

5. Explore files and folders

In this chapter

- Understand files, folders, and libraries
- Get to know File Explorer
- Change the File Explorer display options
- Find specific files

You view all the drives, folders, and files that are stored on your computer and on storage drives it is connected to through a network or over the internet, in File Explorer. File Explorer can display the contents of a folder, a library of folders, or a virtual collection of items (such as the Quick Access list).

To simplify the way that you work with files, Windows presents files in File Explorer as though the files are organized in a hierarchical storage system of folders and subfolders (folders within folders). In reality, files are stored on the computer's hard drive and in other locations (such as Microsoft OneDrive) wherever they fit, and the storage structure that File Explorer displays is only a series of pointers to the files. This provides you with easy access to files while still maintaining an organizational system.

You can organize files in folders and create virtual libraries of folders so that you can access files in multiple ways. If you forget where you stored a file, you can use the simple yet powerful search features of Windows 10 to quickly locate files and other information on your computer based on the file name, content, or type.

This chapter guides you through procedures related to getting to know File Explorer, changing the File Explorer display options, and searching for files.

Understand files, folders, and libraries

There are many different types of files, but they all fall into these two basic categories:

- **Files used or created by apps** These include executable files (such as the Microsoft Office app files) and dynamic-link libraries (DLLs) (files used by

apps to provide functionality). Some of these files might be hidden (not shown in a standard folder window view) to protect them from being inadvertently changed or deleted.



TIP By default, you can't display, select, or delete hidden system files or the folder structure they're stored in. You can choose to display and work with other hidden files, folders, and drives by selecting that option in the Folder Options dialog box, which is discussed in [“Change the File Explorer display options”](#) later in this chapter.

- **Files created by you** These include documents, worksheets, graphics, text files, presentations, audio clips, video clips, and other things that you can open, look at, and change by using one or more apps.

The files that are installed with an app and those it creates for its own use are organized the way the app expects to find them, and you shouldn't move or remove them. However, you have complete control of the organization of the files you create (such as documents and worksheets), and knowing how to manage these files is essential if you want to be able to use your computer efficiently.

Folders

As with files, there are also many different types of folders, but they fall generally into two categories: folders created by Windows or apps and folders created by you to organize your files. Creating folders is covered in [“Create and rename folders and files”](#) in [Chapter 6, “Manage folders and files.”](#)

When Windows 10 was installed on your computer, it created system folders, including these:

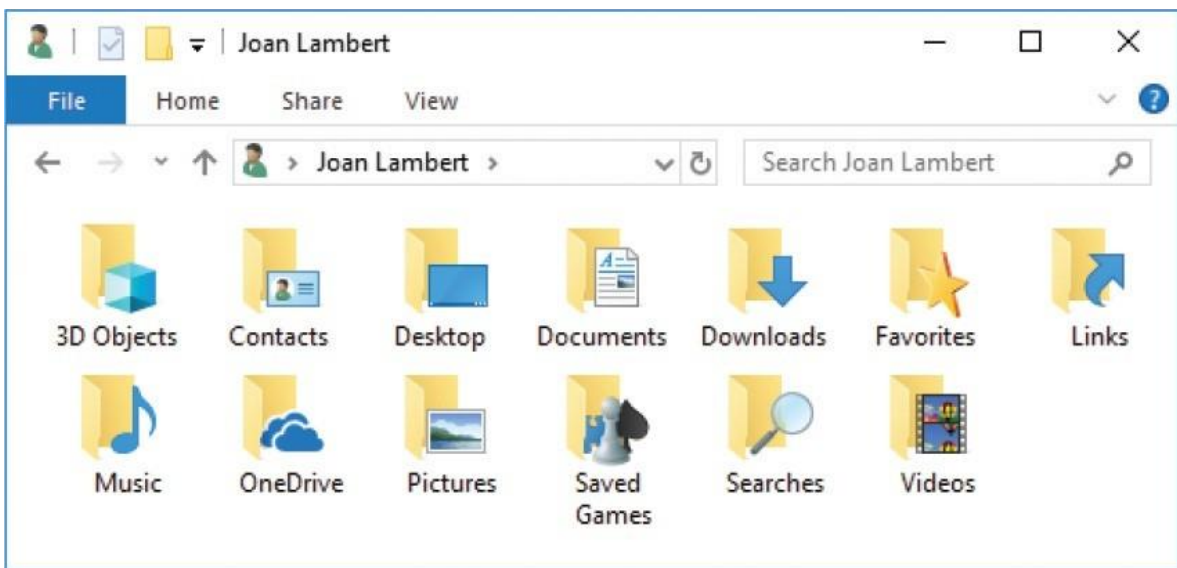
- **Program Files folder** Many apps install the files they need in subfolders of the Program Files folder. You might have the option to choose a different folder, but there's rarely a reason to do so. After you install an app, you shouldn't move, copy, rename, or delete its folders and files; if you do, you

might not be able to run or uninstall the app.



TIP There are a few valid reasons for deleting app system files, such as deleting the Normal.dot file to reset the Microsoft Word normal template, but if you're working at that level you're probably an expert computer user or following reliable instructions. For more information about using Word to its full potential, see *Microsoft Word 2016 Step by Step* (Microsoft Press, 2015) by Joan Lambert.

- **Users folder** For each user account on the computer, Windows also creates a user account folder in the Users folder. The user account folder contains several subfolders, referred to in this book as your *personal folders*. Some of your personal folders are visible in your user account folder, which is located at C:\Users\[account name].



TIP Many of the personal folders can be added as buttons on the left side of the Start menu for quick access; these include

Documents, Downloads, Music, Pictures, and Videos. For more information, see [“Configure the Start menu”](#) in [Chapter 2](#), [“Personalize your working environment.”](#)

There is also a hidden folder named AppData that contains information about your user account settings for Windows and for apps that you use. Windows creates the user account folder and its subfolders the first time a user signs in. As you work on your computer and personalize Windows, Windows saves information and settings specific to your user profile in these folders.

In addition to the account-specific folder for each user account that is active on the computer, the Users folder also contains a Public folder, the contents of which are accessible to anyone who is logged on to the computer. The Public folder contains subfolders. Some of these are visible, such as Documents, Downloads, Music, Pictures, and Videos. The hidden subfolders contain information about settings that are common to all user accounts on the computer. If you want to make files available to anyone who logs on to the computer, you can store them in the Public folders rather than in your personal folders.



TIP If other people have user accounts on your computer, they won't have access to the files in your personal folders unless they have administrative rights or know your password, or if you've shared the folders in a HomeGroup or over the network. To clearly differentiate your personal folders from the public folders, Windows 10 refers to the public folders as Public Documents, Public Downloads, Public Music, Public Pictures, and Public Videos.

- **Windows folder** Most of the critical operating system files are stored in this folder. You can look, but unless you really know what you are doing, don't touch! Most Windows 10 users will never need to access the files in the Windows folder.

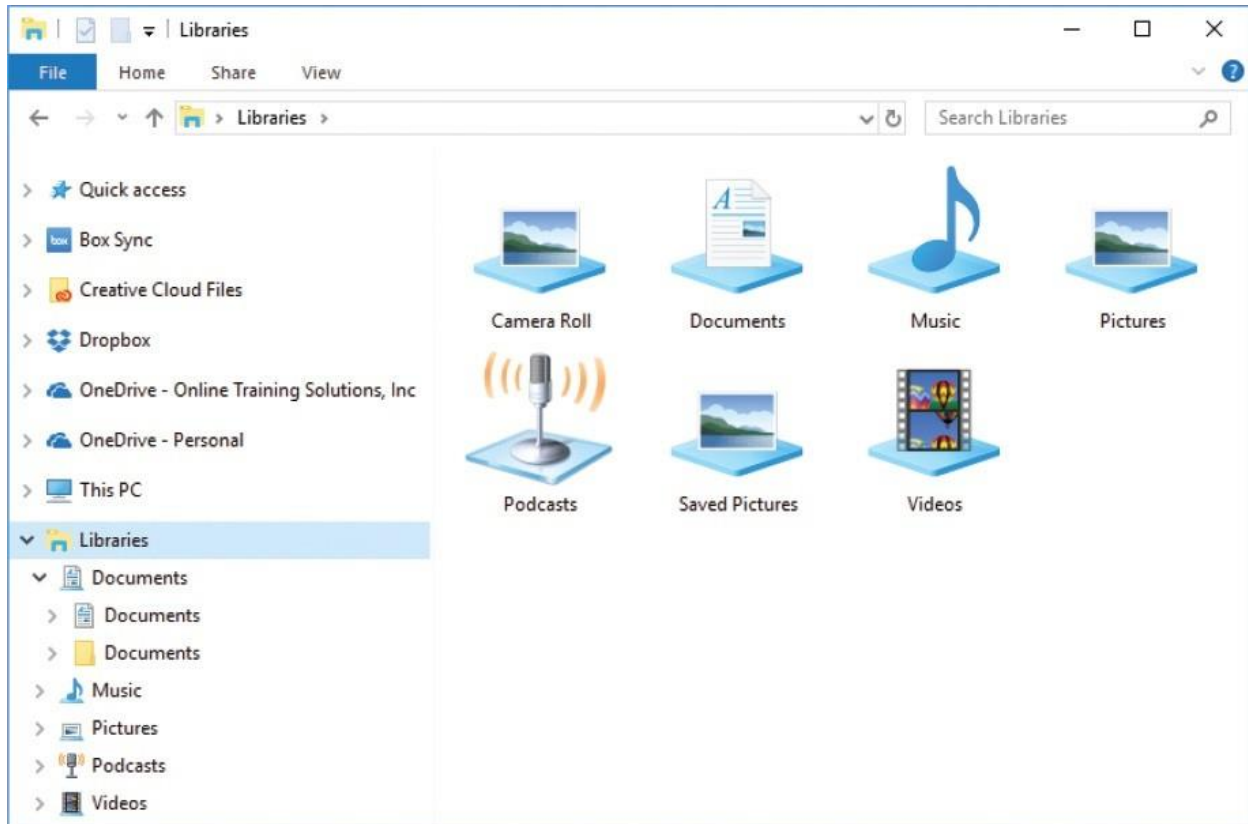
Libraries

You can display a collection of folders that you want easy access to in a *library*. Libraries are virtual folders that aren't physically present on the hard drive but that display the contents of multiple folders as though the files were stored together in one location.

