



## Using a drop down list in excel

Typos are a terrible problem in excel if you are inserting a lot of data into one column in excel. This frequently occurs when using place names (the repeat from above does not always work) and you can end up with **Newcastle on tyne**, **Newcastle upon Tyne** and **Newcastle** when you really wanted to have them all exactly the same.

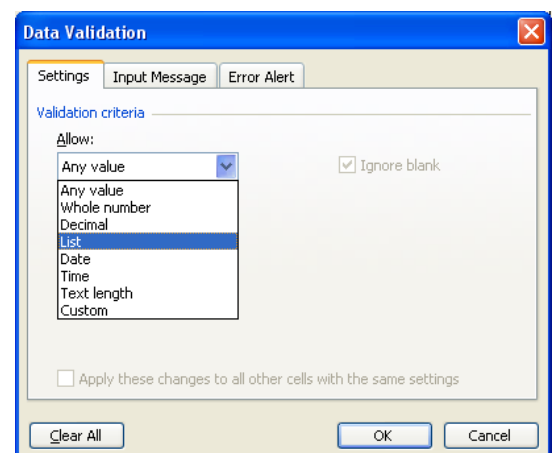
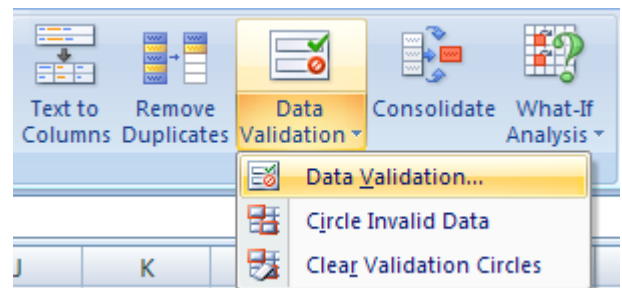
You can use a **drop down list** to ensure that all data in the column is spelled correctly.

Insert the following list of data into column Q of an empty worksheet

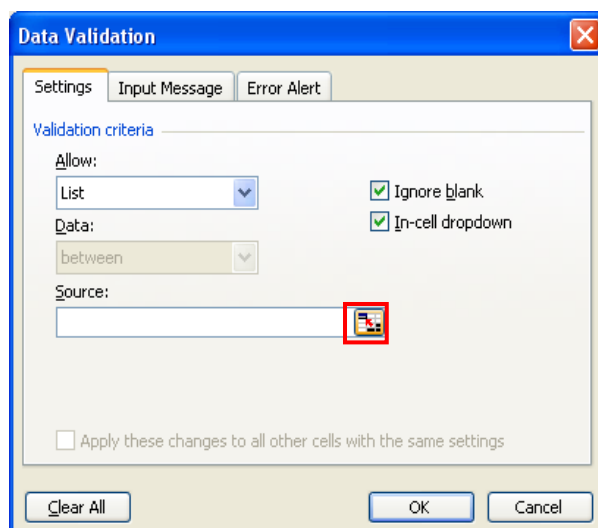
Country
England
Wales
Scotland
Ireland

This list is the one that the user will choose from when inserting data into another column. (It is a good idea to have the list already sorted in alphabetical order)

- Now place the cursor into cell B1
- Insert **Country** into this cell
- **Select all of column B** by clicking in the grey area at top of the column
- Select the **Data Validation** tool from the **Data** tab
- The validation screen will appear
- Select the drop down arrow
- Choose to allow a **list**



- the screen will change to display the **source** box
- Click on the square at the right-hand side of the Source box

