



# **Creating Gantt Charts**

## **for Project Tasks**

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# Gantt Chart Overview

A Gantt chart is a time-line tool used to show a schedule of tasks within a project. This type of chart is helpful for technical writers or project managers who monitor the progress of tasks. As tasks and time frames change during a project, the owner of the chart can easily adjust it to reflect the updated schedule of tasks.

Users type information in Microsoft Excel, and then use that spreadsheet's chart options to build the Gantt chart. The finished product shows individual tasks listed on the y-axis with duration bars displayed beside each task. The chart helps project participants visualize the schedule and expectations.

# Create a Spreadsheet for Project Data

Use the following steps to create a spreadsheet for project data.

- 1 Open Excel.
  - Click the **Start** button > **Microsoft Excel**.
- 2 Create four columns with the following headings:

Task	Start Date	End Date	Duration

- 3 In the **Task** column, type the name of each task represented in the chart.
- 4 In the **Start Date** column, type the date each task starts.
- 5 In the **End Date** column, type the date each task ends.
- 6 In the **Duration** column, type the number of days for the length of each task.

**Tip:** Use an Excel formula to calculate the Duration information by subtracting the Start Date from the End Date.

# Create a Stacked Bar Chart

Use the following steps to convert your spreadsheet into a stacked bar chart.

- 1 Open the spreadsheet that contains your data.
- 2 Select the cells that show the range of start dates.

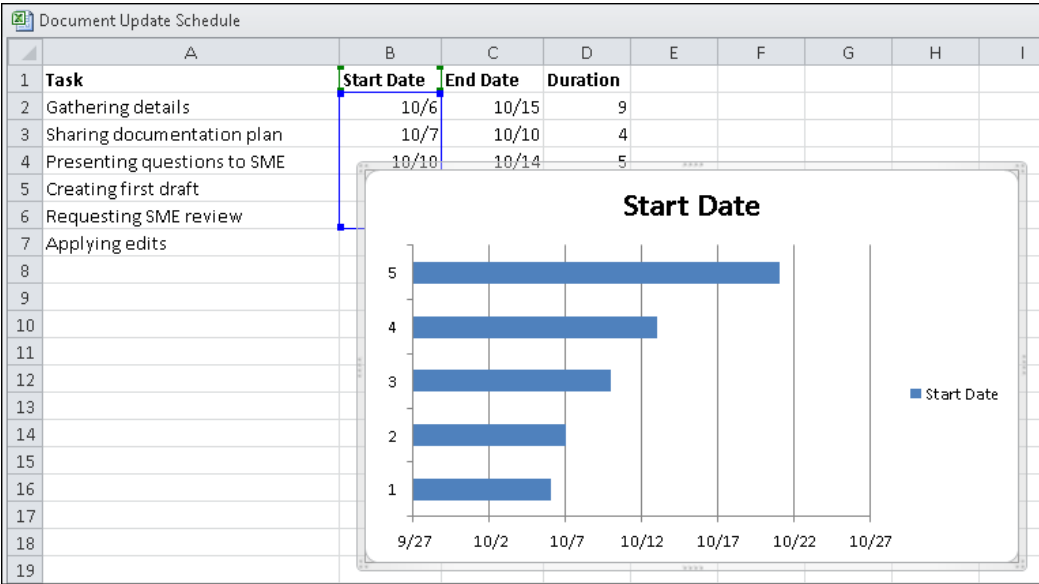
	A	B	C	D	E
1	<b>Task</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Duration</b>	
2	Gathering details	10/6	10/15	9	
3	Sharing documentation plan	10/7	10/10	4	
4	Presenting questions to SME	10/10	10/14	5	
5	Creating first draft	10/13	10/21	9	
6	Requesting SME review	10/21	10/27	7	
7	Applying edits	10/28	10/31	4	
8					
9					

**Note:** Do not select the entire column.

- 3 While the Start Date cells are selected, use the toolbar to insert a stacked bar chart.
  - a From the toolbar, click the **Insert** tab.
  - b Select **Bar > 2-D Bar > stacked bar** image.

