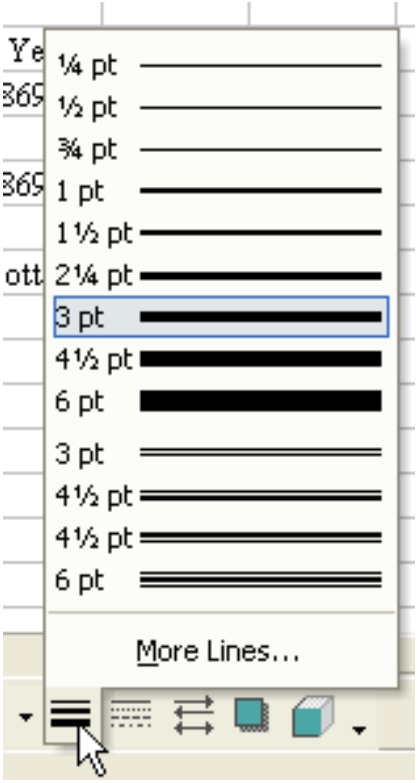

Fig. 1339

Result: As shown in Fig. 1340, you've added an attention-grabbing shape to the worksheet. This will draw the reader's eye to the conclusion.

Fig. 1340

Summary: Use the Drawing toolbar to select an AutoShape and insert it into your worksheet.

Commands Discussed: Drawing toolbar

DRAW PERFECT CIRCLES

Problem: The oval tool in the Drawing toolbar is hard to use. With the rectangle tool, if you start dragging immediately above a cell, as shown in Fig. 1341, you can drag to the end of the range and effectively draw a perfect rectangle every time.

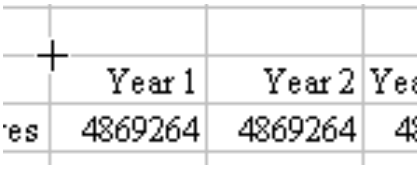

Fig. 1341

If you start drawing the rectangle in the upper left corner of the cell, the AutoShape will start in that corner, as shown in Fig. 1342.

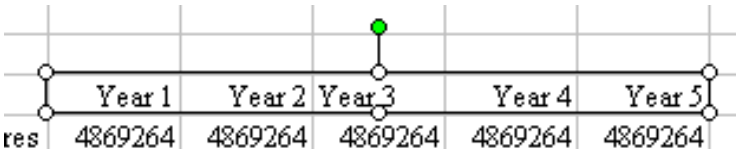

Fig. 1342

However, if you start drawing a circle in the same spot, the oval that you draw will not completely include the text in the cells, as shown in Fig. 1343.

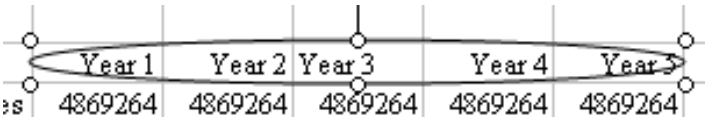

Fig. 1343

Strategy: There are a few special keys that work well when drawing ovals.

First, to force an oval to be a perfect circle, hold down the Shift key while you draw and release the mouse button, as shown in Fig. 1344.

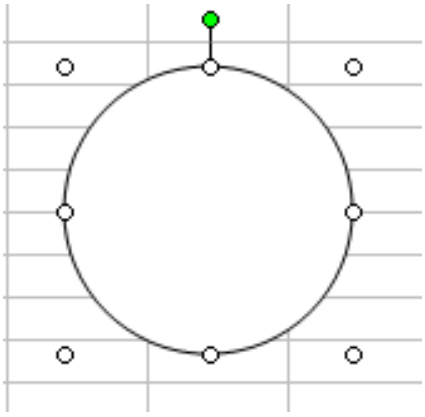

Fig. 1344

Second, a circle or oval is hard to draw. In order to draw the circle shown in Fig. 1345, you would have to start at the upper left corner of K15. This is non-intuitive, because all of the area in black is covered when you drag the circle tool to draw the circle. How can you know how far above your data to start in order to include all of the data?