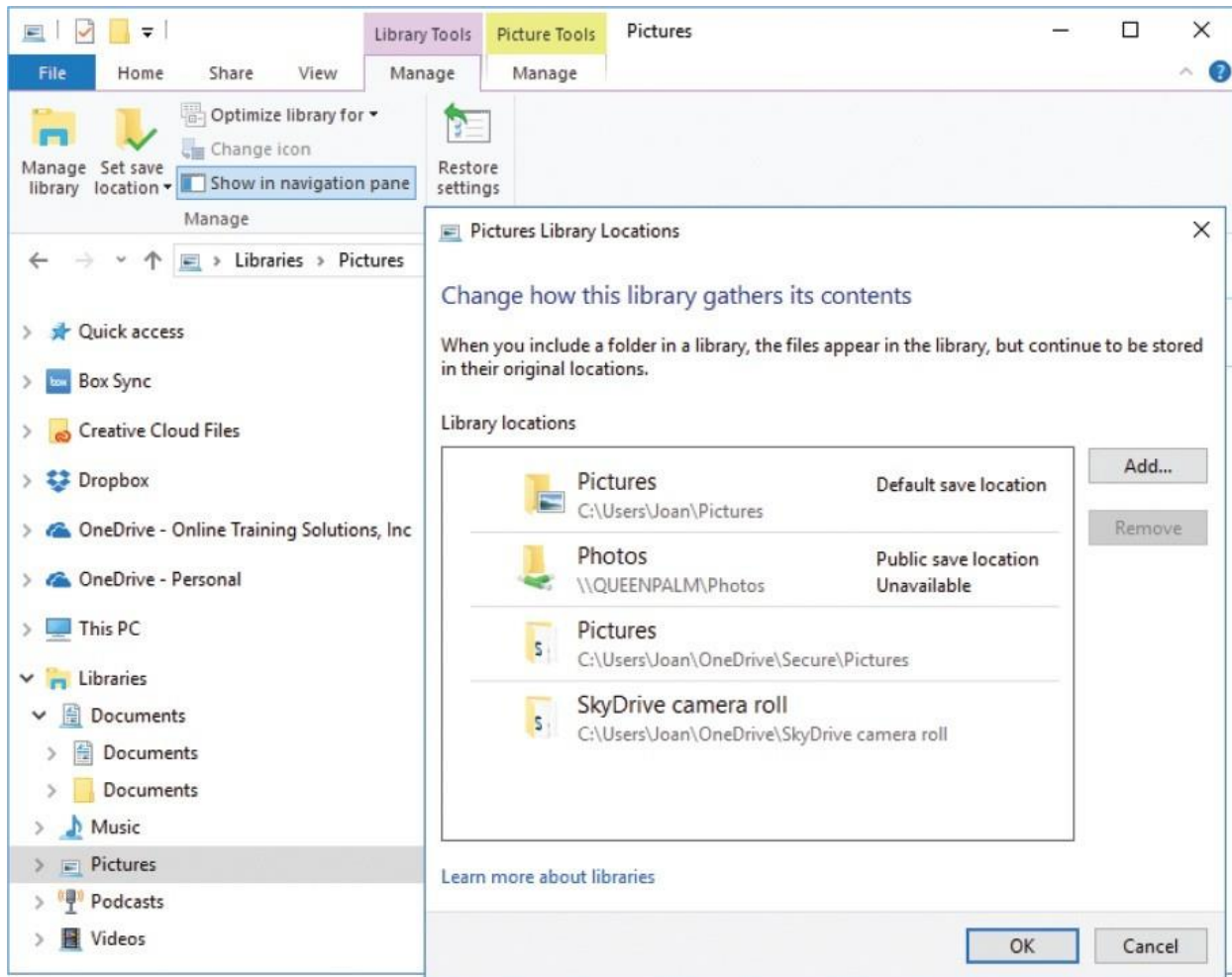
The default Windows 10 installation includes seven standard libraries: Camera Roll, Documents, Music, Pictures, Podcasts, Saved Pictures, and Videos. In previous versions of Windows, the libraries included user account folders and their corresponding Public folders, but in Windows 10 the default starting content is your user account folder. Configuring a OneDrive connection on your computer adds your OneDrive Documents, Music, and Pictures folders to the corresponding libraries.

In Windows 10, libraries are hidden by default in File Explorer. You can turn on the display of libraries if you want to use them.

You manage a library from the Manage tab that appears when you select or open a library in the Libraries window. (Tabs that appear only in specific contexts are called *contextual tabs* or *tool tabs*, because they host tools for working with the selected file or folder.)



You can add folders from any connected location to libraries, and some apps add folders to libraries for you when you make selections.



In addition to the standard libraries, you can create your own libraries, and a folder can belong to more than one library. For example, suppose you are working on a Fall Promotion project for a client, Contoso Pharmaceuticals. If you create one library that displays all the folders of your current projects and another library that displays all the folders associated with Contoso, you can include the Fall Promotion folder in both libraries.

If you don't use libraries, you can choose to not display the Libraries node at the root of the Navigation pane.



TIP If you store files locally on your computer rather than in a cloud storage location such as OneDrive, consider storing your private documents, spreadsheets, databases, and similar files in subfolders of

your Documents folder, and any files you want to share with other users in subfolders of the Public Documents folder. Similarly, store all your private pictures in Pictures and those you want to share in Public Pictures; and so on for music and video files. Then include the Public folders in the libraries. When you follow this process, backing up your work is a simple matter of backing up only the libraries.



SEE ALSO For more information about how to make any default or custom library available to other users or computers on your network, see [“Manage homegroup connections”](#) and [“Share files on your network,”](#) both in Chapter 8, [“Manage network and storage resources.”](#)

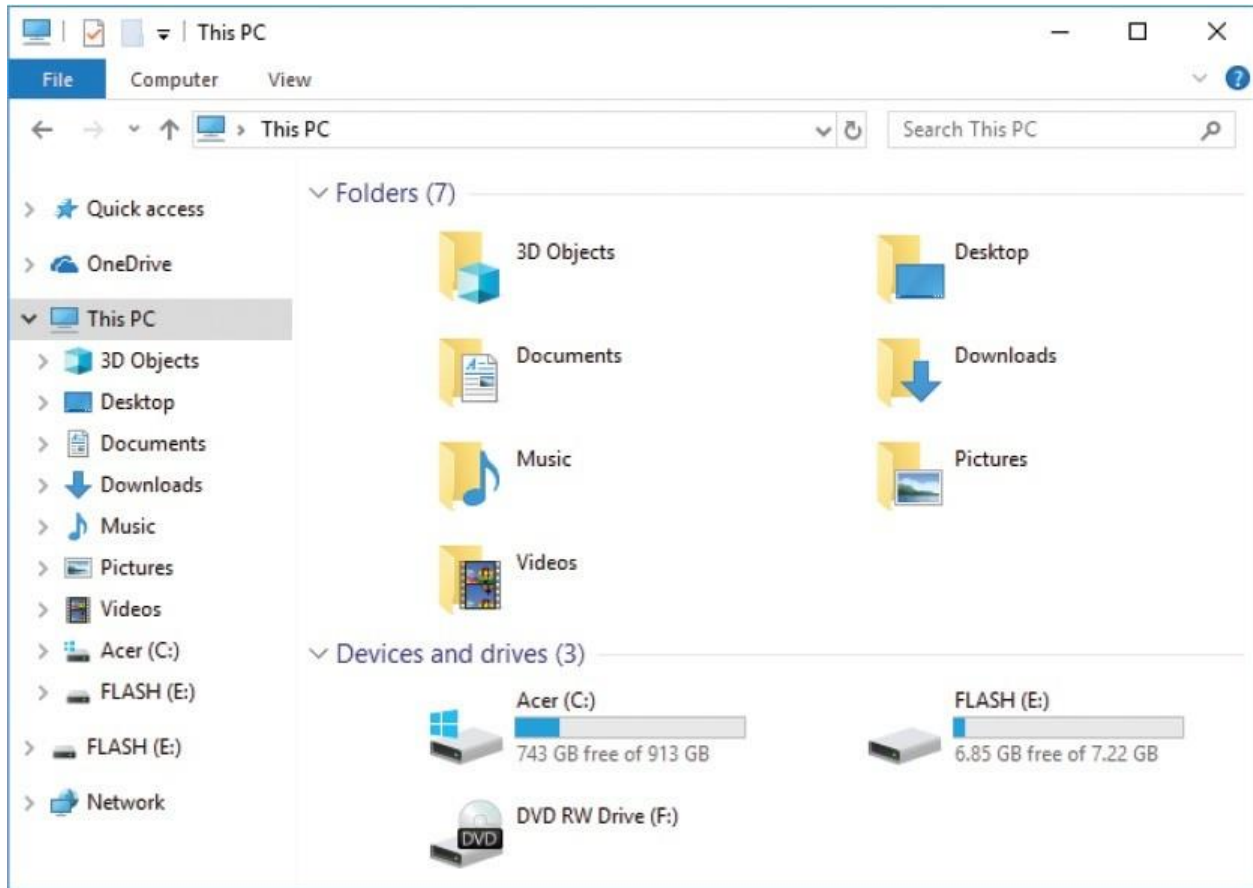
Get to know File Explorer

Early versions of Windows displayed physical hard drives at the root of the file storage structure. As file management and storage practices have evolved—first to include virtual libraries of folders and now to commonly include OneDrive and other cloud storage locations—File Explorer has also evolved. At the root of the storage structure, File Explorer displays a series of conceptual organizational systems, including the following nodes:

- **Quick Access** Contains links to folders and files that you access frequently or pin here for easy access
- **This PC** Contains links to your user account–specific folders, and to the physical storage locations that are installed in or connected to your computer
- **Libraries** Contains links to virtual collections of folders, which by default are composed of the user account–specific folders and their corresponding OneDrive folders
- **Network** Displays a representation of other computers on your local area network
- **Homegroup** Displays a representation of other computers on your local area network that are joined to the network homegroup



SEE ALSO For information about connecting to network computers and homegroup members, see [Chapter 8, “Manage network and storage resources.”](#)



When you connect your Windows 10 computer to OneDrive or OneDrive for Business cloud storage drives, those drives also appear at the root of the storage structure.

Within the This PC node, File Explorer displays the user-specific file storage folders and the storage devices that are connected to your computer. Storage locations included in This PC include hard drives installed in the computer and storage devices (such as CDs, DVDs, USB flash drives, and external hard drives) that are physically connected to the computer. Each storage drive that is physically connected to the computer is identified by a letter, and in some cases

by a description. Your computer's primary hard drive (the one where the operating system is installed) is almost always identified by the letter *C*. (By tradition, the letters *A* and *B* are reserved for floppy disk drives, which are all but obsolete and have been superseded by higher-capacity storage media.) If your computer has additional built-in hard drives, they are assigned the next sequential letters, followed by any removable media drives.



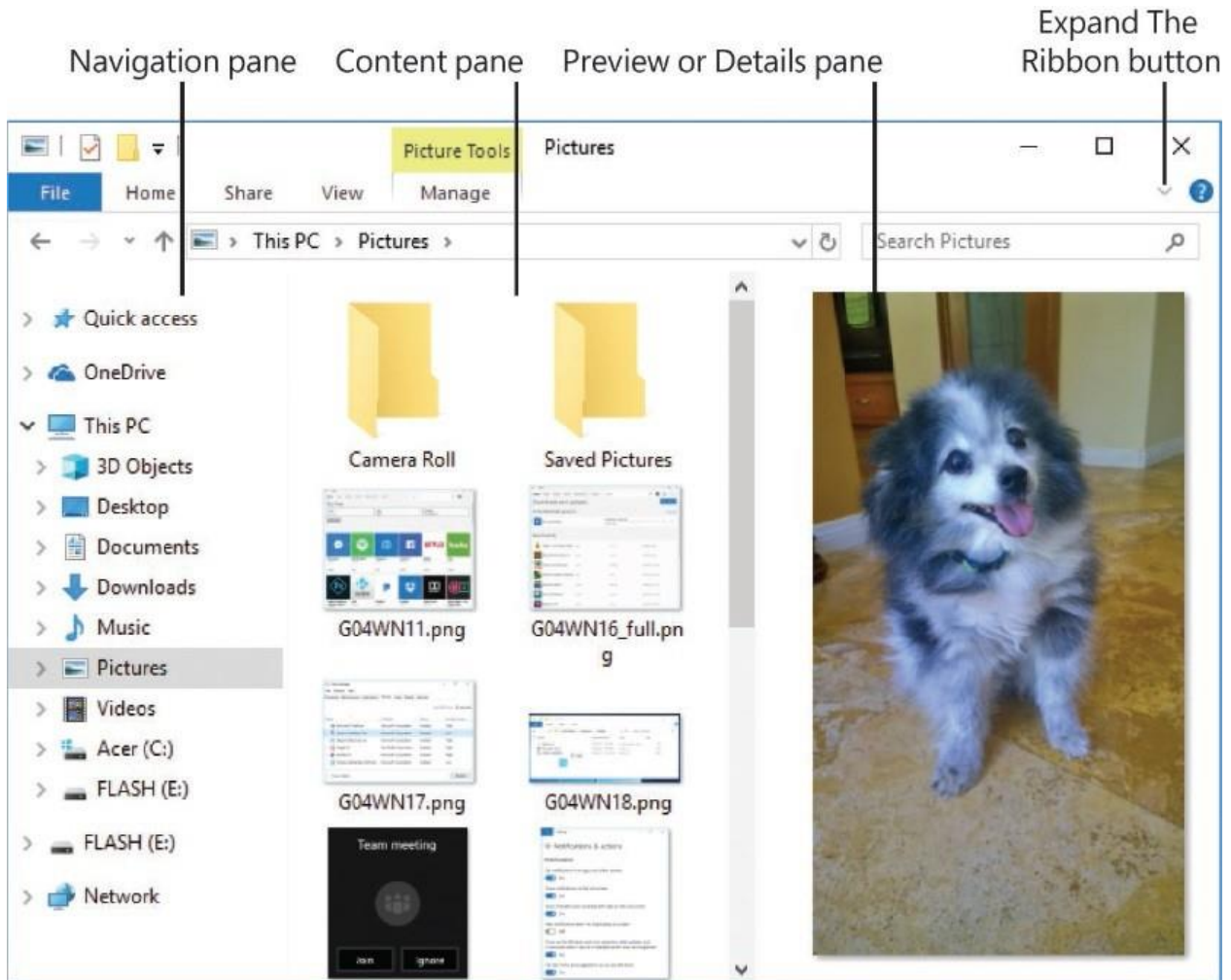
TIP You can't assign a specific drive letter to a local drive in File Explorer, but you can name each drive. For information, see the sidebar "Change the computer name" in [Chapter 8, "Manage network and storage resources."](#)

To explore your computer's storage system, you can use the This PC window as a convenient entry point. The devices represented in This PC are divided into groups. Internal hard drives (those physically installed in your computer) and external hard drives (those connected to your computer by a cable) are shown first, followed by internal removable storage drives (such as CD and DVD drives) and external removable storage devices (such as USB flash drives), and then storage locations you access through a network connection. For each drive or device, the total storage space and available storage space are given, both as actual measurements and visually as a colored progress bar. The length of the progress bar indicates the portion of the total storage space that is in use. The default bar color is aqua; when less than 10 percent of the storage space on a drive or device remains available, the bar color changes to red.