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel interface with the 'Insert' tab selected. The 'Bar' chart type is chosen, and the '2-D Bar' sub-menu is open, highlighting the 'Stacked Bar' option. A tooltip for 'Stacked Bar' is visible, stating: 'Compare the contribution of each value to a total across categories by using horizontal rectangles. Use it when the values on the chart represent durations or when the category text is very long.'

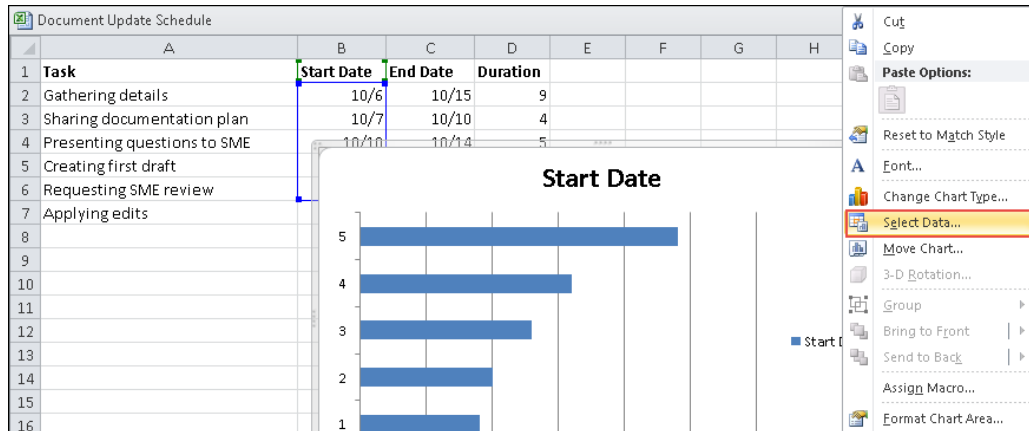
The spreadsheet displays a bar chart.



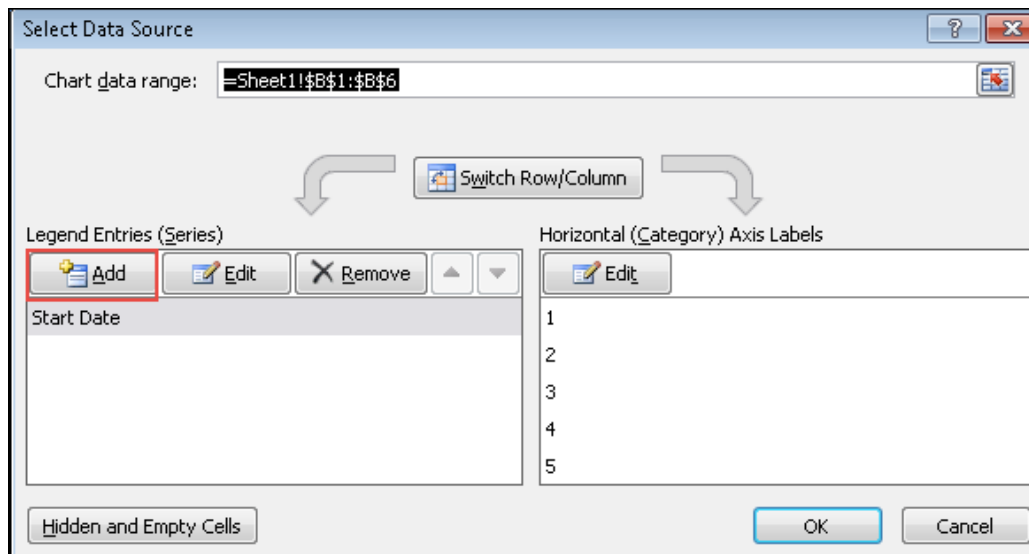
# Add Data and Descriptions to the Chart

Use the following steps to adjust the data in the bar chart.

