

File Extensions & Associations

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Windows doesn't show file extensions by default, but you can change a single setting and make Windows always show you each file's full file extension.

This works in File Explorer on Windows 10 and Windows 11 as well as Windows Explorer on Windows 7 and Windows 8.

What is a File Extension?

Each file has a file extension that tells Windows what type of file that is. File extensions are usually three or four digits long, but can be longer. For example, Word documents have the .doc or .docx file extension. If you have a file named Example.docx, Windows knows it's a Word document and will open it with Microsoft Word.

There are many different file extensions. Audio files may have a file extension like .mp3, .aac, .wma, .flac, .ogg, or many other possibilities depending on what type of audio file they are. Some common image file extensions are .jpeg, .png, .gif, and .heic.

What is the File Extension use for?

All files on your computer have an Associated Program that will Open or Display that file. If there is no Associated Program, you will not be able to open or run that file. A good example of this is when someone sends you an Email Attachment that you can't open. This is because you don't have the program on your computer that created the Attachment.

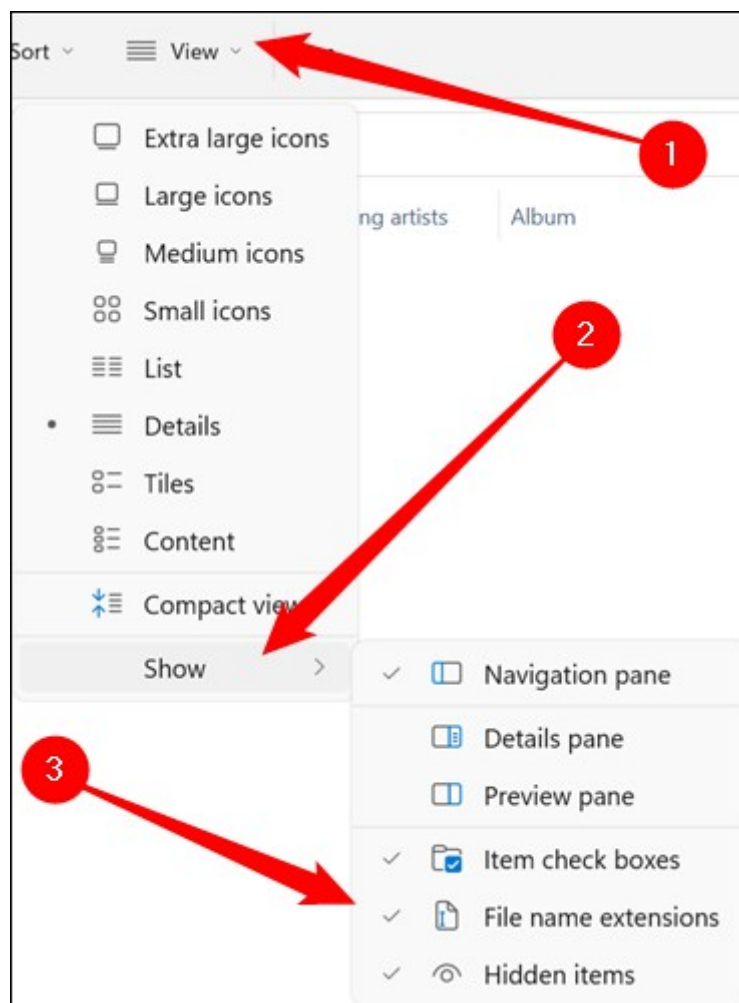
All files on your computer and identified by their file type (Extension).

Caution: YOU CAN NOT CHANGE THE FILE EXTENSION BY RENAMING THE FILE.

