File Management

I. Introduction

Decide on a strategy for organizing and managing files and folders. One of the most important things you must learn about computers is how to manage files and folders. Just like in the days of old, before computers, you had to have a system of organizing all your papers. How hard is it to find a tax receipt when it is just tossed in a box or on top of a desk? Most of us have a filling cabinet with folders in alphabetical order where we file our important papers.

OR

Does your filing system look like this?

Your computer has a built-in filling cabinet. In Windows, it is called "File Explorer", on your Mac it is called "Finder".

 They both come with all the basic tools you need for your files. In this guide we will cover only the Windows File Manager.

File Explorer {not to be confused with Internet Explorer} is a File Manager application that is included with all versions of the Microsoft Windows Operating System. It provides a graphical user interface for accessing the file system on your hard drives or external drives/memory cards.

File Explorer displays the hierarchical structure of files, folders and drives on your computer plus any external drives, such as a USB Memory Stick or External Hard Drive. You can use File Explorer to copy pictures from your camera to the Pictures folder without the need to install special software.

Using File Explorer, you can copy, move, rename and search for files and folders. For example, you can open a folder that contains a file you want to copy or move, and then drag the file to another folder or drive.

File Explorer gives you access to ALL the files on your hard drives, including the Operating System files. Having access to all these system files can be dangerous for the inexperienced user.

Do not be tempted to delete files you may think you don't need or don't understand as this could cause the operating system to crash.

There is a HOAX floating around on the Internet that you should delete the System32 folder. ***Don't do this***; it is a Windows System Folder and necessary for the operation of the Operating System.
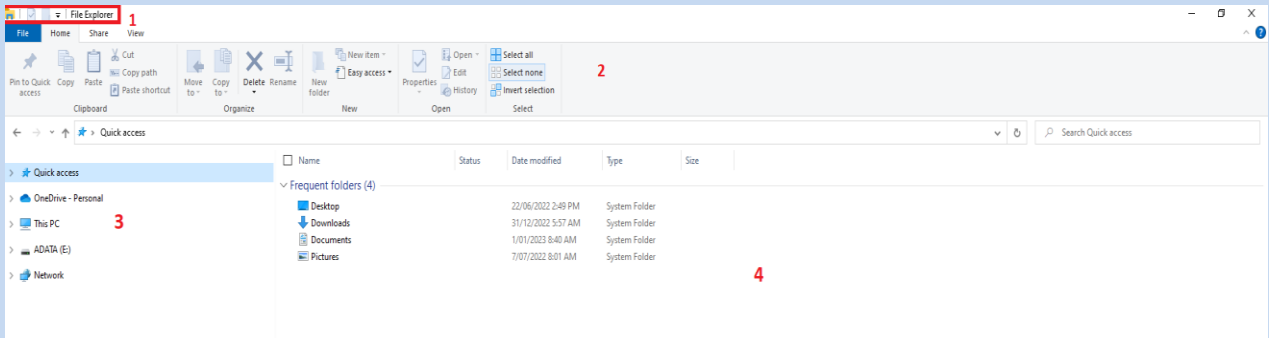
Ⅱ. Opening File Explorer

 To open File Explorer, click on the File Explorer icon located in the taskbar.
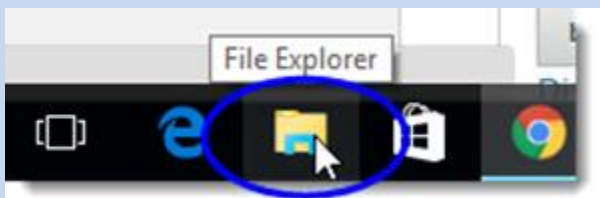
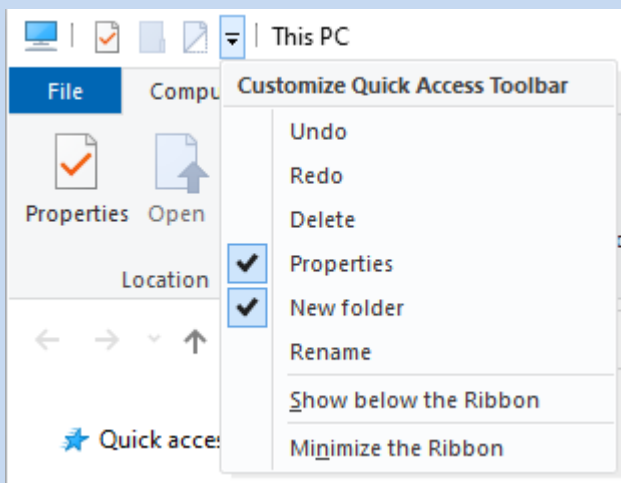Alternatively, on your keyboard, you can open File Explorer by pressing the