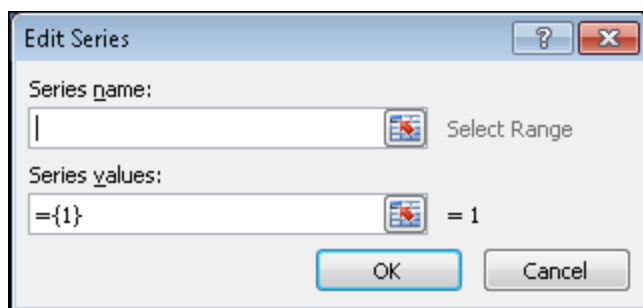
- 1 Click within the chart to select it, and then right click to choose **Select Data**.



- 2 On the **Select Data Source** window, click **Add**.

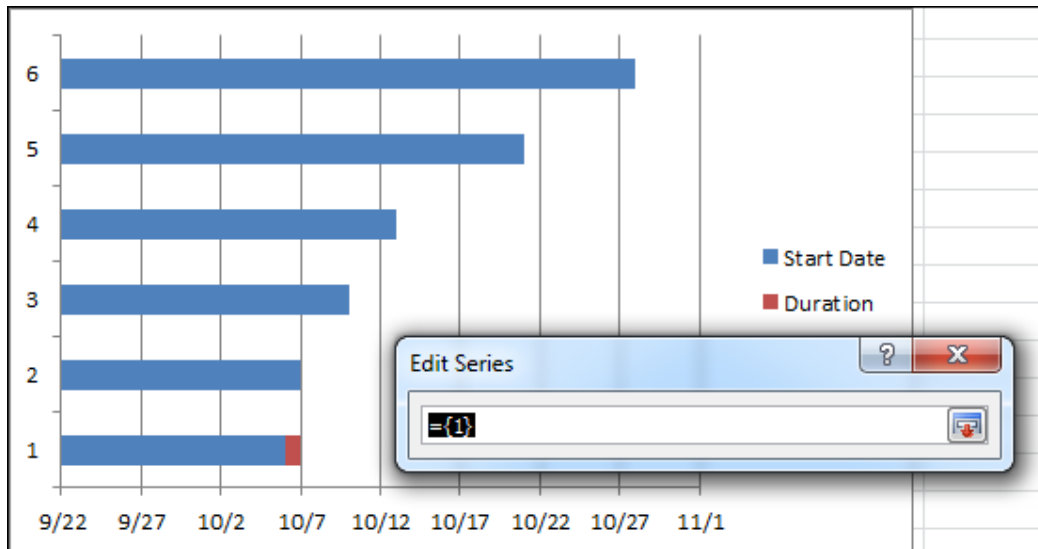


The **Edit Series** window opens.



- 3 For **Series name**, type **Duration** in the field.
- 4 For **Series values**, click the **Select Range** icon.

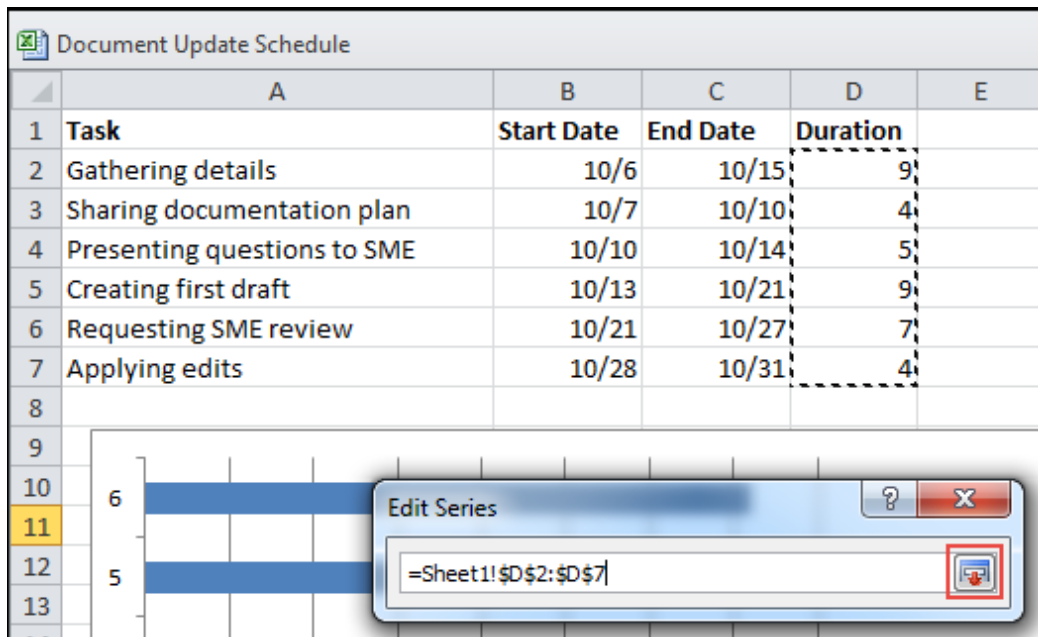
A dialog box opens for the **Series values** field.



