Creating Gantt Charts

for Project Tasks

Instructional Guide by Tracy Summers

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Gantt Chart Purpose

Technical communicators and project managers use Gantt charts to monitor the progress of tasks within projects. This type of chart is helpful because it displays the schedule of tasks and the expected timeline for each task. As tasks and time frames change during a project, the user can easily adjust a chart 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 a y-axis with duration bars displayed beside each task. The chart helps project participants visualize the schedule and expectations.

Part 1 ◼
Create a Spreadsheet for Data

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

1   Open **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 you want 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.
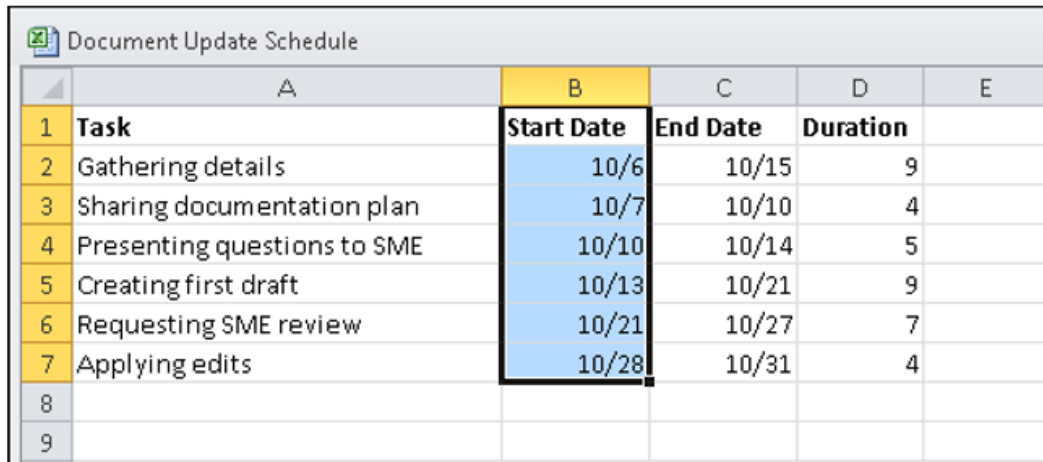
Tip: Use an Excel formula to calculate the duration information by subtracting the start date from the end date.

Part 2 ◼
Create a Stacked Bar Chart

Use the following steps to convert your spreadsheet into a stacked bar chart.
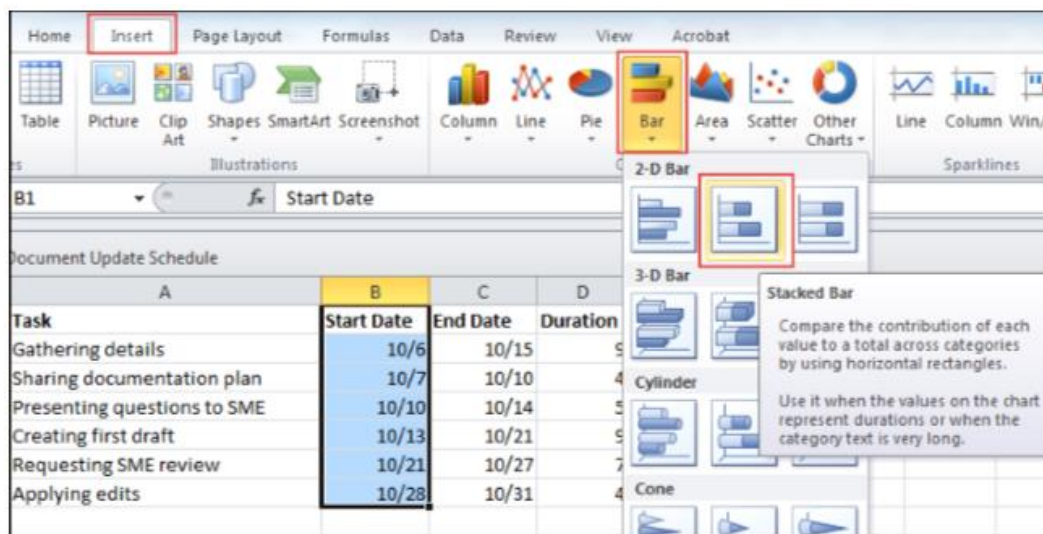
1 Open the spreadsheet that contains your data.