The File Explorer window layout includes the following elements:

- **The ribbon** This command interface has commands organized in groups on tabs. The File menu and ribbon tabs are covered later in this topic.
- **Navigation pane** This vertical pane is open by default on the left side of the window. It displays a hierarchical view of the physical and virtual storage structures available to the computer. You can browse to folders and files on your computer or network by selecting locations in this pane.
- **Content pane** This primary pane displays the contents of the selected folder as a textual or iconic list. You can't close the content pane.

- **Details pane** This pane displays information about the selected folder or file.
- **Preview pane** This pane displays a preview of the file that is selected in the content pane. The Preview pane can display the contents of image files, Microsoft Word documents, Excel workbooks, PowerPoint presentations, PDF files, and other common file types.



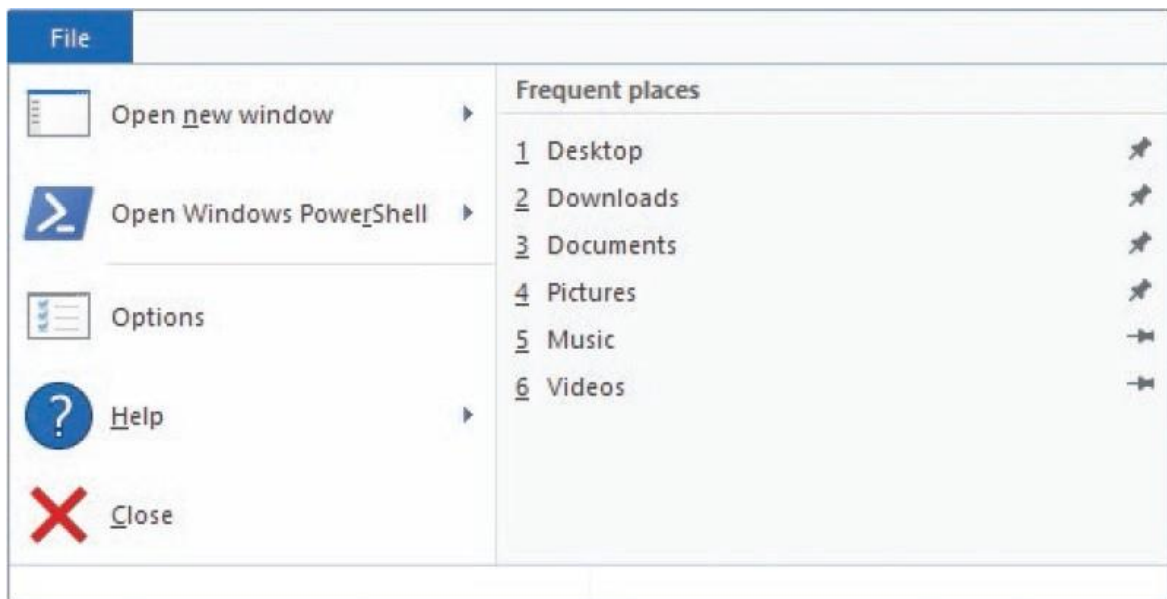
TIP You can display either the Details pane or the Preview pane on the right side of the window, or you can close both. For more information, see [“Change the File Explorer display options”](#) later in this chapter.

Work with the standard ribbon tabs

The ribbon in File Explorer includes the File menu, a set of standard tabs, tabs that are displayed for specific folders, and tabs that appear only when specific types of items are selected. These context-sensitive tabs, also called *tool tabs*, host commands that you need only when you select an item of that type. Tool tabs are covered in the “[Work with the tool tabs](#)” section later in this topic.

The standard ribbon elements are:

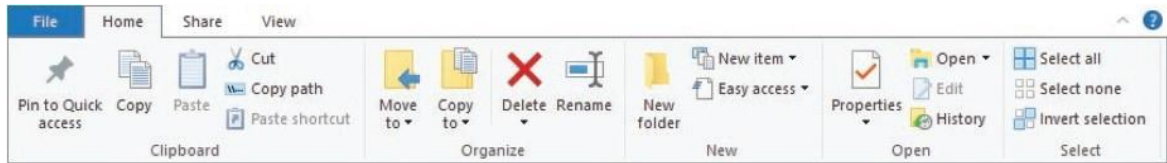
- **File menu** The File menu displays commands in the left pane and a list of recently or frequently displayed folders on the right. You can invoke commands and open specific locations from the File menu.



TIP The most useful of the available commands is Options (labeled Change Folder And Search Options in some Windows versions), which we work with later in this chapter.

You can pin locations to the Frequent Places list by selecting the thumbtack icon. Pinned locations stay at the top of the list and are indicated by angled thumbtacks.

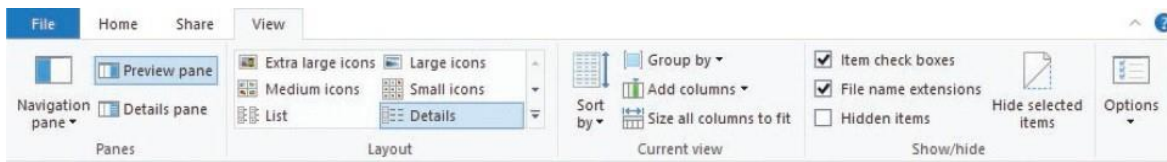
- **Home tab** The Home tab is available when File Explorer is displaying anything other than the This PC, Network, and Homegroup nodes. Commonly used commands are grouped on the Home tab.



- **Share tab** The Share tab provides various ways for you to share a folder or file with other people. These options include sending a copy of a file to other people or sharing its location with other people who are on your network. In addition to sharing options, the Share tab provides commands for printing, burning a file to a disc, and compressing a file.

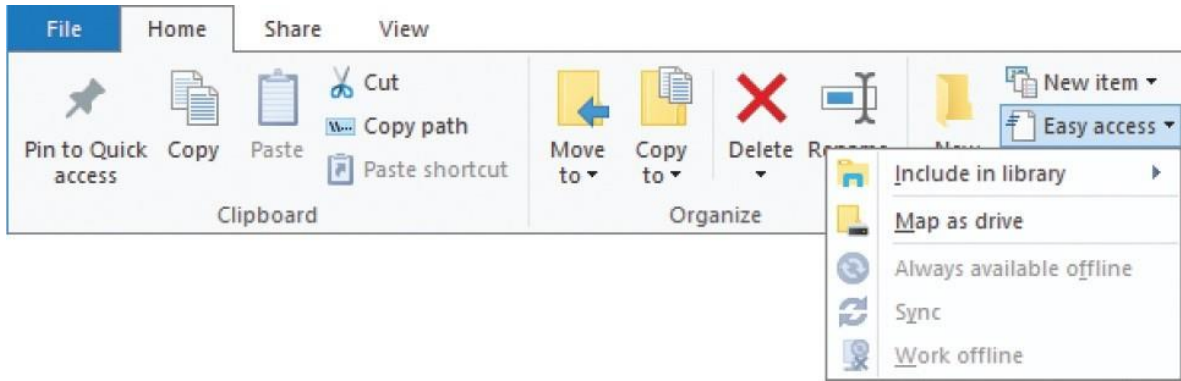


- **View tab** The View tab hosts the commands that you can use to customize the display of items in the File Explorer window.



The Home tab provides access to the most commonly used File Explorer commands. Many of them are covered in depth later in this chapter, but some deserve a quick mention, such as the following:

- **Pin to Quick access** This adds the selected folder to the Quick Access list at the top of the Navigation pane. This list is available from within apps and in File Explorer.
- **Easy access** This command displays a menu that offers various ways to make the current location more easily accessible.



- **Open and Edit** When a folder is selected in the content pane, selecting the Open button expands the folder. The Edit button is disabled. When you select an editable file (such as a Word document) in the content pane, both the Open and Edit buttons will open the file. The difference is that when you select the *arrow* next to Open, you get a list of all the programs known to File Explorer that can open this file type, and an option to choose a default one.
- **History** This displays the current file in the File History viewer.

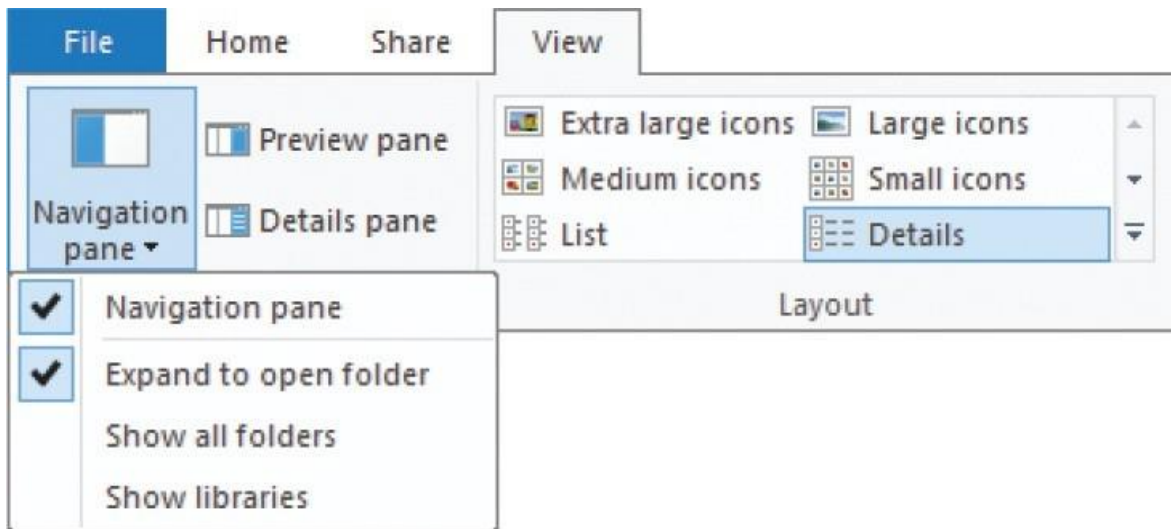


SEE ALSO For information about file version history, see “[Back up data](#)” in [Chapter 15, “Protect your computer and data.”](#)”

The View tab provides access to several commands you can use to tailor File Explorer to suit your preferences. Many of these tabs are discussed in greater detail in “[Change the File Explorer display options](#)” later in this chapter.

The following commands are the most commonly used:

- **Navigation pane** Select this to display a list of Navigation pane features you can turn on or off, including the display of the pane itself.