How to show File Extensions

Windows 11

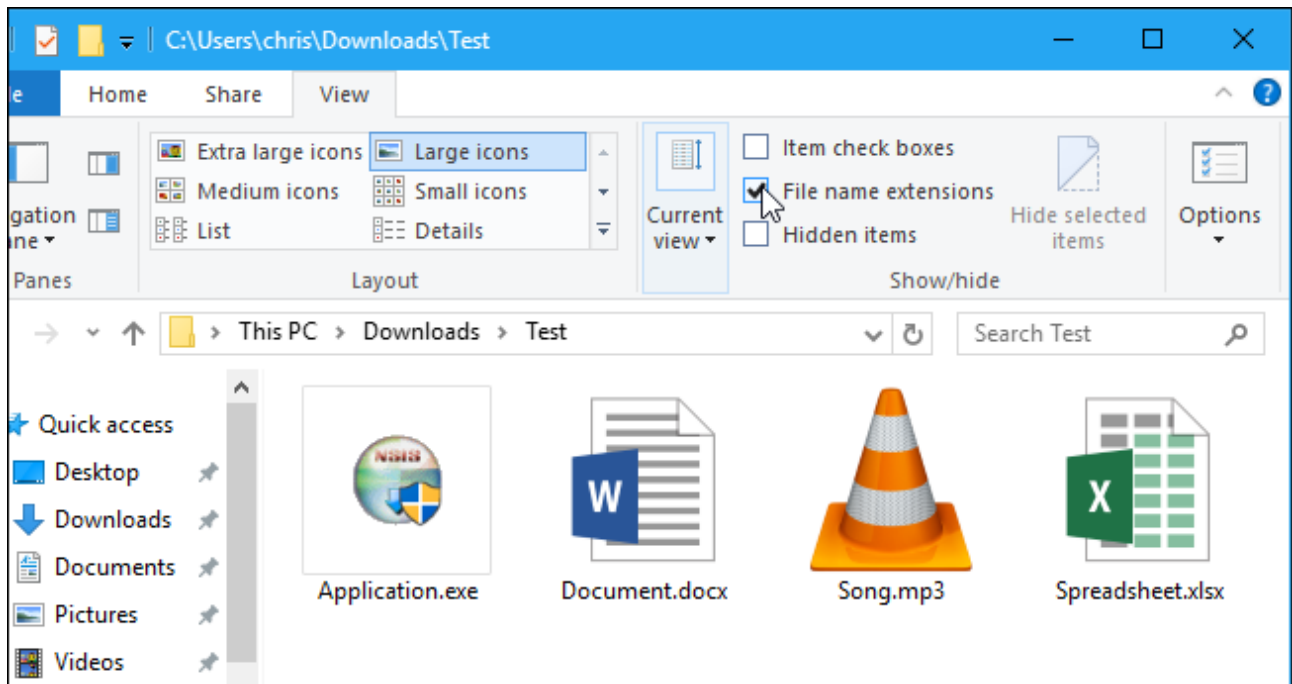
Click the "View" tab along the top of the File Explorer window. Mouse over "Show" at the bottom of the drop-down menu, and then click "File Name Extensions" in the sub-menu.



Windows 10

Click the “View” tab on the ribbon.