Windows Key + E

III. The Parts of File Explorer

1. At the very top in the left hand corner is the "Quick Access Tool Bar".

The Quick Access Toolbar can be customized to include buttons and options that access your favorite tools, letting you swiftly manage File Explorer items.
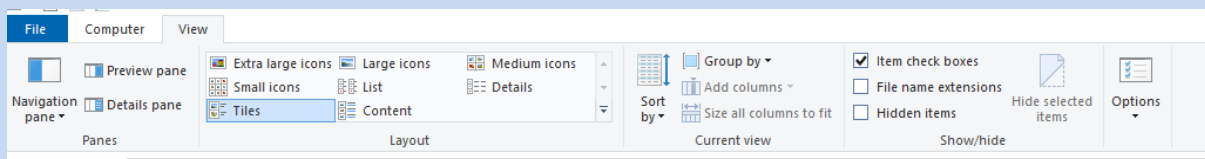

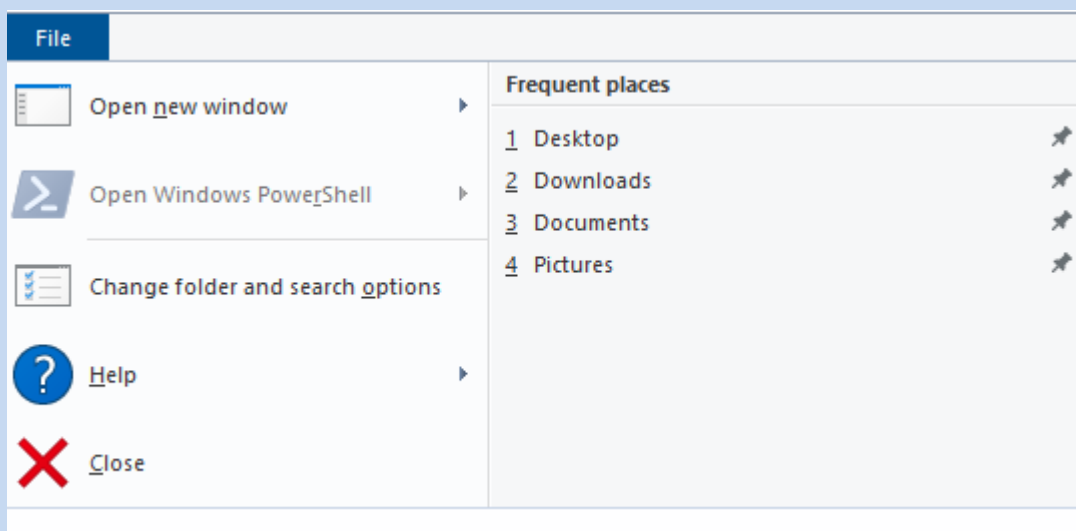The Quick Access Tool Bar can be show above or below the Ribbon Tool Bar as seen in the options above.

2. Next is the "Ribbon Tool Bar". Contains all the tools you need to perform layout and formatting tasks.
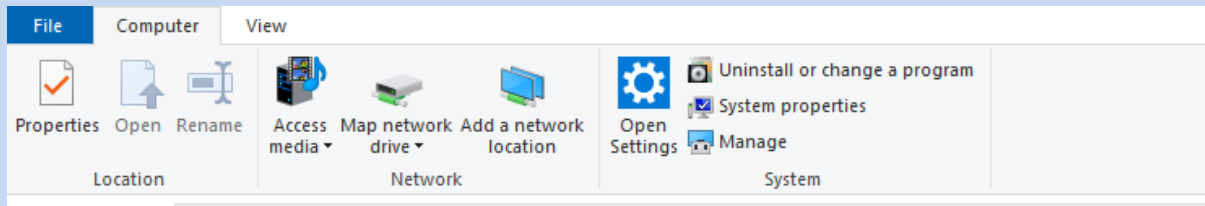
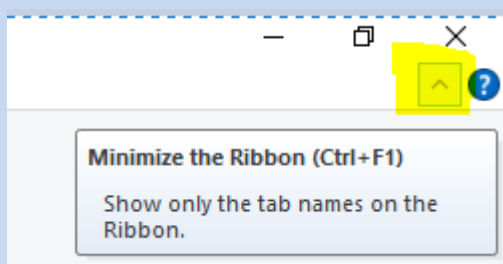Ribbon Tool Bar with the Computer tab selected