- 5 With the dialog box open, select the data within the **Duration** column on the spreadsheet.
  - a In the **Duration** column on the spreadsheet, click the uppermost cell containing data.
  - b While the first cell is selected, move the cursor down the column to select all the cells with duration data.

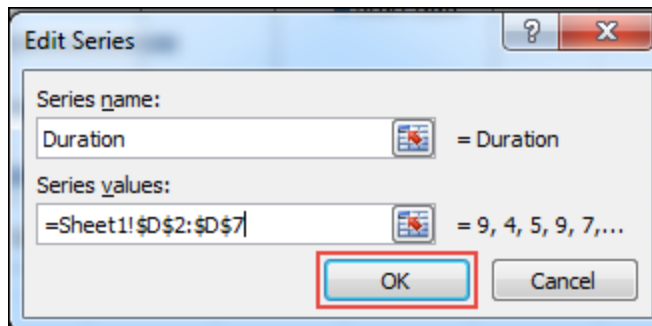
**Note:** Do not select the column header or extra cells.

- 6 Click the **Select Range** icon to confirm the selection.

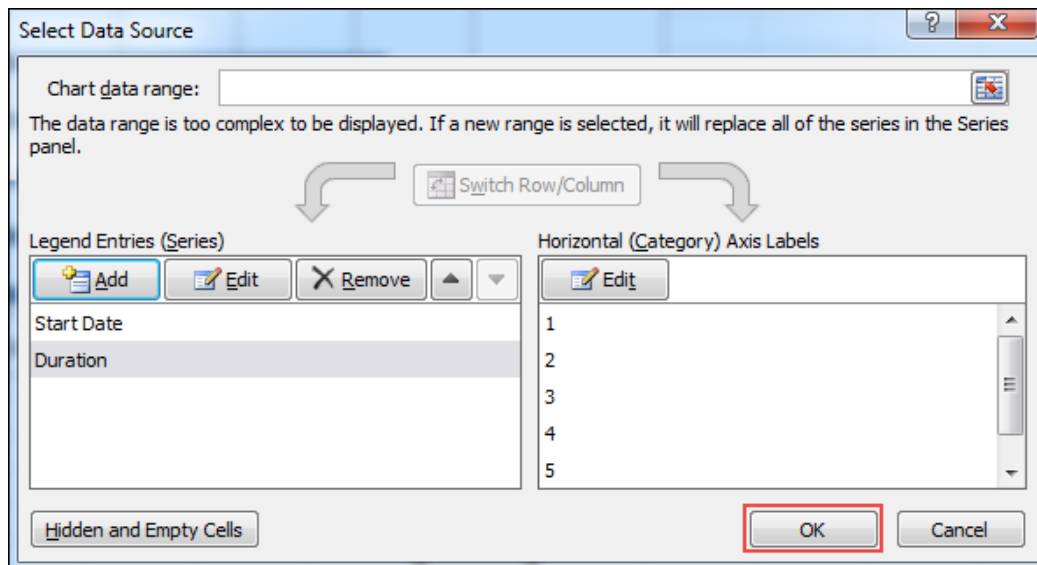




- 7 Click **OK**.