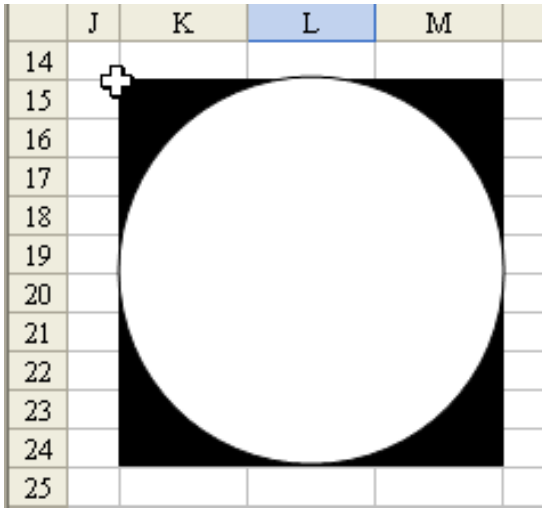

Fig. 1345

One solution is to hold down the Ctrl key when you draw the oval (or the Ctrl+Shift keys to draw a circle). Then, instead of starting in the left corner, start directly in the middle of the circle. As you drag outward, the circle will grow, as shown in Fig. 1346.

Fig. 1346

Summary: The Shift key will cause an oval to draw as a circle. The Ctrl key will cause the oval to draw outwards from the original point.

Commands Discussed: Oval Tool

DRAW PERFECT SQUARES

Problem: How can you draw a perfect square by using the AutoShape tools in the Drawing toolbar?

Strategy: Click the Rectangle tool in the Drawing toolbar. Before you left-click in the worksheet, hold down the Shift key. Keeping it held down, draw the rectangle. Release the mouse button, then release the Shift key.

Result: A perfect square will be drawn, as shown in Fig. 1347.

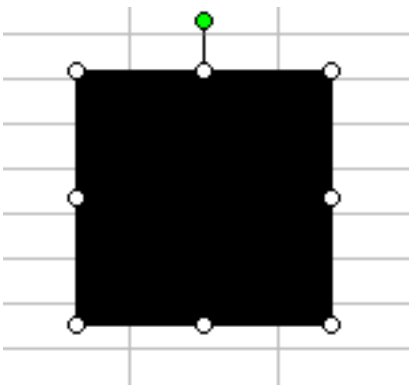

Fig. 1347

Additional Details: If you want to resize a square, hold down the Shift key while you drag a corner handle. This will force Excel to keep the shape a square.

Additional Details: If you need to produce many identically sized squares, follow these steps.

1) First, draw one square as shown in Fig. 1347. Next, hold down the Ctrl key. Click on the first square and drag to move a copy of the square to a new location. You will now have two identical squares.

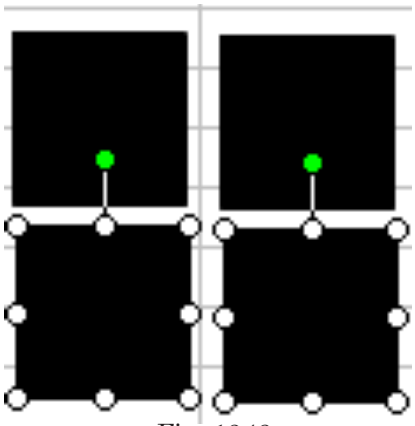

Fig. 1348

2) Hold down the Ctrl key and click on the new square. Both squares will be selected. Hold down the Ctrl key and drag the two squares to create a copy of both. You will now have four squares, as shown in Fig. 1348.

3) Hold down the Ctrl key and choose the original two squares to add them to the selection. You will now have all four squares selected. Hold down the Ctrl key, click and drag to make a copy of the four squares, as shown in Fig. 1349.