Ribbon Tool Bar with the View Tab selected

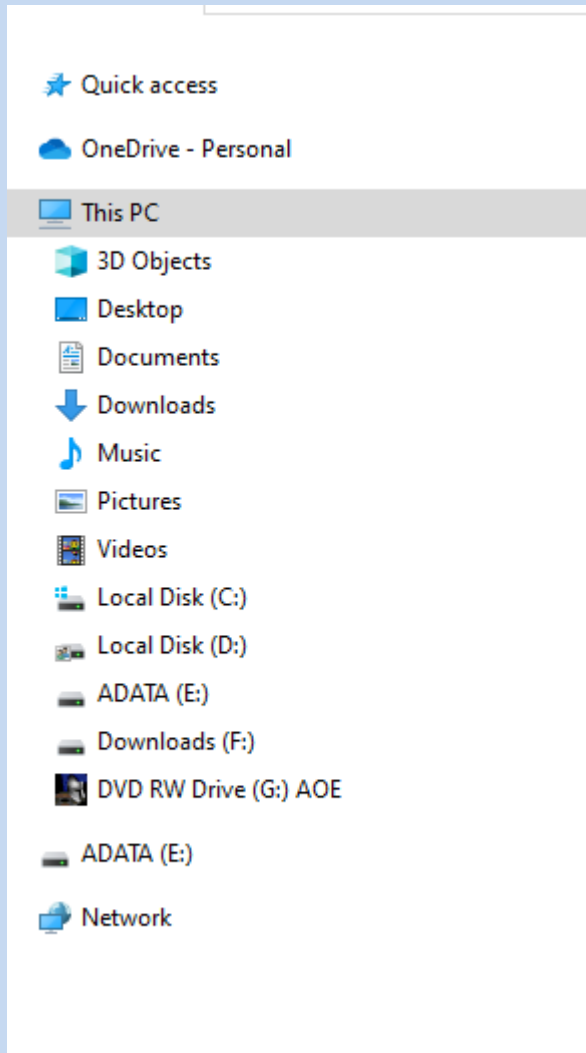Ribbon Tool Bar with the File drop down menu selected.

The Ribbon Tool Bar can be minimized by clicking on the little arrow in the far right corner of File Explorer next to the question mark

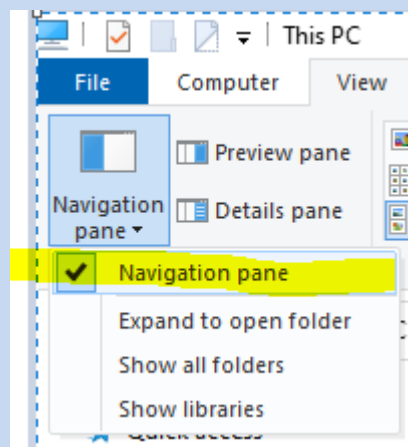OR by using a keyboard shortcut (Ctrl+F1)

3. The Navigation Pane.

From the Navigation pane, you can view your computer's file and folder structure and access files and folders.


If the Navigation Pane is not displayed, select VIEW on the Ribbon Tool Bar and click on the Navigation Pane icon's little down arrow and in the drop down menu TIC Navigation Pane.


The Navigation Pane showing This PC expanded.

