

How to fix 'Unreadable Content' error in Excel

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Microsoft Excel remains the most popular choice when analyzing data, creating charts, or searching for information. So when Excel encounters an "Unreadable Content" error, it can prevent you from working on the spreadsheet. However, you can quickly get rid of the error by trying the solutions below.

1. Launch Excel with admin rights

It's possible that Excel is displaying an Unreadable Content error because it lacks the necessary permissions to access and edit the file. Right-click the Microsoft Excel executable file and select **Run as administrator** .

If running Excel with admin privileges fixes the problem, you should always run Microsoft 365 apps with admin privileges.

2. Unblock Excel files

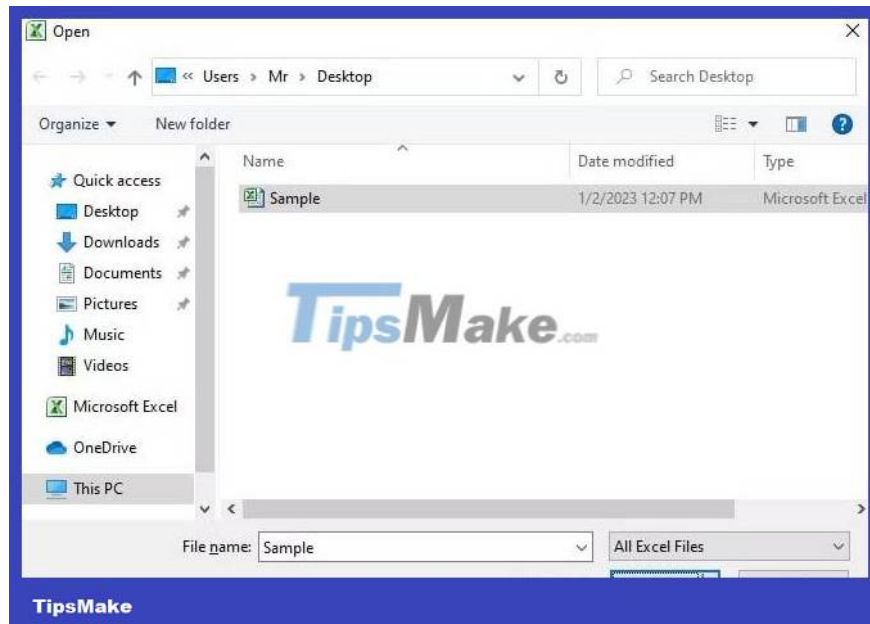
If running Excel with admin rights doesn't fix the problem, you should check to see if the file is blocked. Typically, this happens with documents from external sources.

Right click on the Excel file and go to **Properties** . Then, select the **General** tab . **At the bottom of the Properties** window , select **the Unblock** option . Click **Apply > OK** to save the new file's settings and try opening it again.

3. Repair files with Excel

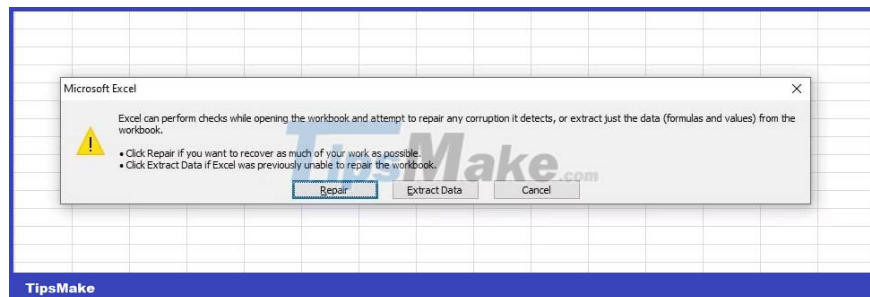
Most of the times, Excel displays an 'Unreadable Content' error when you try to open a damaged spreadsheet. Luckily, Excel has a built-in repair tool that you can use. Here's how you can do it:

1. Launch Microsoft Excel.
2. Select **Open** .
3. Click **Browse** and go to the location of the problematic file.
4. Select spreadsheet.
5. Click the **Open** drop-down menu .



6. Select **Open and Repair** .

7. Click **Repair** in the pop-up window.



If Excel cannot repair the spreadsheet, try to recover as much data as possible. Review the instructions again, but this time, select **Extract Data** in the pop-up window.

4. Move Excel file

Although this may be a strange trick, moving the file to a new location may be enough to resolve Excel's Unreadable Content error. Moving files will eliminate the possibility of problems related to folders or system files.

If you are accessing it from an external storage device, copy it to your computer. The same thing happens if you are using a cloud storage service. Also, rename the file after moving it to ensure you don't overwrite the original file.

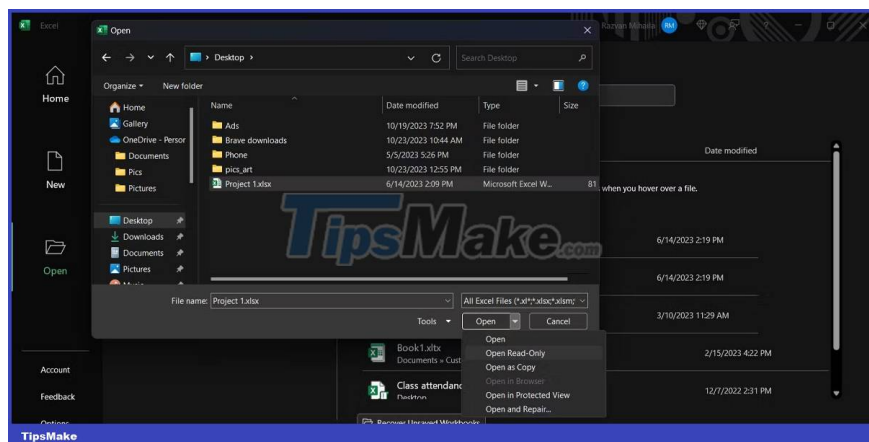
5. Reload the file

If the problem only occurs in the Excel spreadsheet, you may be dealing with a corrupt or incomplete file. There may have been an error during the download process or the file is infected with a virus or malware. You can scan the file for any potential threats, download the file again, or ask the sender for another copy.

Additionally, the file may not be readable during decryption. While encrypting your files will keep them safe, make sure it doesn't cause any problems accessing or sharing files.

6. Create an Excel file in read-only mode

Another way to fix Excel's Unreadable Content error is to open the file with the **Read-Only** option . To do so, launch Excel and go to **Open > Browse** . Then, click on the spreadsheet and select the **Read-Only** option .



If Excel can now open the file, remember that you cannot edit the file's contents. Instead, transfer the data to a new spreadsheet so you have a working Excel sheet.

7. Use an Excel alternative

If you keep getting the same error, no matter what file you're trying to open, Excel may be the cause of the problem. In this case, you can temporarily switch to an Excel alternative. You can still view and edit your spreadsheet until you fix Excel.

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