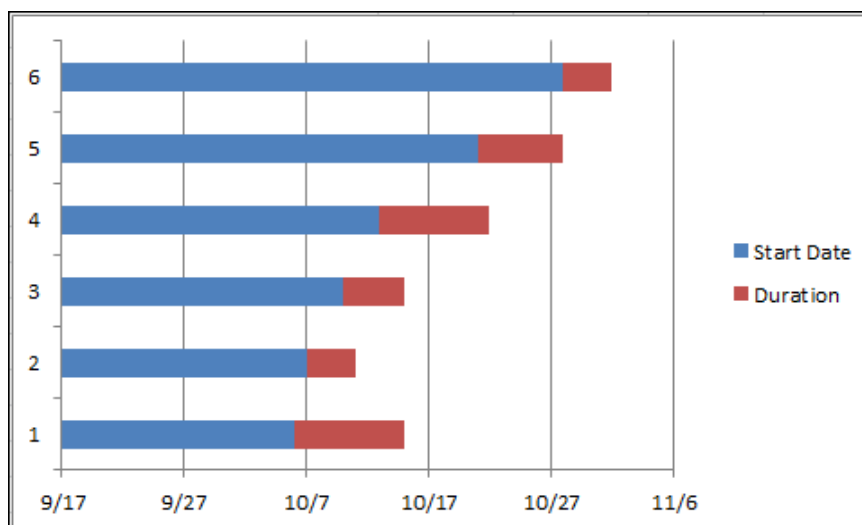


The **Select Data Source** window opens, and the **Legend Entries (Series)** area lists **Duration**.

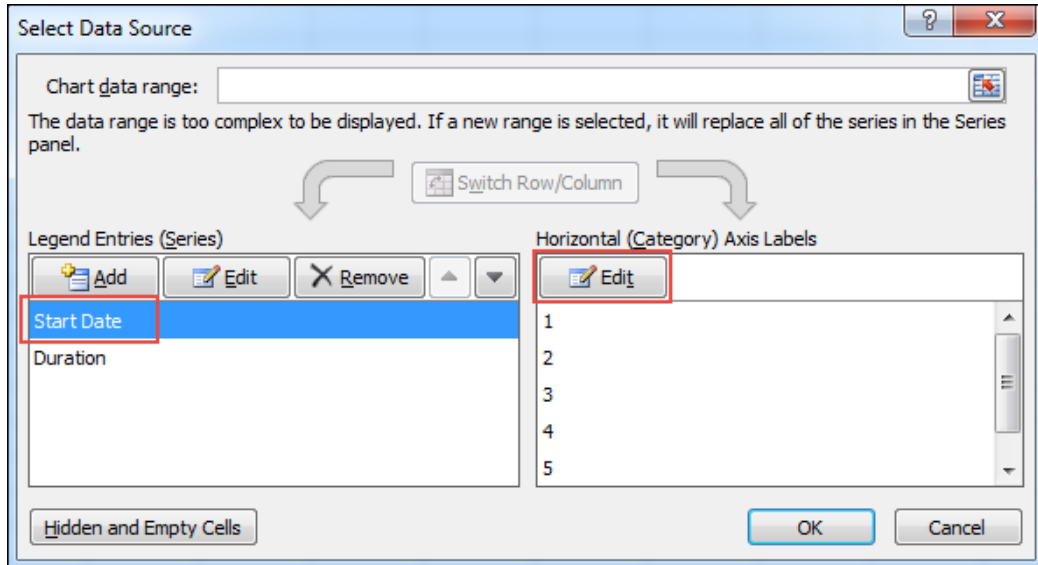


- 8 Click **OK**.

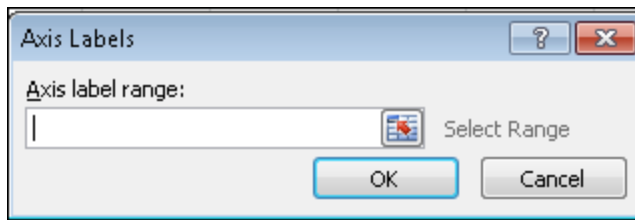
The bar chart displays data for the **Start Date** and **Duration**.