4. When you open File Explorer in Windows 10 it can either open up in "Quick Access" or "This PC". There is a setting that lets you pick which view you want. Navigate to File > Change folder and search options.
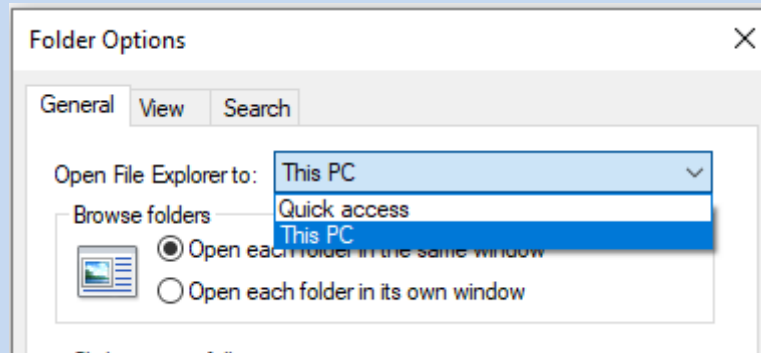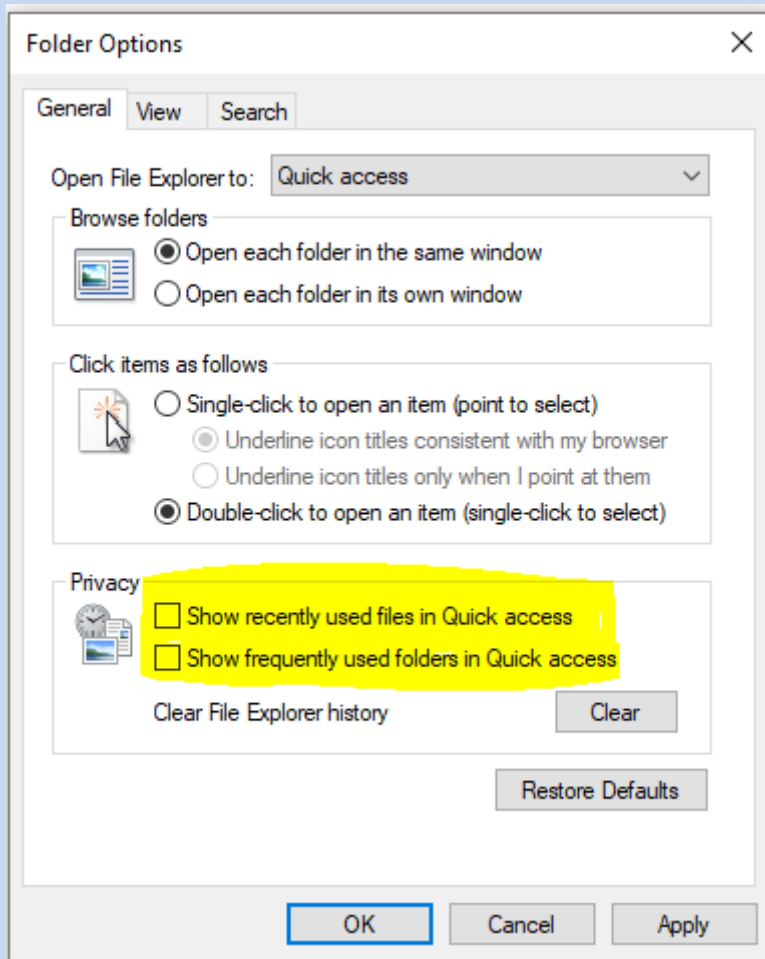

Quick Access will show folders, files and drives you manually PIN to Quick Access and it will also automatically show Recently Used Files and Recently Used Folders.
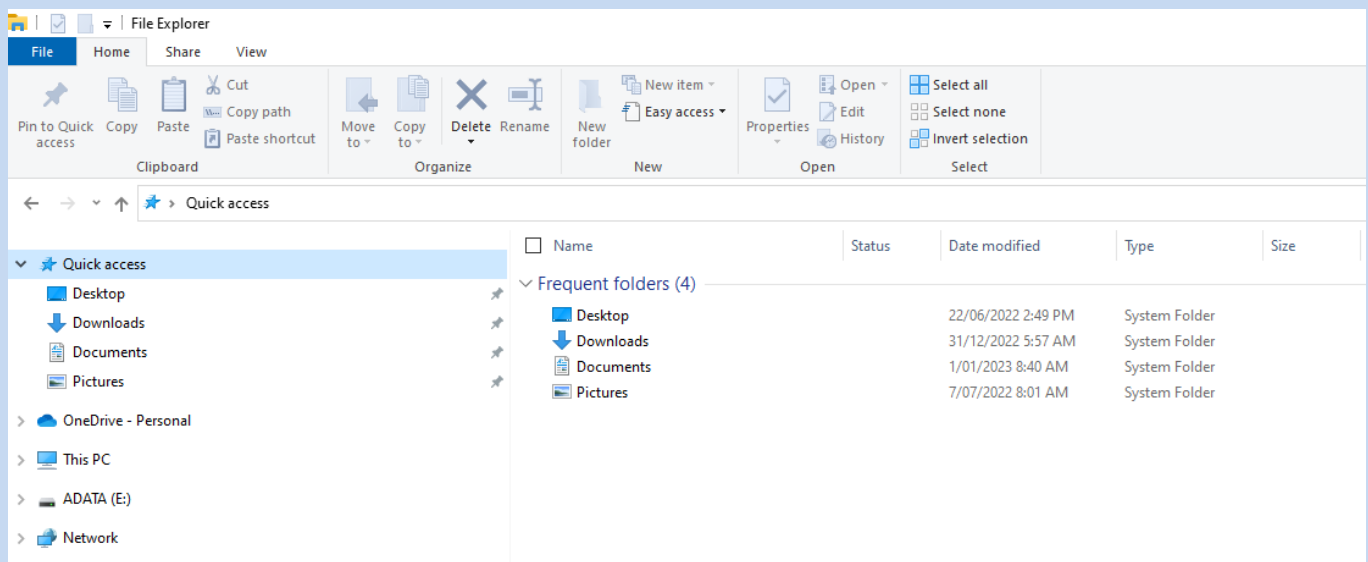
This is an example of File Explorer opened in Quick Access

To prevent Windows from Auto-Adding Files and Folders to Quick Access:

Open File Explorer.