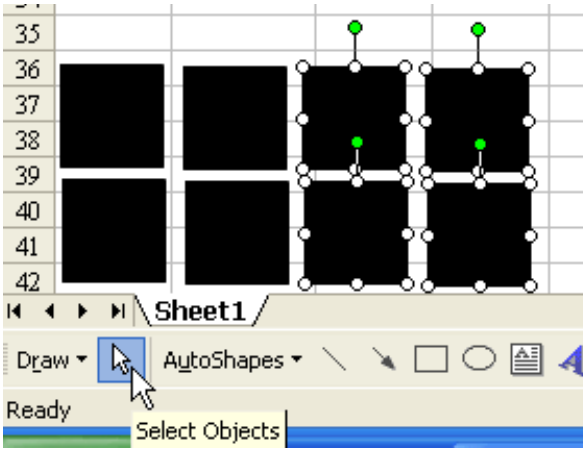

Fig. 1349

4) If you need to keep copying, you will want to select all eight squares. The fastest way to do this is to use the Select Objects arrow in the Drawing toolbar. Select this icon, then drag a box around all of the squares to select them all. Ctrl+Drag to copy the eight squares to be 16 squares.

5) When you are finally done, choose the white Select Object arrow again to exit the Select Objects mode.

Summary: Use the Shift key while drawing a rectangle to force it to be a square.

Commands Discussed: Shift; Ctrl; Ctrl+Drag

DRAW MORE THAN THE FOUR BASIC SHAPES

Problem: You need a shape other than the four basic AutoShapes in the Drawing toolbar.

Strategy: In the AutoShapes dropdown, there are seven flyout menus available. Of these, five menus offer additional shapes.

1) Select the AutoShape dropdown on the toolbar, as shown in Fig. 1350.

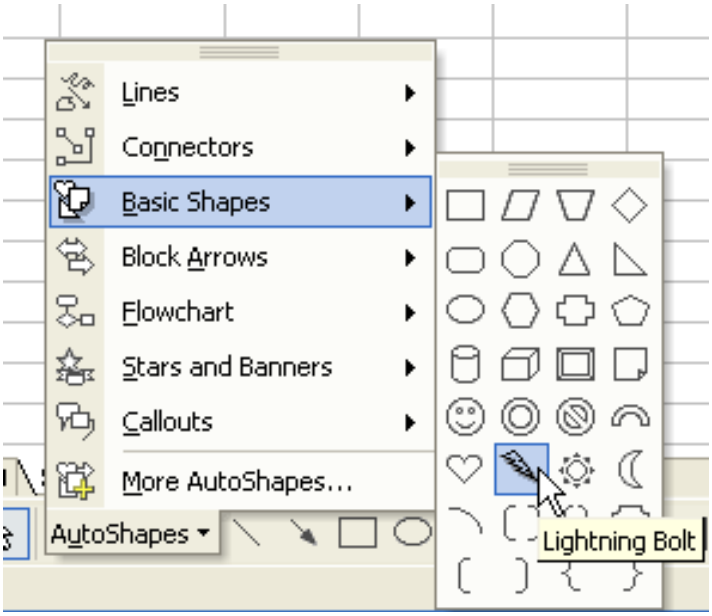

Fig. 1350

2) Choose the basic shapes choice. Choose the lightning bolt. As shown in Fig. 1351, left-click in your worksheet and drag to draw a lightning bolt.

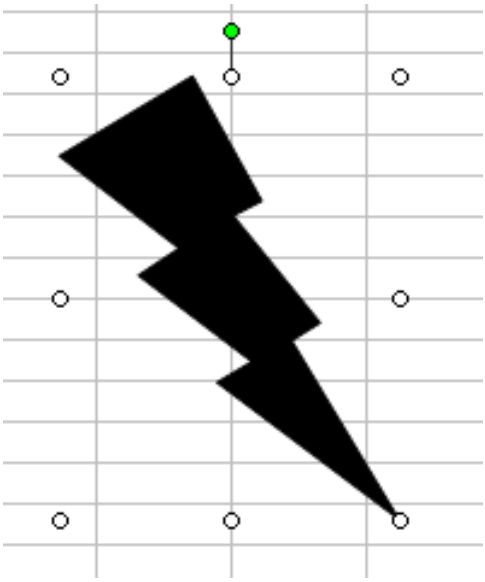

Fig. 1351

Additional Details: The other shapes available are shown below.

