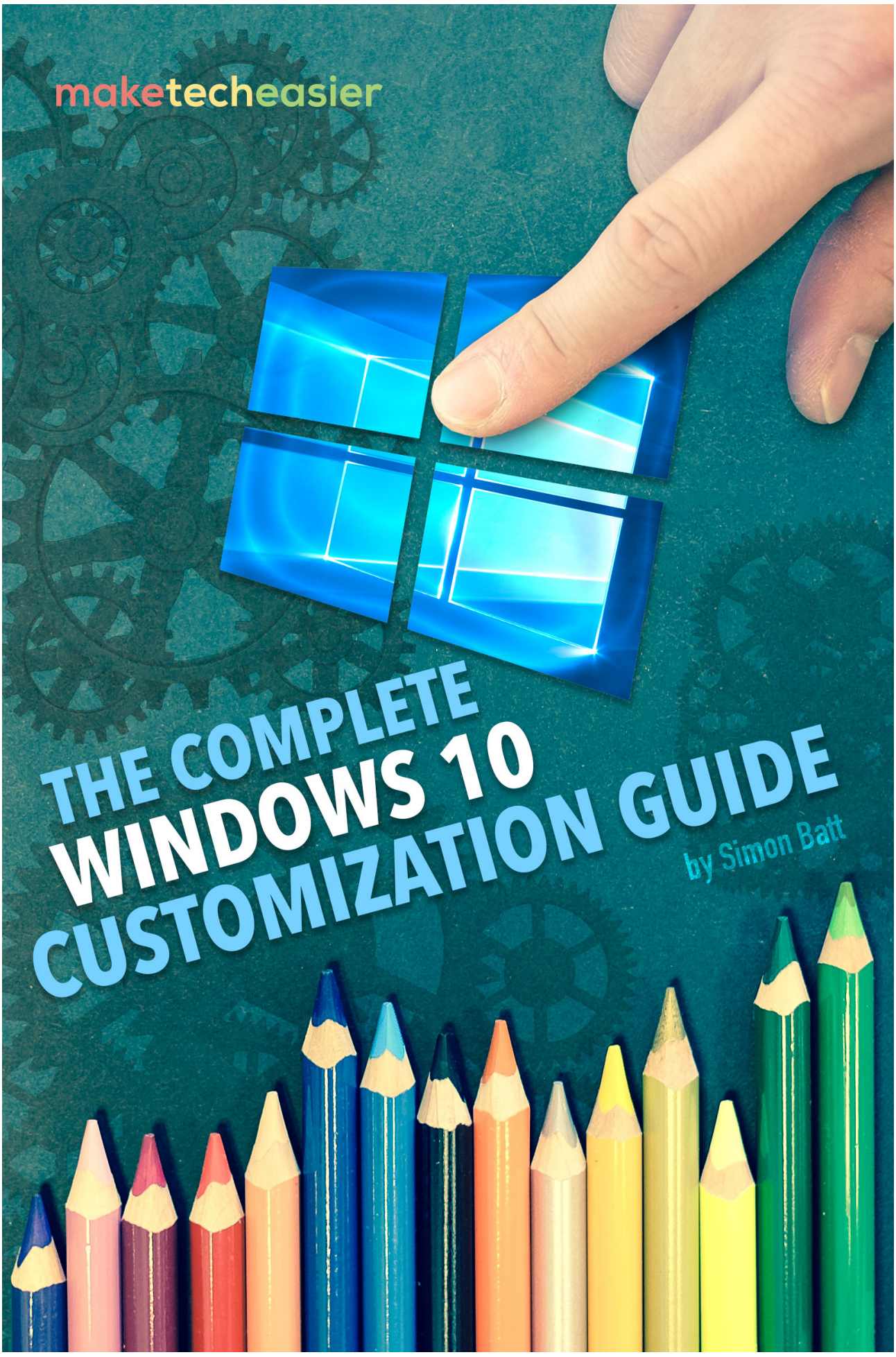
maketecheasier



THE COMPLETE WINDOWS 10 CUSTOMIZATION GUIDE

by Simon Batt

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Introduction

When purchasing a Windows 10 machine for the first time, it can be very exciting to see all the new features the OS has to offer. Windows changed a lot with the jump to 10, and even those who have decent experience with previous Windows versions may find it hard to navigate the new iteration of the operating system.

Probably one of the first things you want to do with a new operating system is learn how to change it to better suit your needs. Windows 10 is set up to work perfectly “out of the box,” but there are a myriad of options and settings you can use to make the Windows 10 experience your own.

In the following chapters we’ll be exploring the multitude of options at your disposal as well as how to access them. By the end of this guide you’ll know how to make Windows 10 your own, even if it means relearning how to do a few old tricks in the process.

Chapter 1. Users

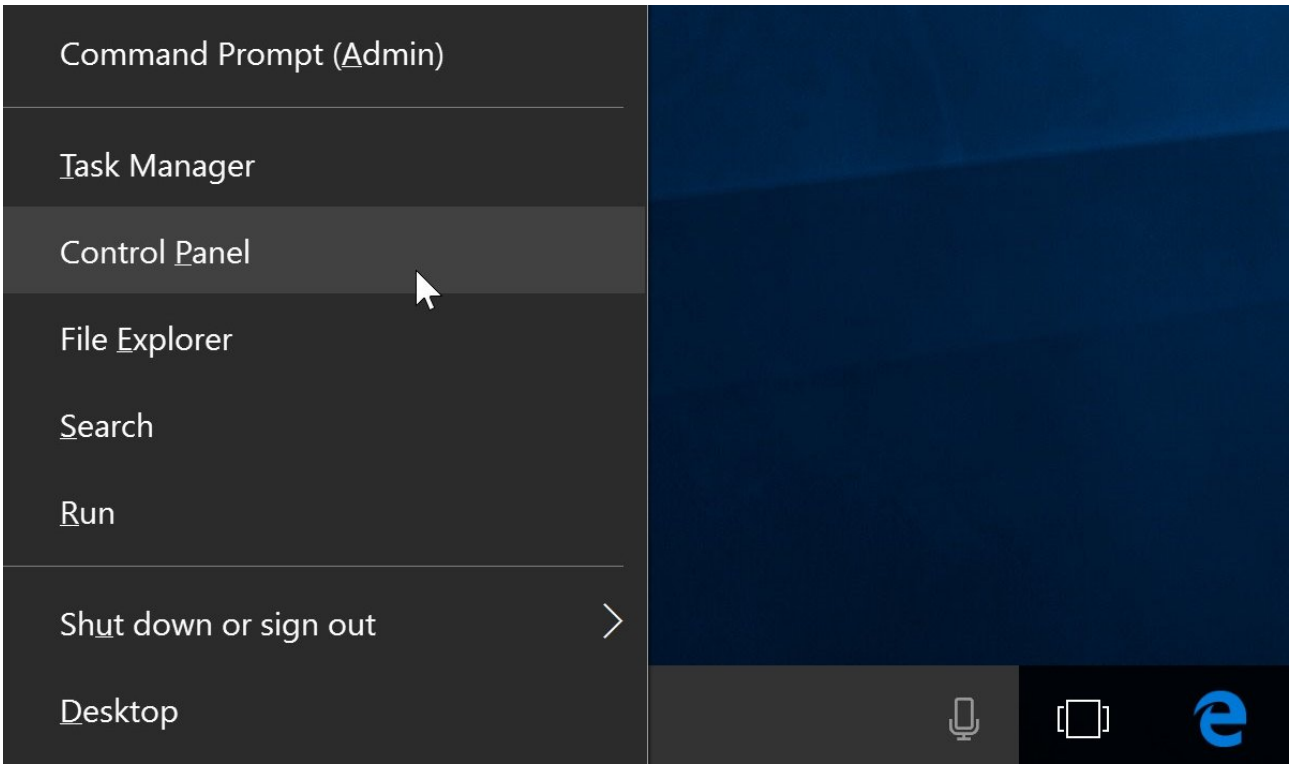
Changing an Account's Name

When you log into Windows 10 for the first time, it will ask you for your Microsoft account credentials. If you enter them, your Microsoft account name will be used for your machine's account name. You also have the option to not tie your Microsoft account to your computer and use a "local account" instead. Regardless of the way you set up the account, you may want to change the name that appears on your account.

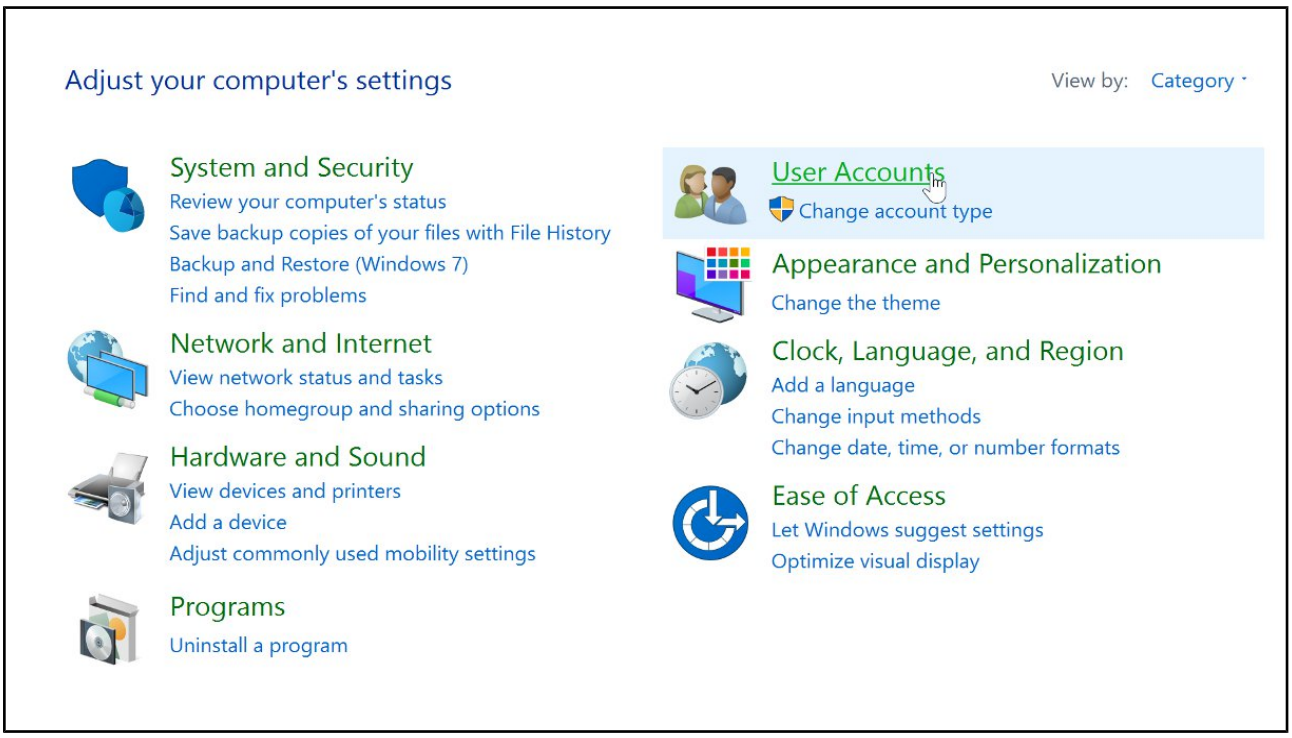
If you want to change the name you select to log in to (perhaps to designate a work-based account), it's very simple. However, it does depend on if your account was made on the computer or if it was linked to your computer by your email.

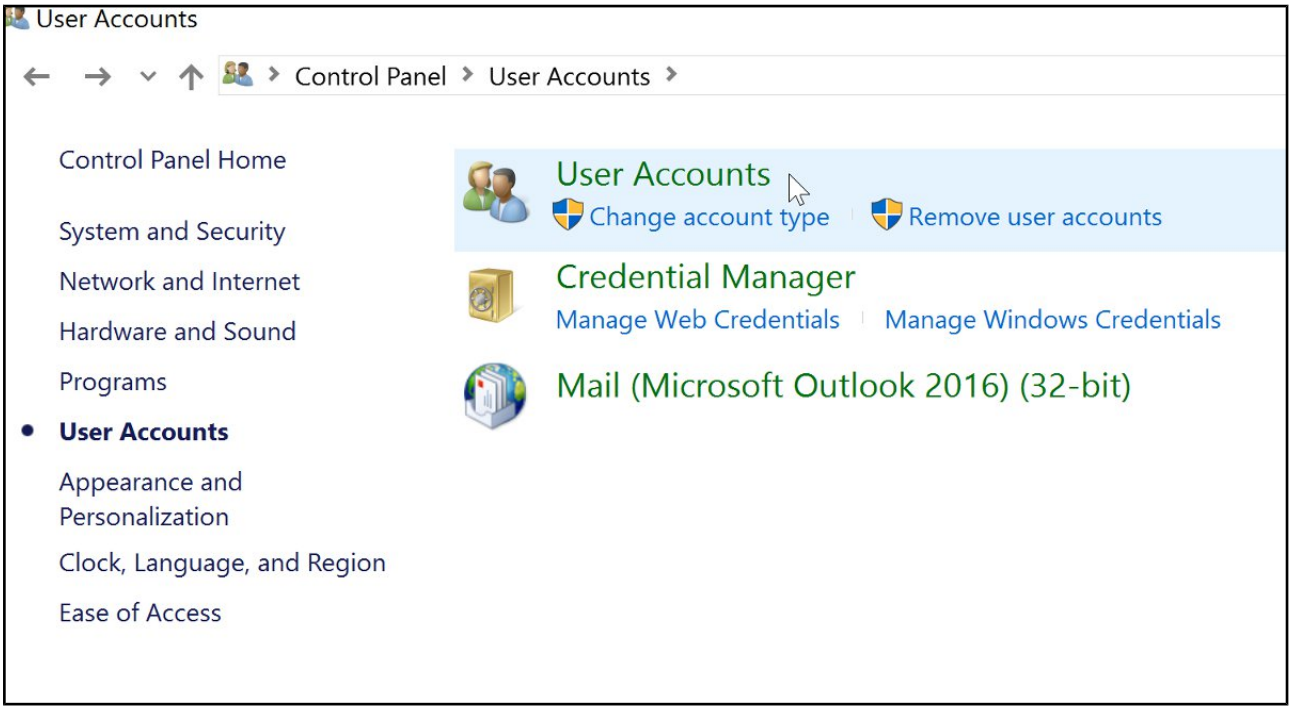
If your account was made on the computer locally without a Microsoft login:

First, open the Control Panel by right-clicking the Start button and clicking "Control Panel".

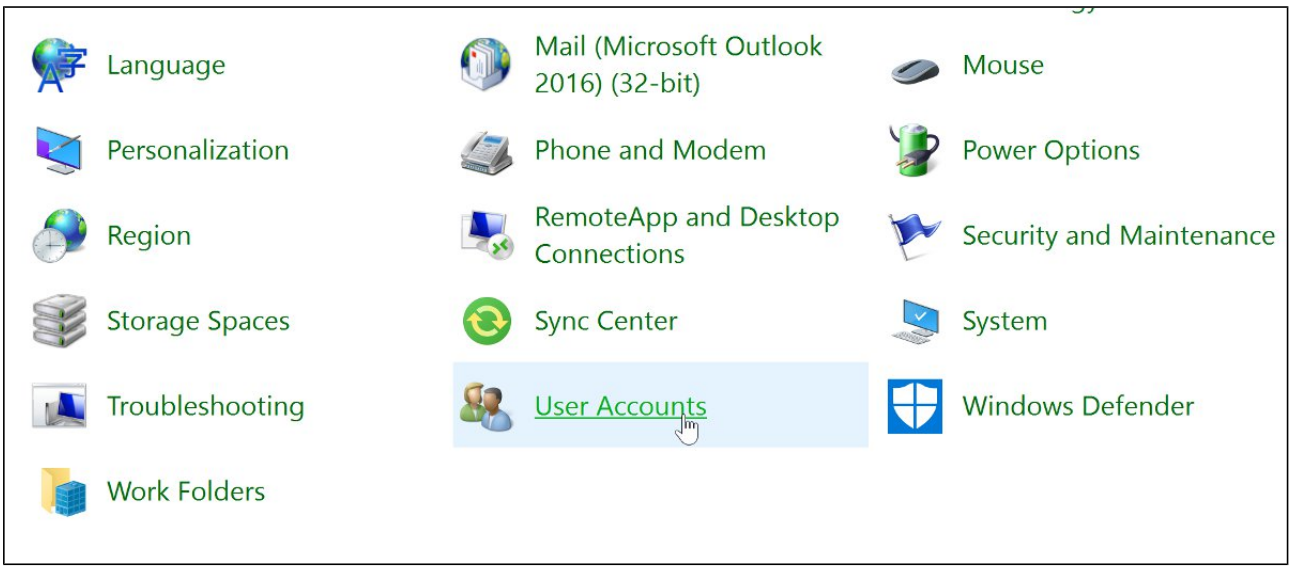


If you're using Category view, click "User Accounts", then the second User Accounts that appears after.

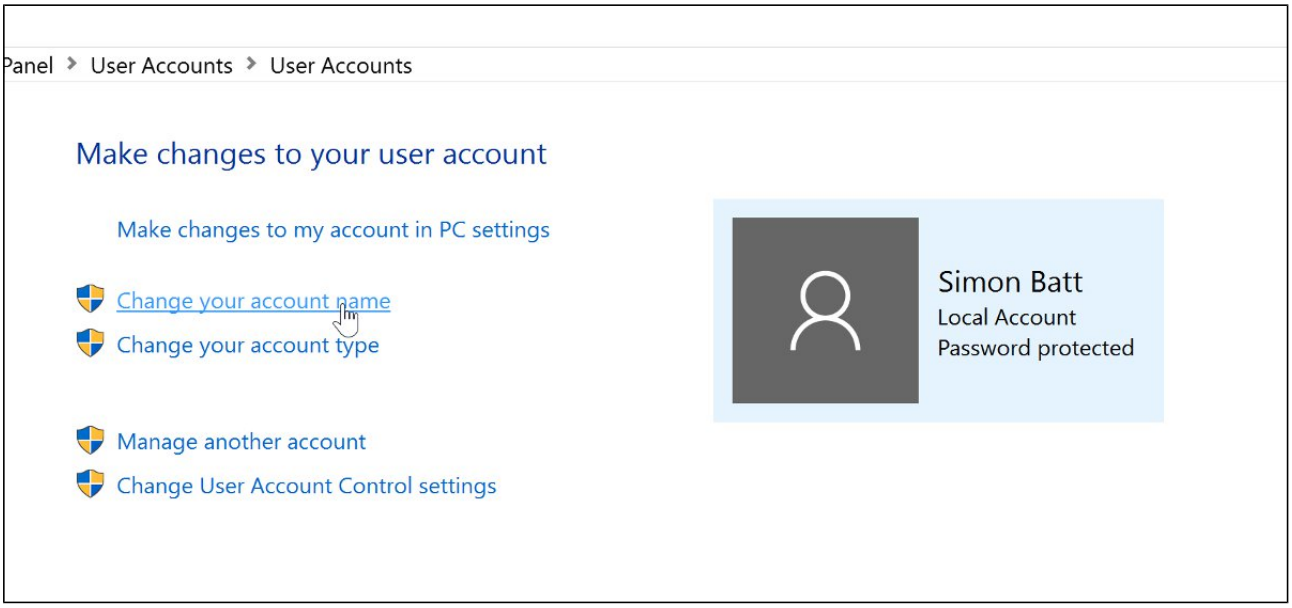




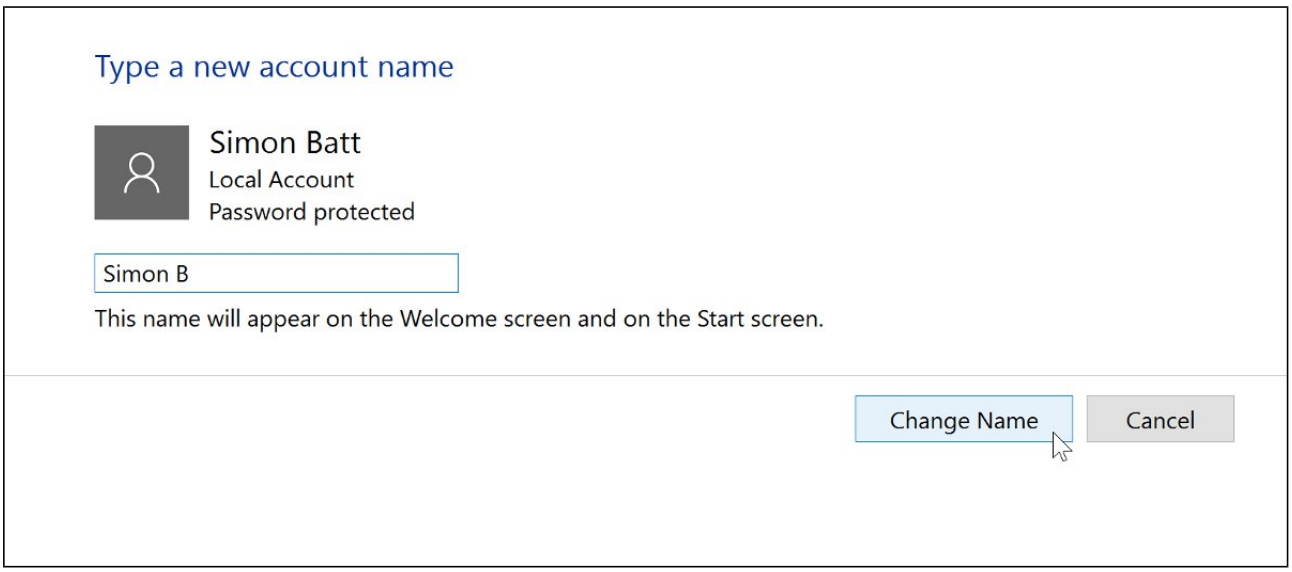
If you're using the Large or Small icons view, click User Accounts.