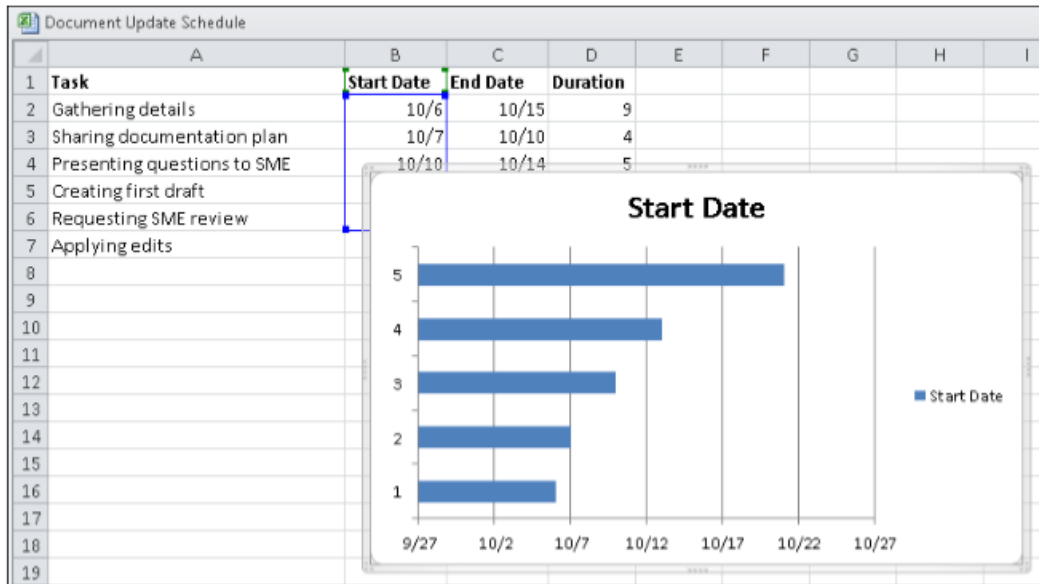**2** Select the cells that show the range of start dates.

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 the **Bar** > **2-D Bar** > stacked bar image.
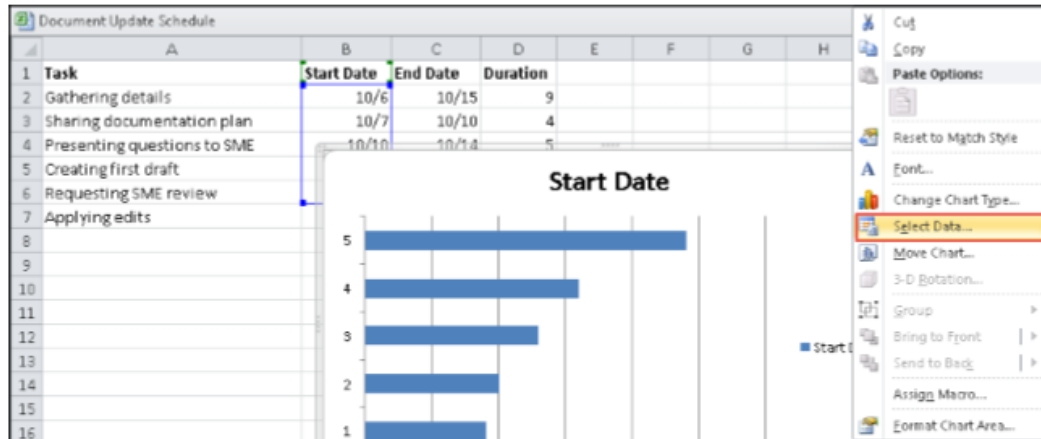
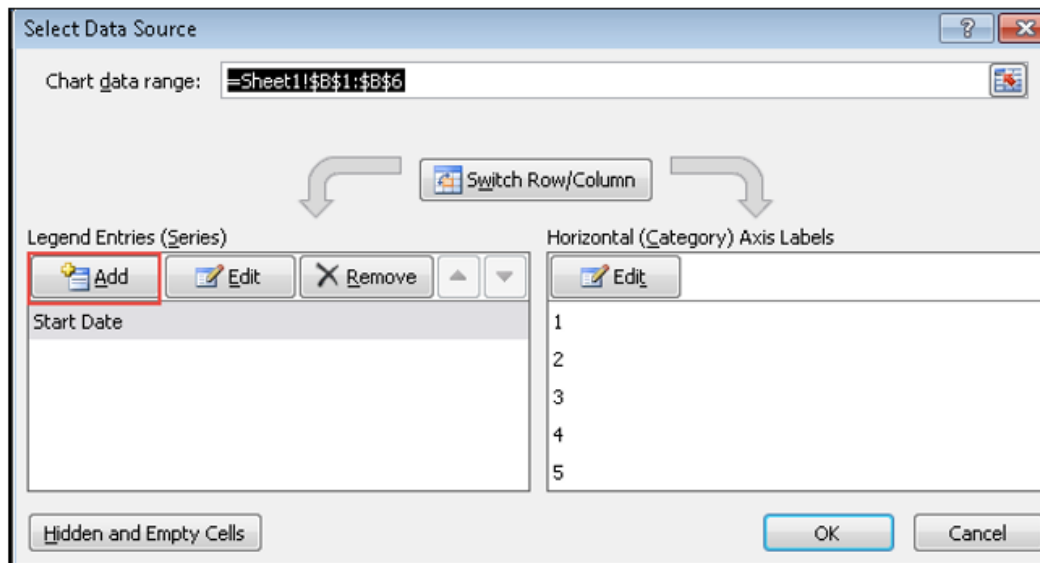The spreadsheet displays a bar chart.