As shown in Fig. 1352, Block Arrows:

Fig. 1352

As shown in Fig. 1353, Flowchart symbols:

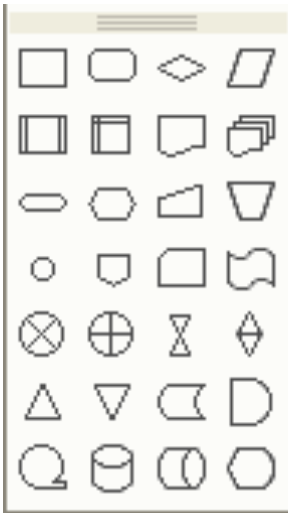

Fig. 1353

As shown in Fig. 1354, Stars and Banners:

Fig. 1354

As shown in Fig. 1355, Callouts. These special shapes have an anchor point that is attached to one cell. As you move the shape, it continues to be anchored to the original cell.

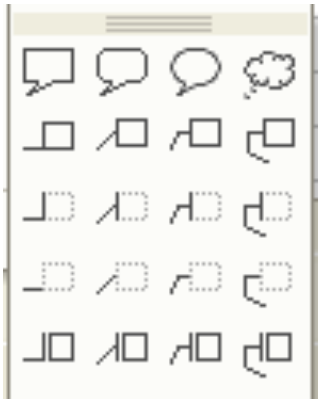

Fig. 1355

The More AutoShapes option opens the Insert Clipart task pane, with a number of vector-based line drawings available, as shown in Fig. 1356.

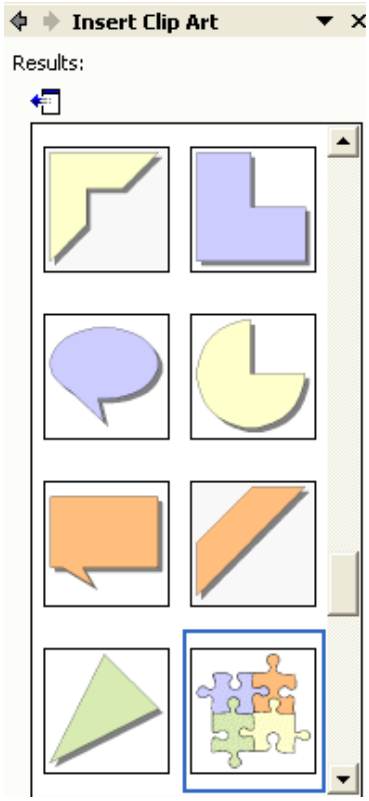

Fig. 1356

Summary: Use the AutoShape dropdown option to select from additional AutoShapes offered in Excel.

Commands Discussed: AutoShape dropdown

CHANGE AN EXISTING AUTOSHAPE

Problem: How can you change an existing AutoShape to a new shape?

Strategy: There is an extra step involved if your AutoShape can accept text.

1) Using the mouse, click on the AutoShape. If you immediately get nine resize handles, as shown in Fig. 1357, then your AutoShape does not accept text. Skip the next step.

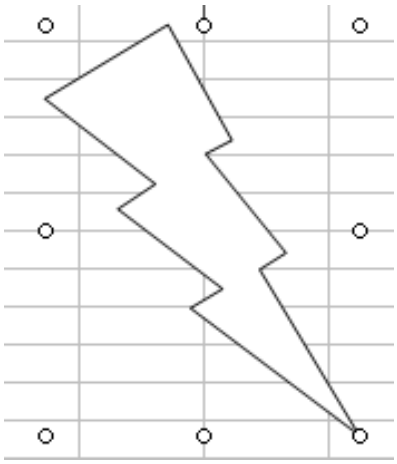

Fig. 1357

However, if you click on the AutoShape and the shape is surrounded by diagonal lines, then you have a text-enabled AutoShape, as shown in Fig. 1358.

