CUSTOMIZE FILE EXPLORER TO SUIT YOUR NEEDS

You may want to customize File Explorer in order to improve the way it works for you and be more productive when using it day by day. For example, you can add your own folders to Quick Access, enable libraries and make them easily accessible, or use check boxes to select files and folders.

Change the File Explorer Start Location

When you start File Explorer, by default, it opens Quick Access. You can change the start location to This PC by opening File Explorer and following these steps:

1. Click the File tab (note blue background) on the Ribbon. The File menu appears.
2. Click Change Folder and Search Options. The Folder Options window appears.
3. In the General tab, click the *Open File Explorer to* dropdown list. A list with two options is shown: Quick access and This PC.
4. Select This PC .
5. Click OK.
6. Close File Explorer. The next time you Open File Explorer (Windows +E), it displays This PC rather than Quick Access.

Pin Folders to Quick Access

When you start File Explorer, it displays Quick Access, where you see a list of the folders you browse most frequently and the files that you recently accessed. This list changes over time as you use different folders. You can always pin the folders and libraries that you want to access quickly to Quick Access. You can pin a folder to Quick Access by right-clicking on the folder and selecting Pin to Quick Access in the right-click menu.

Unpin Folders from Quick Access

To unpin a folder from the Quick Access section, Open File Explorer (Windows +E) and follow these steps:

1. Click the Quick Access section.
2. Right-click the folder that you want to unpin. The right-click menu appears.
3. In the right-click menu, click Unpin from Quick Access. The selected folder is no longer listed in Quick Access.

Enable and Use the Preview Pane

In File Explorer, you can enable a Preview pane that is shown on the right side of the window. As the name implies, you can use it to preview the contents of certain types of files (text, images, and videos). For example, if you select an image file in File Explorer, you can see a preview of it; if you select a text file, you can preview its contents.

To enable the Preview pane, Open File Explorer (Windows +E) and follow these steps:

1. In the File Explorer window, click the View tab. The View tab is shown.
2. In the Panes section, click the Preview Pane button. The Preview pane is added to the right side of the File Explorer window.
3. Select several files one by one. You can preview their contents in the Preview Pane, if they are text, images, or videos.

To disable the Preview pane, just follow the preceding steps.

Enable the Details Pane

You can enable a Details pane that is shown on the right side of the File Explorer window. As its name implies, you can use the Details pane to find more information about each file, such as its size, the date it was created, and the date it was last modified. The fields of data shown in this pane vary from file to file. For some files, such as pictures, you see lots of data; whereas for other files, such as PDF files, you see less data.

To enable the Details pane, Open File Explorer (Windows +E) and follow these steps:

1. In the File Explorer window, click the View tab. The View tab is shown.
2. In the Panes section, click the Details Pane button. The Details pane is added to the right side of the File Explorer window.
3. To see a file's details, click it to select it.

To disable the Details pane, just follow the preceding steps.

Disable or Enable the Navigation Pane

The Navigation pane is shown by default on the left side of the window. As the name implies, you can use it to quickly jump to different locations on your computer. When the Navigation pane is disabled and you start File Explorer, either

Quick Access or This PC is loaded, depending on your start location for File Explorer. It is not advisable to disable the Navigation pane because doing so makes navigation more difficult. If you decide to disable the Navigation pane, follow these steps:

1. Open File Explorer (Windows +E).
2. Click the View tab. The View tab is shown.
3. In the Panes section, click the Navigation Pane button. The Navigation Pane menu appears.
4. In the menu, click Navigation Pane. The Navigation pane no longer appears at the left side of the File Explorer window.
5. To enable the Navigation pane, follow the preceding steps.

Enable the Libraries Section in the Navigation Pane

By default, the Navigation pane doesn't show the Libraries in Windows 10, as it did in Windows 7. Fortunately, the libraries aren't gone; they're just hidden. To enable and use the libraries, Open File Explorer (Windows +E) and follow these steps:

1. In the File Explorer window, click the View tab. The View tab is shown.

2. In the Panes section, click the Navigation Pane button. The Navigation Pane menu appears.

3. In the menu, click Show Libraries. The Libraries are now added to File Explorer.

4. Click the Libraries shortcut in the Navigation Pane to view your libraries.

Use Views to Better Examine Your Folders' Contents

When you first browse a folder, File Explorer automatically applies a view that's optimized for the contents of that folder. However, the Ribbon has a number of view options in the Layout section of the View tab:

• Details: For each file and folder, the Details view shows several columns with information, such as Name, Date Modified, Type, and Size. Each file has its own small icon that represents the file type.