- **Preview pane and Details pane** You can display either of these panes, but only one at a time. The active pane appears on the right side of File Explorer. When the Preview pane is active, selecting a file displays the file content in the preview pane. If the Details pane is active, selecting a file displays its icon and file information such as its size.
- **Layout commands** These commands determine whether the files are displayed as icons of various sizes or one of two types of list.



TIP You can quickly switch between a detailed list and large icons view by using the icons in the lower-right corner of the File Explorer window.

- **Current view commands** Sort By allows you to select the column to sort by. You can also do this by selecting a column title. Select it again to reverse the sort. Select Group By and Add Columns to see the options for each.
- **Show/hide commands** The three check boxes in Show/Hide turn the display of their respective items on and off. You can select one or more items (files or folders) and select Hide Selected Items to mark them as hidden. Then select or clear the Hidden Items check box to display or hide them in the content pane. To unhide the items, first show all hidden items,

then select the hidden items, and select Hide Selected Items to turn it off.

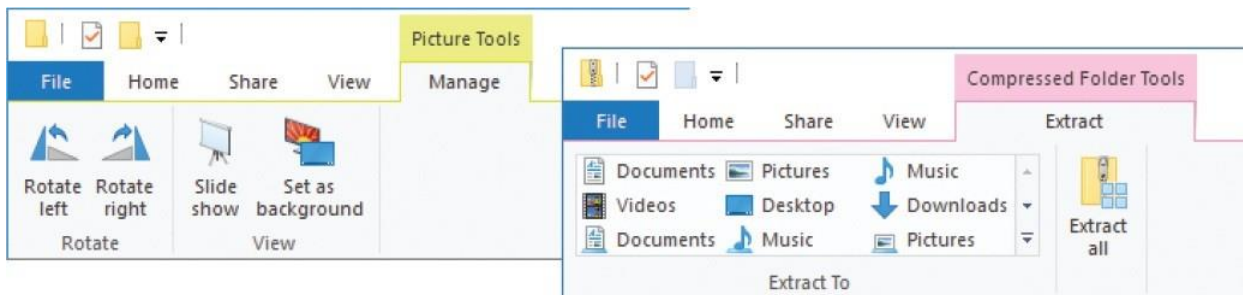


TIP When hidden items are displayed in the content pane, the icons of the hidden items are slightly dimmed to differentiate them from items that aren't hidden. The Hide Selected Items button is active when hidden files are selected.

- **Options** The Options command displays the Folder Options dialog box, which we discuss in [“Change the File Explorer display options,”](#) later in this chapter.

Work with the tool tabs

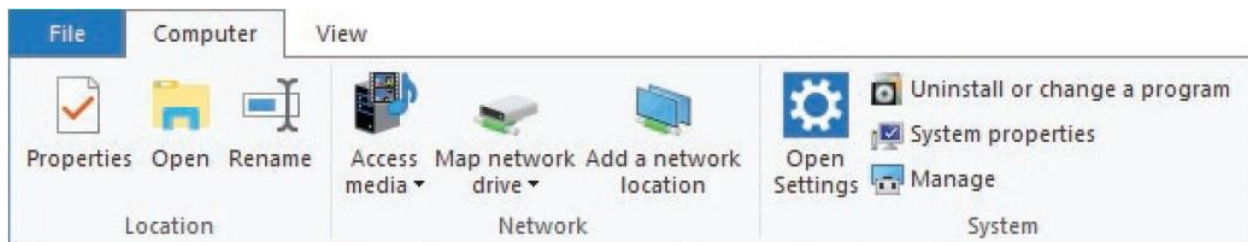
Tool tabs appear on the ribbon when specific storage locations are displayed or specific types of files are selected. Tool tabs are in named groups of one or more tabs that host commands specific to working with the selected file type. (Most groups have only one tab.) A colored tab in the title bar displays the tool tab group name. The tool tab or tabs are below the group tab and to the right of the standard tabs. For example, when you select an image file, the Manage tool tab in the Picture Tools group appears; when you select an audio file, the Play tool tab in the Music Tools group appears; and when you select a compressed folder (a zip file), the Extract tool tab in the Compressed Folder Tools group appears.



TIP The tool tabs appear when you select multiple files of the same type, but not when you select multiple types of files.

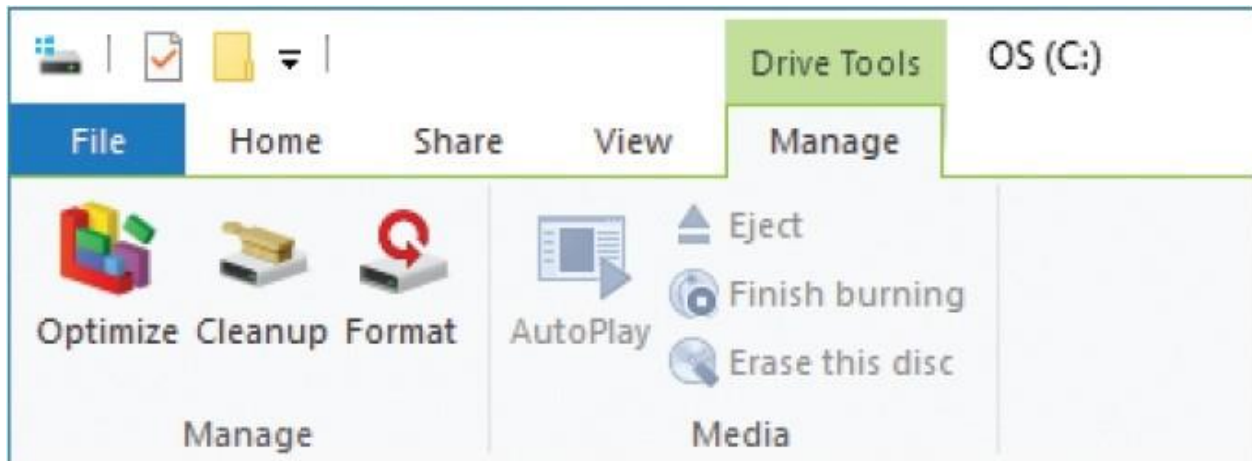
There are theoretically more than 200 tool tabs, each with its own combination of commands. The storage locations that have their own tabs include This PC, Drive, Network, Homegroup, Search, Library, and Recycle Bin. The file types that display tool tabs when you select them include ISO, ZIP, Image, Audio, Video, and Shortcut file types.

For example, when you select This PC in File Explorer, the Home and Share tabs are replaced by the Computer tab. This tab contains links to common functions and tools that you can use to manage your computer. You can point to each command on the Computer tab to display a ScreenTip explaining its purpose.

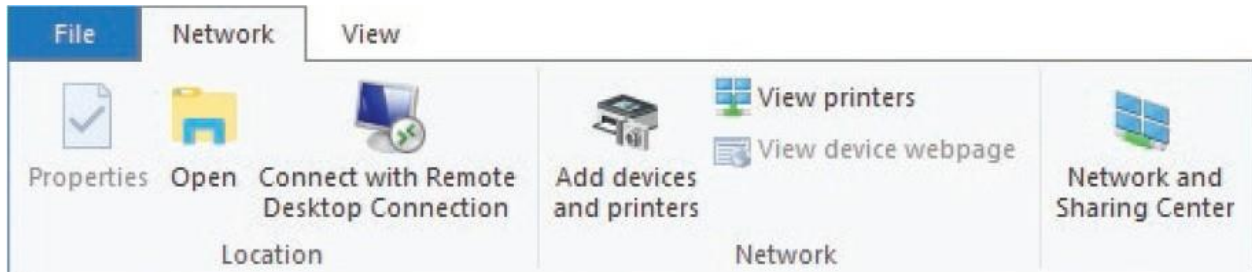


TIP Some of these commands open in a new window and some change what File Explorer displays. This can be confusing. Check for a Back button in the window before selecting Close; otherwise you might close File Explorer.

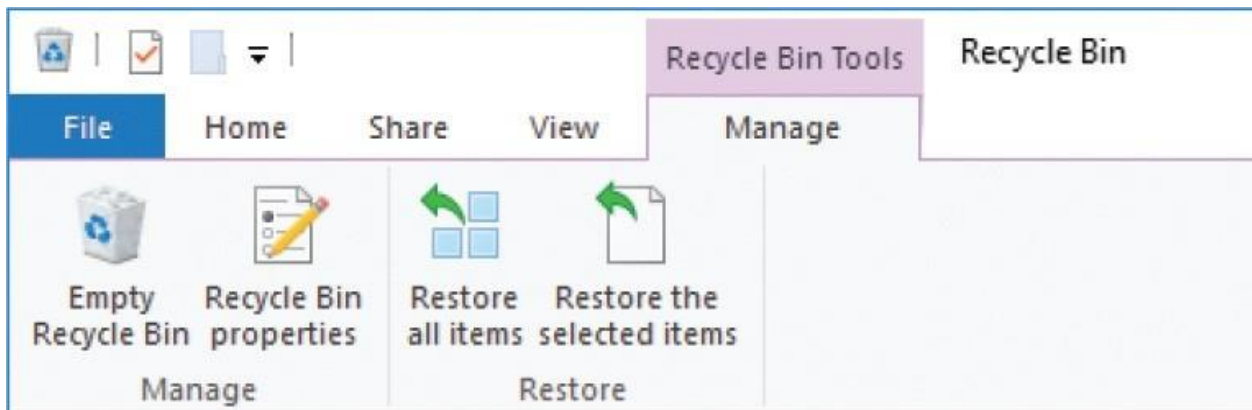
When you select a hard drive in the Navigation pane, the Manage tool tab in the Drive Tools group appears.



If you have a local network, you can select the icon for it in the Navigation pane. Commands appropriate to the network are displayed on the Network tab.



Even the Recycle Bin has its own tool tab. When you double-click the desktop icon for the Recycle Bin, the Manage tab in the Recycle Bin Tools group appears on the ribbon.

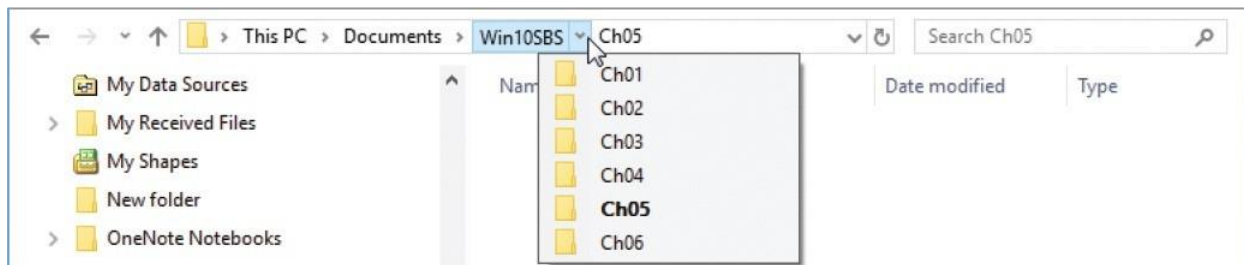


From this tool tab, you can empty the Recycle Bin or restore deleted items.

Work with the Navigation And Search bar

The Navigation And Search bar is displayed just below the ribbon. You can use

the commands on this bar to quickly navigate through the folder structure.



To the immediate right of the folder navigation arrows is the Address bar. The Address bar displays an icon and the friendly path to the current folder. Selecting the folder icon at the left end of the Address bar displays the absolute path from the root drive. Each item in the friendly path has a > after it. If you select a >, the folders within that item are displayed, and you can select one to open it. You can drag the icon to another location, such as the desktop, to create a shortcut to this folder at that location. You can right-click anywhere in the Address bar to display the shortcut menu.

To the right of the Address bar are the Refresh button and the search box. Selecting the Refresh button is the same as pressing the F5 key: it refreshes the display. The search box is one of those special locations that produces a tool tab. Search is discussed in more detail in [“Find specific files,”](#) later in this chapter.

To start File Explorer

- On the **Start** menu, select **File Explorer**.
- On the taskbar, select the **File Explorer** button.
- Select Win+E.
- Right-click the **Start** button and then on the Quick Links menu, select **File Explorer**.