Click “Change Your Account Name”.



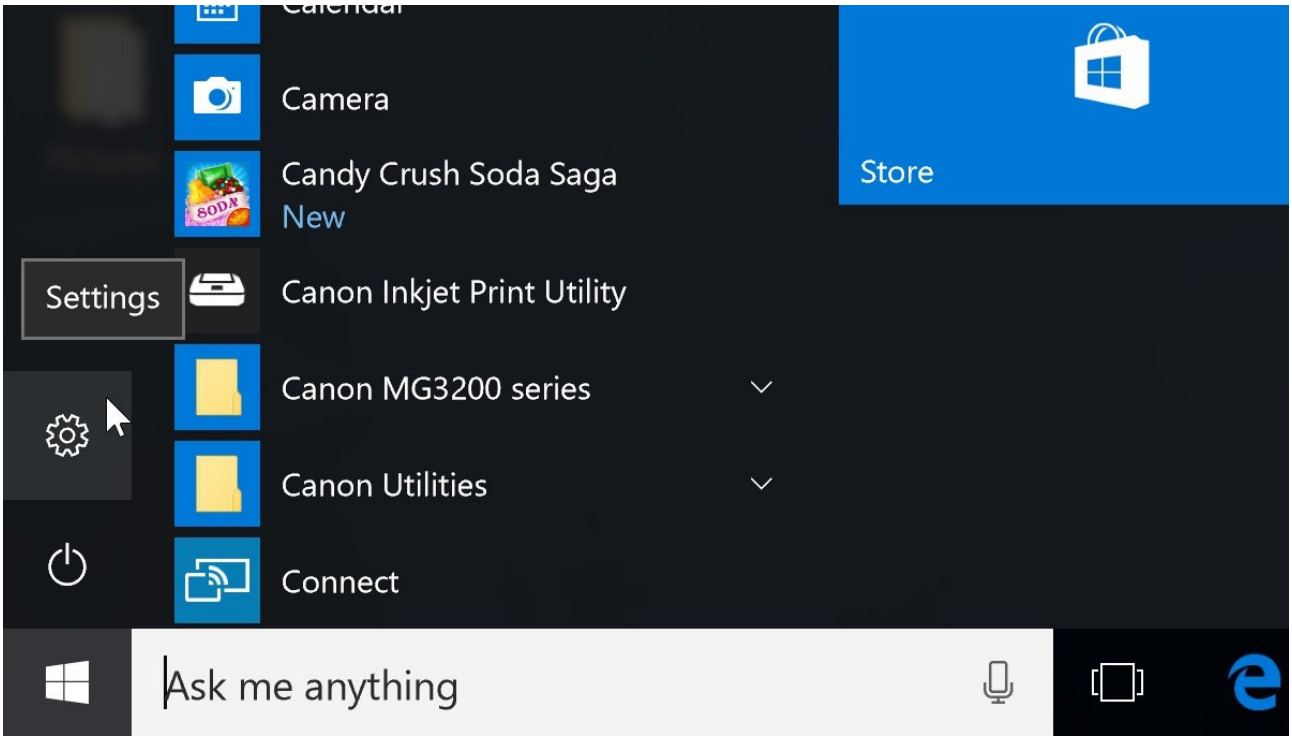
Type the name you want, and click “Change Name”.



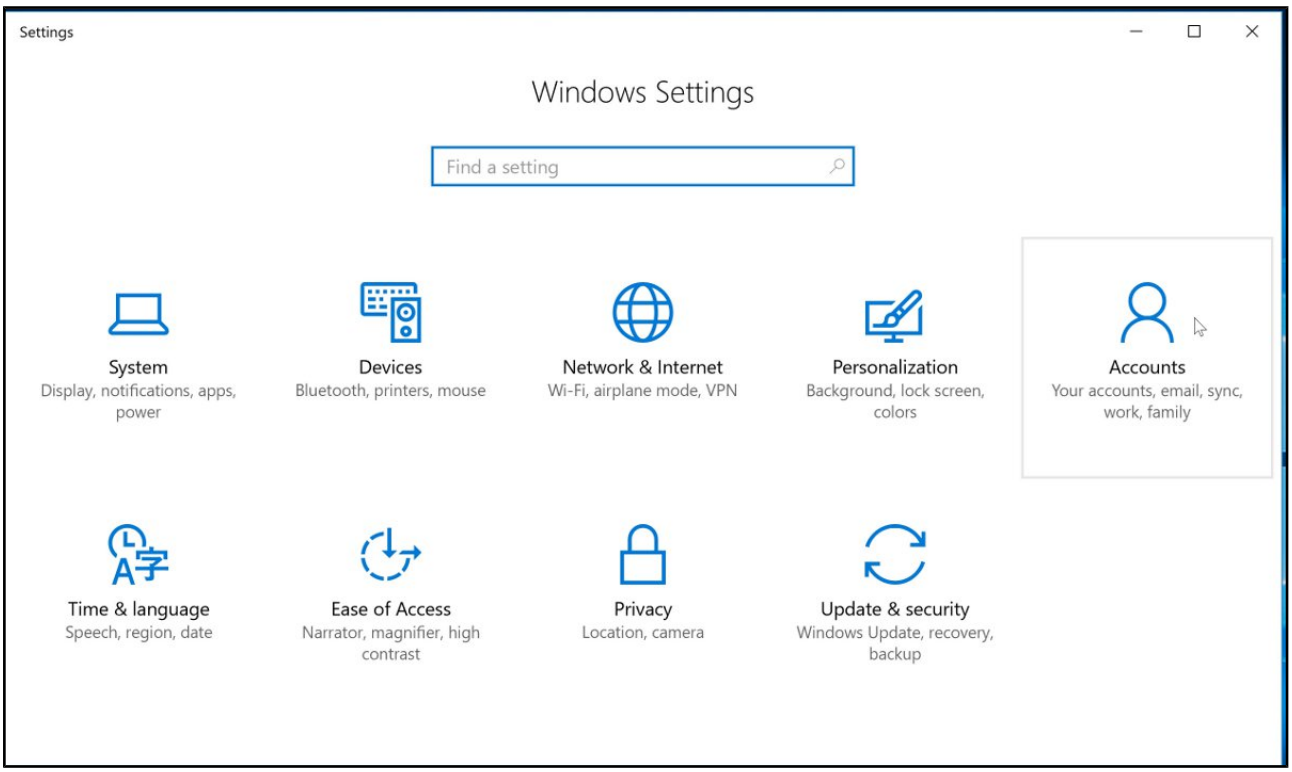
Now when you log on, your account will display the name you just entered.

If you made an account by attaching an existing Windows account:

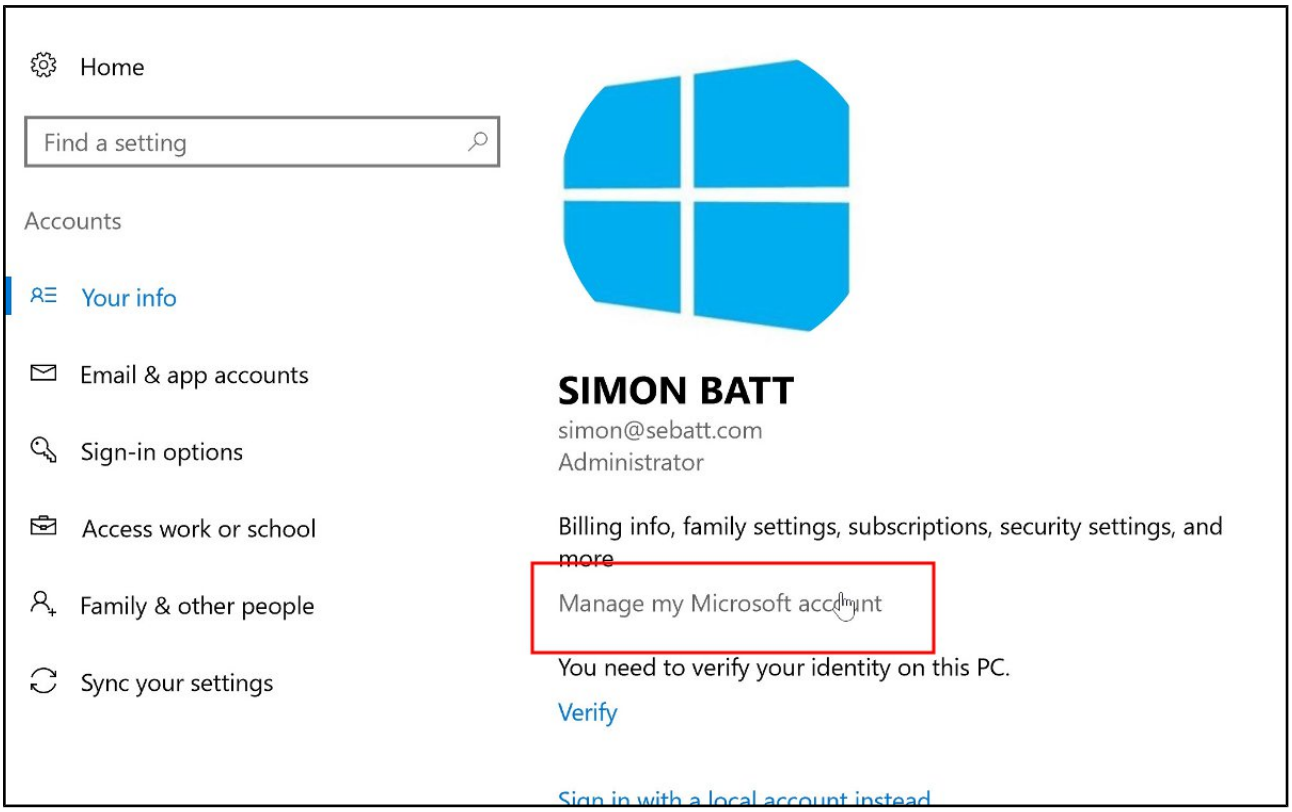
Click on the Start button, then click on the Settings cog on the left.



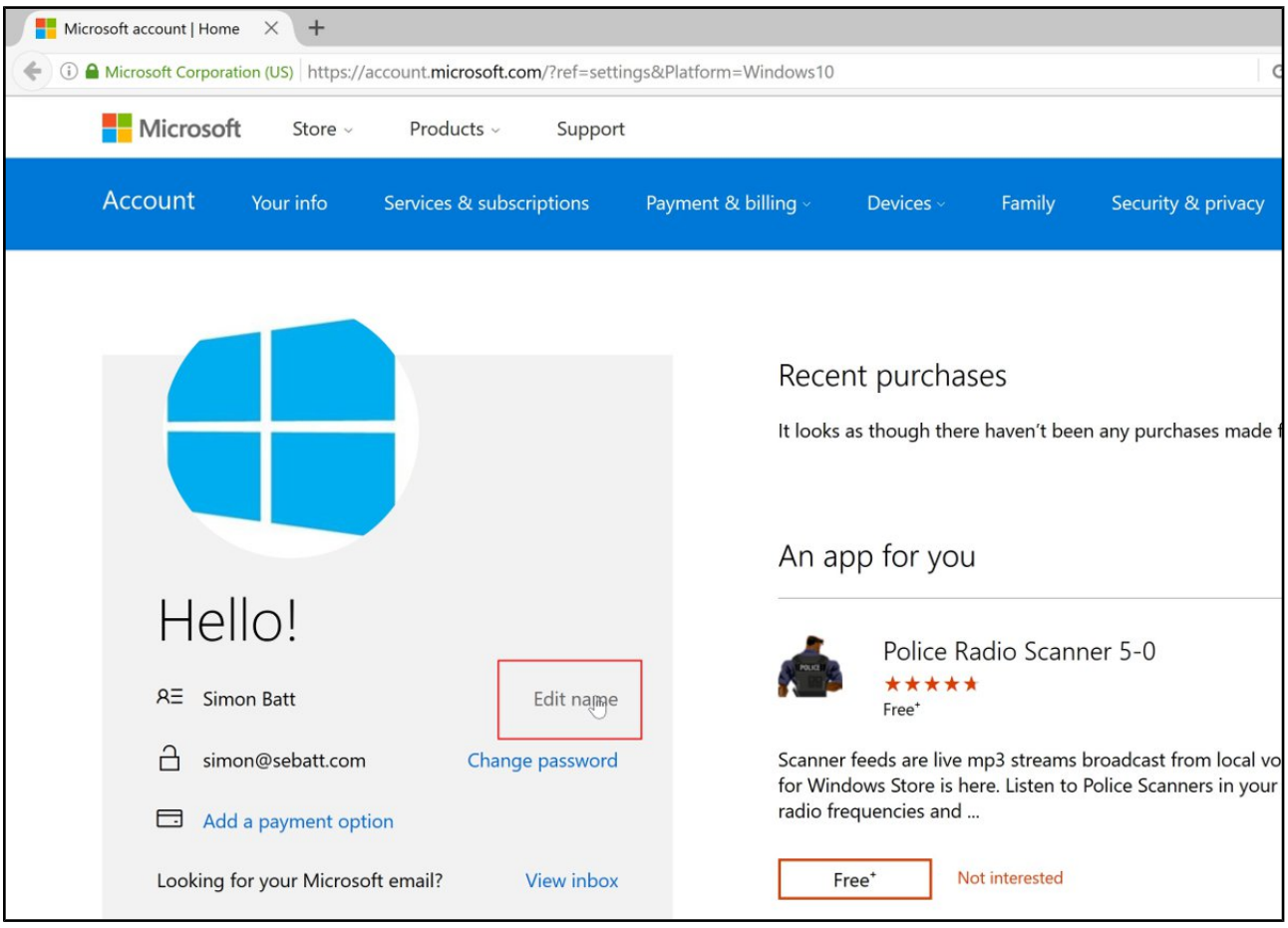
Click on Accounts.



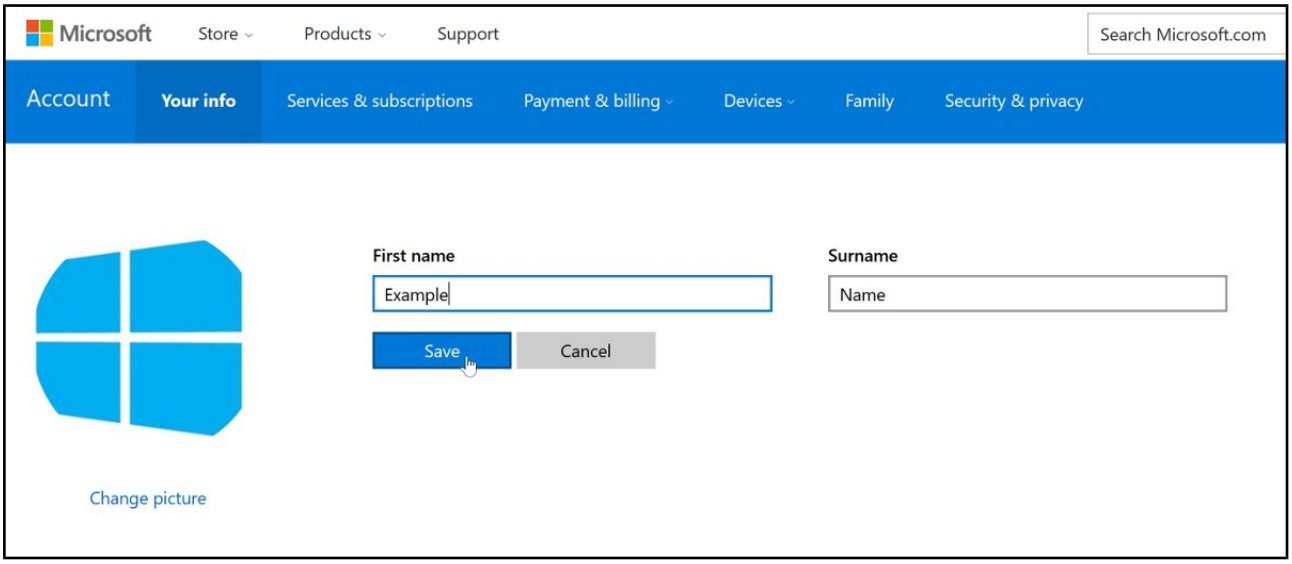
You'll arrive on the Your info page. Here, click "Manage my Microsoft account".



This will open a web browser window and automatically direct you to your Microsoft account. On this page, click "Edit name".



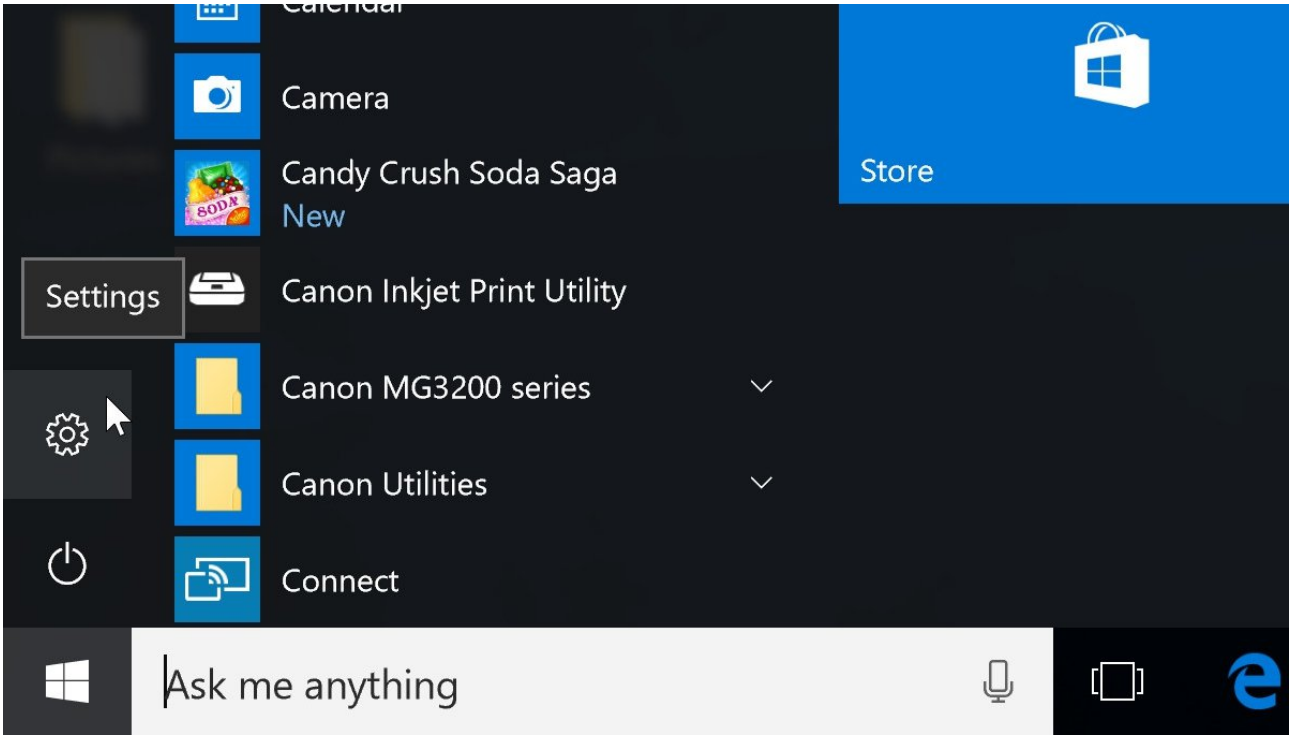
Edit your name as you please, then click “Save”.