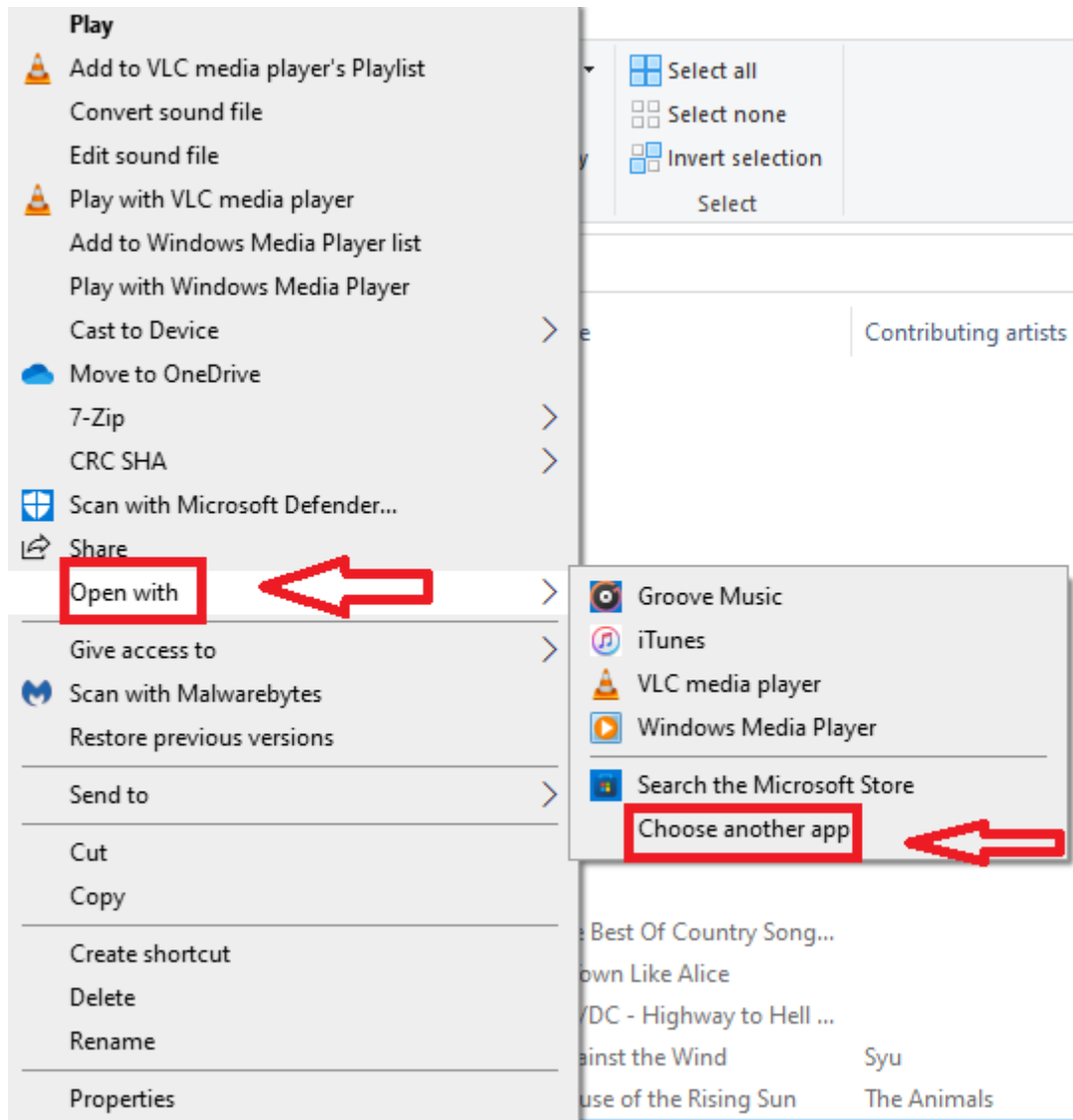
Tic the “File name extensions” box in the Show/hide section to toggle file extensions on or off. File Explorer will remember this setting until you disable it in the future.



How to change the File Association so the correct program opens:

There are two ways to change the File Association:

1. Right Click on the File Name and in the pop up Menu select **Open With**, then in the sub-menu select **Choose another app**



Select the Program then TIC
Always use this app to open.....
and click OK

How do you want to open this file?

Keep using this app



VLC media player

Featured in Windows 10



Groove Music

The best music app for Windows. Enjoy all the music you love on all your devices.

Other options



iTunes



Windows Media Player



Look for an app in the Microsoft Store

Always use this app to open .mp3 files

OK

Second Method to change File Association

Click the Start button (or hit the WIN+X hotkey) and choose Settings.

Select Apps from the list.

Choose Default apps on the left.

Scroll down a little and select **Choose default apps by file type**.

Locate the file extension for which you want to change the default program.








In the Choose default apps by file type window, select the program to the right of the file extension. If there isn't one listed, select Choose a default instead.

When you select Choose Default Application by File type it will take a few seconds to open as it builds the list.

← Settings

🏠 Choose default applications by file type

Associate file types with specific applications

Name	Default app
.123 OpenOffice.org 1.1 Spreadsheet	 LibreOffice
.386 Virtual device driver	 Choose a default
.3fr 3FR File	 Photos
.3g2 3G2 File	 Films & TV
.3ga 3GA Audio File (VLC)	 VLC media player
.3gp 3GP File	 Films & TV
.3gp2 3GP2 File	 Films & TV

This is an example of the first few lines. There are hundreds of files types listed.