Part 3 ◼
Add Data and Descriptions to the Chart

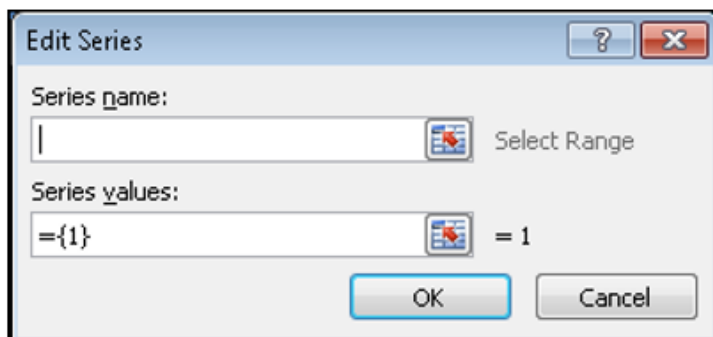Use the following steps to adjust the data in the bar chart.

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

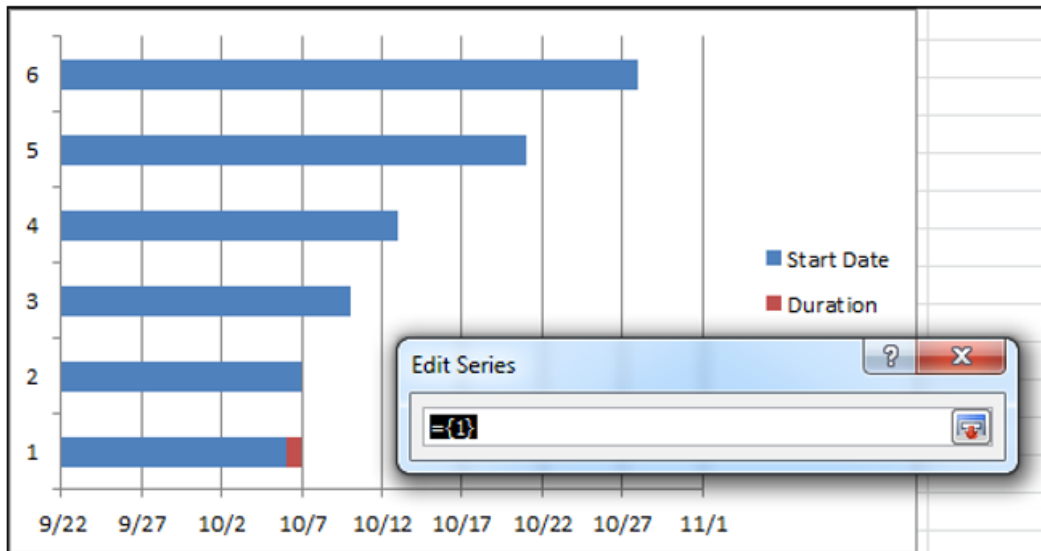**2** On the **Select Data Source** window, click **Add**.