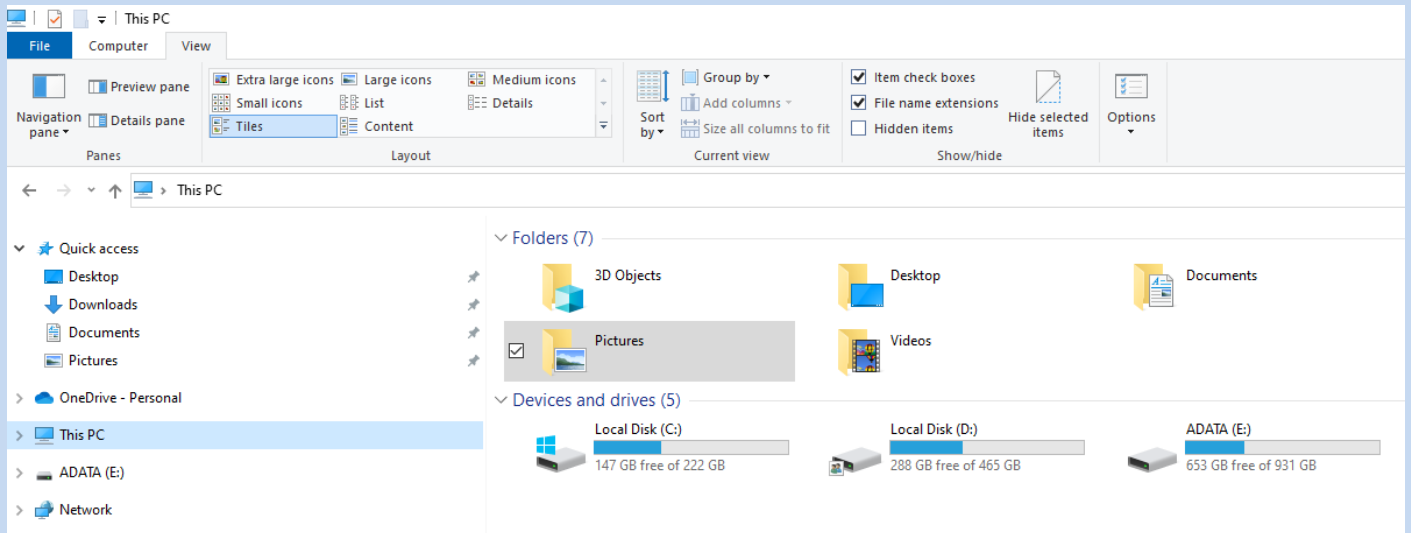Navigate to File > Change folder and search options.

Under the General tab, look for the Privacy section.

Uncheck Show recently used files in Quick access.

Uncheck Show frequently used folders in Quick access.

This is an example of File Explorer opened in
"This PC" with the View set to Tiles.

Notice: This PC also displays Devices and Drives

IV. Windows 11

Microsoft made some changes to File Explorer in Windows 11.