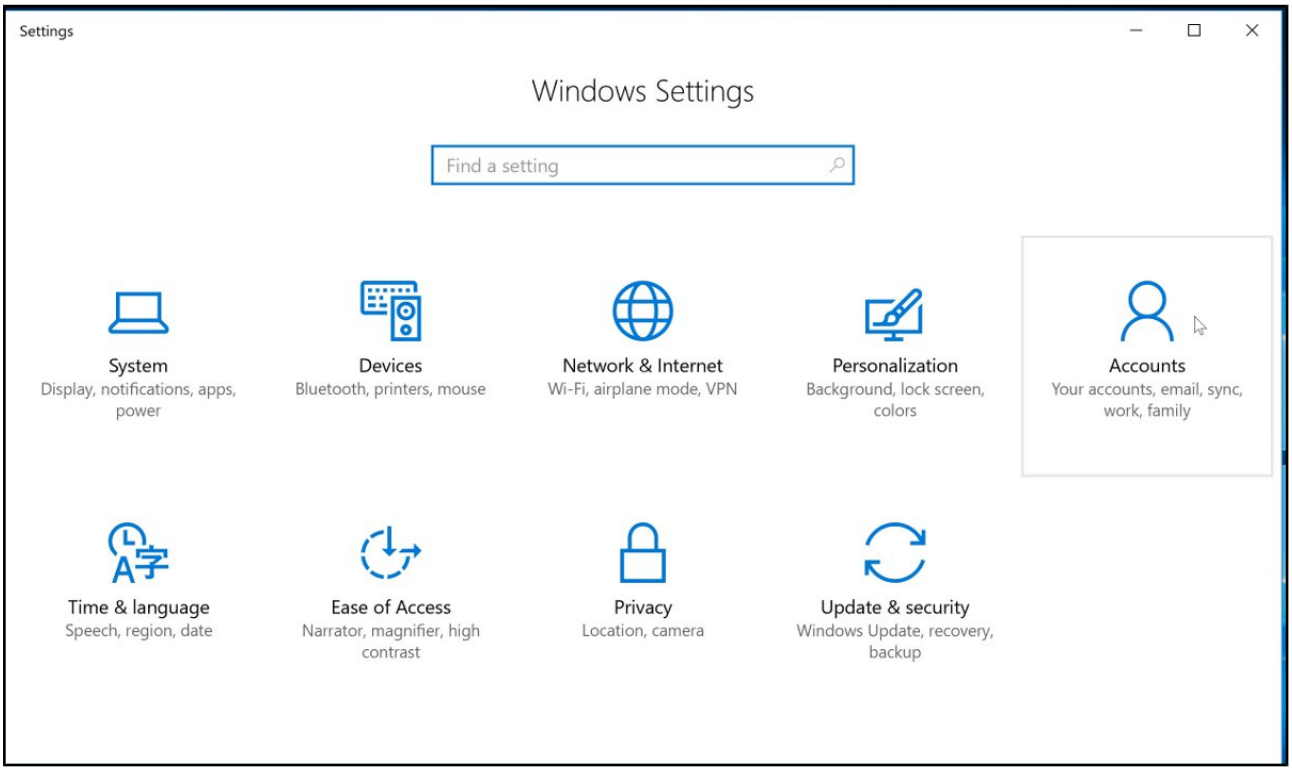
Changing an Account’s Picture

When you make an account, Windows 10 will either take the avatar associated with your Microsoft account or give you a default picture if it can’t do that. If you want to change the picture associated with your account, follow these steps.

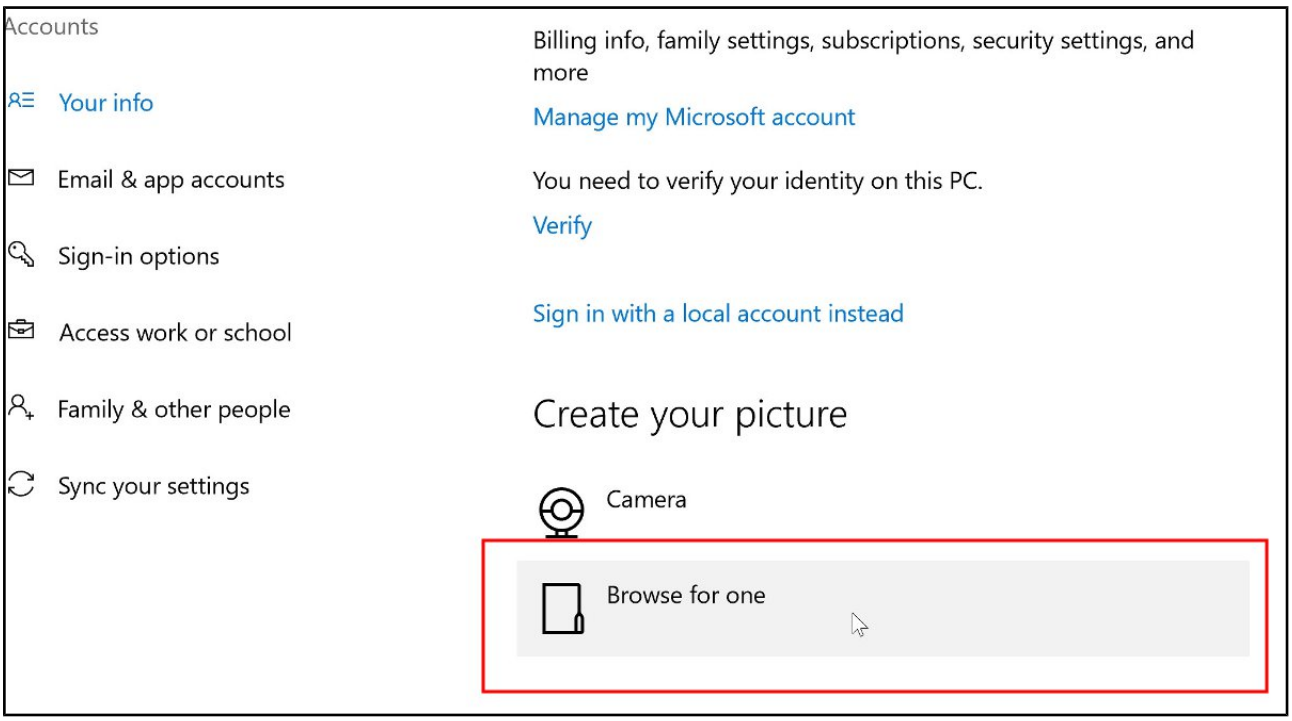
First, click on Start, then click the Settings cog on the left.



Now click Accounts.



Make sure you're on the Your Info page on the left. Scroll down this page to the "Create your picture" category.



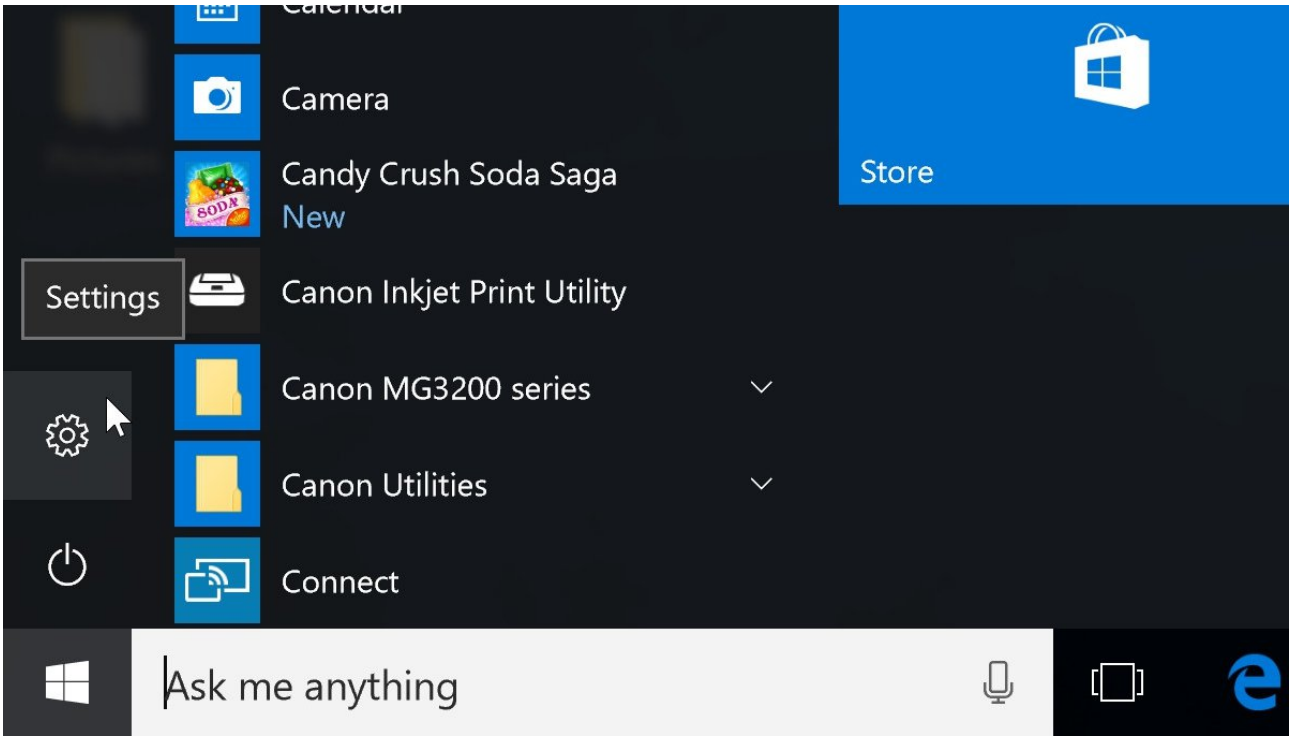
Here, you have several options. Camera will allow you to take a photo using a webcam, and “Browse for one” will allow you to choose an image from your computer. Either route you take, the image you select will represent your account on the computer.

Changing the Role of an Account

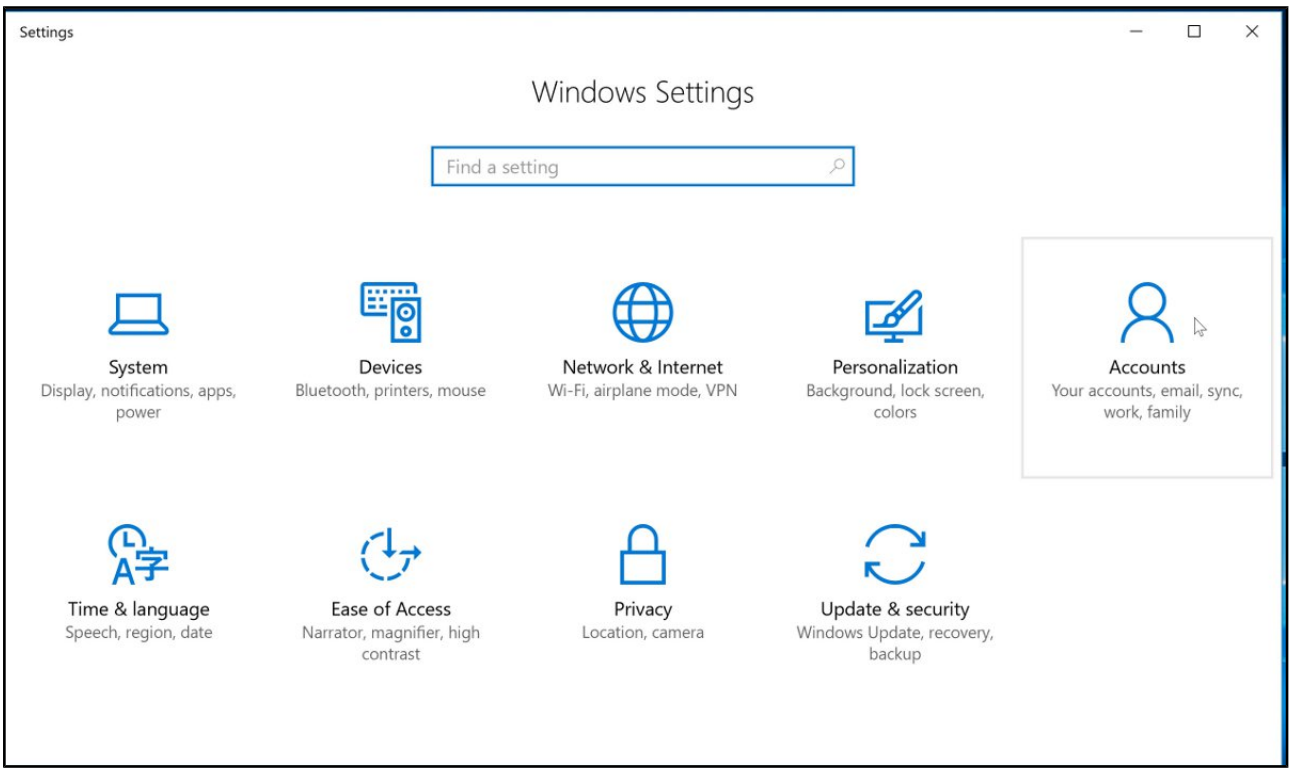
As well as setting up an account for each person using the computer, you can also set it so that people have different levels of control over the computer and important files. This is especially handy for if you have children who also want to use the computer, as you can give them an account role that doesn't allow them to modify important system files.

If this sounds like something you'd like to do, whether to edit your own roles or to set roles for other people, follow these steps.

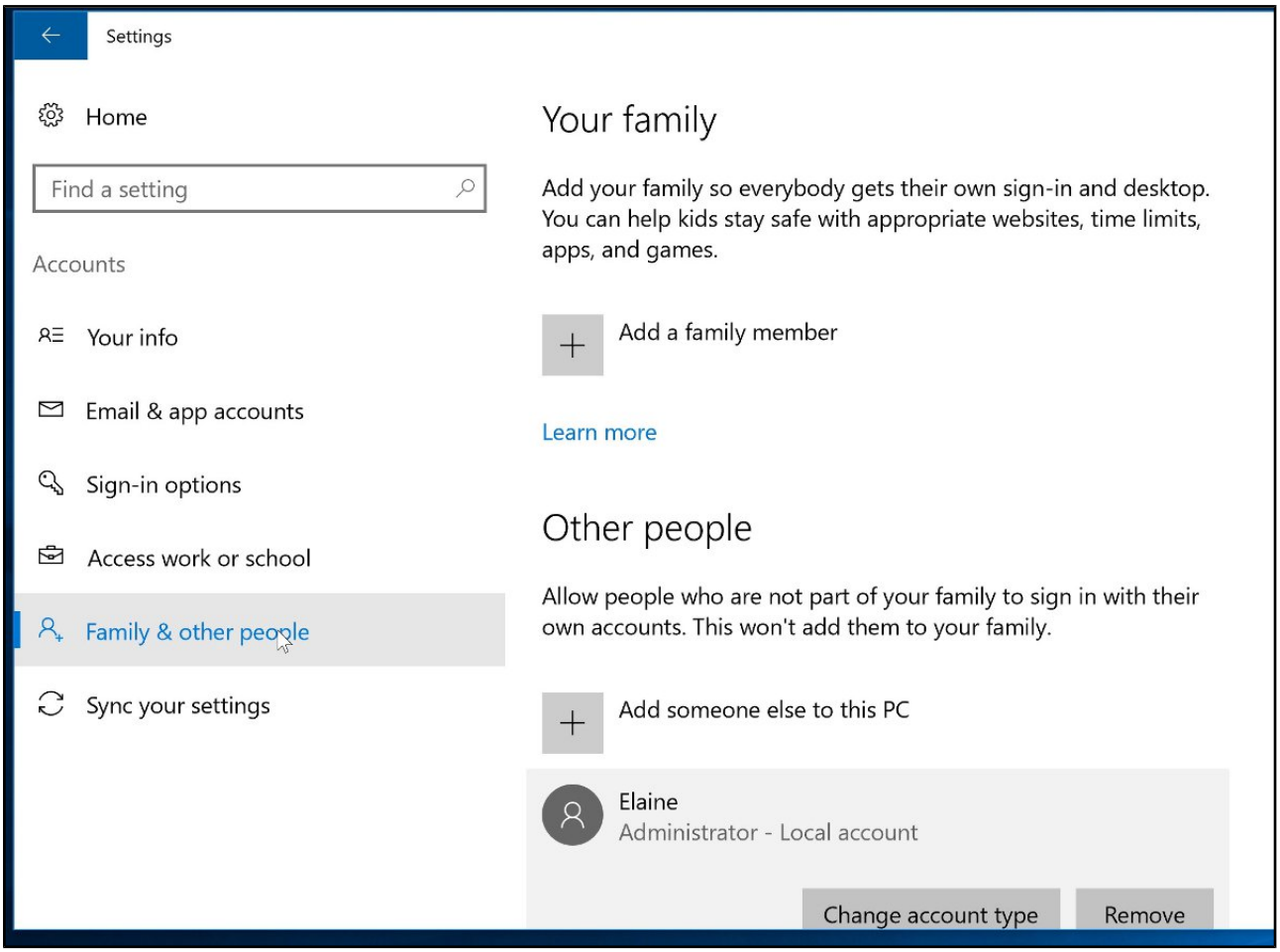
First, go to Start, then Settings.



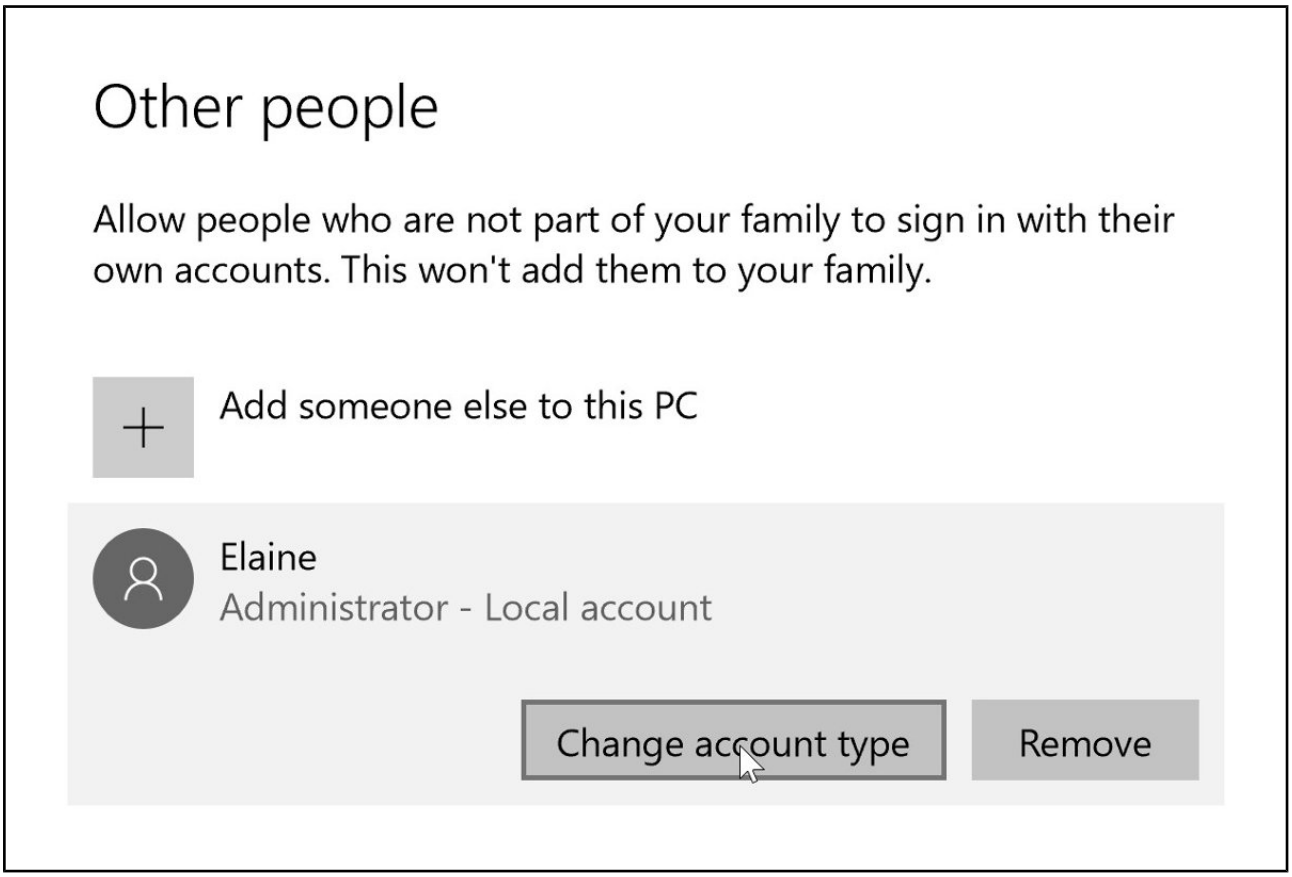
Click Accounts.



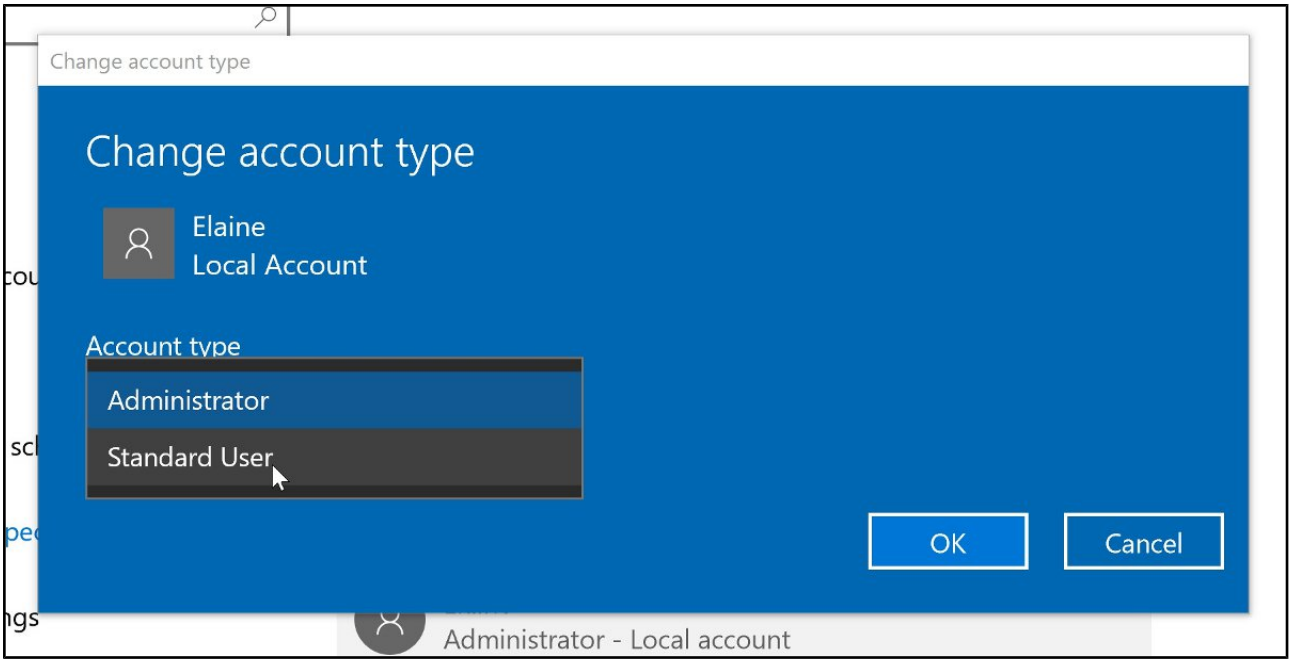
On the left, click “Family & Other people”.