The **Edit Series** window opens.

3 For **Series name**, type **Duration**.

**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.

a In the **Duration** 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 duration data.
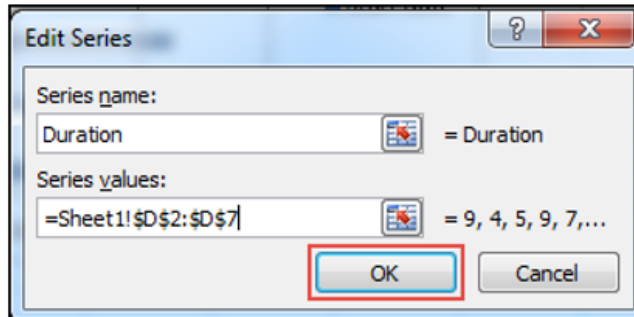
Note: Do not select the column header or extra cells.

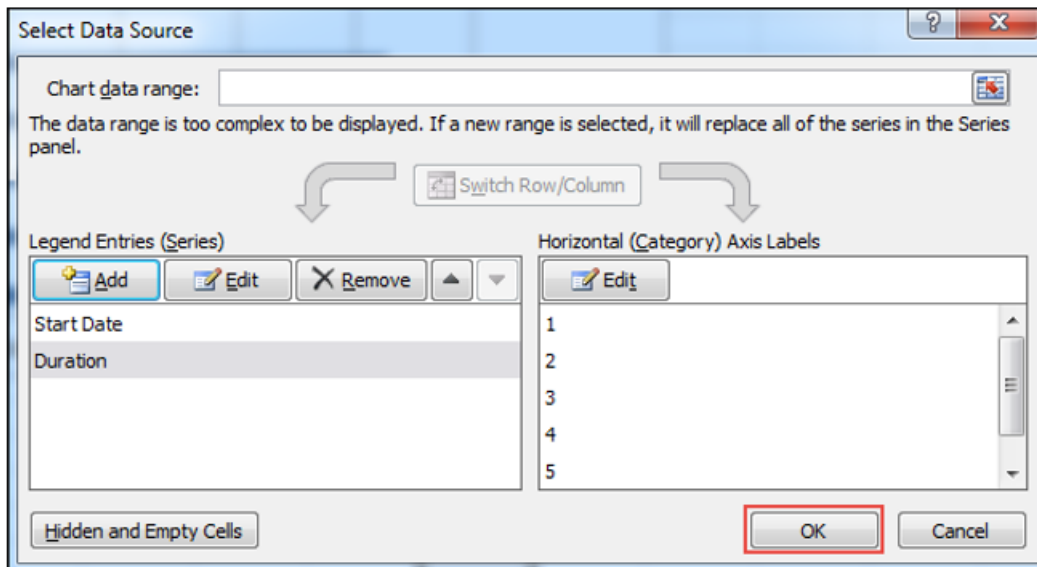**6** Click the **Select Range** icon to confirm the selection.
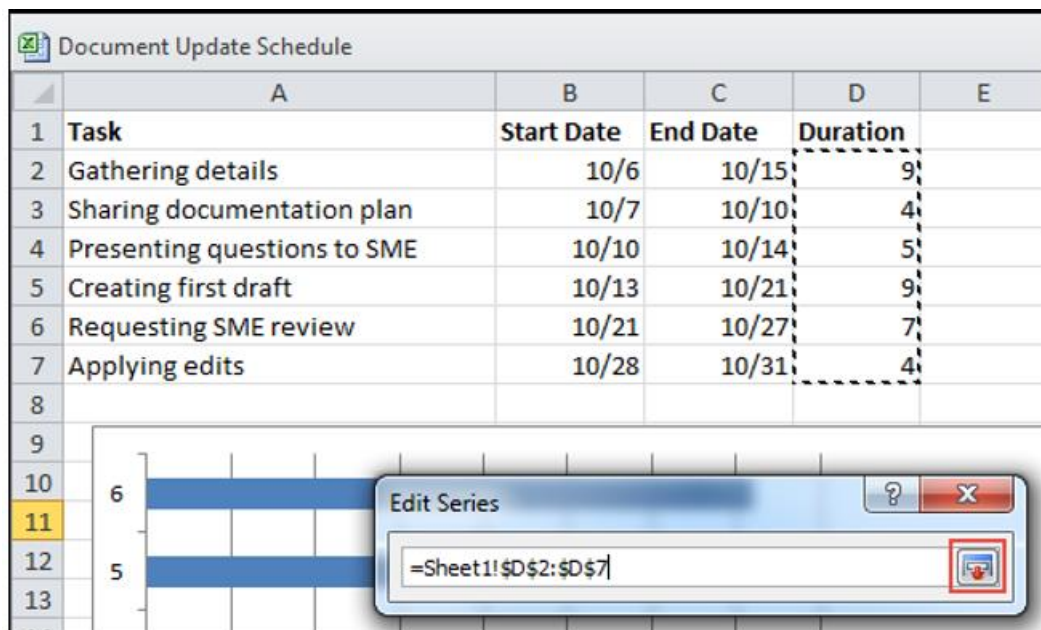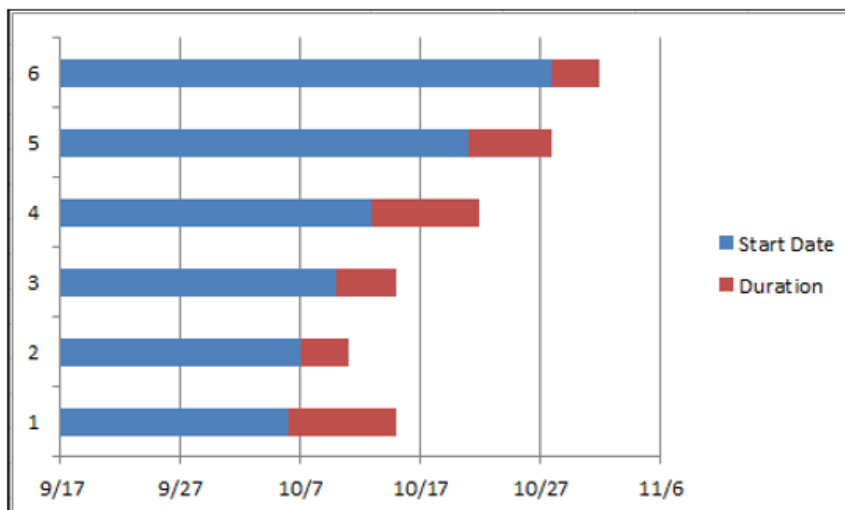
7 Click **OK**.

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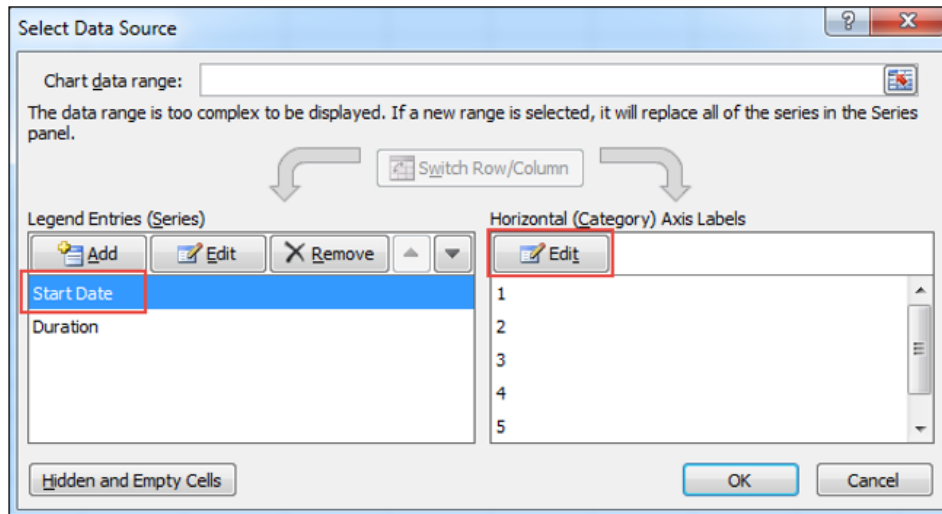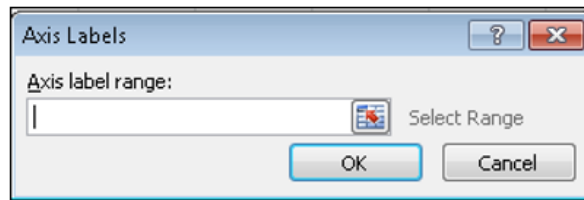

