
Showing File Extensions on Windows and Mac OS

Updated March, 2017

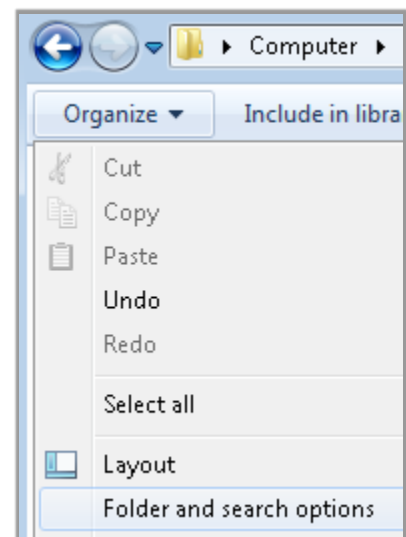
A **file extension** is a suffix at the end of a file that indicates contents of the file. For instance, a file extension like “.gif”, “.jpg”, or “.png” tells the computer that the file is an image file. A file extension of “.txt”, or “.rtf” tells the computer that the file is a text file

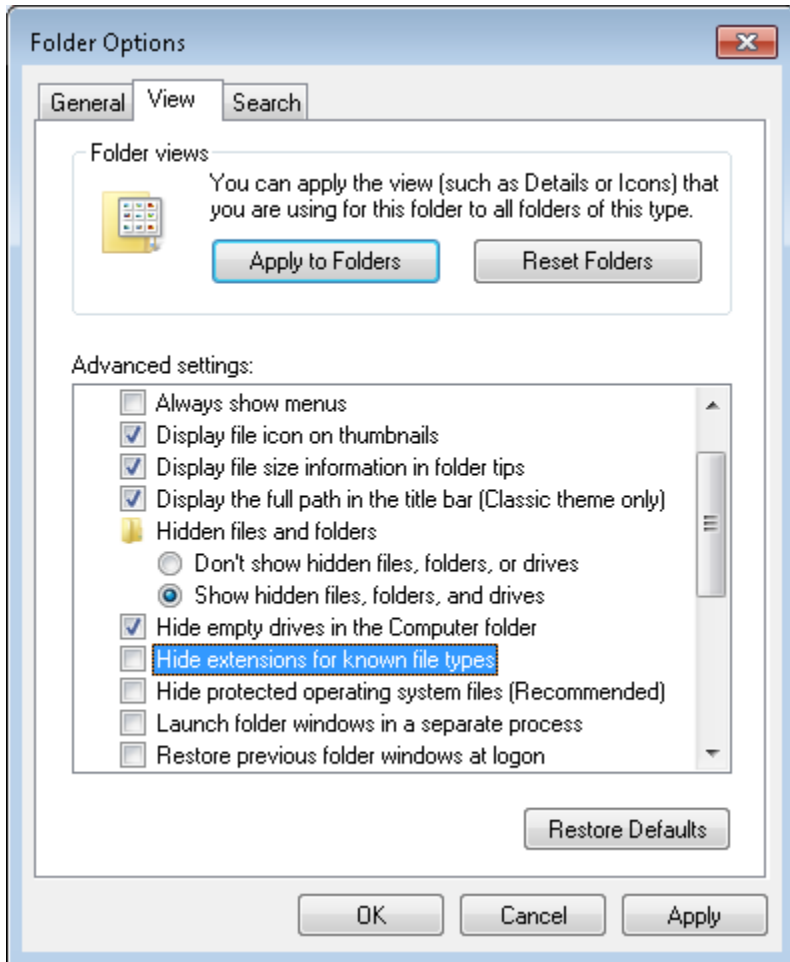
Your computer will use these extensions to figure out which program to use when you want to view these files. If you are writing code, your code files will have extensions like “.java”, “.cs”, “.vb”, or “.html” depending on the language, and you may have other files relating to your project that are generated by the development environment.