This will bring up a window that displays all the users currently on the system. If you want to change the role of an account, just click the “Change Account Type” button below the user you want to modify.



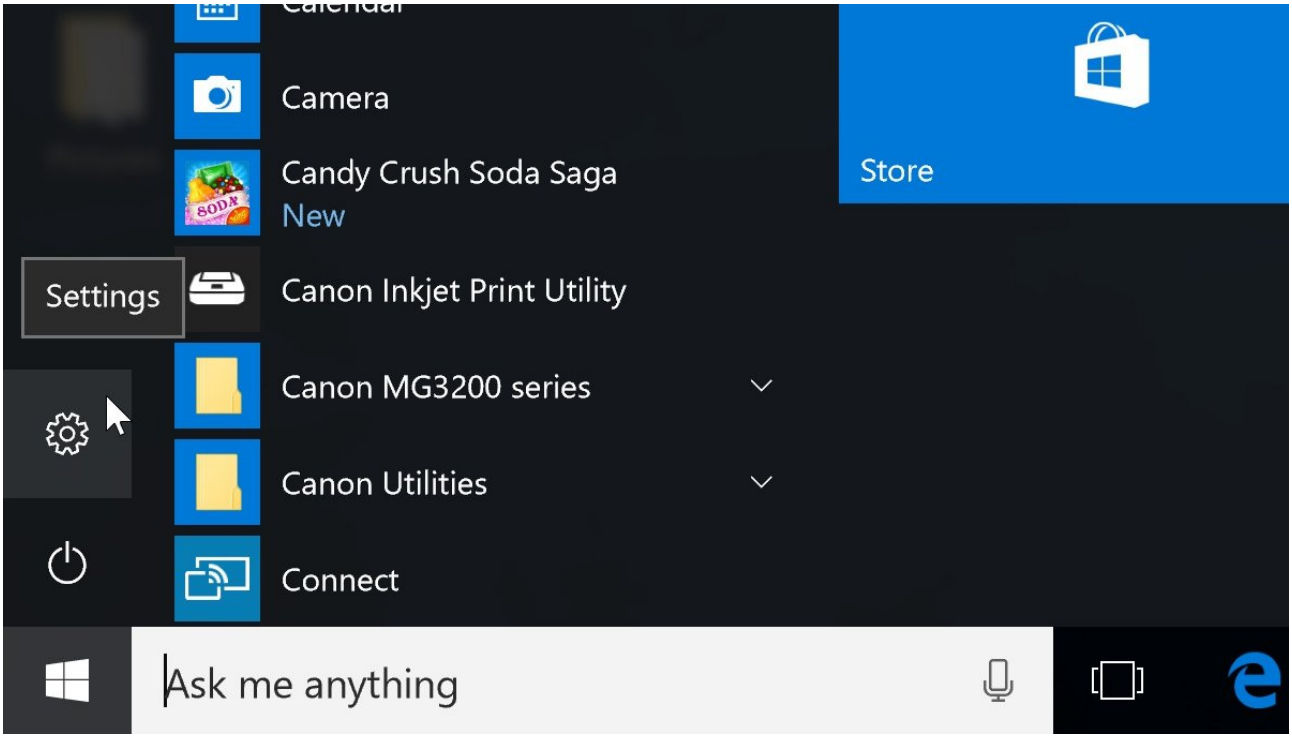
In the window that appears select the kind of account you want this account to become, then click OK.



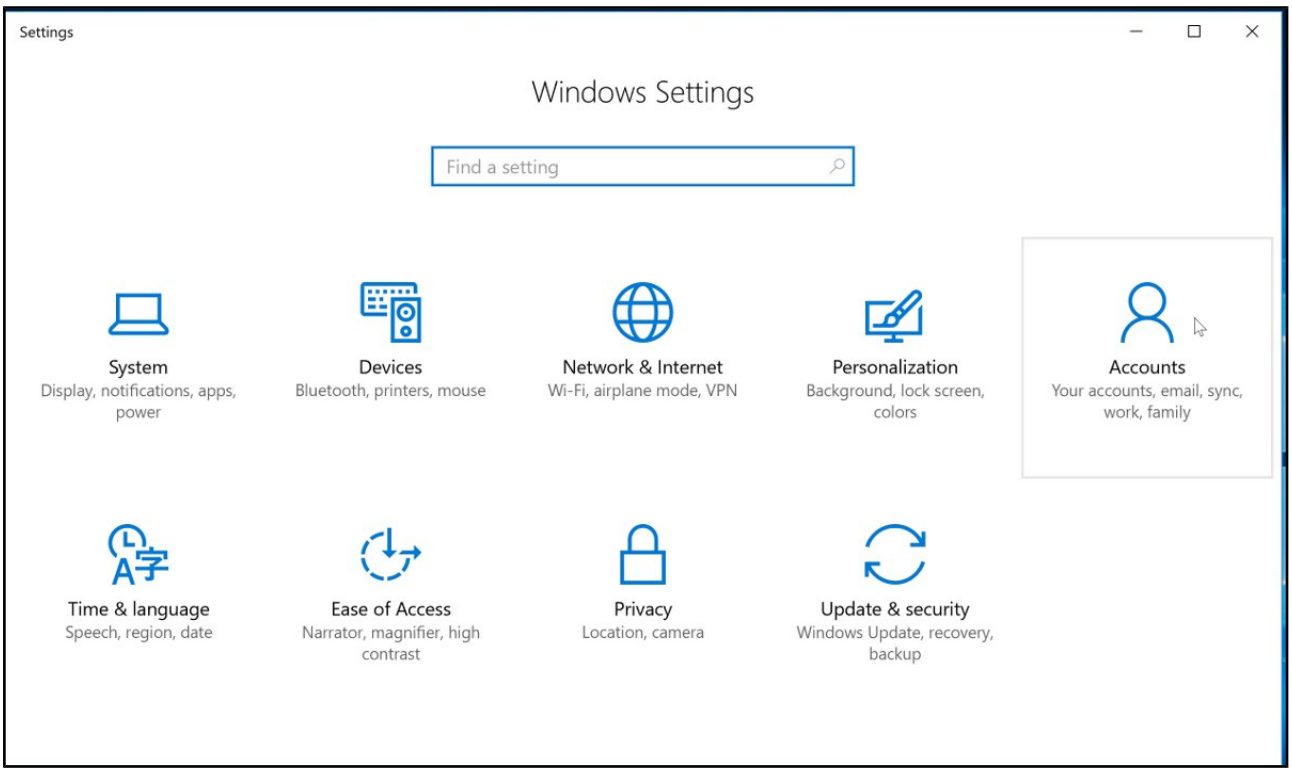
Login Using PIN Instead Of Password

Do you find it a chore to log in with your password but don't want to leave your computer security-free? If you want, you can change your login to require a PIN code instead of a password. If your machine is not already set up with a PIN, here's how to set one

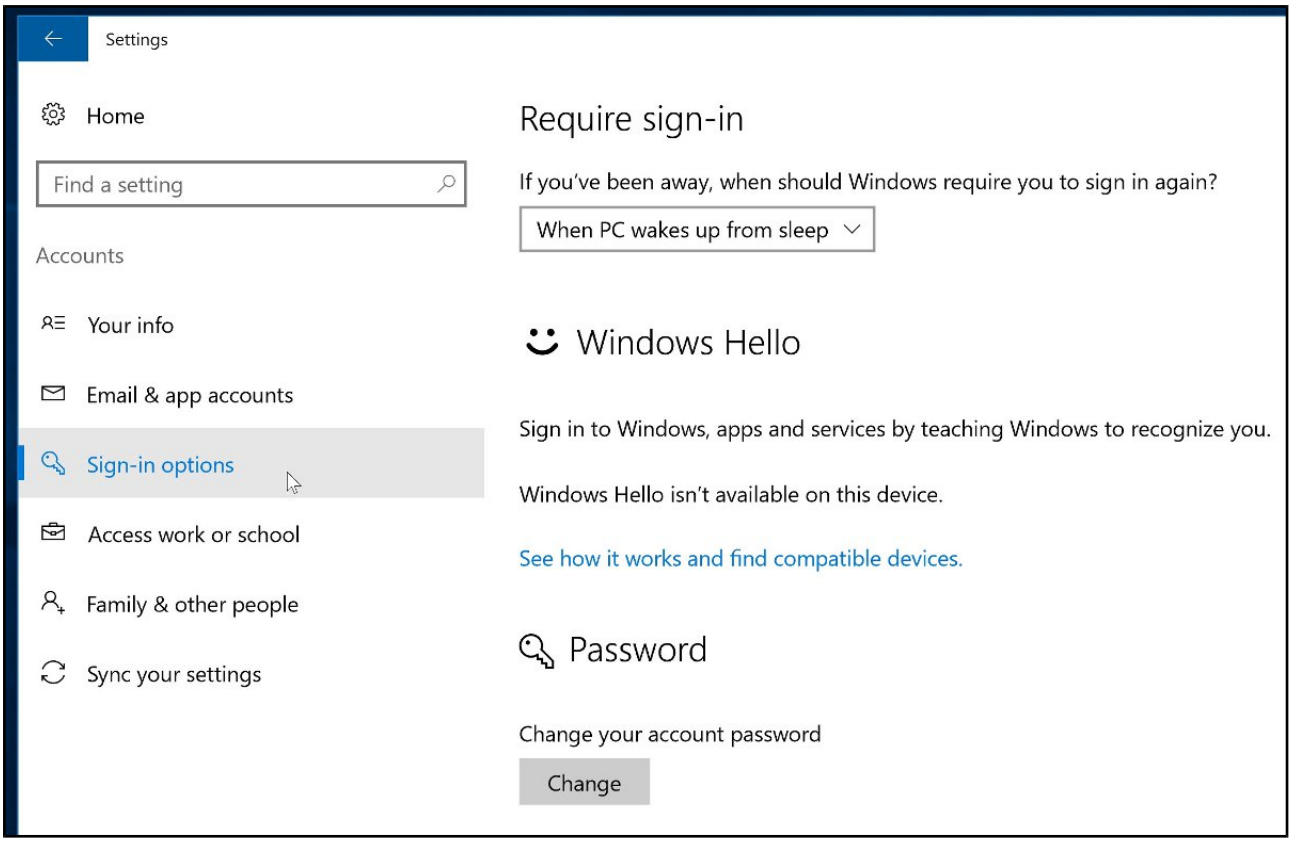
First, go to Start, then the Settings cog on the left.



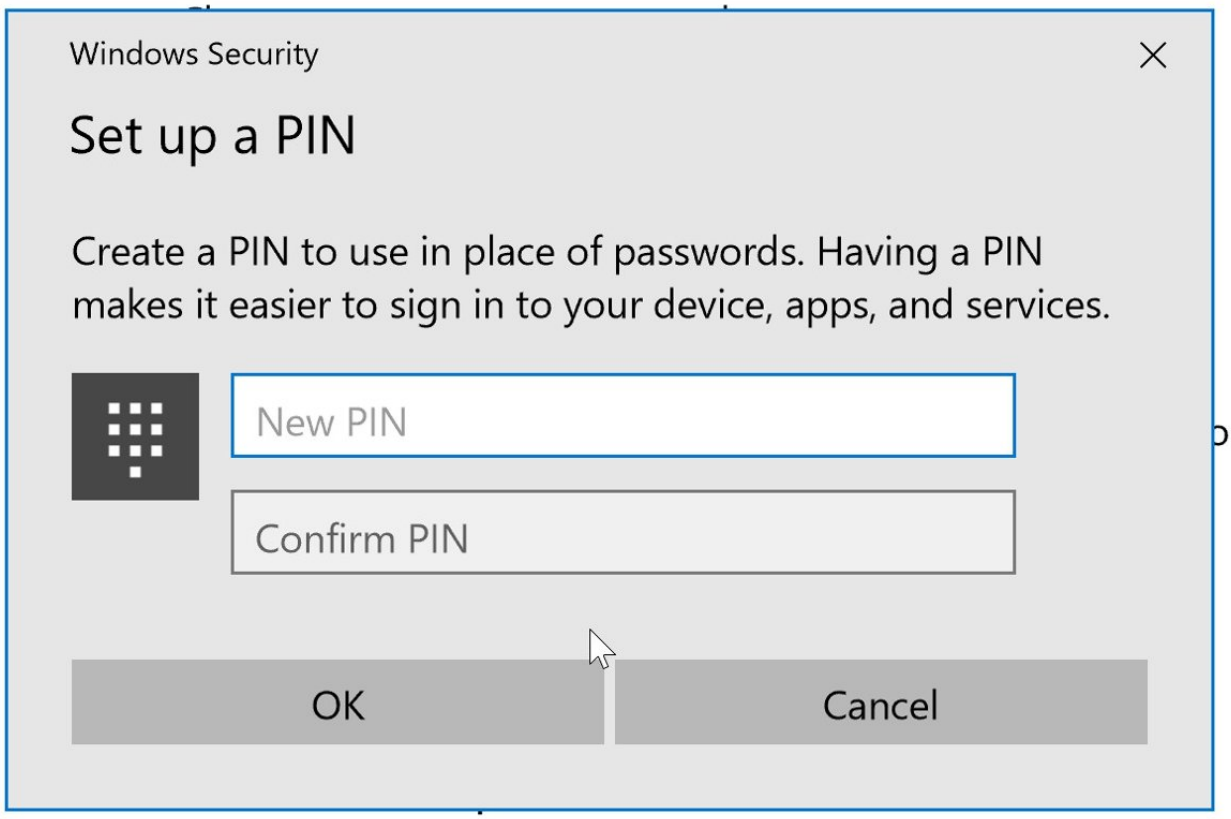
From here, go to Accounts.



Click “Sign-In” Options on the left.



Below PIN, click Add.



This will allow you to set a PIN for your computer.

One thing to note about PIN codes is that they're generally less secure than a strong password. With passwords you can have lots of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols in them, making them hard to crack.

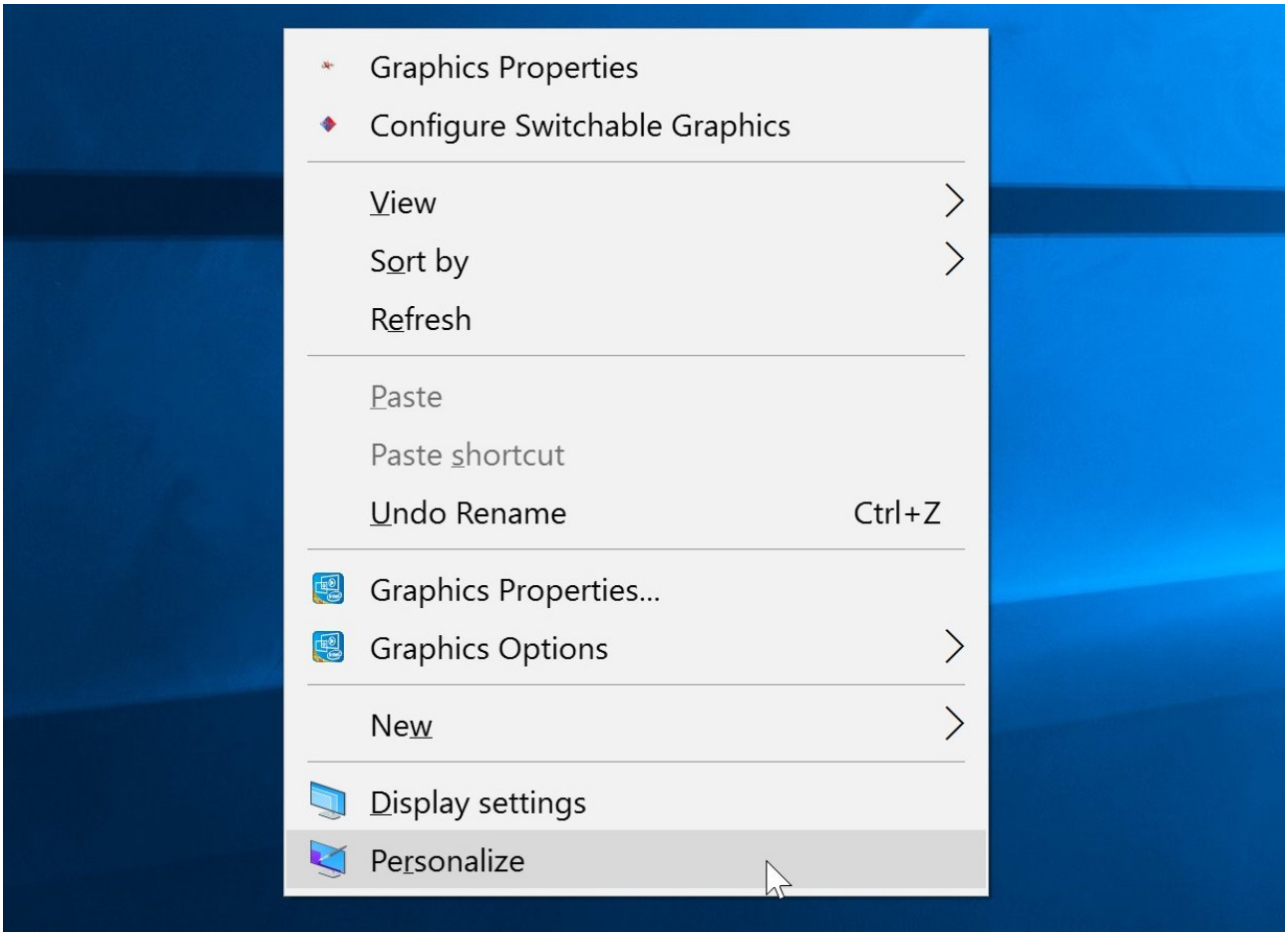
A PIN being a four-digit combination, it means the system's security strength is reduced as a result. As such, only use PINs if you're not leaving your computer alone for long periods of time in public places or if your machine does not contain very sensitive documents.

Chapter 2. Desktop

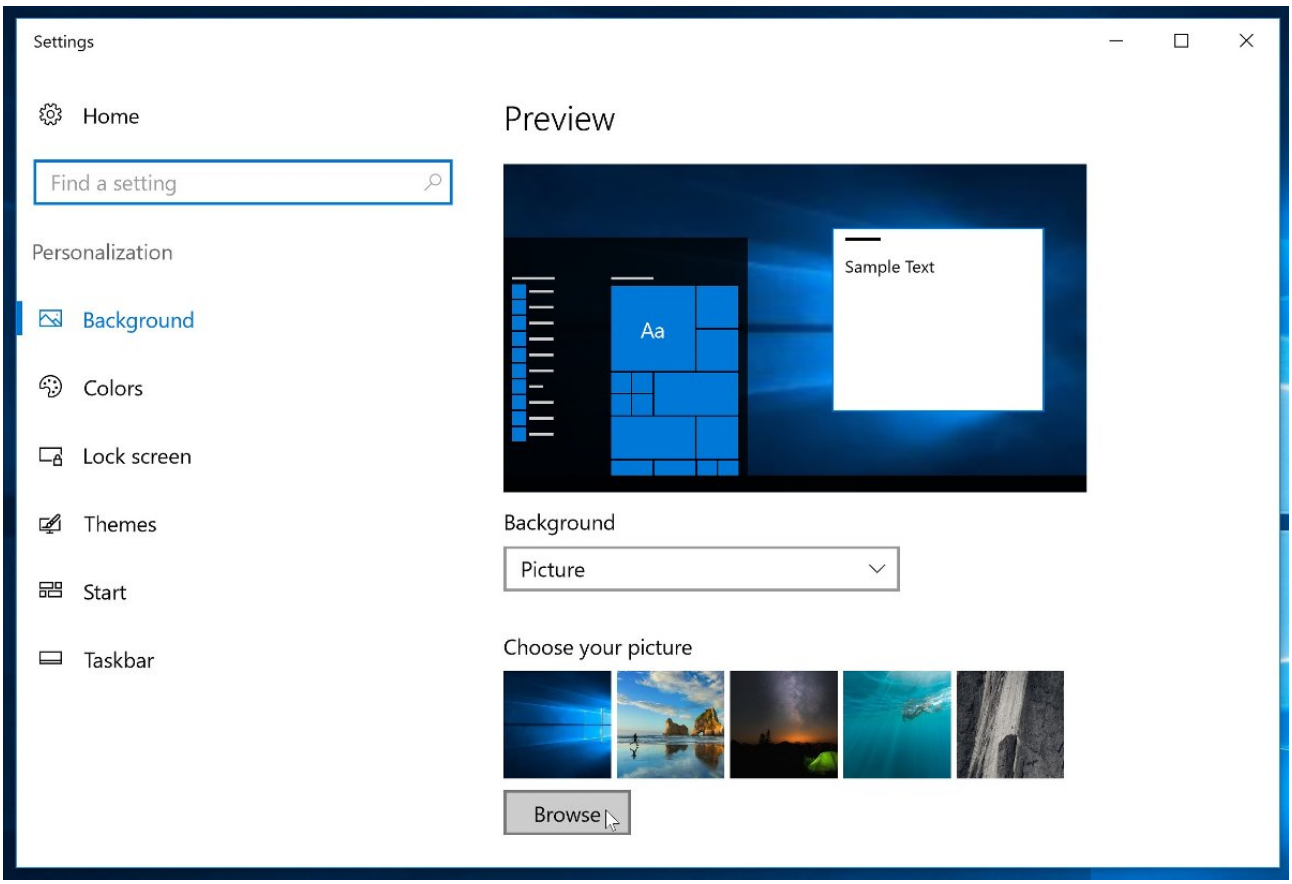
Changing the Desktop Image

When you first log in to Windows 10, you'll find that it has automatically given you a Windows-themed image as the background for your desktop. While these pictures are pretty interesting by themselves, you'll probably want to change it to something that reflects yourself and your tastes.