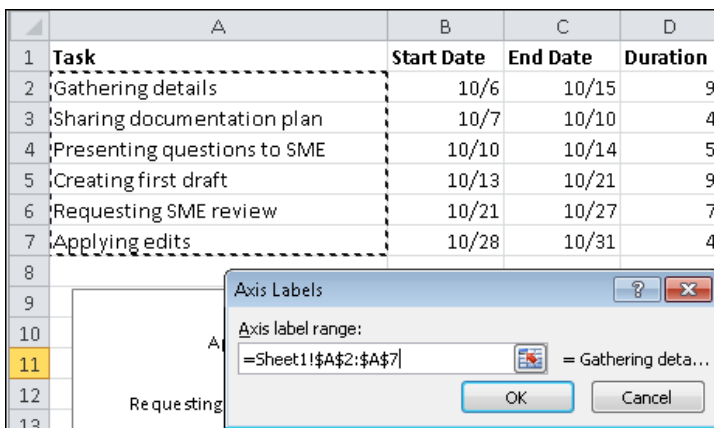
- 9 Click within the chart to select the chart, and then right click to choose **Select Data**.
- 10 Click **Start Date** to select it, and then click **Edit** in the **Horizontal (Category) Axis Labels** section.



The **Axis Labels** dialog box opens.

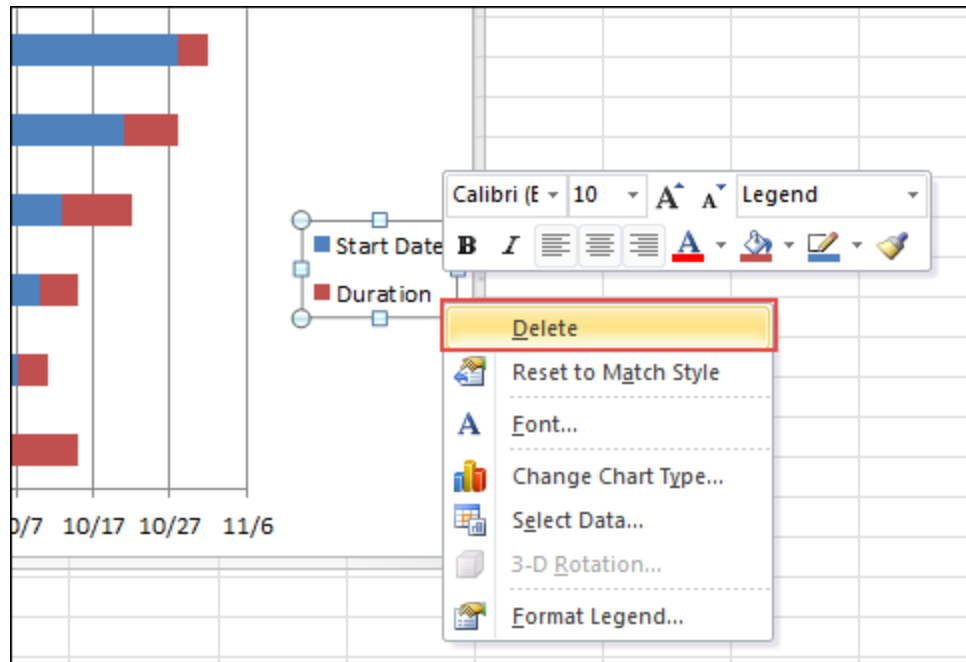


- 11 With the dialog box open, select the cells containing task descriptions.
  - a In the **Tasks** column, click the uppermost cell containing data.
  - b While the first cell is selected, move the cursor down the column to select all the cells with task descriptions.