To display the contents of a folder in File Explorer

- In the **Navigation** pane, select the folder name.
- In the content pane, double-click the folder name.

To expand or collapse a folder in the Navigation pane

- Double-click the folder, or select the < to the left of the folder name.

To move through a list of recent locations

- At the left end of the **Navigation and Search** bar, select the **Back** and **Forward** buttons.

To move directly to a location

1. In File Explorer, on the **Navigation and Search** bar, do either of the following:
 - Select the **Recent locations** button (the **v** between the Forward and Up buttons) to display a menu of recent locations.
 - Select the **Previous Locations** button (the **v** at the right end of the Address box) to display a menu of previous locations.
2. Select the location you want to move to.



TIP You can paste or enter a folder path from the File Explorer Address bar directly into the Address bar in a dialog box to display that location.

To move up one level in the current folder path

- In File Explorer, on the **Navigation and Search** bar, select the **Up** button (the upward-pointing arrow to the left of the Address box).

Work with libraries

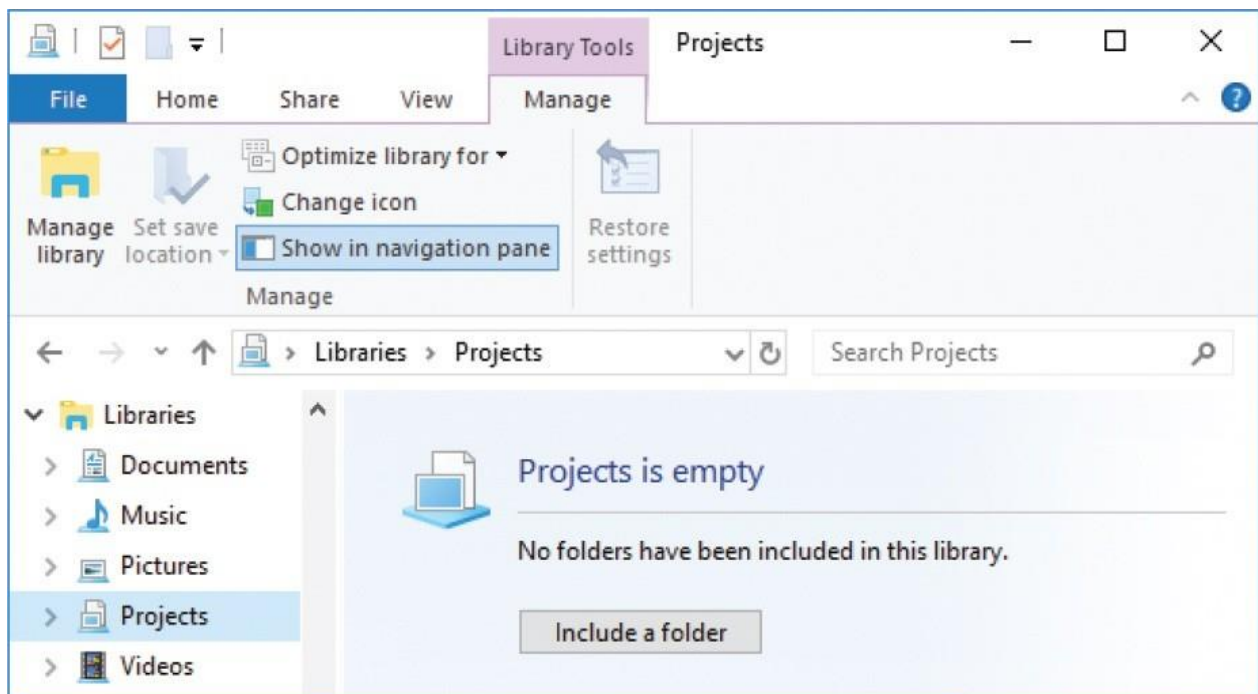
The Libraries node that is optionally displayed in the File Explorer Navigation pane is more conceptual than most other folders. Rather than containing files and folders, it points to folders that might exist on your hard drive, on a USB drive, or even on a hard drive on someone else's computer on a network you can access.



TIP You can control the display of libraries by going to the File Explorer View tab, selecting Navigation Pane, and selecting Show Libraries.

Libraries are shortcuts to folders that you can navigate to individually, but that you want quicker access to. For example, the Documents library might include pointers to your private Documents folder, to the Public Documents folder, and to the Documents folder in your OneDrive folder. When you add a file to one of those folders, and it is indexed, it shows up in the Documents library.

You can add folders from any connected location to an existing or new library. Until the library contains at least one folder, it displays a button labeled *Include a folder*.



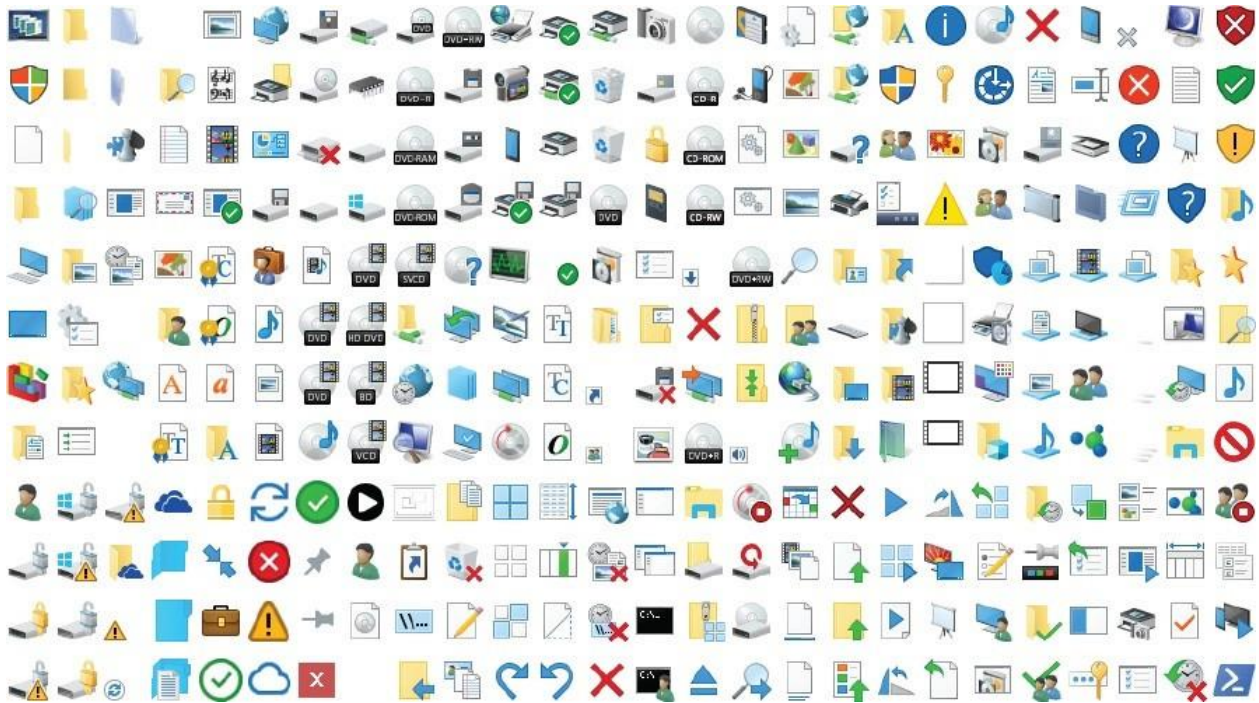
One of the benefits of managing file locations within libraries is that the Libraries node and all the folders it points to are included by default in File History backups.



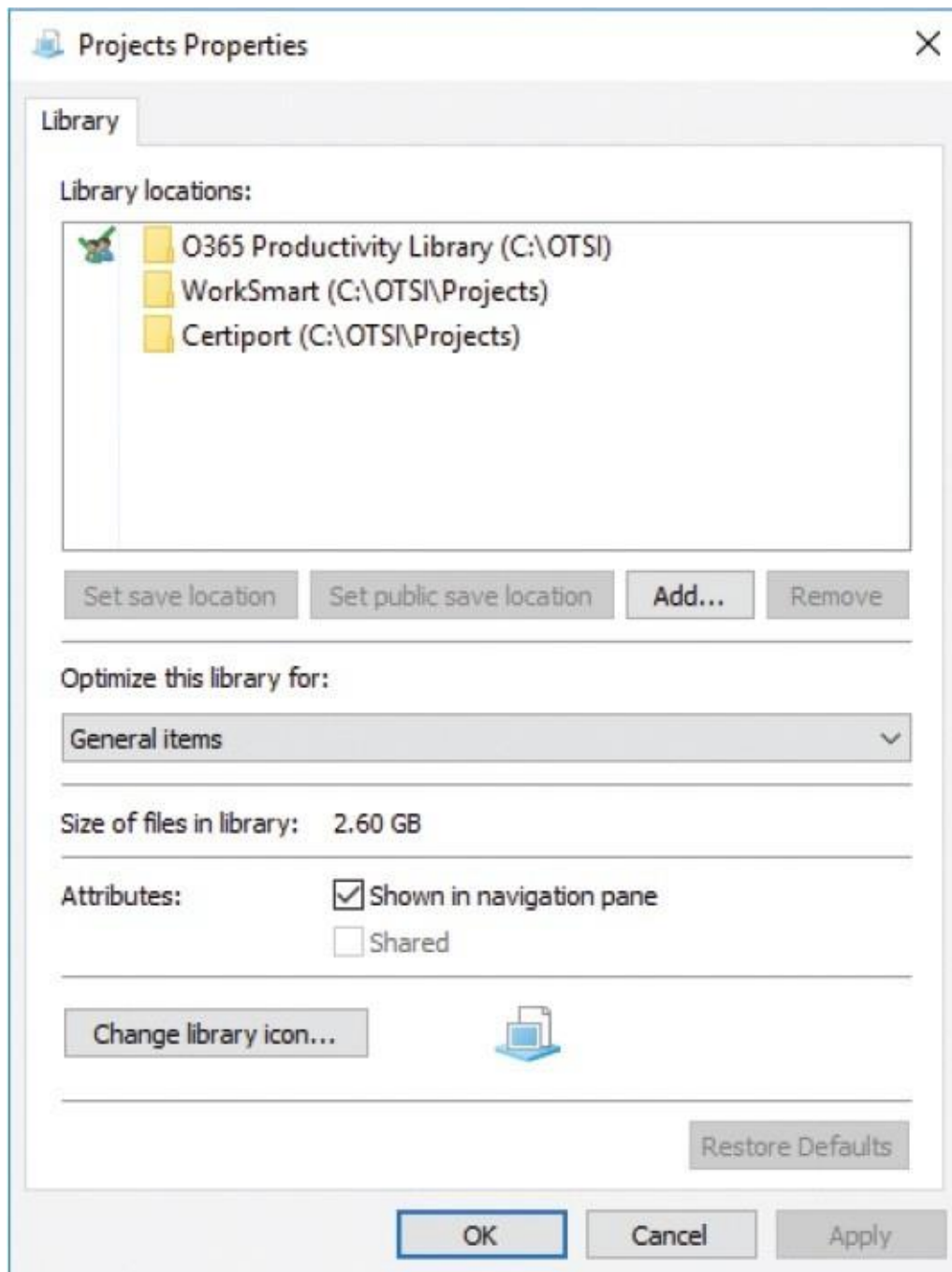
SEE ALSO For information about search indexes, see “[Find specific files](#)” later in this chapter and “[Search your computer and the web](#)” in

Chapter 14, “Work more efficiently.” For information about File History, see “Back up data” in Chapter 15, “Protect your computer and data.”

You can optimize individual libraries for specific file types—either documents, music, pictures, or videos—to set sorting and grouping options specific to that file type. To further personalize the library, you can assign one of over 400 icons to it.



If you no longer use a library, you can delete it without affecting the files and folders it contains, or you can simply hide it so that it doesn't appear in the Navigation pane.



You manage a library and its contents from the Manage tool tab or the library Properties dialog box.

To display or hide the Libraries node in the Navigation pane

- In File Explorer, on the **View** tab, in the **Panes** group, select **Navigation pane**, and then **Show libraries**.