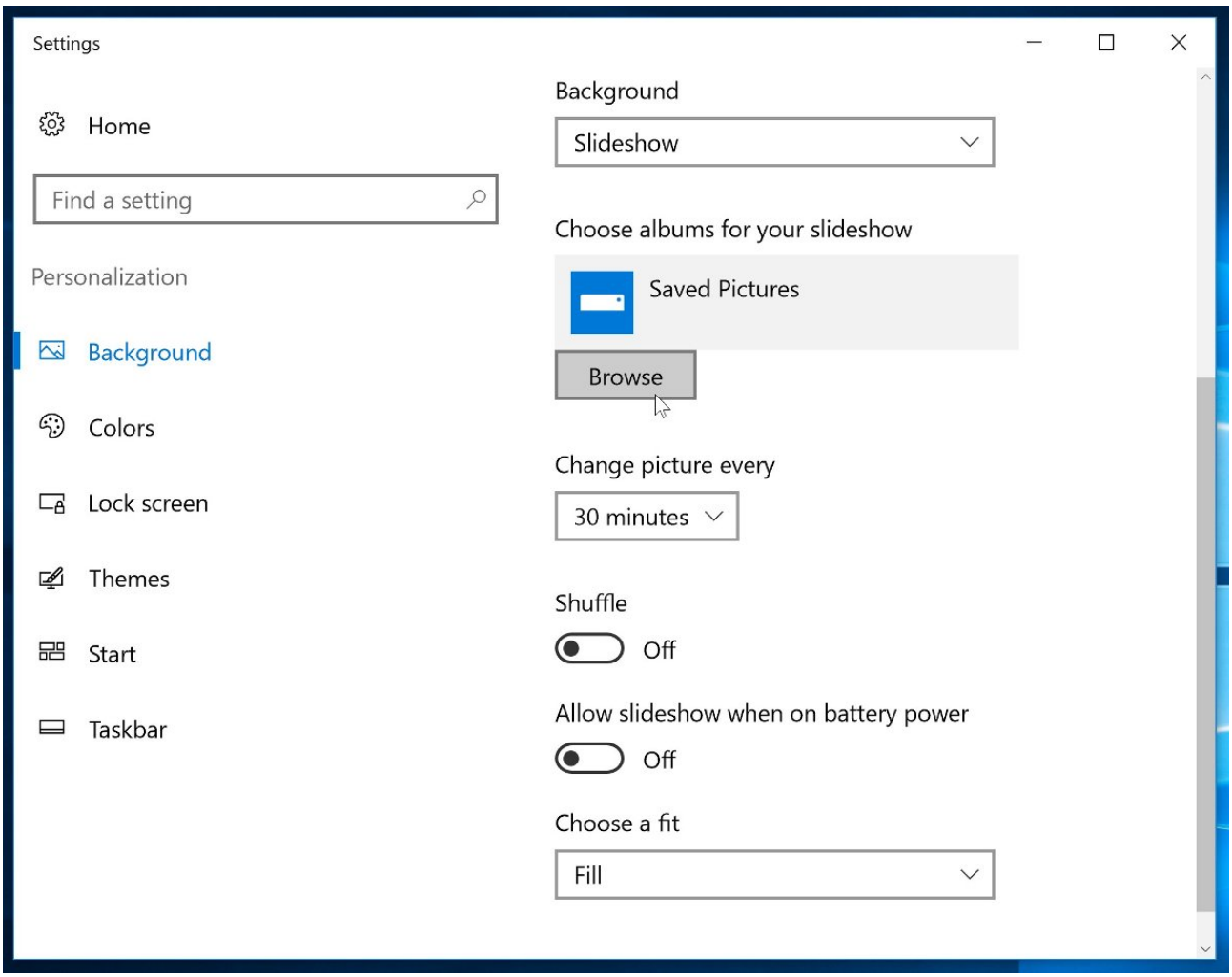
To change the Desktop image, first we have to access the Personalization window. This is done by simply right-clicking on the Desktop itself (make sure you're not right-clicking a file, folder, or the taskbar) and click **Personalize**.



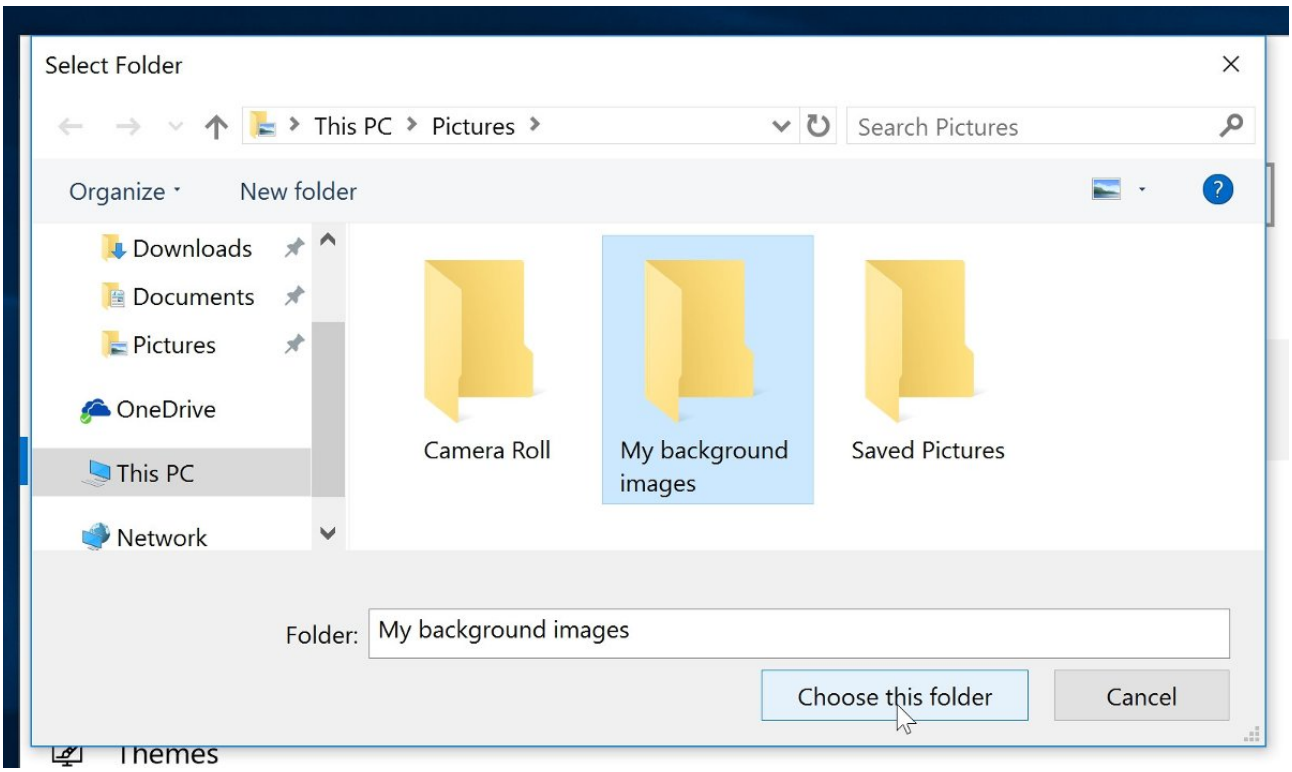
On this new screen under Background, select Picture. You'll then be presented with a selection of images to choose from. If you have an idea for an image you'd like, you can tell Windows to use it by clicking "Browse" and selecting the image. Make sure the image is approximately the same size as the screen or else it may look strange.



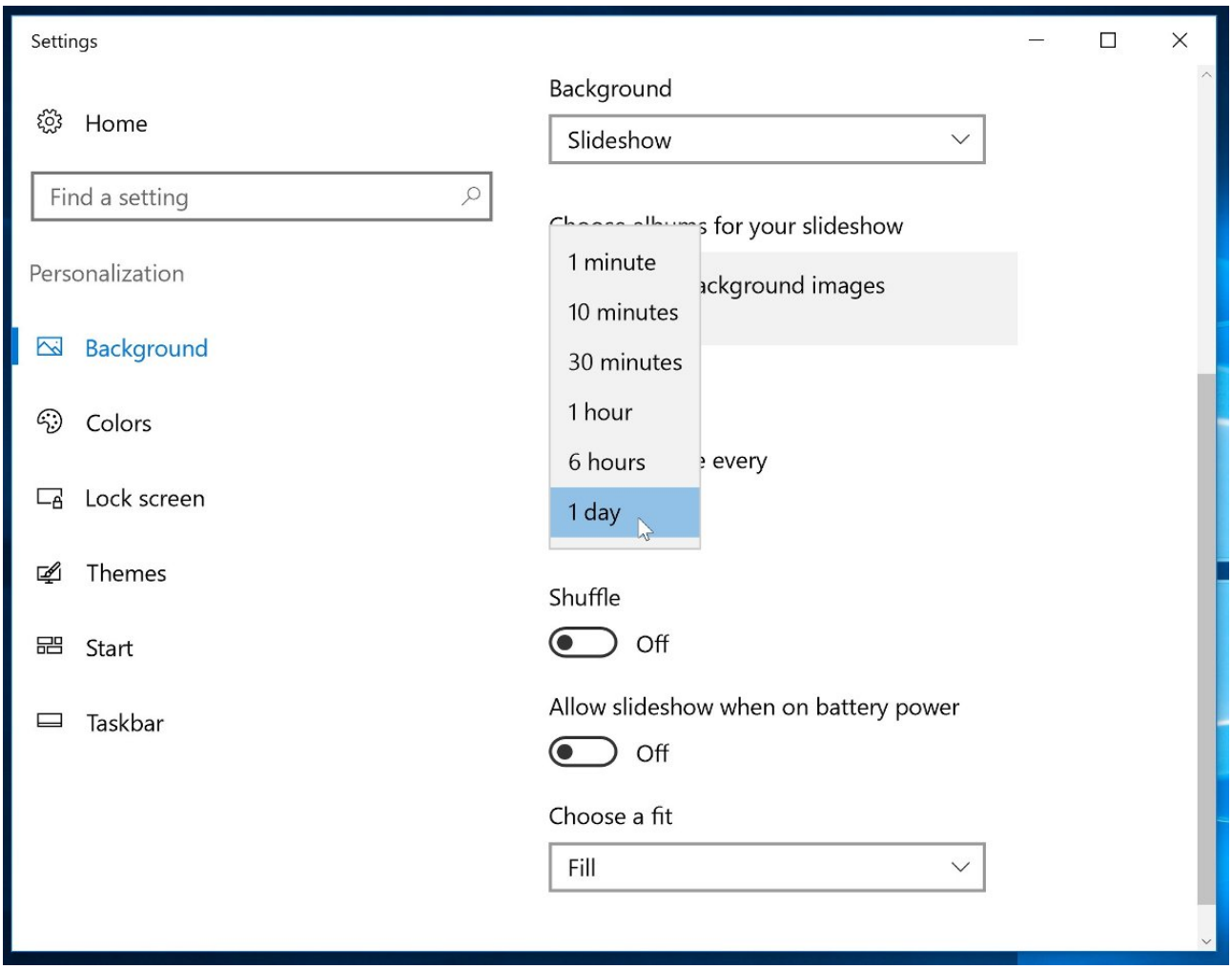
If you look under the Background drop-down menu, you may have seen another interesting option; Slideshow. You can set it so that Windows goes through a series of images for your background instead of just the one. To do this, put all the images you want to have on your background into a folder. Then, click the Browse button under Choose albums for your slideshow.



Select the folder.



Below the Browse button are a few options you can change. These include a timer for when the background changes to the next image, if the images are randomly selected, if the slide show still occurs while on battery, and how you want the images to fill the screen.

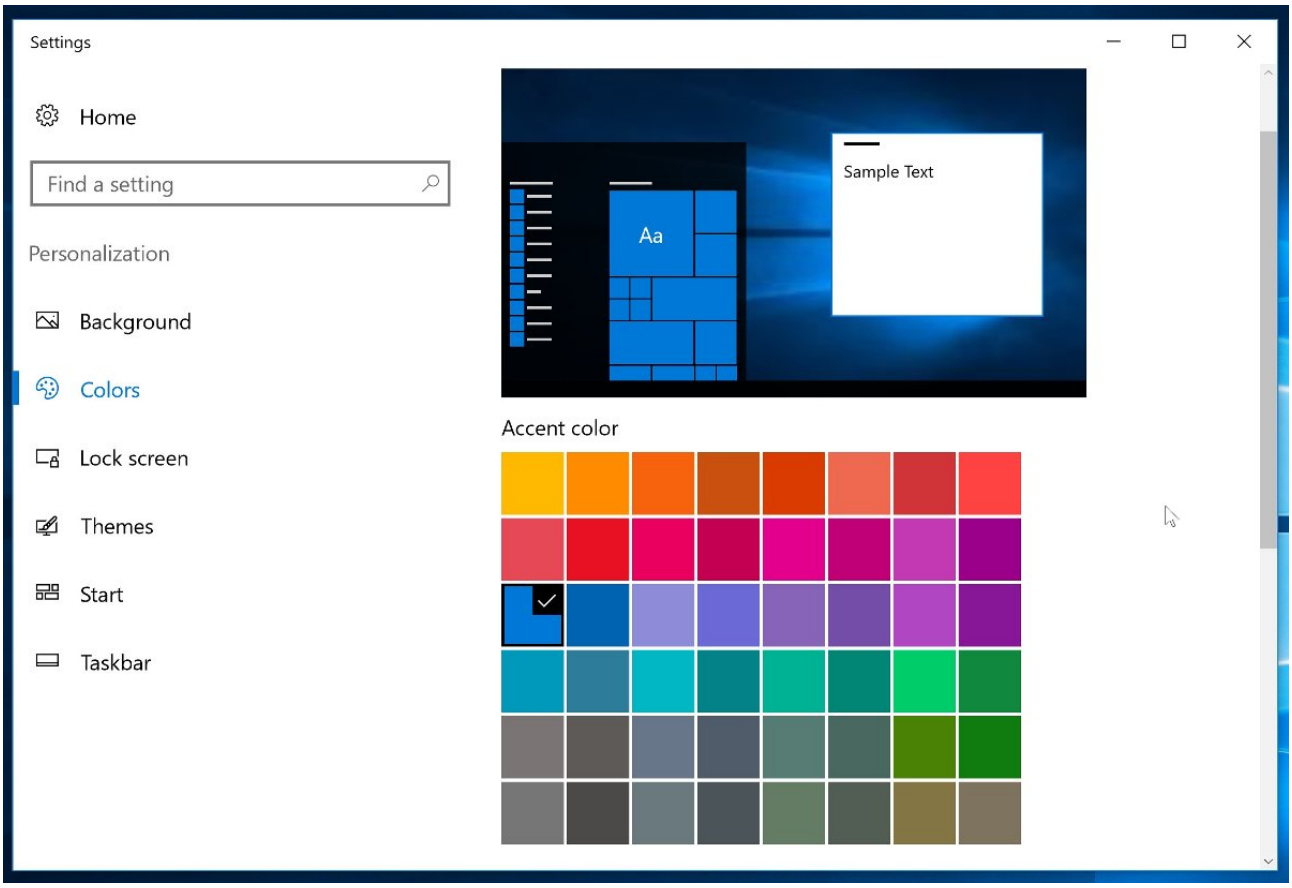


You now have a more exciting desktop background.

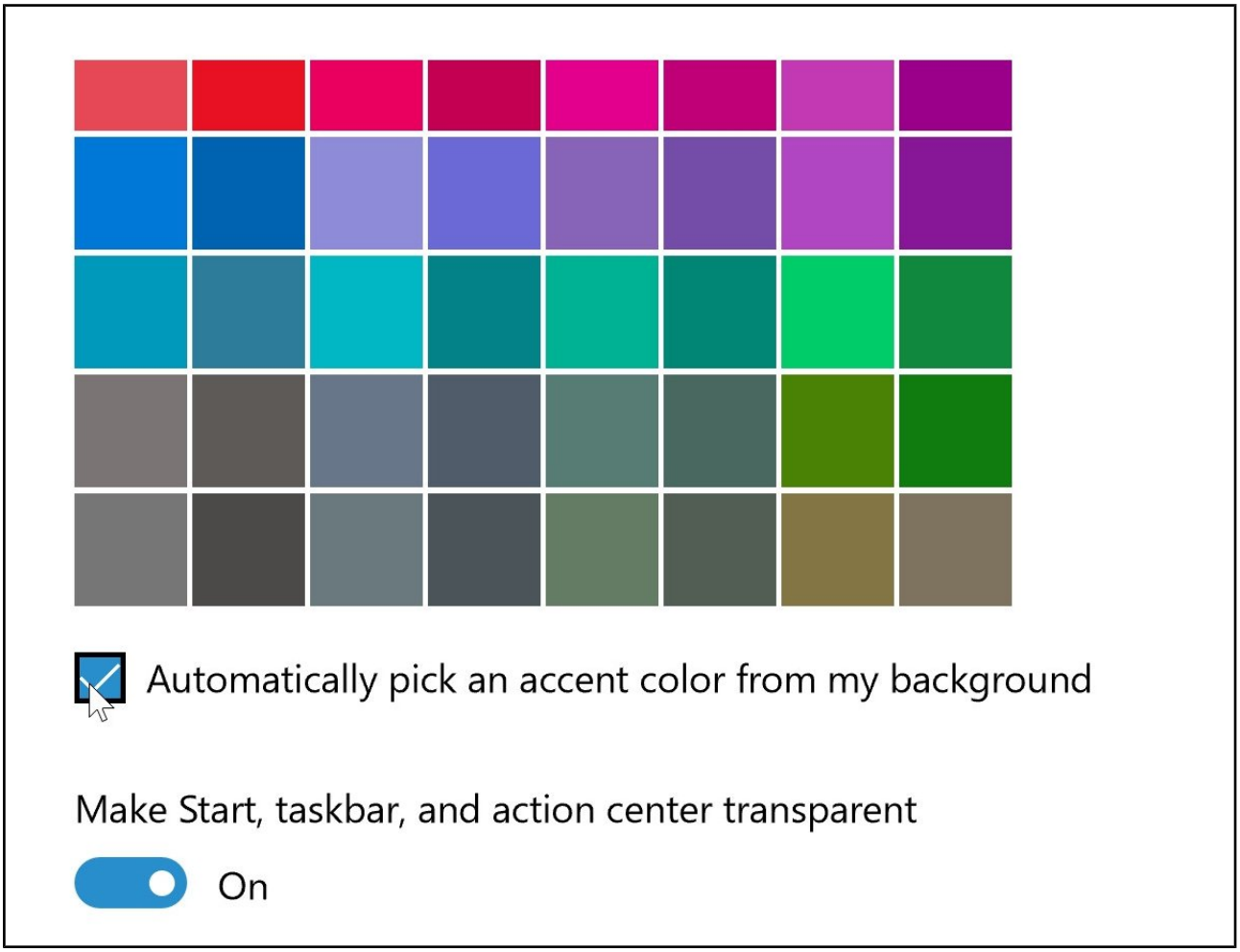
Set Visual Theme

We can do a little better than just the background of the desktop, however. While setting a background image can help personalise your computer a great deal, you can also tweak how the UI looks. You can even tell Windows 10 to change the colour of your UI to match the dominant colours of the background images you've just set, even if it's a slideshow.

While in the Personalize window, click the Colors option on the left.