**Note:** Do not select the column header or extra cells.

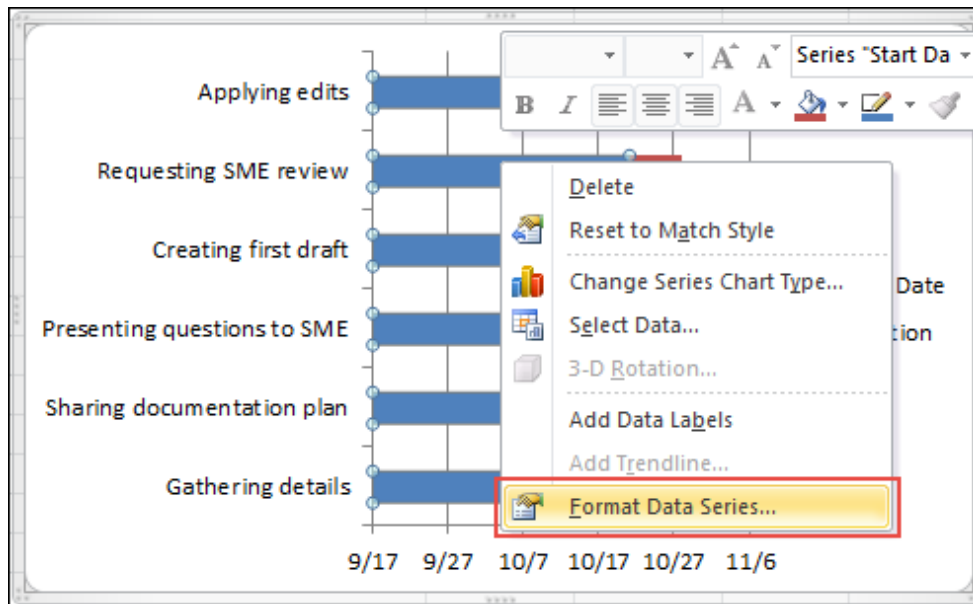
- 12 Click **OK** to close the **Axis Labels** window.
- 13 Click **OK** to close the **Select Data Source** window.
- 14 Delete the legend area from the chart.
  - a Within the chart, click the legend area to select it.
  - b Right click, and then click delete.



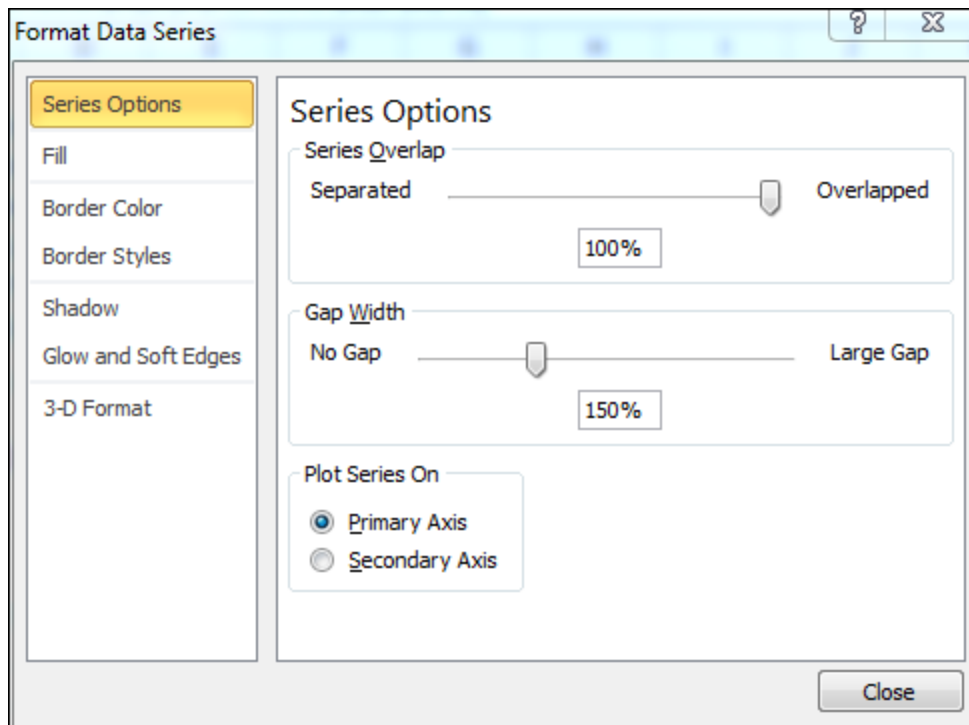
# Transform into a Gantt Chart

Use the following steps to transform the bar chart into a Gantt chart.