1. They added Tabs and redesigned the ribbon tool bar.

2. They removed folders from This PC. Now it only shows Devices and Drives.

3. They renamed Quick access to Home (on the main screen) and renamed OneDrive.

4. They added three options to open File Explorer: Home, Personal, or This PC.
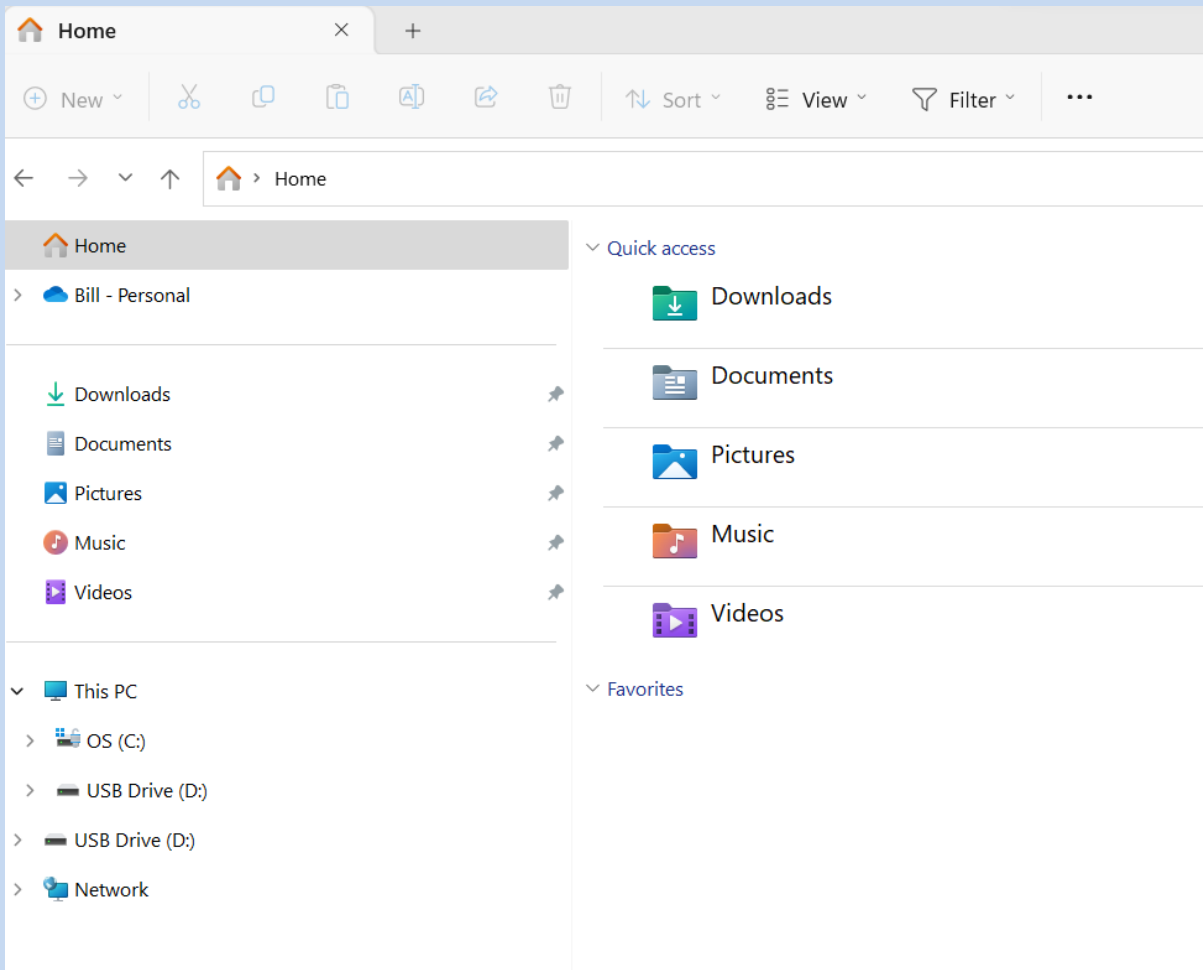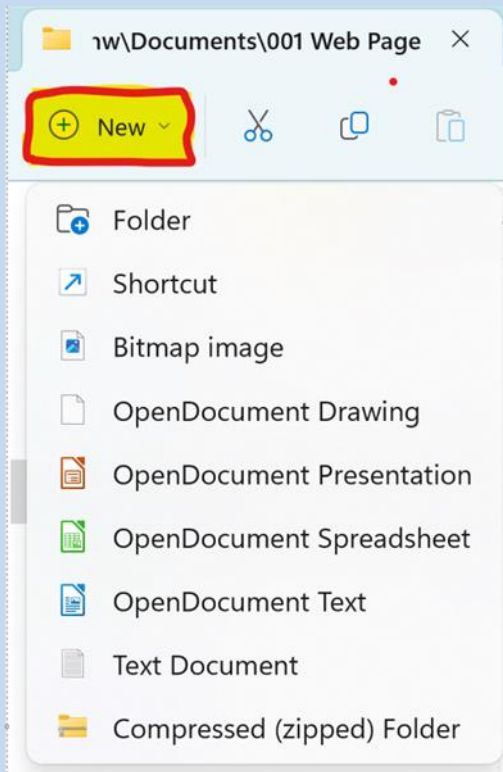
Windows 11 File Explorer opened in HOME (Quick Access)