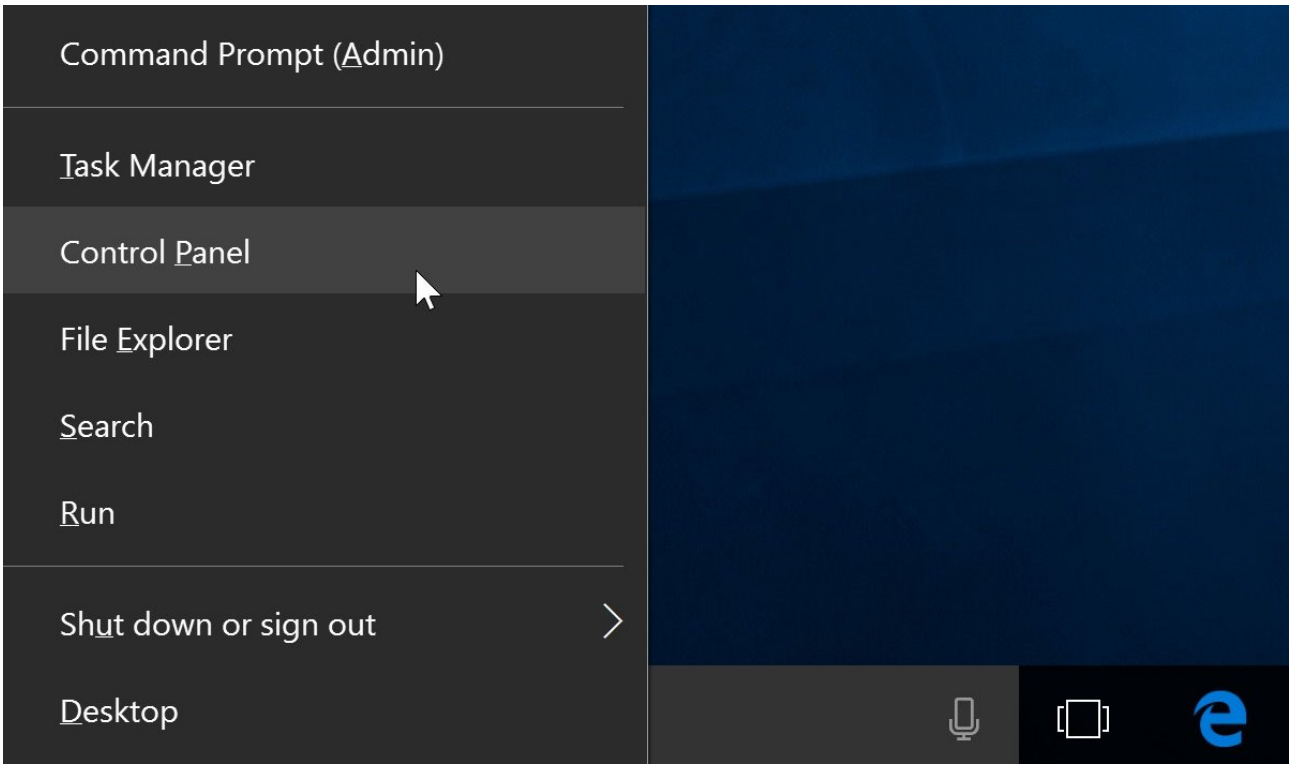
Here you can set the options for the colors of your window. You can take your pick of the selection of colors on offer, or you can tell Windows to look for accent colors in your current desktop image and use that instead.


Automatically pick an accent color from my background
Make Start, taskbar, and action center transparent
On

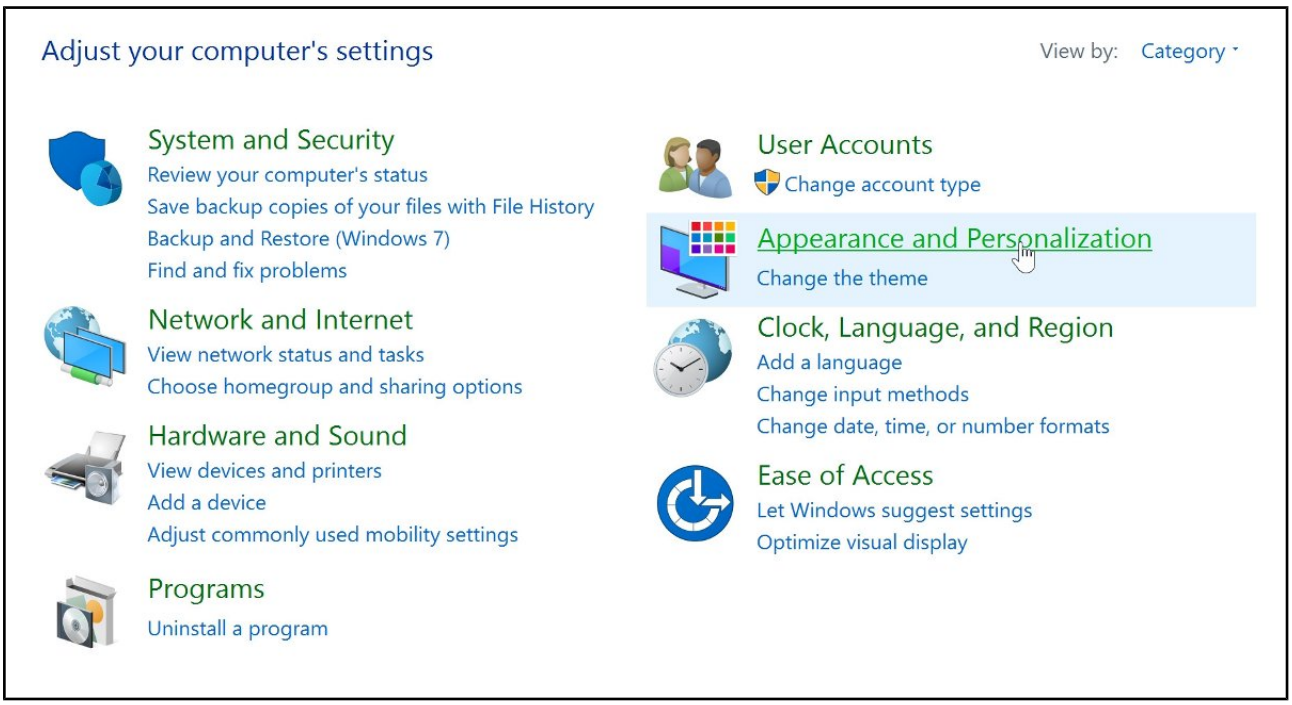
Set Sound Theme

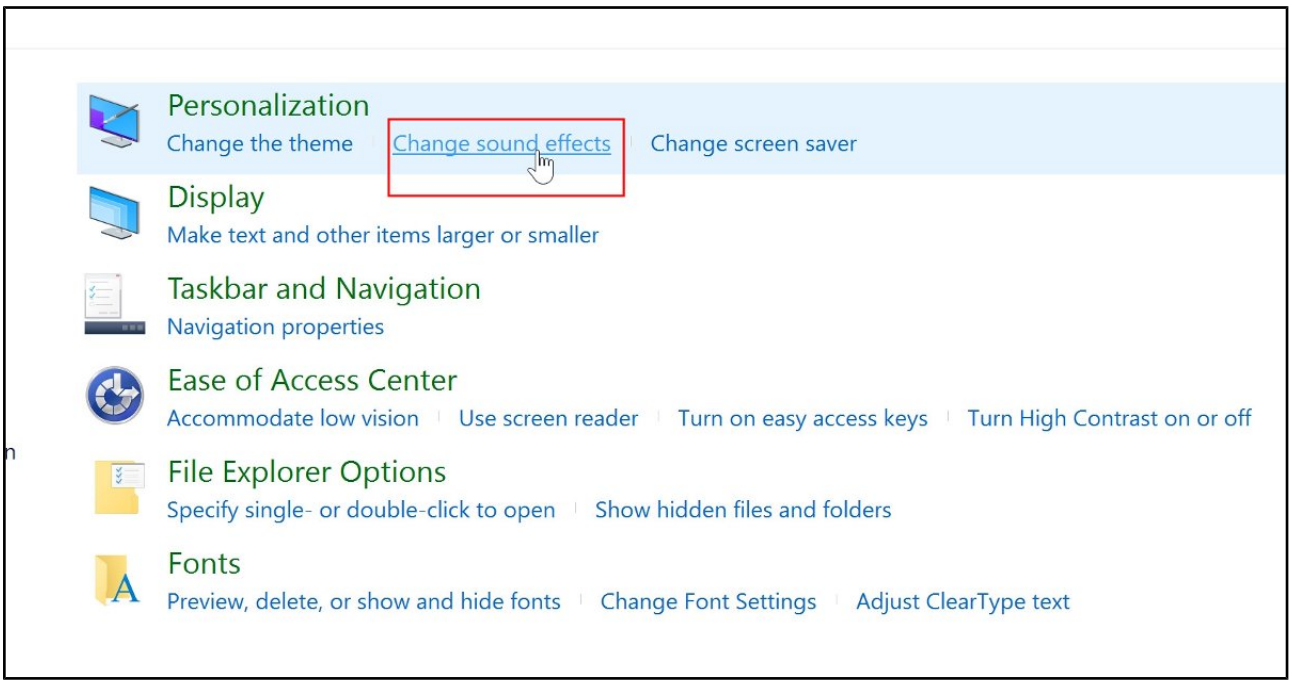
You're not restricted to just visual customisation, however. Did you know you can also change the sounds that Windows 10 plays during specific events? You can change and set the sound your computer makes when it logs on, logs off, receives a new email, presents an error, detects a critical-level battery, and many more things.

To access the sound settings, first right-click the Start button. Then click Control Panel.

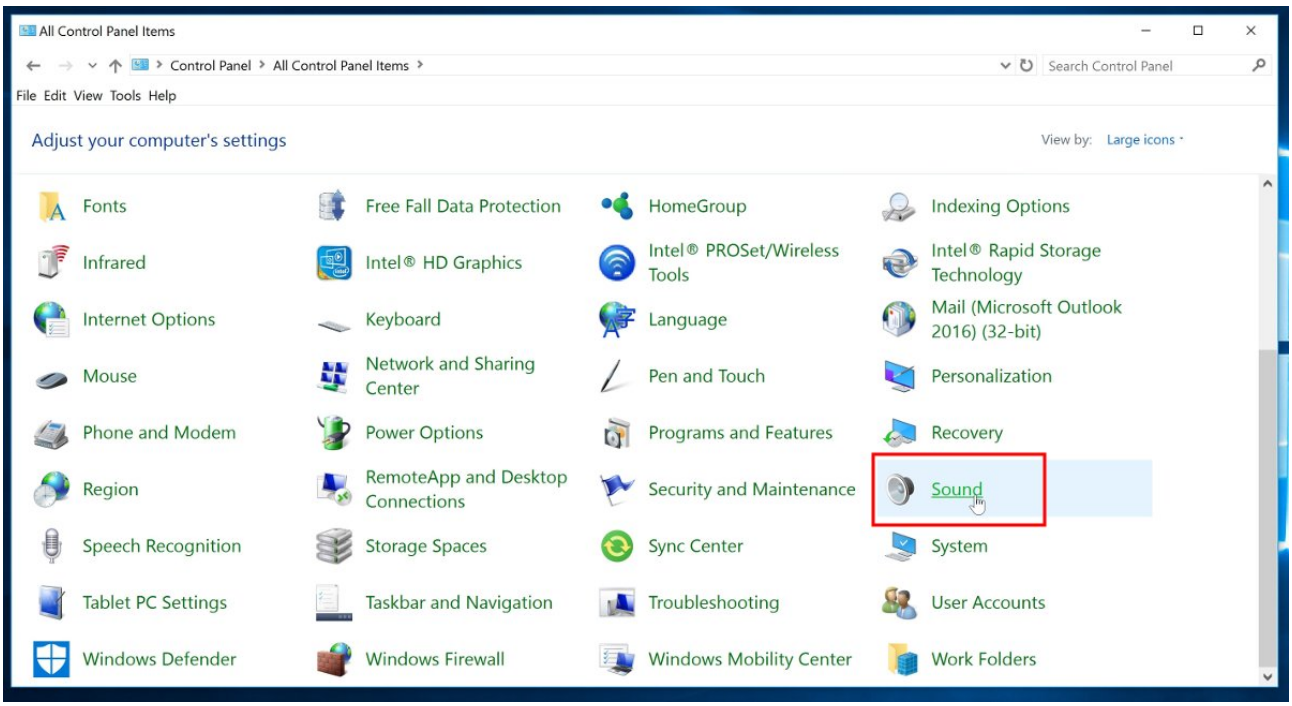


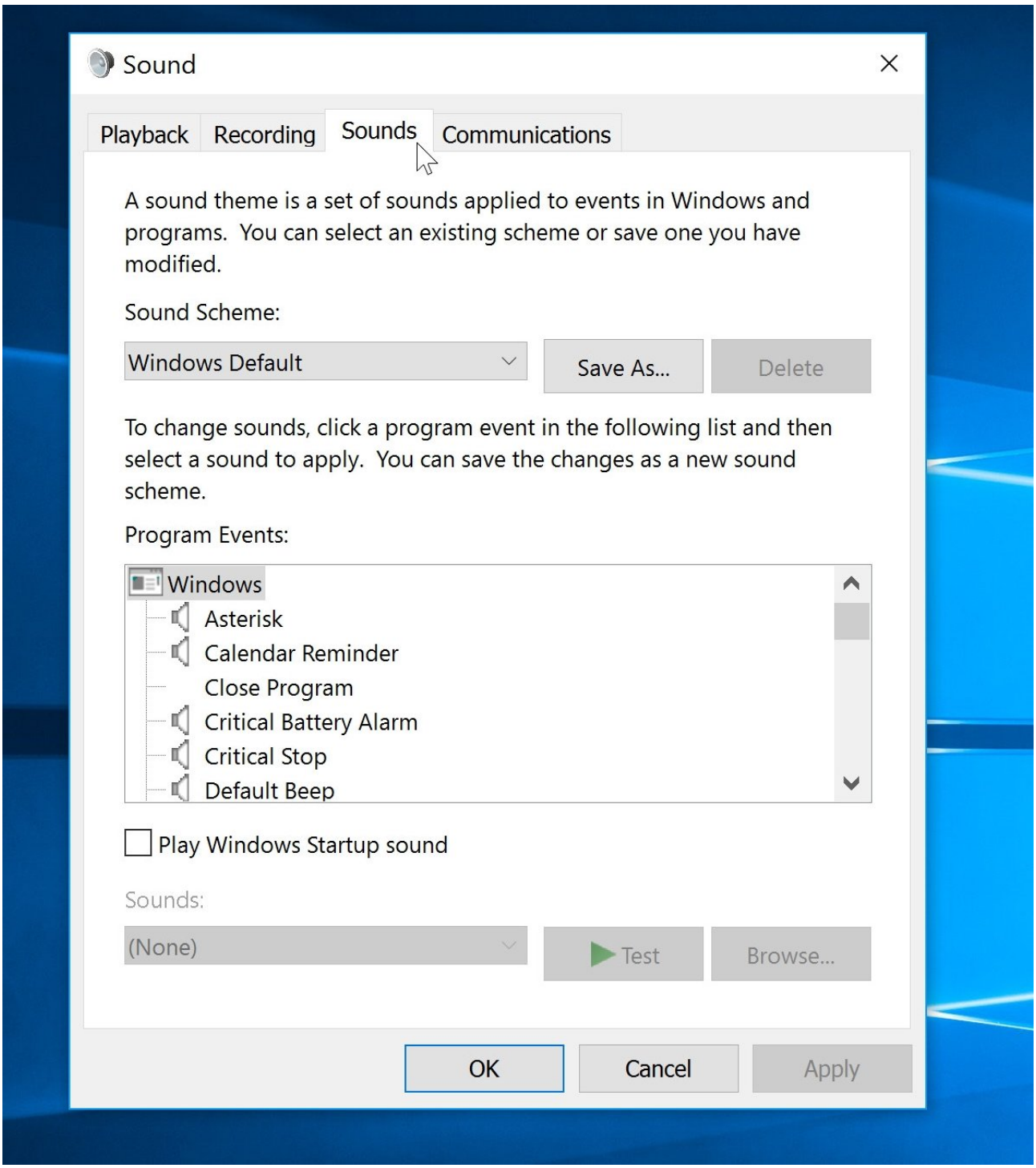
If you view the Control Panel in Category view, click "Appearance and Personalization", then "Change sound effects" under Personalization.



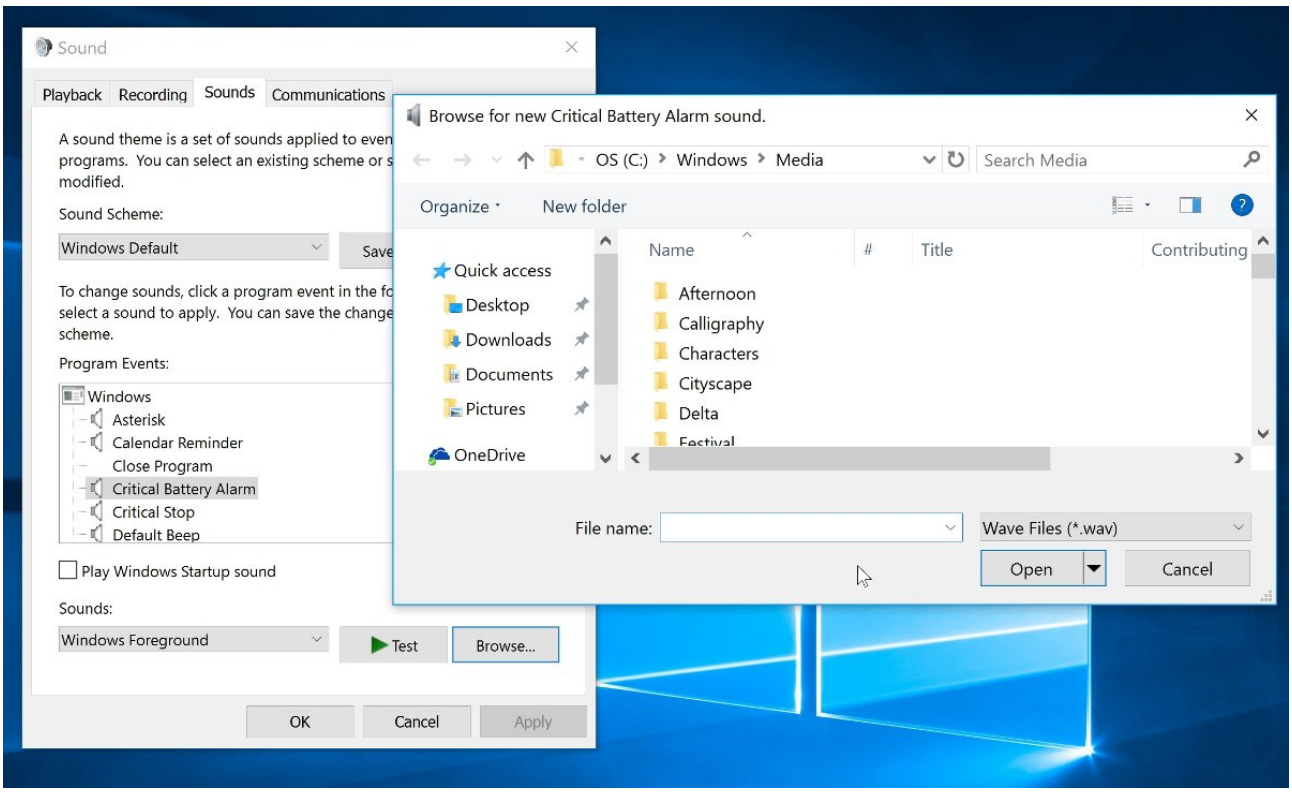


If you view the Control Panel in Small/Large icons view, click Sound, then click the Sounds tab in the window that appears.


All Control Panel Items
Control Panel › All Control Panel Items ›
Search Control Panel
File Edit View Tools Help
Adjust your computer's settings
View by: Large icons
Fonts
Free Fall Data Protection
HomeGroup
Indexing Options
Infrared
Intel® HD Graphics
Intel® PROSet/Wireless Tools
Intel® Rapid Storage Technology
Internet Options
Keyboard
Language
Mail (Microsoft Outlook 2016) (32-bit)
Mouse
Network and Sharing Center
Pen and Touch
Personalization
Phone and Modem
Power Options
Programs and Features
Recovery
Region
RemoteApp and Desktop Connections
Security and Maintenance
Sound
Speech Recognition
Storage Spaces
Sync Center
System
Tablet PC Settings
Taskbar and Navigation
Troubleshooting
User Accounts
Windows Defender
Windows Firewall
Windows Mobility Center
Work Folders



In this window, in the bottom panel, you can select specific events related to computer actions. Once an event is selected, use the Sounds drop-down box to select a default sound to use, or click on “Browse…” if you have a sound file you’d like to use instead. Remember that Windows 10 needs sounds to be in .wav file format for them to be usable.