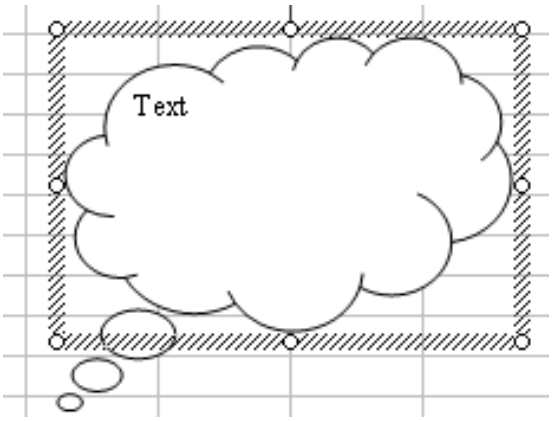

Fig. 1358

2) In text-enabled AutoShapes, the first click will put the shape in text-edit mode. This is represented by the diagonal lines in the border. In order to select the shape, you need to click again on the diagonal lines. This will change the diagonal lines to dotted lines, as shown in Fig. 1359.

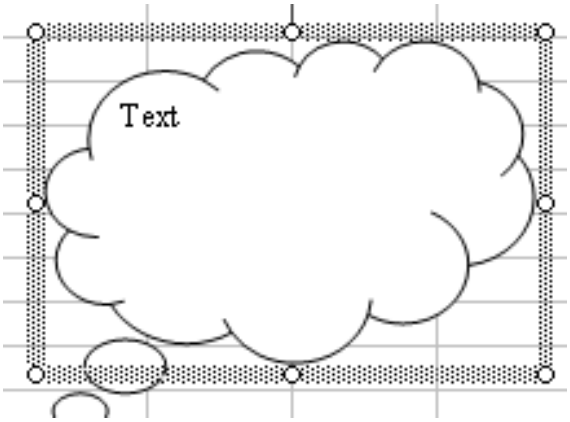

Fig. 1359

3) After the shape is selected, select Draw – Change AutoShape from the Drawing toolbar and choose another AutoShape, as shown in Fig. 1360.