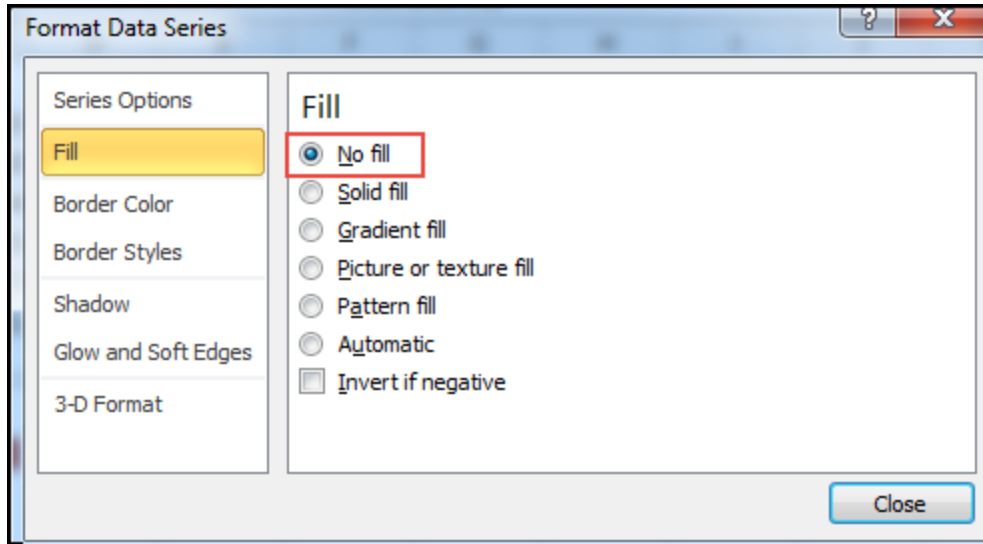
- 1 Click within the chart to select the bars.
- 2 Rick click, and then select **Format Data Series**.



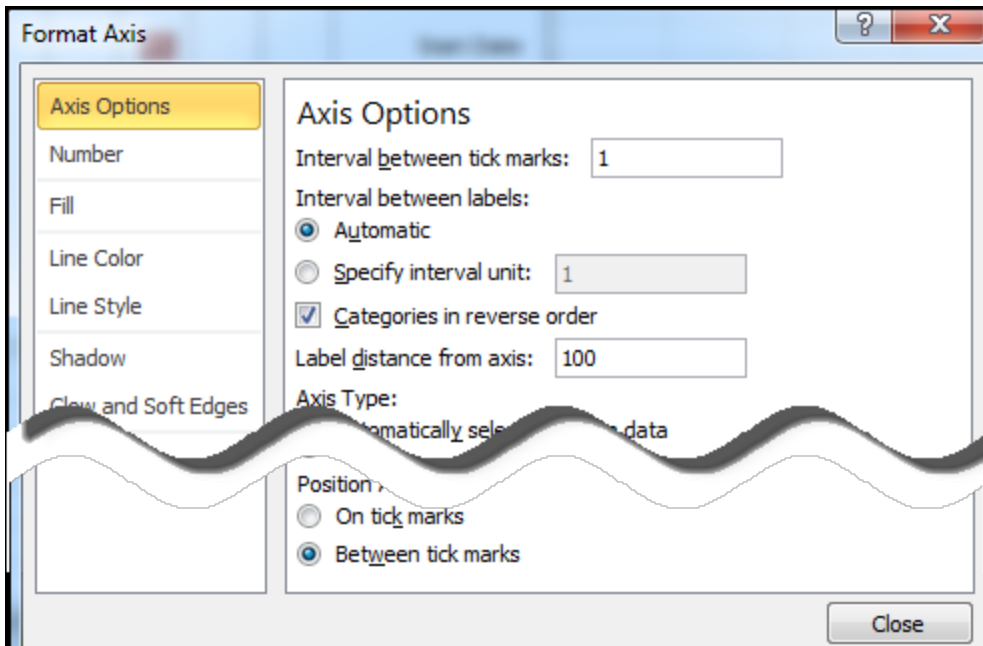
The **Format Data Series** window opens.



- 3 From the left menu, click **Fill**.
- 4 From the right-side of the window, select **No Fill**.



- 5 While the **Format Data Series** window is open, click on the task description area within the chart. The **Format Axis** window opens.



- 6 In the right-side panel, select **Categories in reverse order**.
- 7 Click **Close** to save.

The Gantt chart displays the schedule of tasks.