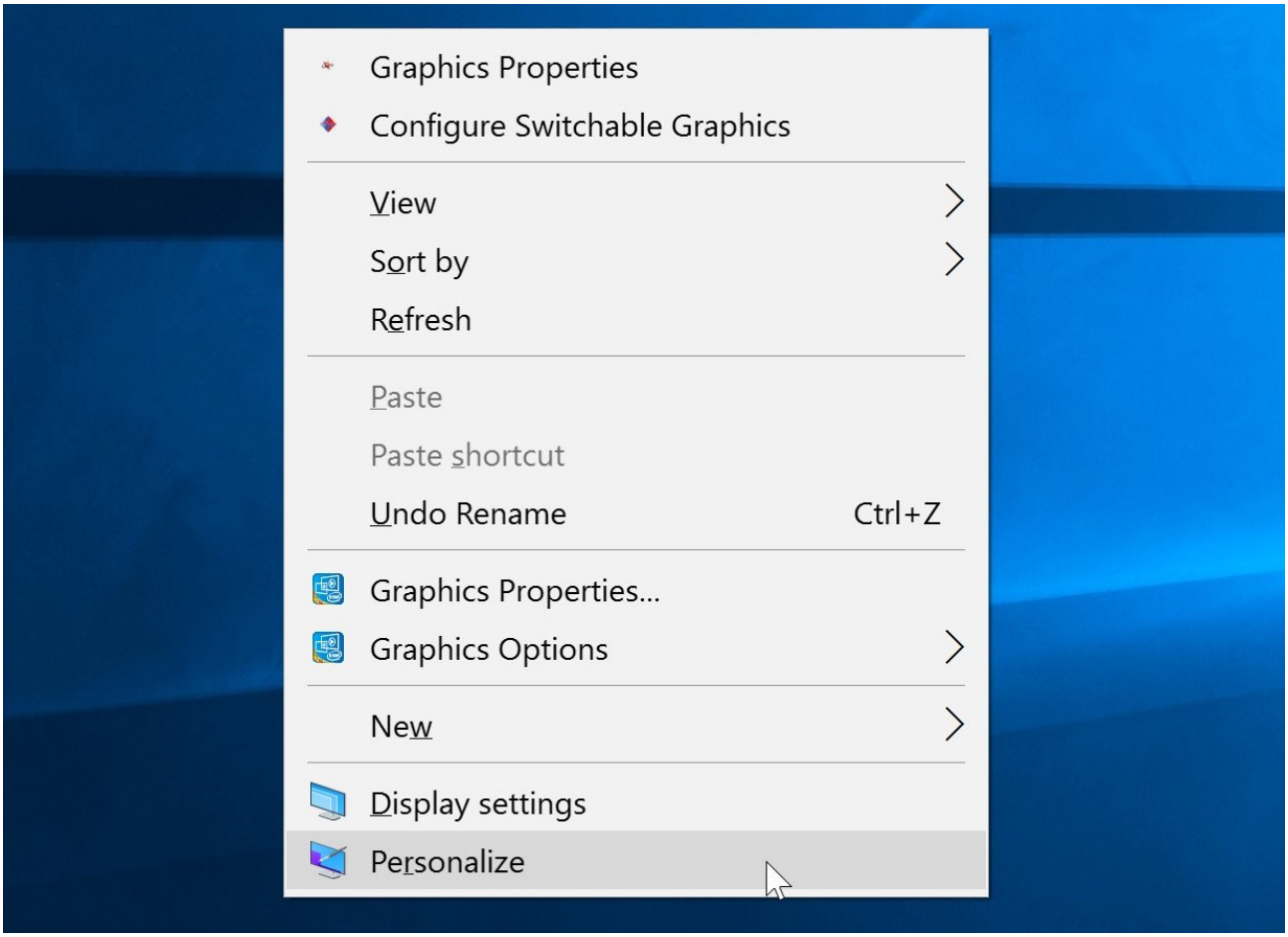


Once you've set up the sounds as you like, make sure you click the "Save as…" button, and save your theme with a name so you don't lose your hard work.

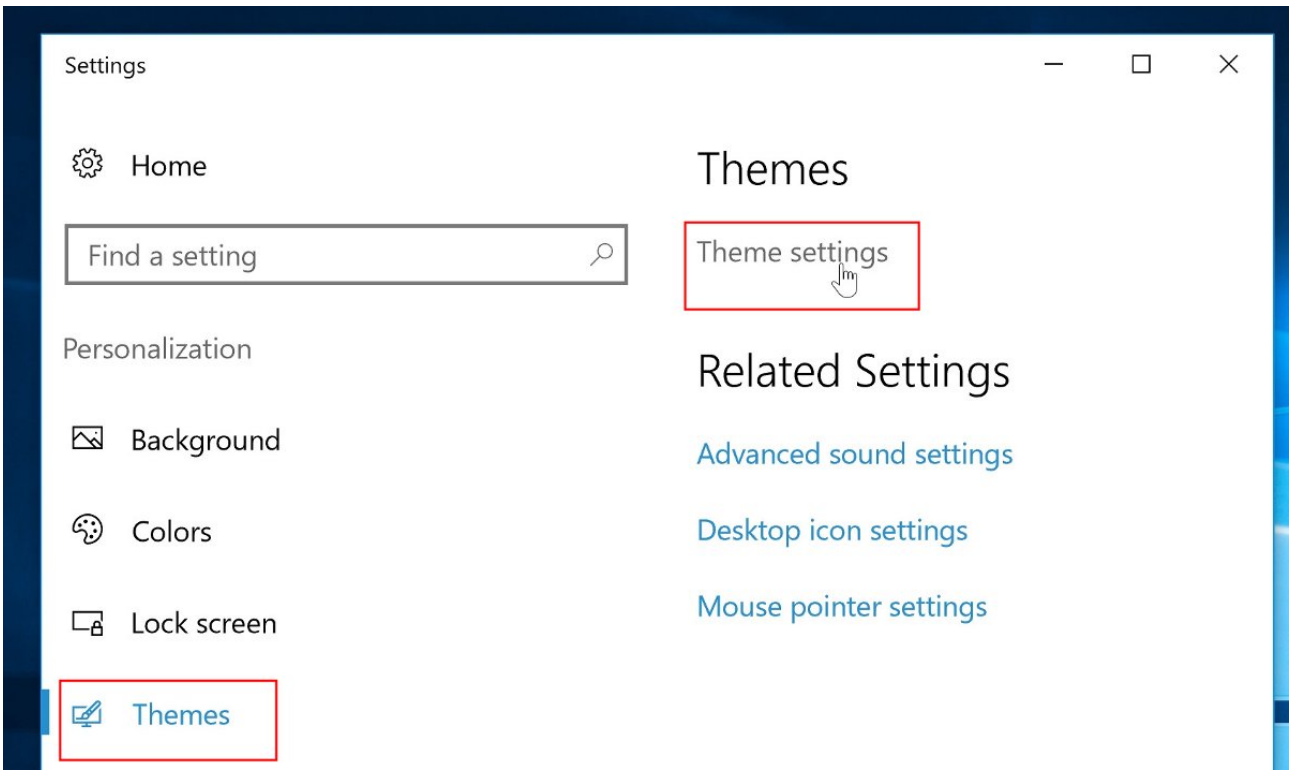
Theme Saving and Loading

Now that you have your system looking and sounding great, you may want to save all your settings under a single theme so that you can save and load different themes on the fly.

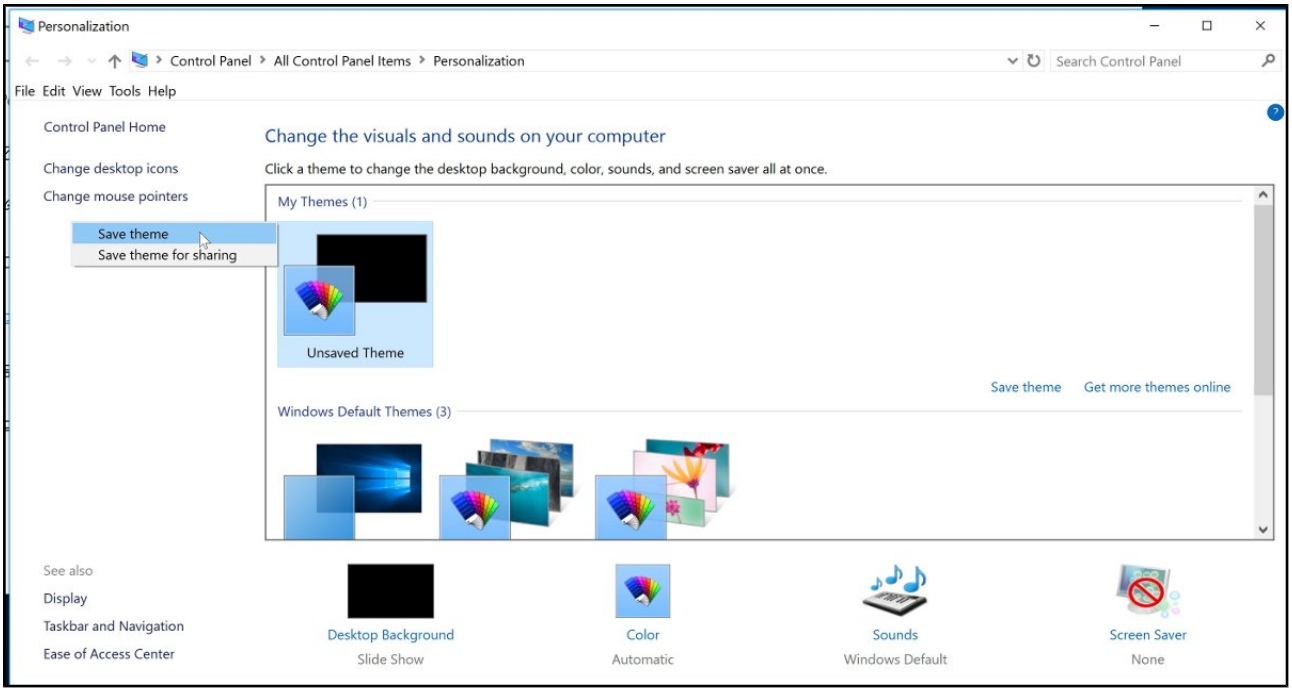
To save a theme, right-click an empty spot on the desktop and click Personalize.



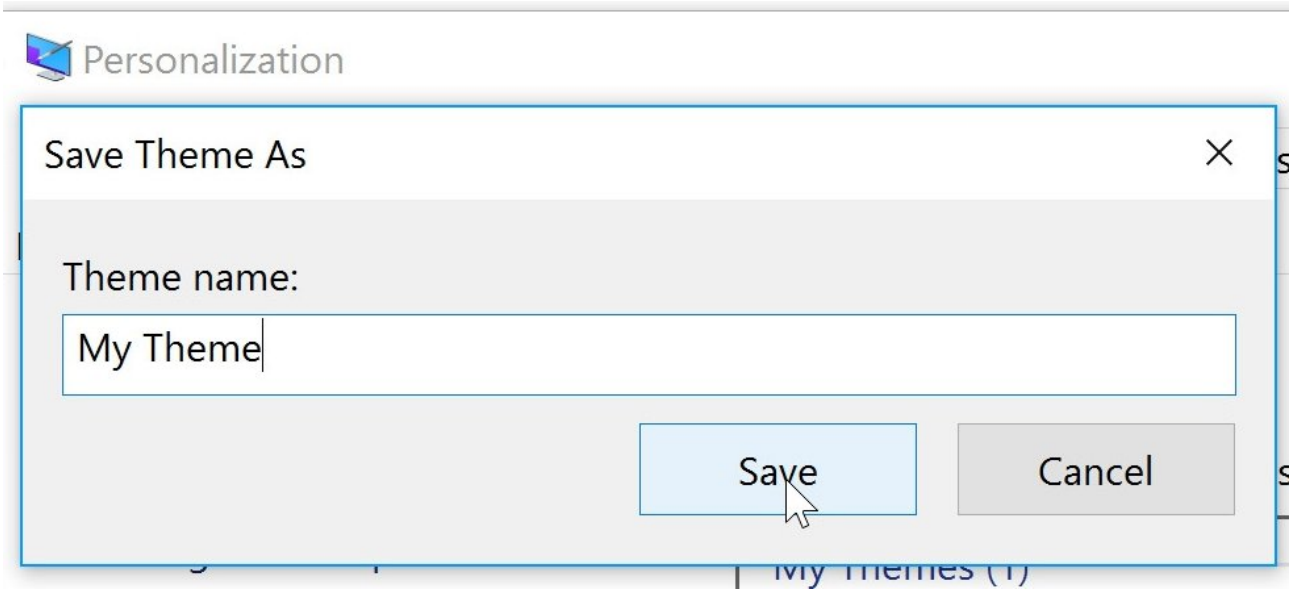
In the Personalization window, click Themes on the left, then “Theme Settings.”



This takes you to a screen of themes. If you've already set your desktop image, visual, and sound themes, don't click any themes on this screen. Doing so will change the theme you've set up to a different one. To save the theme you've set up, right-click the theme called "Unsaved Theme" and click "Save Theme".



Give your theme a name, then click Save.

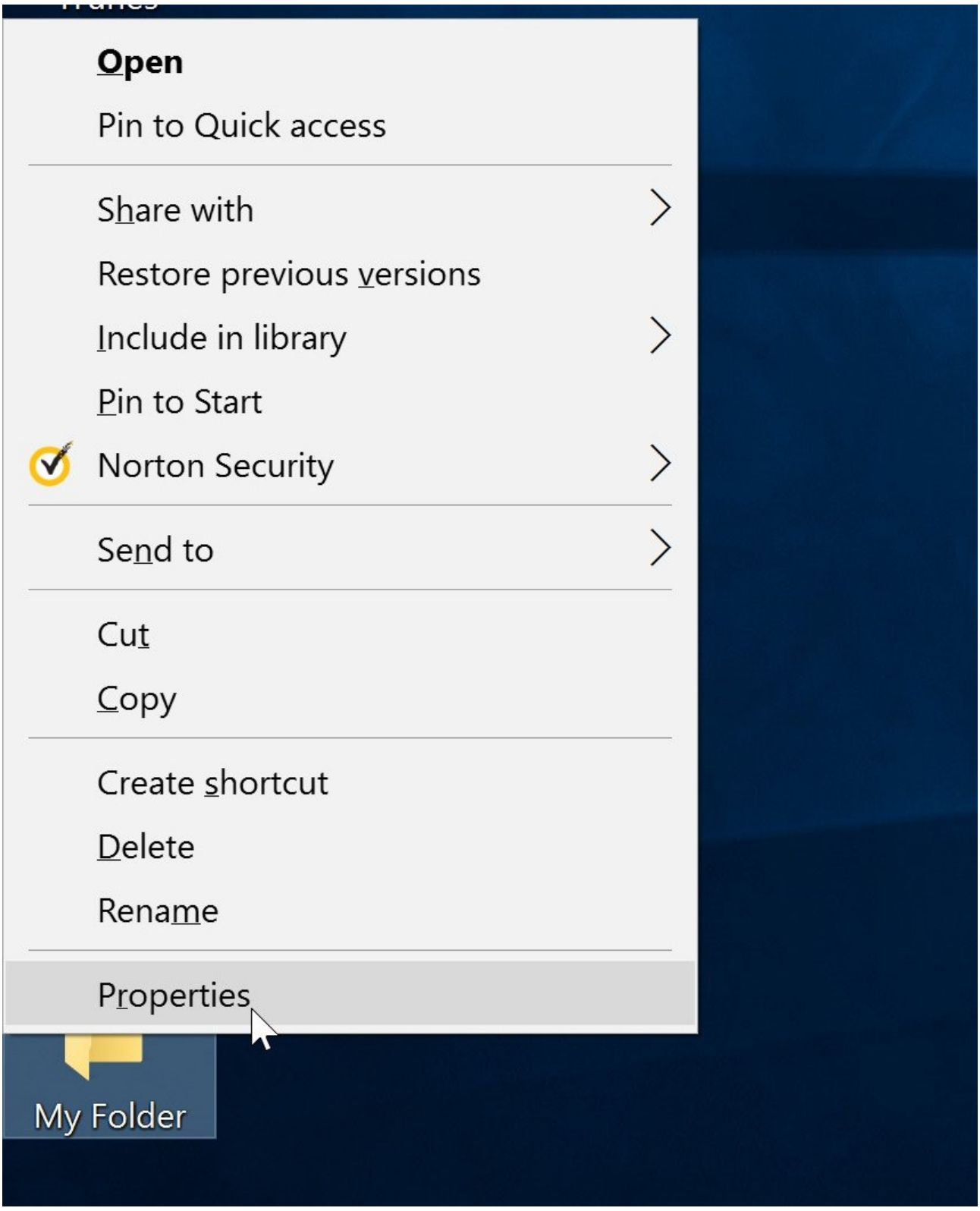


Now your settings are all saved. You can now freely switch between themes or make new ones without fear of losing your current one. If you change something and want to revert back to the original theme, just come back here and click the theme again. To save any changes you make to your theme, just repeat the above instructions again to save it.

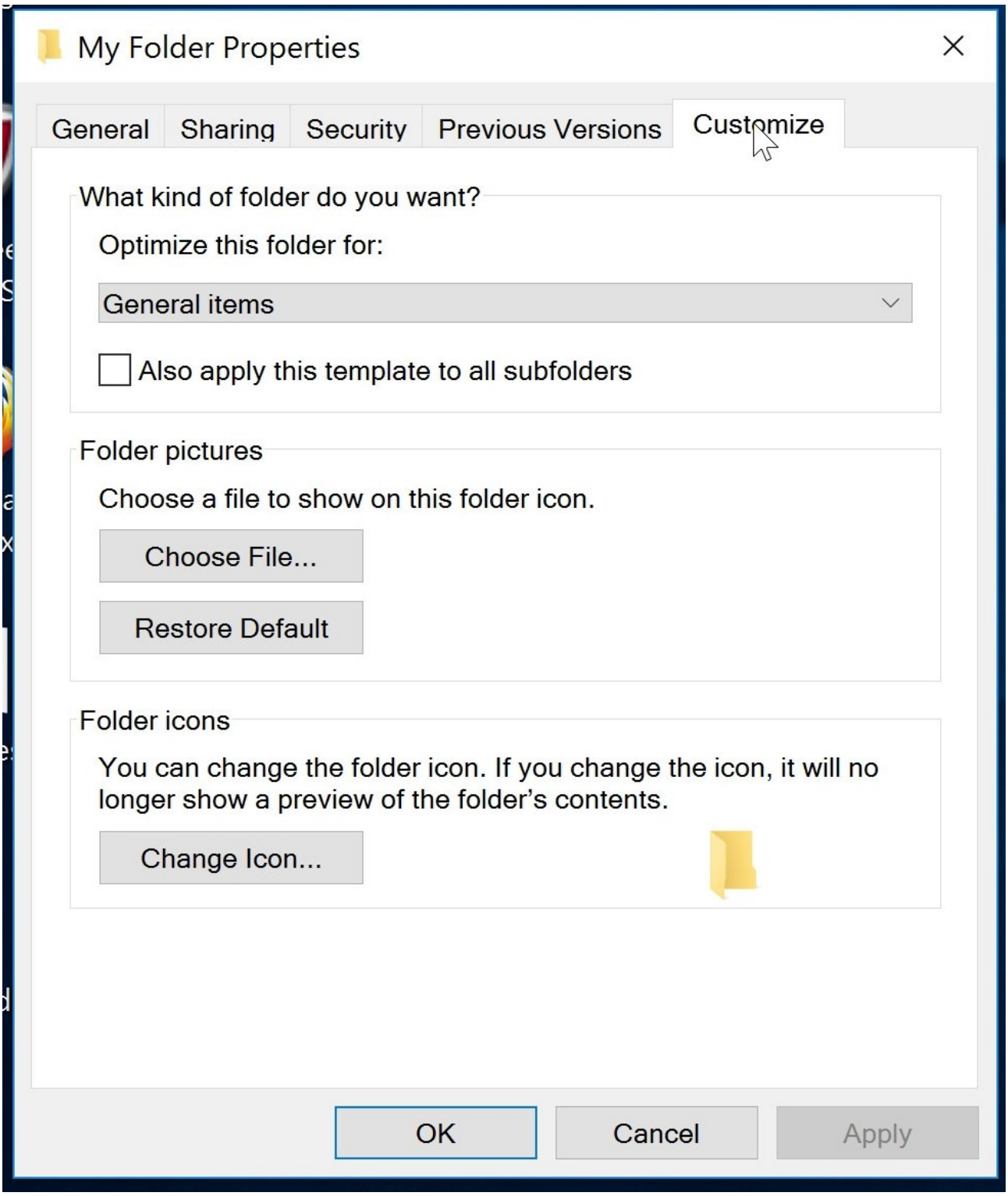
Change Folder Icon

Did you know that you can change the icon for a folder on your desktop? If you want to make a specific folder stand out on your desktop, it’s very simple to change how it appears.