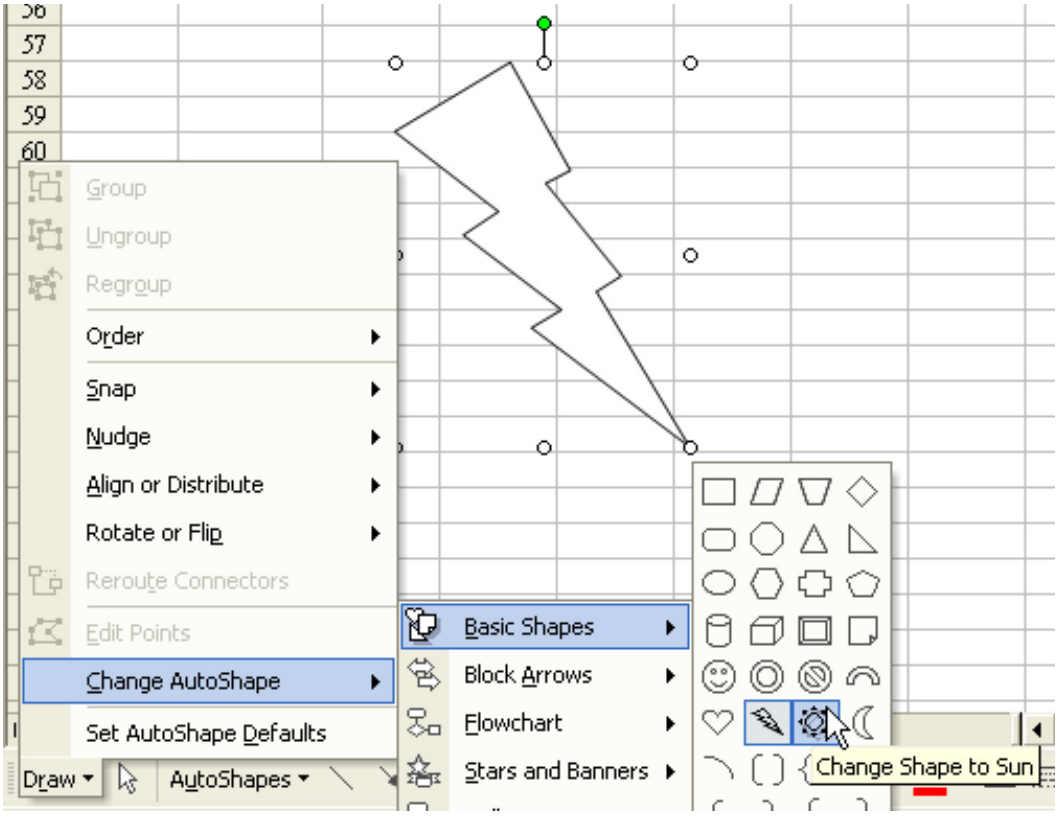

Fig. 1360

Additional Details: Using this technique, you can add text to any of the shapes that are usually not text-enabled. Add a regular textbox to the worksheet. Type the text. Select the textbox so that it is surrounded by dots. Use this technique to change the shape of the textbox to a basic shape, as shown in Fig. 1361.

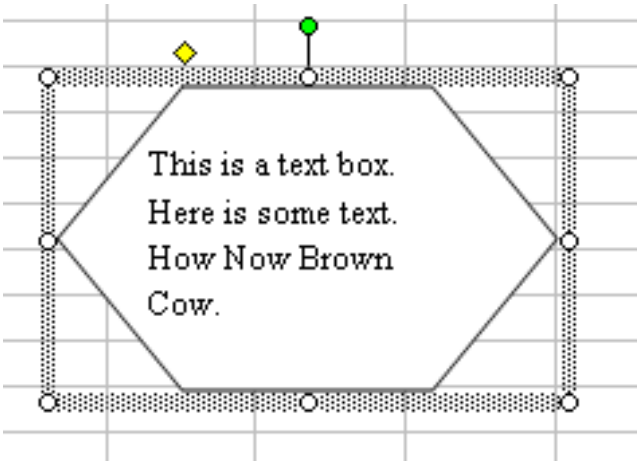

Fig. 1361

Summary: You can change the shape of any AutoShape using the Draw dropdown on the Drawing toolbar.

Commands Discussed: Draw – Change AutoShape

ADD TEXT TO AN AUTOSHAPE

Problem: Can you add text to any AutoShape?

Strategy: Some AutoShapes accept text by default. If you have an AutoShape that does not, follow these steps.

1) Right-click the AutoShape and choose Add Text, as shown in Fig. 1362.

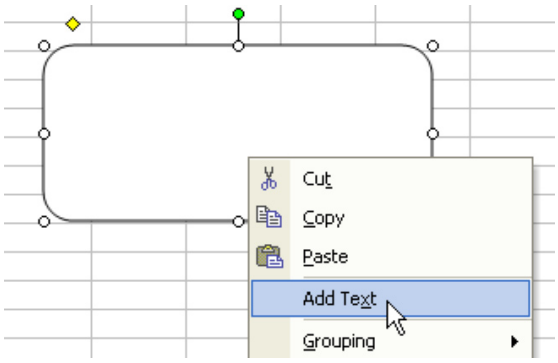

Fig. 1362

2) Click on the AutoShape. Type some text, as shown in Fig. 1363.

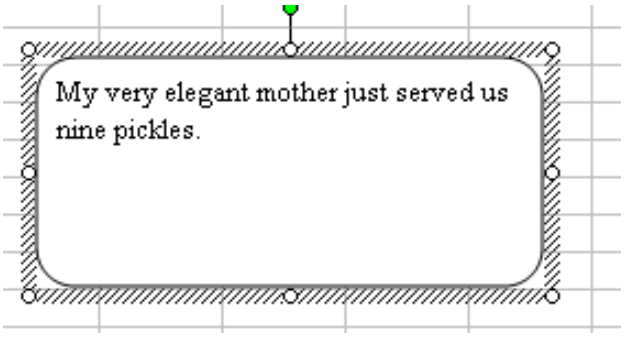

Fig. 1363

Additional Information: To center and then bold the text, follow these steps.