To open a library in File Explorer

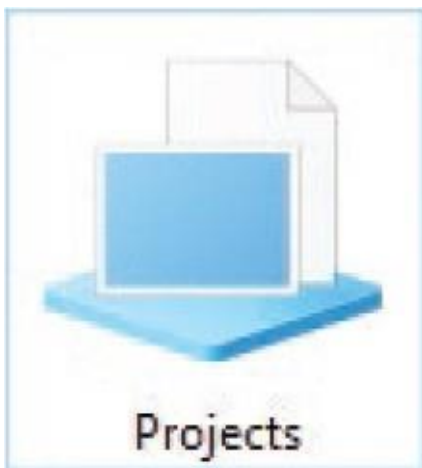
- In the **Navigation** pane, select the **Libraries** node. Then in the content pane, double-click the library you want to open.
- In the **Navigation** pane, select the > to the left of the **Libraries** node, and then select the library you want to open.

To open the Properties dialog box for a library

- In File Explorer, right-click the library, and then select **Properties**.

To create a library

1. In the File Explorer **Navigation** pane, do either of the following:
 - Right-click the **Libraries** node.
 - Select the **Libraries** node and then right-click an empty area of the content pane.
2. Select **New**, and then **Library** to create the library with the name active for editing.
3. Enter a name for the new library, and then press Enter. The icon remains neutral until you choose a content type.

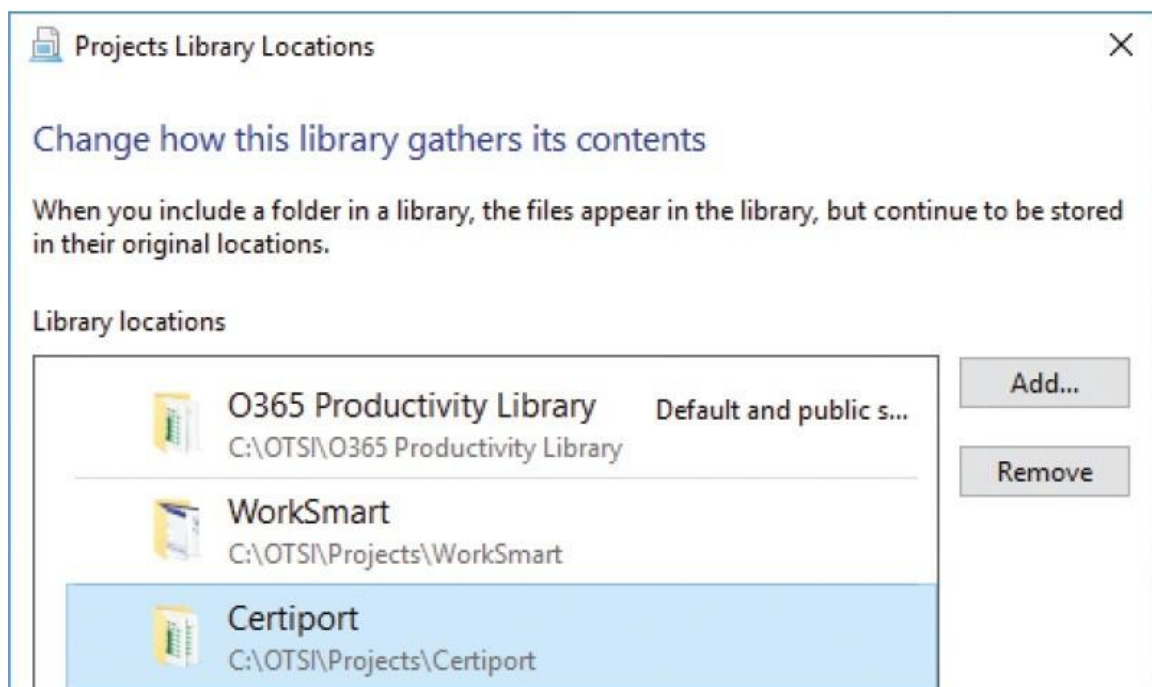


TIP To quickly add the first folder to a new library, open the library in

File Explorer, select the Include A Folder button in the content pane to open the Include A Folder dialog box, browse to and select the library you want to include, and then select Include Folder.

To add a folder to a library

1. Do either of the following:
 - Open the library in File Explorer. On the **Manage** tool tab, in the **Manage** group, select **Manage library** to open the Library Locations dialog box specific to the library.



- Open the **Properties** dialog box for the library.
2. Select **Add** to open the Include Folder In dialog box for the library.
 3. Browse to and select the folder you want to include, and then select **Include folder** to add the folder to the library.
 4. Select **OK** to close the dialog box.

To optimize a library or folder for a file type

- Open the library's **Properties** dialog box. In the **Optimize this library for** list, select **General items, Documents, Music, Pictures, or Videos**. Then

select **Apply** or **OK**.

- In File Explorer, display the **Libraries** node, and then select the library you want to optimize. On the **Manage** tool tab, select **Optimize library for**, and then in the list, select **General items, Documents, Music, Pictures, or Videos**.

To change the folder icon of a custom library

1. Do either of the following to open the Change Icon dialog box:
 - Open the library in File Explorer. Then on the **Manage** tool tab, select **Change icon**.
 - Open the library's **Properties** dialog box and select **Change library icon**.
2. In the **Change Icon** dialog box, select the icon you want to use, and then select **OK**.

To remove a folder from a library

- Open the library's **Properties** dialog box, select the folder, and select **Remove**. Then select **Apply** or **OK**.
- Open the library's **Library Locations** dialog box, select the folder, and then select **Remove**. Then select **OK**.

To hide a library in the Navigation pane

- In the library's **Properties** dialog box, clear the **Shown in navigation pane** check box. Then select **Apply** or **OK**.



TIP You can hide a folder that is in a system-created library so that the folder appears in the content pane but not in the Navigation pane. To hide a library folder from the Navigation pane only, expand the library and right-click the folder in the Navigation pane, and then select **Don't Show In Navigation Pane**. To stop hiding the folder, display it in the content pane, right-click it, and then select **Show In Navigation Pane**.

Change the File Explorer display options

Windows 10 provides many ways to personalize the display of File Explorer to suit the way you work.

Display and hide panes

Each pane of the File Explorer window displays a specific type of information. You can display and hide some panes to show or hide information, or to change the amount of space available in the content pane. For example, if your folders typically contain many files and you are adept at navigating in the Address bar, you might want to turn off the Navigation, Detail, and Preview panes so that the content pane occupies the entire folder window.

To display or hide the File Explorer Navigation pane

1. In File Explorer, on the **View** tab, in the **Panes** group, select **Navigation pane**.
2. Select or clear the **Navigation pane** check box to display or hide the pane.

To display or hide the File Explorer Preview pane

- Select Alt+P.
- On the **View** tab, select **Preview pane**.

To display or hide the File Explorer Details pane

- Select Alt+Shift+P.
- On the **View** tab, select **Details pane**.



TIP You can change the width of a pane by pointing to its border and, when the pointer changes to a double-headed arrow, dragging in the direction you want to increase or decrease its size. This technique is useful if you want to display more information in one pane without closing the other panes.

Display different views of folders and files

You use commands on the View tab to set the layout, sort order, grouping, and columns that are displayed in the content pane. You can choose to display a check box column (the boxes appear only when you point to or select items), file name extensions, and hidden files.



TIP The Layout options that you set apply only to the current folder. The Show/Hide settings apply to all folders. You can apply some settings to all folders of the same type in the Folder Options dialog box that is displayed when you select the Options button (not the arrow) at the right end of the View tab.

The standard information displayed for files in Details view includes the file name, date modified, type, and size. You can add a lot more information to the Details view to make it more useful to you. For example, you can display the dimensions of images, the number of pages in a document, or the number of slides in a PowerPoint presentation. Having these types of details available directly from File Explorer can save you a lot of time and effort. Over 300 properties are available for display in File Explorer. Most apply only to specific file types, but many could be useful to you.

When the Details pane is open, it displays detailed information when you select a single file. As you select more files, the Details pane displays the number of items selected, the total size of the files, and other types of information common to the selected files.

8 items selected



Title:	Add a title
Authors:	Add an author
Size:	1.50 MB
Date modified:	9/28/2015 7:28 PM - 9/29/2017 3:40 PM
Tags:	Add a tag
Subject:	Specify the subject
Comments:	Add comments
Date created:	10/2/2017 2:33 PM
Shared with:	HIBISCUS\HomeUsers

If you add a folder to the selection, the Details pane displays only the number of items selected (the folder is counted as one item, regardless of the number of subfolders and files in it) and a stack of icons.

Different views are best suited to different tasks. For example, when you are looking for a specific graphic among those stored in a folder, you might find it useful to be able to see the graphic thumbnails in the content pane.

The available views include the following:

- **Icons** The four Icon views (Extra Large, Large, Medium, and Small) display an icon and name for each folder or file in the current folder. In all

but Small Icons view, the icons display either the file type or, in the case of graphic files (including PowerPoint presentations), a representation of the file content.

- **List** This view is like Small Icons view in that it shows the names of the files and folders accompanied by a small icon that represents the file type. The only difference is that the items are arranged in columns instead of in rows.
- **Details** This view displays a list of files and folders, each accompanied by a small icon that represents the item type and its properties, arranged in a tabular format, with column headings. The properties shown by default for each file or folder are Name, Date Modified, Type, and Size. You can hide any of these properties, and you can display a variety of other properties that might be pertinent to specific types of files, including Author and Title.
- **Tiles** For folders, this view displays a medium-size icon and the folder name and type. For files, the icon indicates the file type and is accompanied by the file name, type, and file size.
- **Content** For folders, this view displays an icon, the folder name, and the date. For files, the icon indicates the file type and is accompanied by the file name, type, file size, and date.



TIP In the Extra Large Icons, Large Icons, Medium Icons, Tiles, and Content views, folder icons display representations of the folder content depicted as pages and pictures.

To change the File Explorer folder view

- On the **View** tab, in the **Layout** group, select a layout option.



TIP If you point to one of the view layouts, the content pane temporarily displays that layout.

-
- Right-click an empty spot in the content pane, point to **View**, and then select a view from the list.
 - In the lower-right corner of the content pane, select the **Details** or **Large Icons** button.



TIP You can optimize a folder for a specific view on the Customize tab of the folder's Properties dialog box. Doing so makes that the default view for the folder. You can select a different view at any time by using one of the techniques listed here.

To display folder content as icons

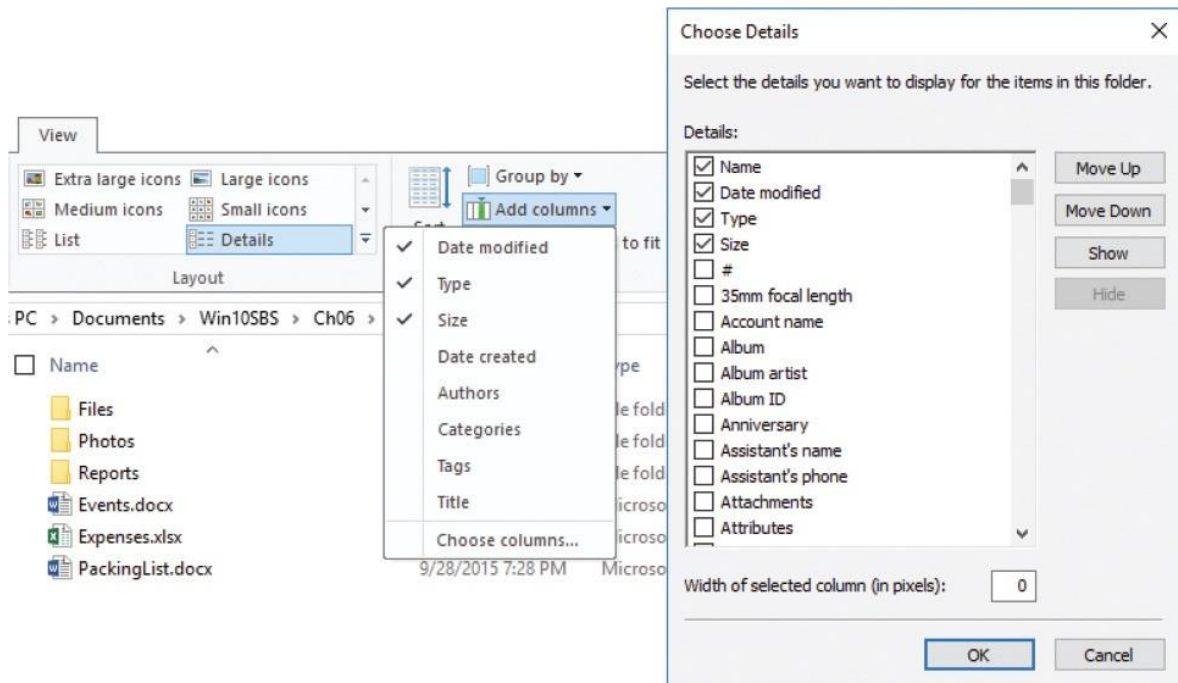
- On the **View** tab, in the **Layout** group, select **Extra Large** icons, **Large** icons, **Medium** icons, or **Small** icons.