8 Click **OK**.

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

9 Click within the chart to select it, 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.
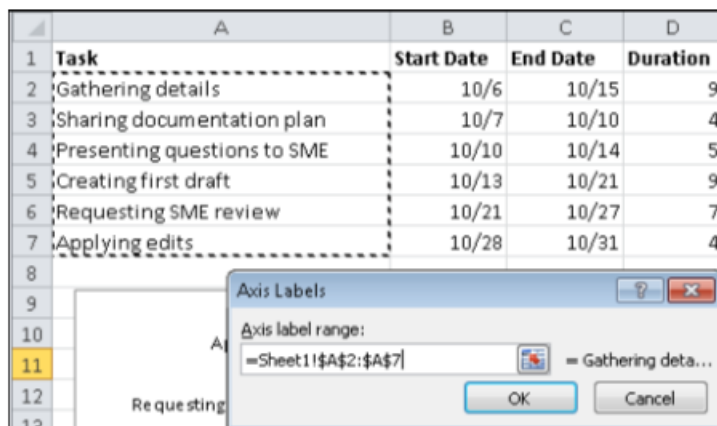

The **Axis Labels** window opens.

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 select **Delete**.
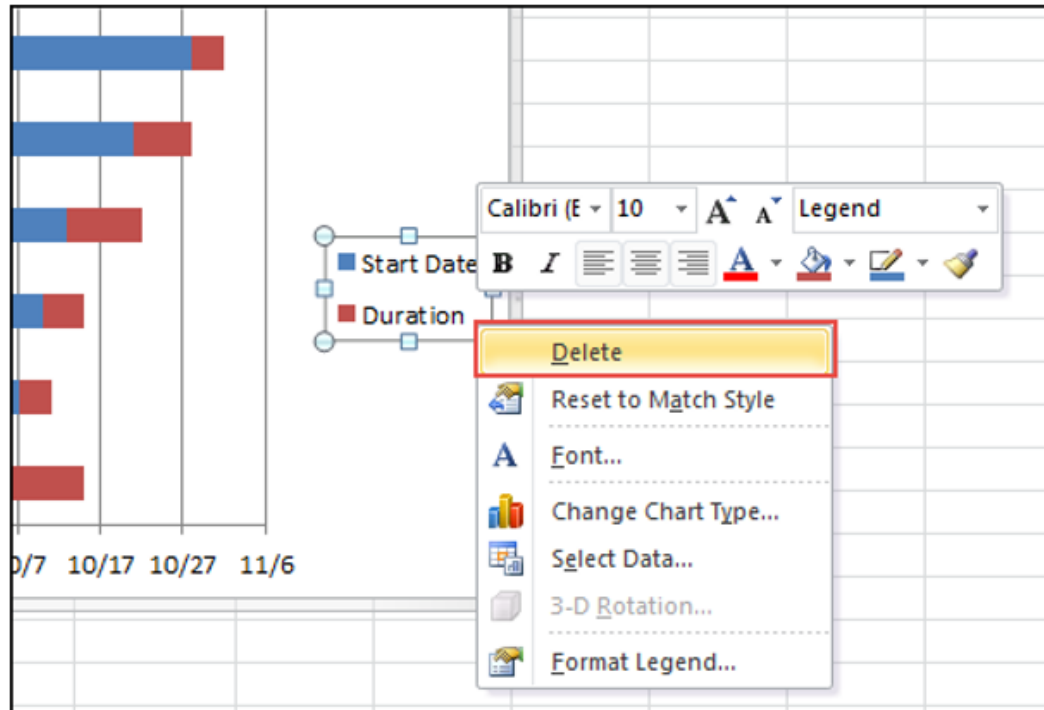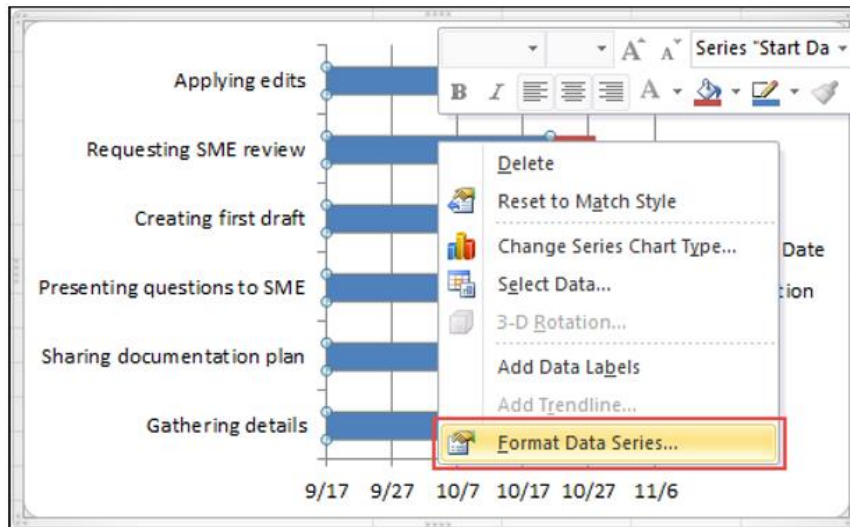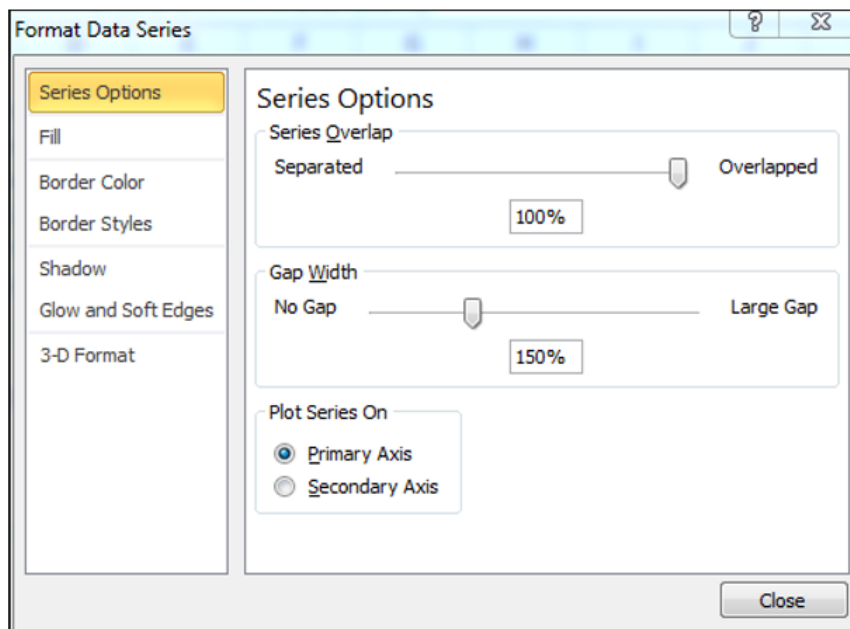
Part 4 ■

Transform the Bar Chart 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.