1) The text box is surrounded by diagonal lines. Click on the diagonal lines to change them to dots. Right-click on the dots and choose Format AutoShape, as shown in Fig. 1364.

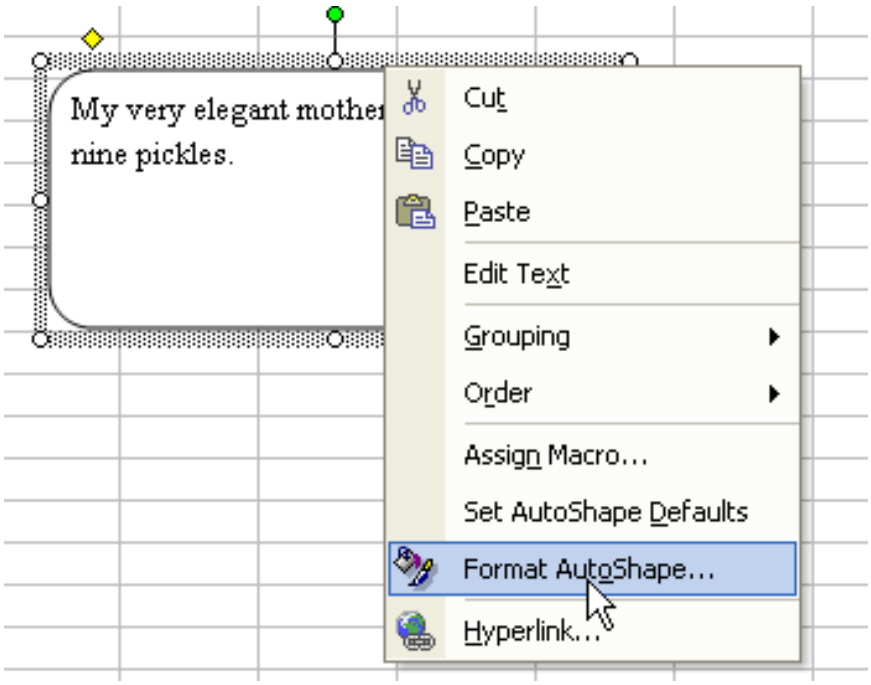

Fig. 1364

2) In the Format dialog, go to the Alignment tab. In the Text Alignment section, choose Center for both Horizontal and Vertical. The text will be centered, as shown in Fig. 1365.

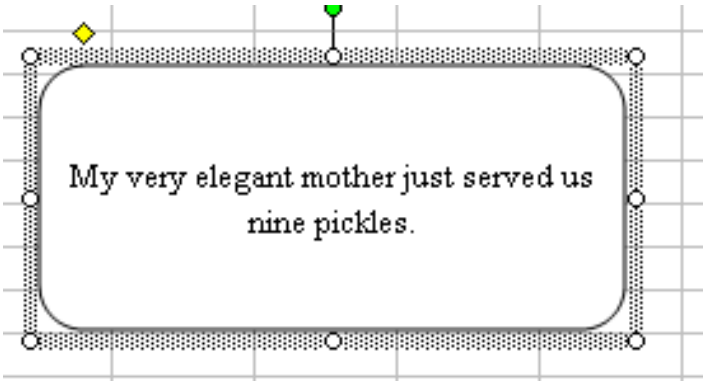

Fig. 1365

3) To make a bolder text, go to font tab, choose a color, 18pt, font, and bold to create the result shown in Fig. 1366.

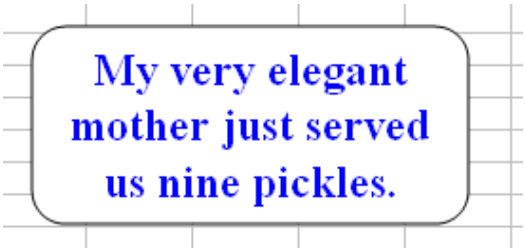

Fig. 1366

Summary: You can add text to any AutoShape by using the Right-Click menu to Add Text.

Commands Discussed: Add Text; Format AutoShape