To display folder content as a list of items and their properties

- On the **View** tab, in the **Layout** group, select **Details**.

To add, remove, or rearrange properties in Details view

1. In File Explorer, display the contents of the folder as a detailed list.
2. Do either of the following to open the Choose Details dialog box:
 - On the **View** tab, in the **Current view** group, select **Add columns** and then **Choose columns...**
 - Right-click any column header, and then select **More....**



3. In the **Choose Details** dialog box, do any of the following:

- Select a column name to add or remove its check mark, which adds or removes that column from Details view.
- Select a column name, and then select **Show** or **Hide** to show or hide that column in Details view.
- Select a column name, and then select **Move Up** or **Move Down** to move the column higher or lower on the list, which also moves the column to the left or right in Details view.

To resize a column in Details view

- In File Explorer, point to the line between the column heading and the heading to its right, and when the mouse pointer changes to a double-headed arrow, do any of the following:
 - Drag to the left to make the column narrower.
 - Drag to the right to make the column wider.
 - Double-click to make the column resize to fit the widest item in the column.

To resize all columns in Details view to fit the widest item in the column

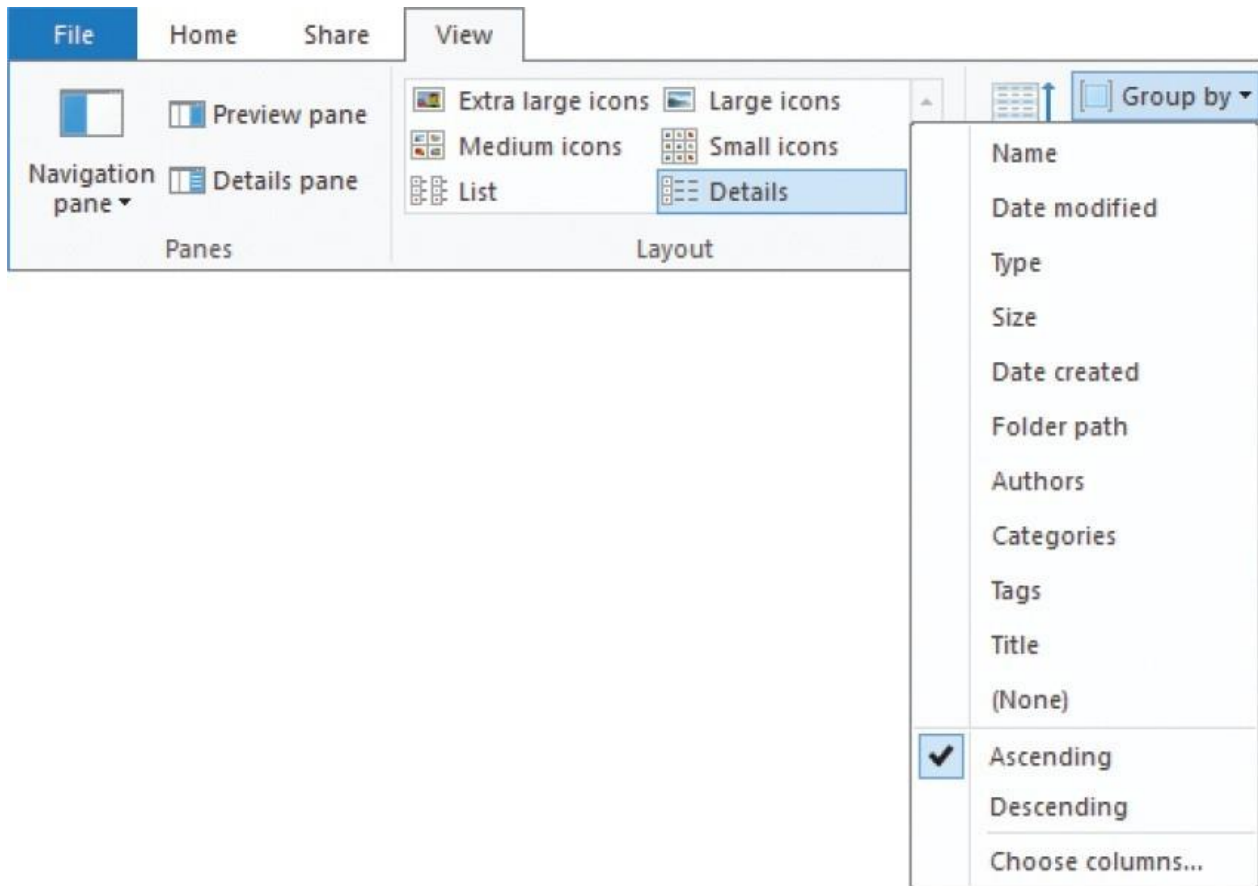
- On the **View** tab, in the **Current view** group, select **Size all columns to fit**.

To display or hide folder features and content

- In File Explorer, on the **View** tab, in the **Show/hide** group, do any of the following:
 - To turn on or off the display of check boxes when you point to or select an item, select or clear the **Item check boxes** check box.
 - To show or hide each file name extension (for example, .docx), select or clear the **File name extensions** check box.
 - To show or hide hidden items, select or clear the **Hidden items** check box.

Group, sort, and filter folder content

By default, the folders and files in the content pane are displayed in alphabetical order by name, with the subfolders at the top and files below them. You can sort or group the items in a folder or library in any view, by any default or displayed property. The default options include Name, Date Modified, Type, Size, Date Created, Authors, Categories, Tags, and Title. The Sort By and Group By menus display the currently available properties; to sort or group by a hidden property, display the property first to add it to the menu, and then return to the menu to sort or group the folder or library contents.



TIP Changing a folder's layout, type, grouping, or other attribute doesn't affect its appearance in a library. Libraries independently control the appearance of folder content.

If you group folders and files, their overall arrangement changes, but within each group the sort order remains the same. You can change the order of the items in the content pane by sorting them by any of the displayed properties.



TIP If you choose to sort grouped content in ascending or descending order, files and folders are sorted within their groups.

Options for sorting and grouping content are available from the View tab, and also from the shortcut menu that appears when you right-click an empty area of the content pane. Although both options are very similar, the ribbon menus display a few more options.

If a folder contains a lot of files, or contains subfolders of files, you can filter the folder content to display only the files that meet specific conditions. Filtered results include individual files, whether they are at the top level of the folder or within subfolders.

To group folder content

1. On the **View** tab, in the **Current view** group, select **Group by**. If a property has a dot to its left, items in the folder are already grouped by that property.
2. If the **Group by** list doesn't include the property you want to group by, select **Choose columns**, select the property in the **Choose Details** dialog box, and then select **OK**.
3. In the **Group by** list, select the file property you want to group items by.

To ungroup folder content

- On the **View** tab, in the **Current view** group, select the **Group by** button, and then select **(None)** from the bottom of the list.

To sort files in any view

1. On the **View** tab, in the **Current view** group, select **Sort by**. If a property has a dot to its left, items in the folder are already sorted by that property.
2. If the **Sort by** list doesn't include the property you want to sort by, select **Choose columns**, select the property in the **Choose Details** dialog box, and then select **OK**.
3. In the **Sort by** list, select the file property you want to sort items by.

To sort folder content in Details view

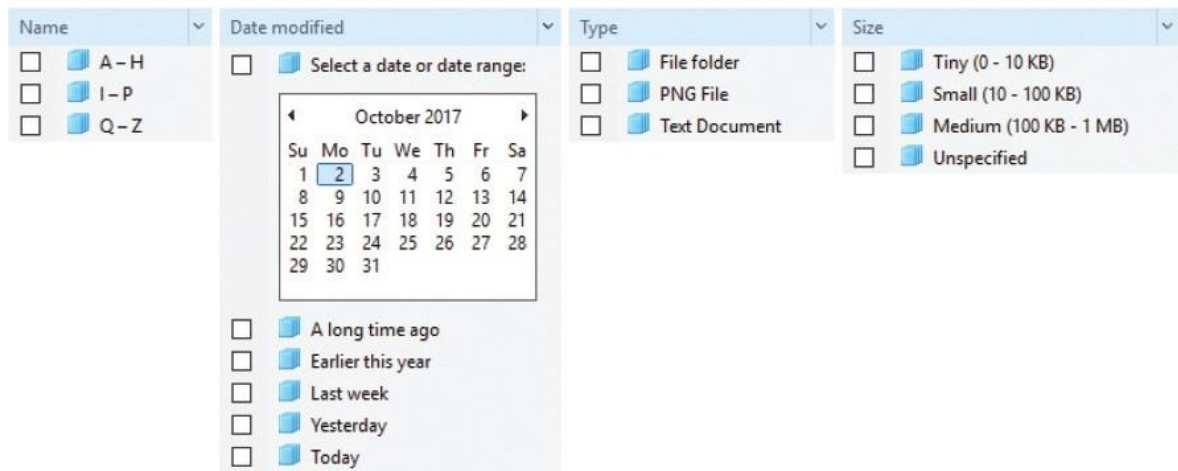
- Select the column name you want to sort by.
 - Selecting the column name once sorts in alphabetical or ascending numerical order.

- Selecting the column name a second time sorts in reverse alphabetical or descending numerical order.

A ^ or v appears in the middle of the column heading to let you know the column is sorted in ascending or descending order.

To filter folder content

1. In File Explorer, display the contents of the folder as a detailed list.
2. Point to a column header until a v appears at its right edge.
3. Select the v to display a list of items you can filter on. (The list content is specific to the properties of the items in the folder.)



4. Select a check box to show only those items in the list that match the filter.

Each filter is applied when you select it, so you can immediately see its impact.



TIP You can repeat steps 3 and 4 to apply filters from other columns to the content pane.