By default the Windows and Mac OS operating systems will **hide the file extensions** in Windows File Explorer and Mac Finder. However, programmers and savvy computer users would like to be able to tell files like “MyProject.java”, “MyProject.class”, “MyProject.sln”, “MyProject.csproj”, “MyProject.cs”, and “MyProject.exe” apart from each other! If your own Windows File Explorer or Finder is hiding file extensions on your computer, the following steps will show you how to make the file extensions visible.

Showing File Extensions in Windows 7

To show file extensions on Windows 7, first open Windows Explorer (not Internet Explorer). Then click on the “Organize” button near the top-left and scroll down to click on “Folder and Search Options”.



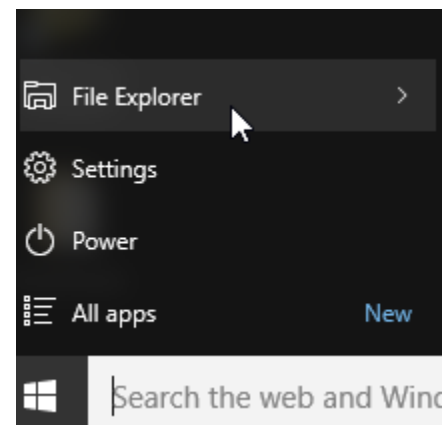


You will then see a “Folder Options” dialog with three tabs: “General”, “View”, and “Search”. Click on the “View” tab, and you should see an “Advanced Settings” list containing many checkboxes.

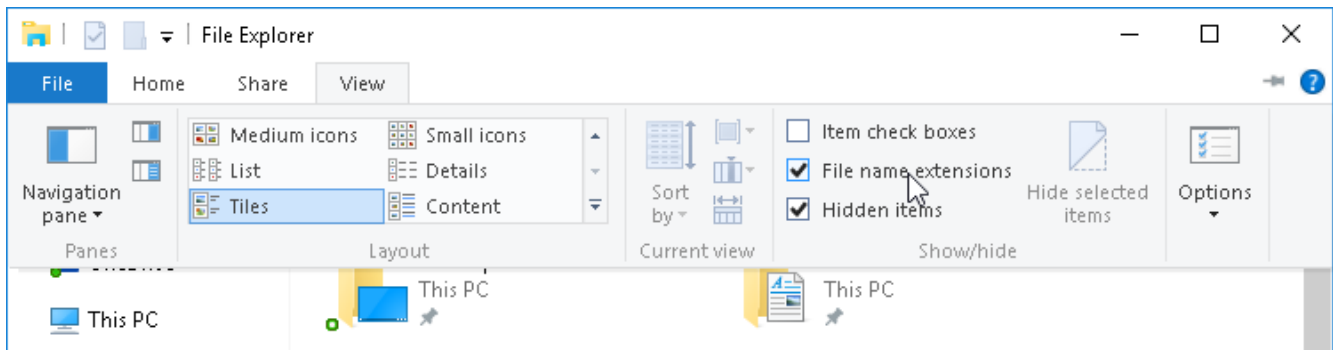
Scroll down until you see one that says “Hide extensions for known file types” and **uncheck** this box. Then click the “Apply to Folders” button to make this change for all folders on your hard drive. Finally, click “OK” to close the dialog. Now you should be able to see the file extensions directly in Windows Explorer.

Showing File Extensions on Windows 8 and 10

In Windows 8 and 10, Microsoft renamed the “Windows Explorer” application to “**File Explorer**”. To show file extensions on Windows 8 and 10, start by running the File Explorer application.



Near the top of the File Explorer, click on the “View” tab on the right. Then ensure the “File name extensions” box is **checked** in the Show/Hide area as shown below.



With that box checked, you should be able to see your file extensions in Windows File Explorer.

Showing File Extensions on Mac OS



To show your file extensions on Mac OS, first launch the Finder application. Next, from the Finder menu bar, select “**Preferences...**”.

In the “Finder Preferences” dialog, select the “**Advanced**” tab. Then **check** the box that says “**Show all filename extensions**”.



You can then close the dialog with the red circle in the top left corner. You are done! Finder should now display the full filename, including the file extension.