Notice, that several folders have been "Pinned" as indicated by the Pin Icon.
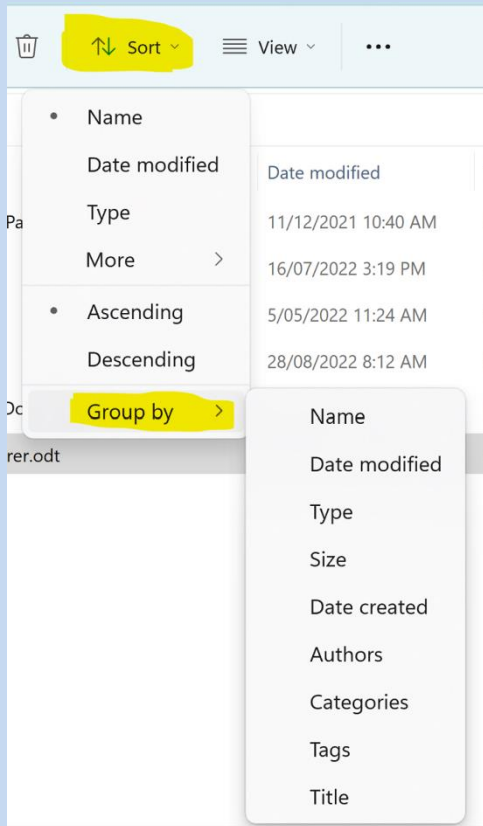
Ribbon Tool Bar

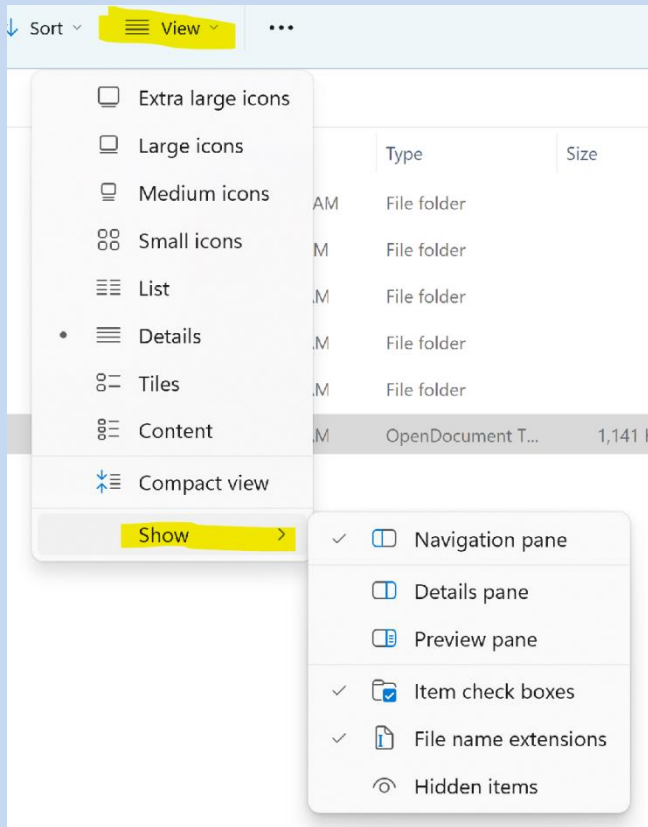Cut   Copy   Paste   Rename Share   Delete
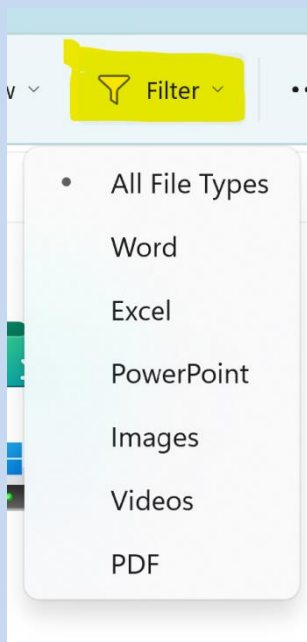
Ribbon Tool Bar "New" Drop Down Menu