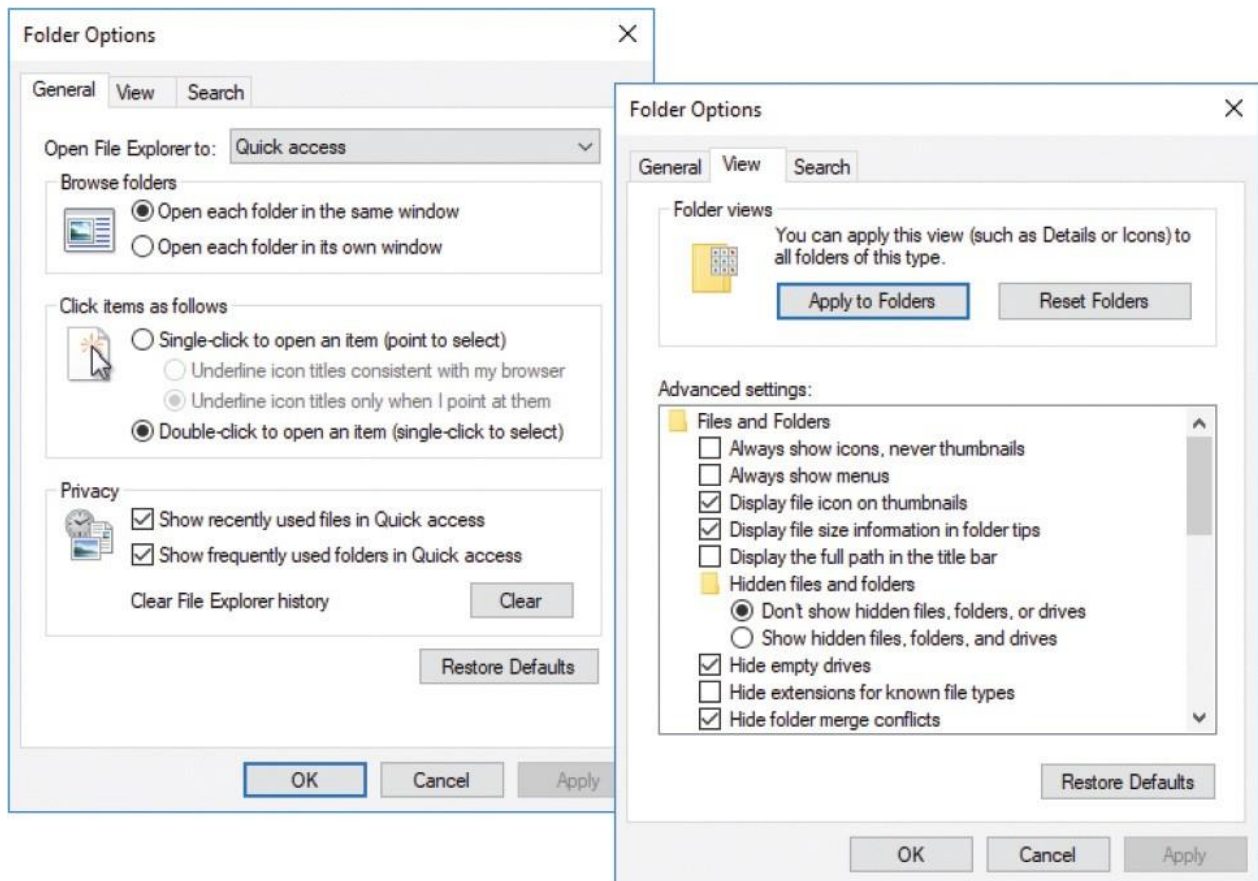
5. Click or tap outside the list to close it.

Change folder options

Most of the common folder options you might want to change are included on the File Explorer ribbon. However, some less common ones are available when you select the Options button (not the arrow) at the right end of the View tab.

In the Folder Options dialog box, you can customize folder windows by changing settings on these two tabs:

- **General** On this tab, you can change how you browse folders, whether you select or double-click to open items, and how the Navigation pane behaves.
- **View** On this tab, you can change the default view for all folders and change specific display/hide settings. For example, you can specify whether to show the status bar in File Explorer windows.



TIP When you first start working in Windows 10, the default view for each folder is determined by its type. If you apply the current folder

view to all folders of a particular type and then change your mind, you can select **Reset Folders** on the **View** tab of the **Folder Options** dialog box to restore the type-based default views. For information about folder types, see [“Work with folder and file properties”](#) in [Chapter 6](#), [“Manage folders and files.”](#)

To display the Folder Options dialog box from File Explorer

- On the **File** menu, select **Options** or **Change folder and search options**.
- On the **View** tab, select the **Options** button, or select the **Options** arrow and then select **Change folder and search options**.

To change the default File Explorer starting folder

1. In the **Folder Options** dialog box, display the **General** tab.
2. Select the **Open File Explorer to** list, and then select either **Quick access** or **This PC**.
3. Select **OK**.

To change how you select to open an item

1. In the **Folder Options** dialog box, on the **General** tab, do either of the following:
 - Select **Single-click to open an item (point to select)**.
 - Select **Double-click to open an item (single-click to select)**.
2. Select **OK**.

To add a location to your Quick Access list

- Select the folder in File Explorer, and then do either of the following:
 - On the **Home** tab, in the **Clipboard** group, select **Pin to Quick access**.
 - In the content pane, right-click the folder, and then select **Pin to Quick access**.

To hide items in the Quick Access list

1. In the **Folder Options** dialog box, on the **General** tab, do either of the following:
 - Clear the **Show recently used files in Quick access** check box.
 - Clear the **Show frequently used folders in Quick access** check box.
2. Select **OK**.



TIP In Windows 10, a new group called Quick Access was added at the top of the Navigation pane. When this is selected, the content pane on the right displays a collection of your frequently used folders and recent files so that you can quickly return to programs, files, or locations you often need to access. These can be folders on your computer, network computers, or external hard drives.

Find specific files

Windows 10 provides various ways to search everything from a folder on your computer to the web, all from the taskbar search box. File Explorer provides an additional search capability that is limited to files only (that is, it doesn't return apps and web searches). The underlying search engine is the same from all these locations, but the focus of the searches and the way the results are returned varies.

Windows Search

Recent advancements in online and computer search technology have made the instant location of information and files so simple that it's easy to forget how tedious tracking down the same items would have been in the past. The search technology that is built in to Windows 10 is excellent.

Using Windows Search, you can find apps, files, messages, and message attachments on your computer. You don't need to know the name or location of the file or item you want to find; simply enter a word or phrase in the taskbar search box to display a list of matching items, organized by type.

How does Windows Search find items so quickly? Behind the scenes, Windows

Search maintains an index of all the keywords in, and associated with, the files stored on your computer—app names, common tasks, and the file names and content (when possible) of documents, audio and video recordings, images, email messages, webpages, and other data files. Windows Search automatically indexes the most common file types (such as documents, text files, and email messages) and doesn't index file types you are less likely to search (such as operating system files). It does not include the system files; such an index would be huge and would slow down the search process.

When you enter a search term, Windows looks for the term in the index instead of searching the actual files on your hard drive.

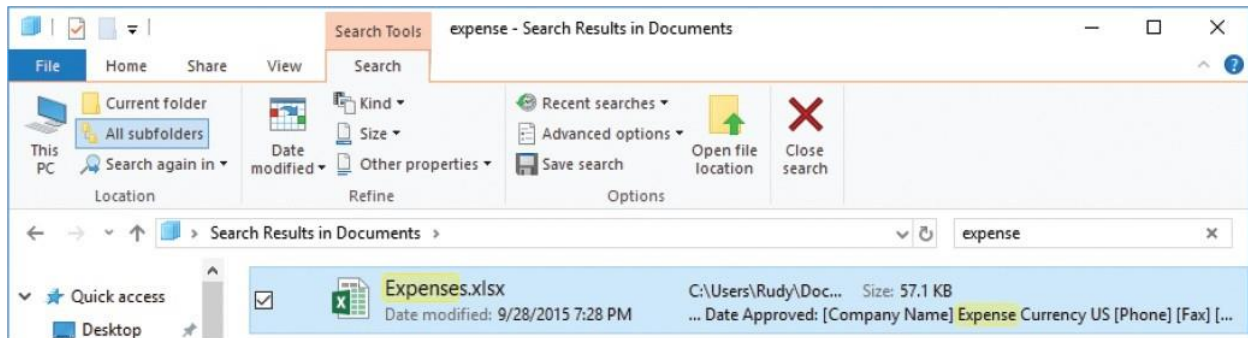


TIP By default, Windows doesn't index encrypted files, because a search by another computer user could reveal the encrypted data. You can add encrypted files to the search index if you first put in place a full-volume data-encryption solution, such as Windows BitLocker Drive Encryption. For information about changing the file storage locations that are indexed, see [“Search your computer and the web”](#) in [Chapter 14, “Work more efficiently.”](#)

File Explorer Search

File Explorer Search differs from Windows Search in that it is limited to searching for files and displays them in its own familiar interface. So when you get a results list, you can use all the usual commands on the View tab to refine the display.

You initiate a File Explorer Search from the Search box at the right end of the Navigation And Search bar. When you activate this box to enter a search term, the Search Tools group tab appears, providing tools you can use to refine your search.



You can save a set of search parameters so that you can display updated results at any time. Saved searches are added to the Favorites group in File Explorer and are also available from your personal Searches folder.

To search for a file in File Explorer

- In the upper-right corner of the File Explorer window, enter a search term in the **Search** box. As you enter the search term, Windows filters the program files, folders, and email messages stored on your computer.

To refine a File Explorer search

- On the **Search** tool tab, in the **Refine** group, select the property by which you want to filter the search results, and then enter the criteria for the filter.

To save a search for later reference

1. On the **Search** tool tab, in the **Options** group, select the **Save search** button. The Save As dialog box displays the content of your personal Searches folder.
2. In the **Save As** dialog box, select **Save** to accept the default name and save the search in the Searches folder.



TIP Close the Search Results window to return to the original folder.

Key points

- File Explorer is the app in which you display and access the files stored on your computer. Files are organized into folders. Some folders are created by Windows, some by apps, and some by you. You can also create virtual libraries of files.
- You can display additional file properties in File Explorer, and group, sort, and filter files by any displayed property.
- You can limit a search to files and to specific file locations by searching from the File Explorer search box.



Practice tasks

Before you can complete these practice tasks, you need to copy the book's practice files to your computer. The practice files for these tasks are located in the **Win10SBS\Ch05** folder. The introduction includes a complete list of practice files.

Understand files, folders, and libraries

There are no practice tasks for this topic.

Get to know File Explorer

Perform the following tasks:

1. Start File Explorer, and navigate to the practice file folder.
2. Open the **Photos** folder, and then open the **Backgrounds** subfolder.
3. Use the tools on the **Navigation and Search** bar to move up to the **Ch05** folder.
4. In the **Navigation** pane, contract all the expanded storage nodes. Then review the locations in the Navigation pane and ensure you're familiar with each.
5. In the **Navigation** pane, double-click **This PC**. Review the file storage locations that are connected to your computer.
6. On the **View** tab, display the **Navigation pane** menu. If the Navigation pane isn't already configured to display libraries, display them now.

7. Expand the **Libraries** node. Create a new library named **Win10SBS** and ensure that it appears in the Navigation pane.
8. Add the **Backgrounds** subfolder of the **Ch05\Photos** folder to the new **Win10SBS** library.
9. Optimize the **Win10SBS** library for the display of photos. Then assign an icon that you like to the library folder.
10. Hide the **Win10SBS** library from the Navigation pane. Then unhide it.

Change the File Explorer display options

Start File Explorer, and then perform the following tasks:

1. Navigate to the practice file folder and expand its contents in the content pane.
2. Experiment with the settings in the **Panes** group on the **View** tab to hide and redisplay the Navigation pane.
3. Display the **Details** pane. Select a file in the content pane and notice the available details. Select a different type of file, and then select multiple files, noting the details available for each.
4. Display the **Preview** pane and repeat the process in step 3. For each file that displays a preview, observe the preview content and notice the controls available in the Preview pane for scrolling or moving through the preview.
5. Resize the **Preview** pane by dragging its border.
6. Experiment with the settings in the **Layout** group on the **View** tab. Display the content of the practice file folder in each of the eight available layouts. Consider the information provided by each layout and when each would be most or least useful.
7. Display the Details view of the practice file folder content.
8. From the **Add columns** list, navigate to the longer list of columns and select **Dimensions** to add that column to the Details view.
9. Rearrange the columns in the content pane so that the **Dimensions** column is immediately to the right of the **Name** column.
10. Resize all columns to fit the widest item in the column.
11. Remove the **Date Created** and **Dimensions** columns from the Details view.

12. Display item check boxes, file name extensions, and hidden items.
13. Group the items by type.
14. Sort the grouped items alphabetically by name. Then reverse the sort order.
15. Filter the items by using the **Size** filter to display only large items (1-16 MB).
16. Remove the filter, restore the default sort order, and remove the file grouping.
17. Add the **Photos** folder to your Quick Access list.

Find specific files

Display the practice file folder in File Explorer, and then perform the following tasks:

1. Search for a file from the File Explorer search box by using the search term **travel**.
2. Refine the search by narrowing the results to items that are small (between 10 and 100 KB).
3. Save the search for later reference.
4. Return from the **Search Results** folder to the original folder.