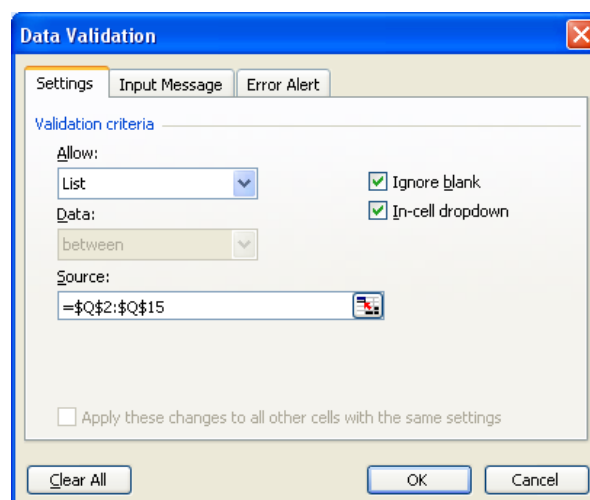


- This window will appear
- **Select the range of cells where the data is stored (not the cell containing the heading)**
- The range of cells will appear in the Data Validation window
- Close the window to return to the previous window

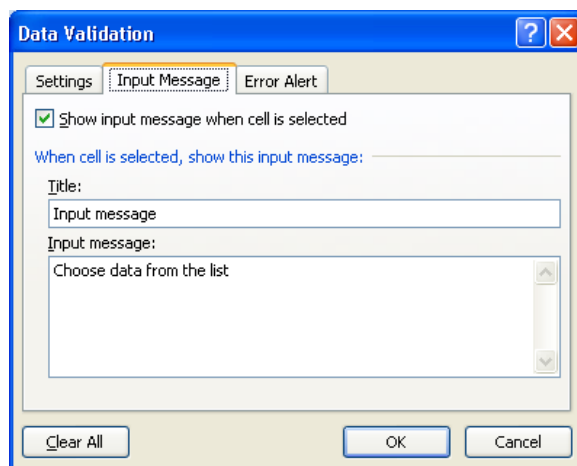


**End of guided exercise**

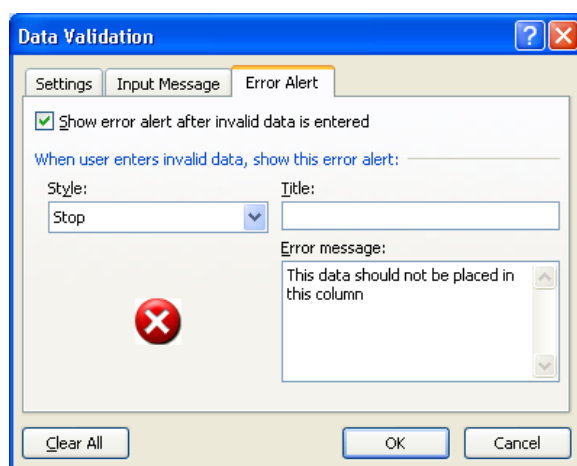
- The range of cells will appear in the Source box
- Check that **Ignore Blank** and **In-Cell drop down** check boxes are selected.



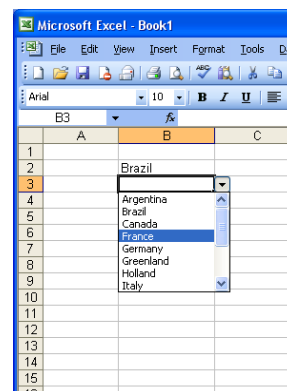
- Click on the **Input Message** tab
- Insert a title for the input message
- Insert the input message in the message box
- This message will be displayed every time the restricted cells are selected.



- Click on the Error Alert tab
- Choose the **Stop** sign
- Insert an error alert message
- This message will appear if somebody continues to insert incorrect data into the cell.
- Click on OK



- Place the cursor in any cell in column B
- A drop down arrow will appear at the top right-hand corner of the cell
- Select the drop down arrow
- Choose a country from the list
- Only data from the list can now be inserted into the cells in this row
- Try inserting alternative data into the cell
- What happens?.....



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If any data has to be added to the list in column Q the range of the data source will have to be extended so the process will have to be re-created.

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There are other methods of creating drop down lists and the data validation tool can be used ensure that other criteria are satisfied for the cells.