SORT Drop Down Menu

With Group By Sub Menu

↓ Sort ⌄   ≡ View ⌄   • • •

Extra large icons

Large icons

Medium icons

Small icons

List

• Details

Tiles

Content

Compact view

Show   ›

Type   Size

AM   File folder

M   File folder

M   File folder

M   File folder

M   File folder

M   OpenDocument T...   1,141 K

VIEW drop down menu with

✓ ▢ Navigation pane

▢ Details pane

▢ Preview pane

✓ ▣ Item check boxes

✓ ▢ File name extensions

◉ Hidden items

SHOW sub menu

∨ ⌄   ▽ Filter ⌄   • •

• All File Types

Word

Excel

PowerPoint

Images
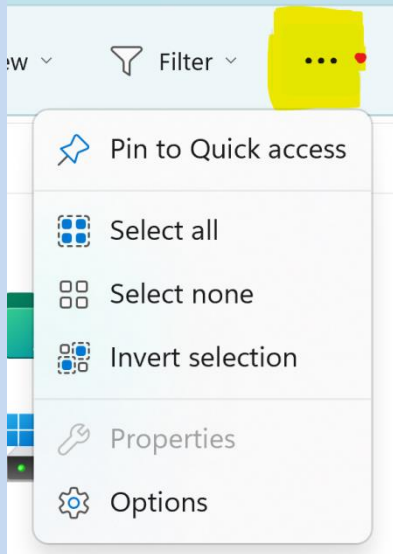
Videos
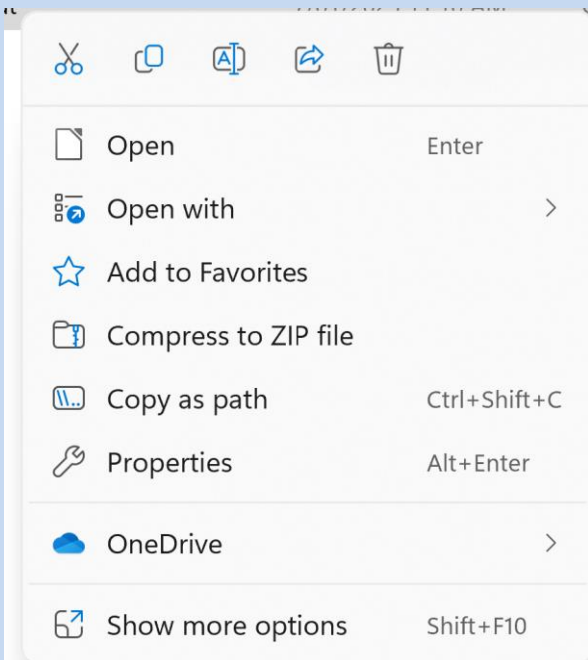
PDF

FILTER drop down menu.

More Options drop down Menu …

RIGHT CLICK menu

When you Right Click on a File this menu will open.

Open
New
Print
Move to OneDrive
Add to Favorites
Scan with Microsoft Defender…
Open with…
Copy as path
Share

Send to   >

Cut
Copy

Create shortcut
Delete
Rename

Properties
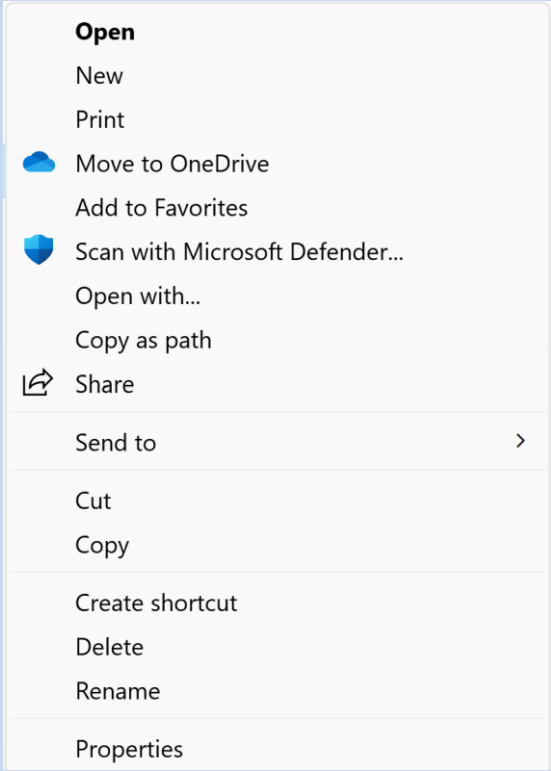
SHOW MORE OPTIONS

Menu

Alternative to using Windows File Explorer:

1. Explorer ++   Link: https://explorerplusplus.com/download

2. One Commander Link: https://www.onecommander.com/

Links to detailed User Guides:

Windows 11 File Explorer User Guide:

Link: https://www.xda-developers.com/windows-11-2022-update-file-explorer-guide/

Windows 10 File Explorer user Guide:

Link: https://uis.georgetown.edu/file-explorer/#description

Apple Mac Finder:

https://www.imore.com/how-use-finder-your-mac