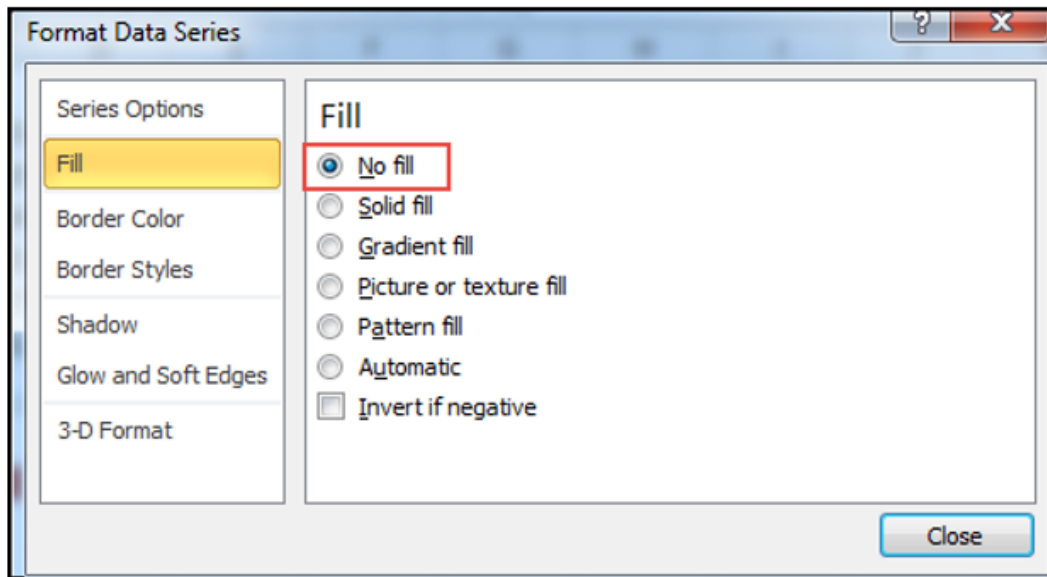**2**   Rick-click, and then select **Format Data Series**.

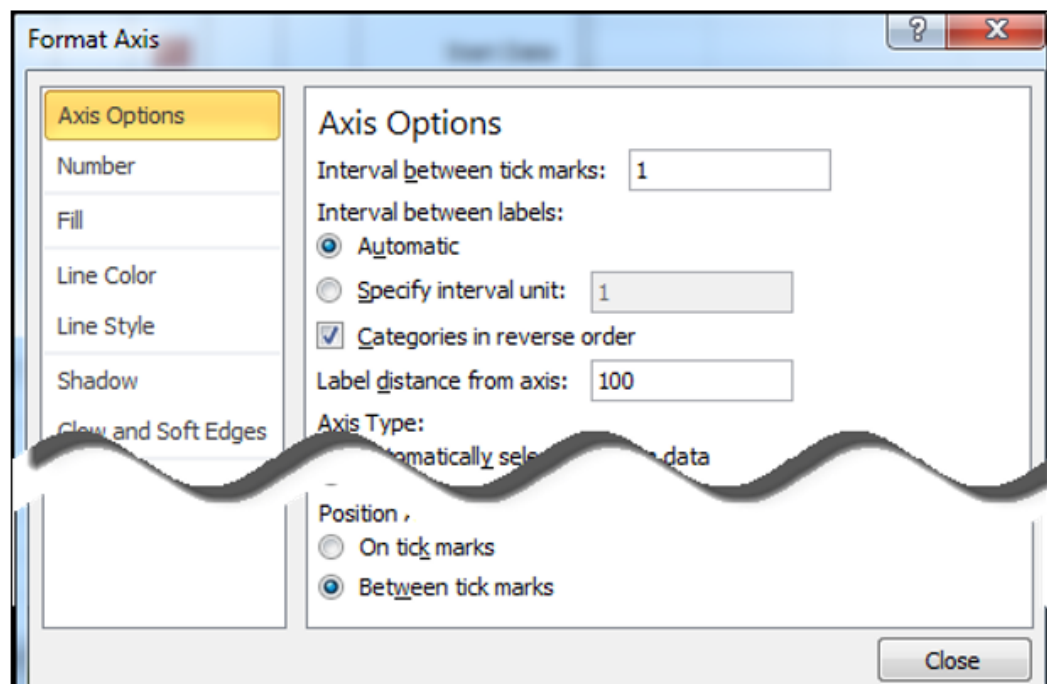The **Format Data Series** window opens.

3   From the left menu, click **Fill**.

4   In the **Fill** panel, 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 **Axis Options** panel, select **Categories in reverse order**.

7   Click **Close** to save.

The Gantt chart displays the schedule of tasks.