• Content: Each file and folder appears on a separate row, where you see detailed information about it, such as the date the file was last modified, its size, its author,

and its length (for audio and video files). For picture and video files, you see a small preview of the content rather than a file icon.

- List: Displays a simple list of folders and files, each with an identifying icon.
- Tiles: Displays a medium-size icon representing each file and folder, along with information about their types and sizes.
- Extra-large icons: Displays extra-large icons that are representative of the contents of each file. For pictures and video, you see a preview of each file.
- Large icons: Displays large icons that are representative of the contents of each file. For pictures and video you see a preview of each file.
- Medium icons: Displays medium icons that are representative of the contents of each file. For pictures and video you see a preview of each file.
- Small icons: Displays small icons that are representative of the contents of each file. You can easily switch between these views by clicking on them.

File Explorer remembers the last view that you used for a folder and applies it the next time you open it.

Sort Files and Folders

File Explorer offers the Sort tool for sorting the files and folders that you're viewing based on criteria such as their name, type, size, authors, and more. To sort the files within a folder, Open File Explorer (Windows +E) and follow these steps:

1. Navigate to the folder that you want to sort.
2. Click the View tab on the Ribbon. The View tab is shown.
3. In the Current View section, click the Sort By button. The Sort By menu appears.
4. Click the sorting criteria that you want to use to apply it. The files and folders for your current location are now sorted using the criteria you selected.

Group Files and Folders

With File Explorer, you can group the files and folders that you're viewing based on criteria such as their name, type, size, authors, and more. To group the files within a folder, Open File Explorer (Windows +E) and follow these steps:

1. Navigate to the folder whose contents you want to group.
2. Click the View tab on the Ribbon. The View tab is shown.

3. In the Current View section, click the Group By button. The Group By menu appears.
4. Click the grouping criteria that you want to use to apply it. The files and folders for your current location are now grouped using the criteria you selected.

Customize File Explorer with Folder Options

You can reconfigure certain ways that File Explorer works. All the configuration settings are in a window named Folder Options. This window has three tabs filled with settings. Here's how to access the Folder Options window, browse its settings, change them, and apply your desired configuration:

1. Open File Explorer (Windows +E).
2. Click File. The File menu appears.
3. Click Change Folder and Search Options. The Folder Options window appears at the General tab. Here are settings for browsing folders in File Explorer, opening an item in File Explorer, and whether to show recently used files and folders in Quick Access.
4. In the General tab, change the settings that you are interested in.
5. Click the View tab. Here you will find settings for viewing files and folders in File Explorer. The list of settings is long. Browse through the list and read what they do. Each name is self-explanatory.
6. Change any advanced settings that you want.
7. Click the Search tab. Here you find settings for using search in Windows 10 and in File Explorer.
8. Change how search works.
9. To apply your settings, click OK.

Use Check Boxes to Select Files and Folders

You can set File Explorer to display check boxes near the name of each file and folder. You can then use these check boxes to select files and folders.

To enable check boxes in File Explorer, follow these steps:

1. Open File Explorer (Windows +E).
2. Click the View tab on the Ribbon. The View tab is shown.
3. In the Show/Hide section, click Item Check Boxes. Check boxes are now shown each time you move your cursor on top of a file or folder. Click the check box to select that item.

4. Close File Explorer. To disable the check boxes, follow the preceding steps.

Clear File Explorer's History of Recently Used Files and Folders

By default, File Explorer remembers all the files and folders that you've accessed and displays them in different places, like in Quick Access. If you want to clear your history of accessed files and folders, Open File Explorer (Windows +E) and follow these steps:

1. Click File. The File menu appears.
2. Click Change Folder and Search Options. The Folder Options window appears.
3. In the third panel from the top, click on the *Clear* button.
4. Click OK.