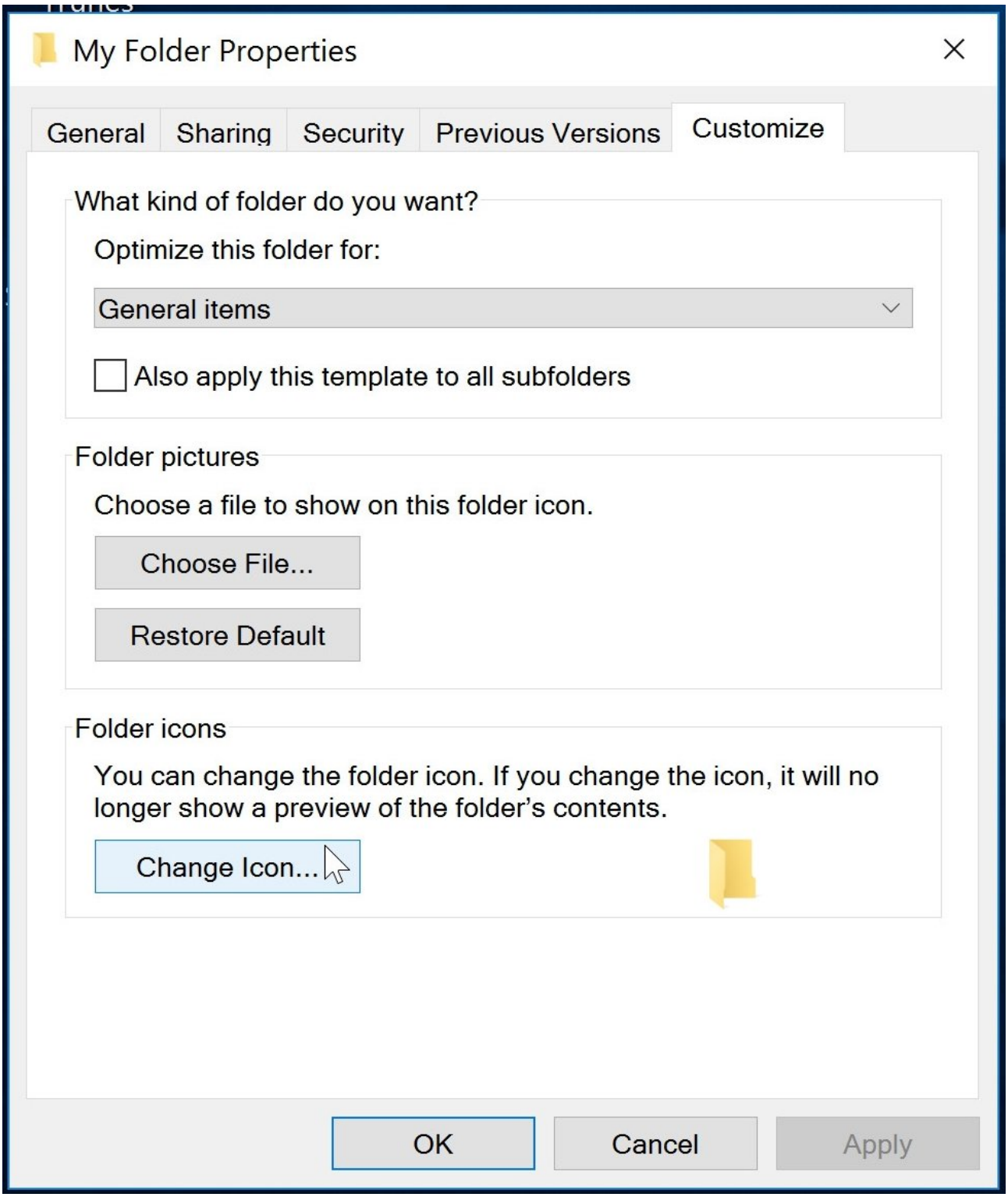
First, right click the folder, then click Properties.



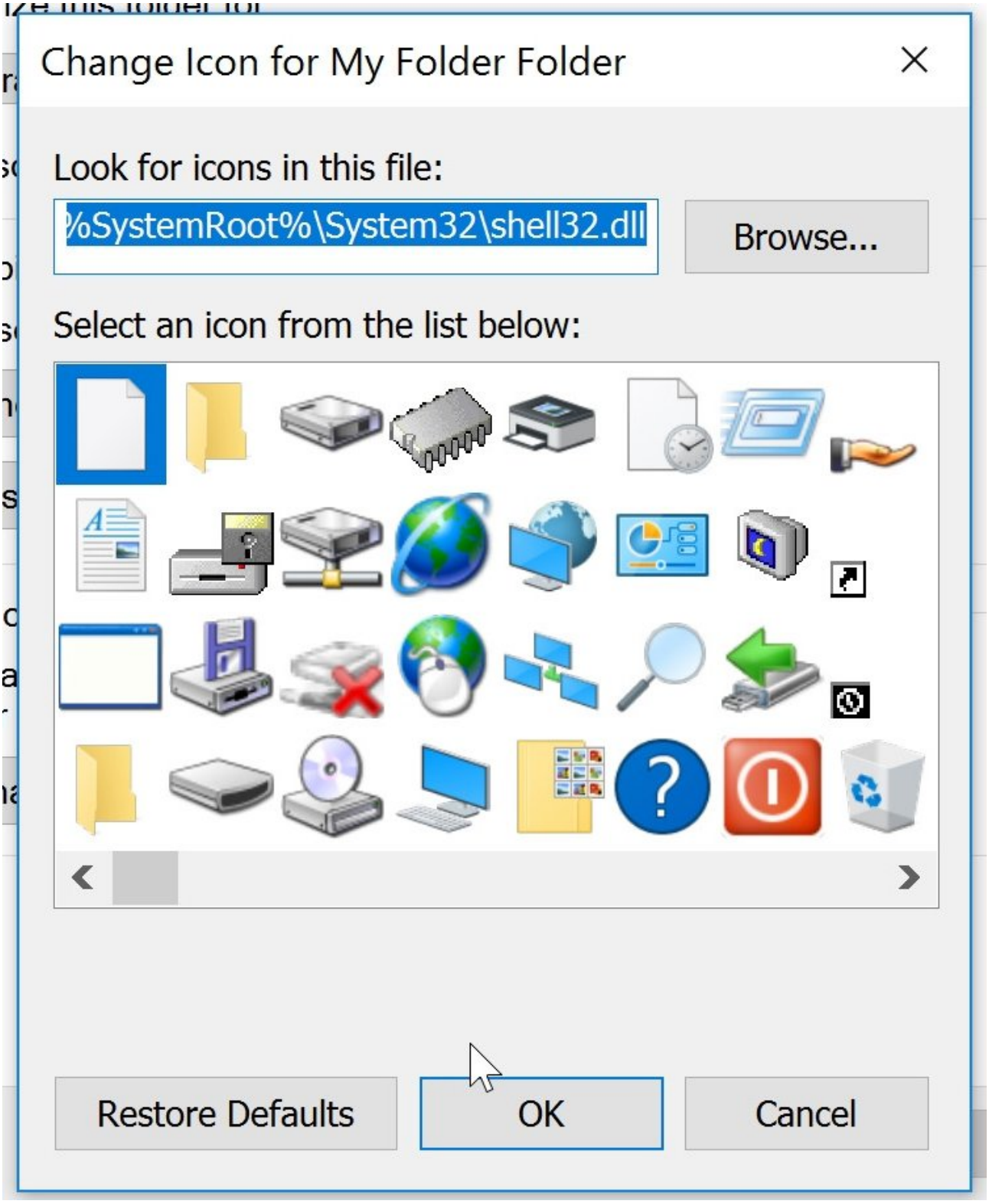
From here, go to the Customize tab.



In the Customize tab, find the section labelled Folder Icons and click “Change Icon…” from it.



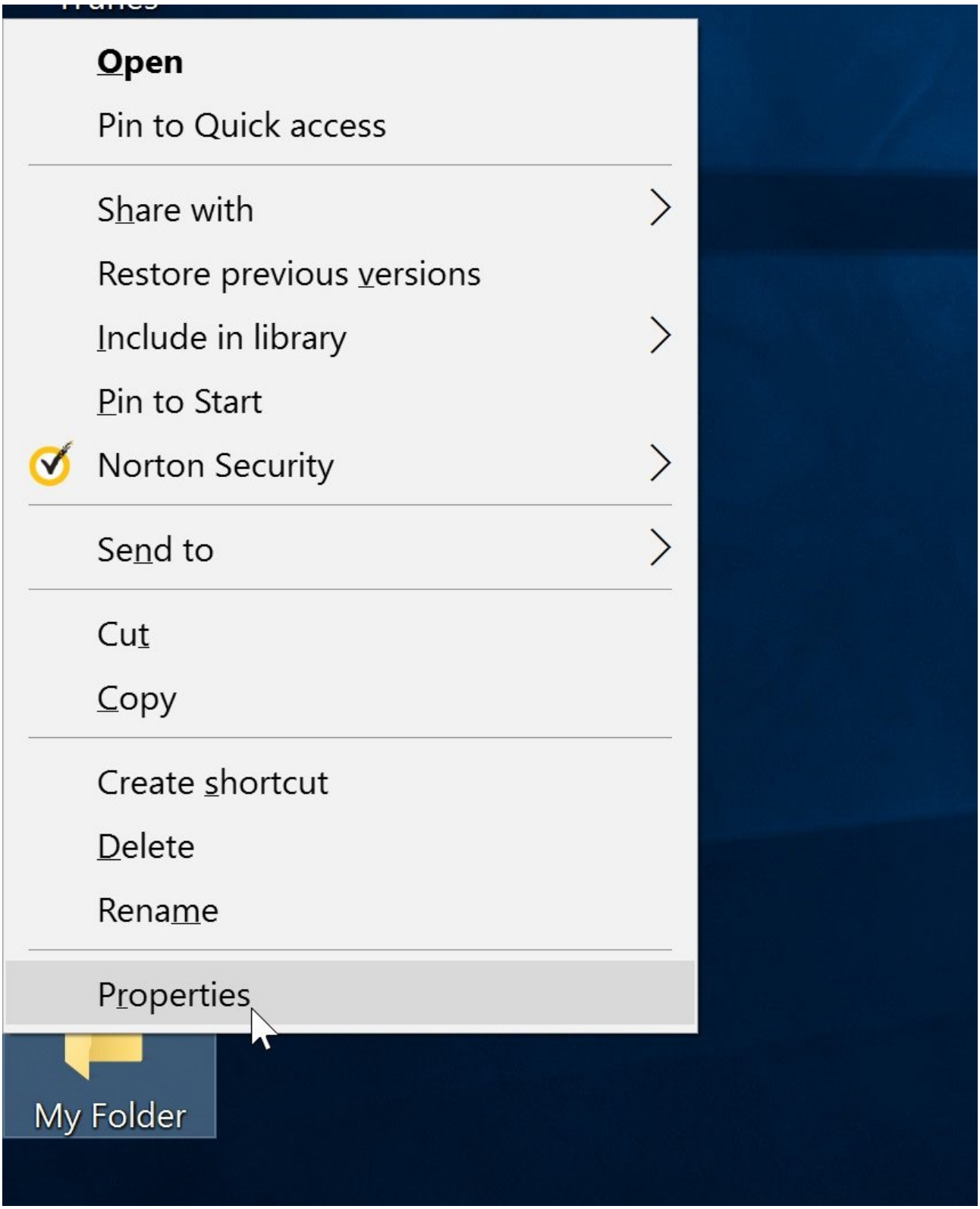
Now you can select from a range of icons from Windows. If you have any custom Icon files you want to use, you can select them using “Browse...”. Once done, click on OK in all the windows.


Change Icon for My Folder Folder
Look for icons in this file:
%SystemRoot%\System32\shell32.dll
Browse...
Select an icon from the list below:
Restore Defaults
OK
Cancel

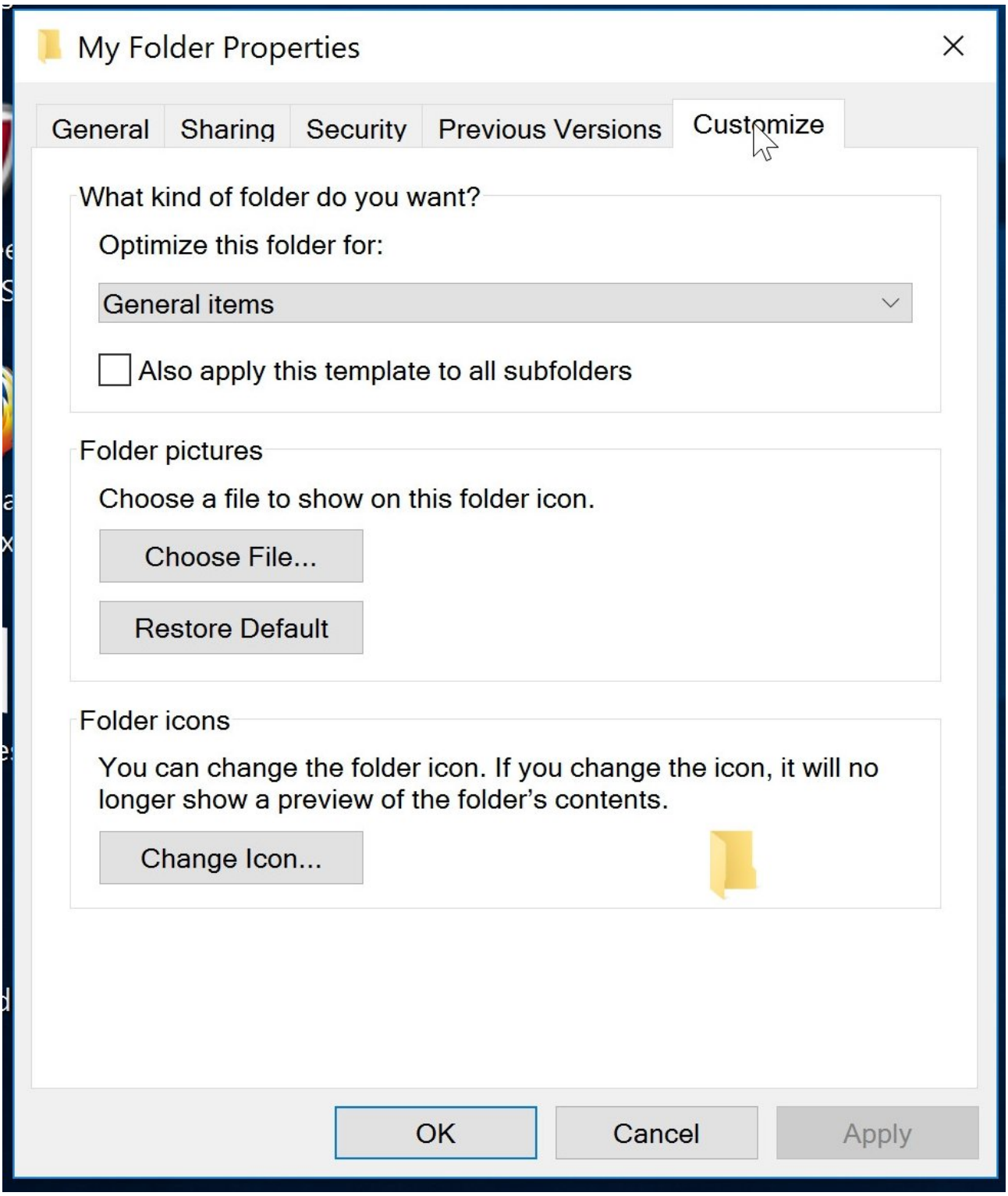
Show File in Folder

If you want a reminder of what files are in what folder, you can set Windows 10 to show a specific image file from within that folder. When you look at the folder as you browse your computer, the folder preview will show the specific image that you've set.

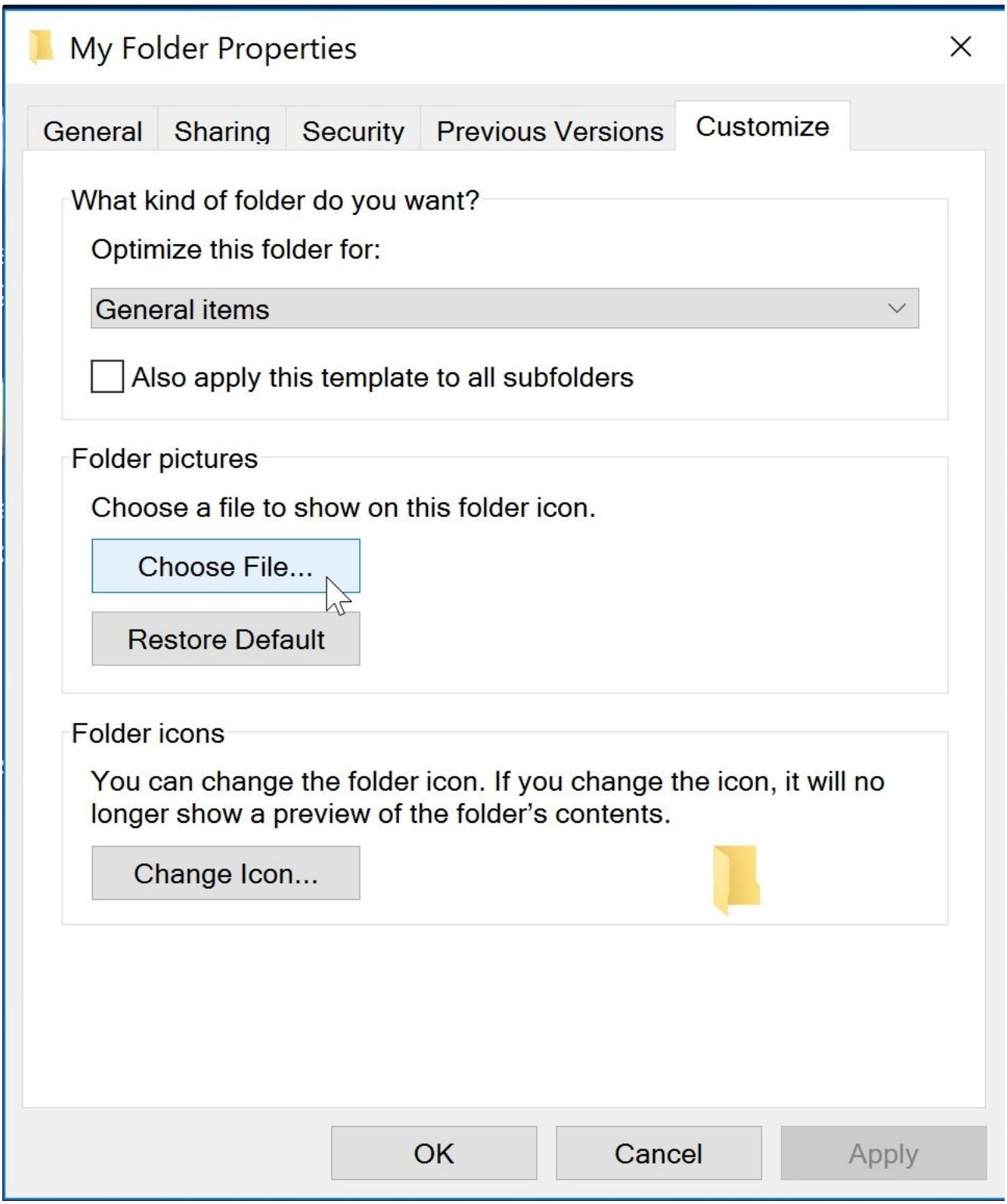
To do this, right-click the folder and click Properties.



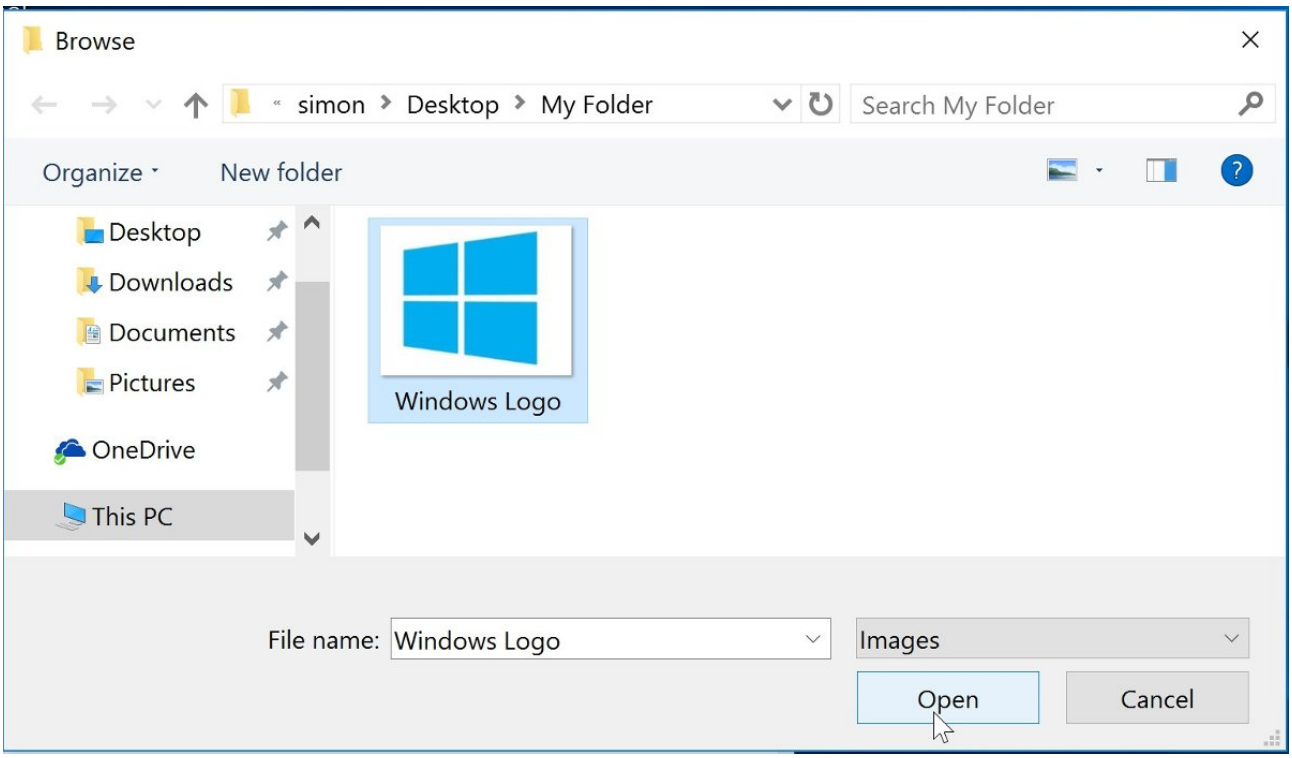
In this new window click the Customize tab at the top.



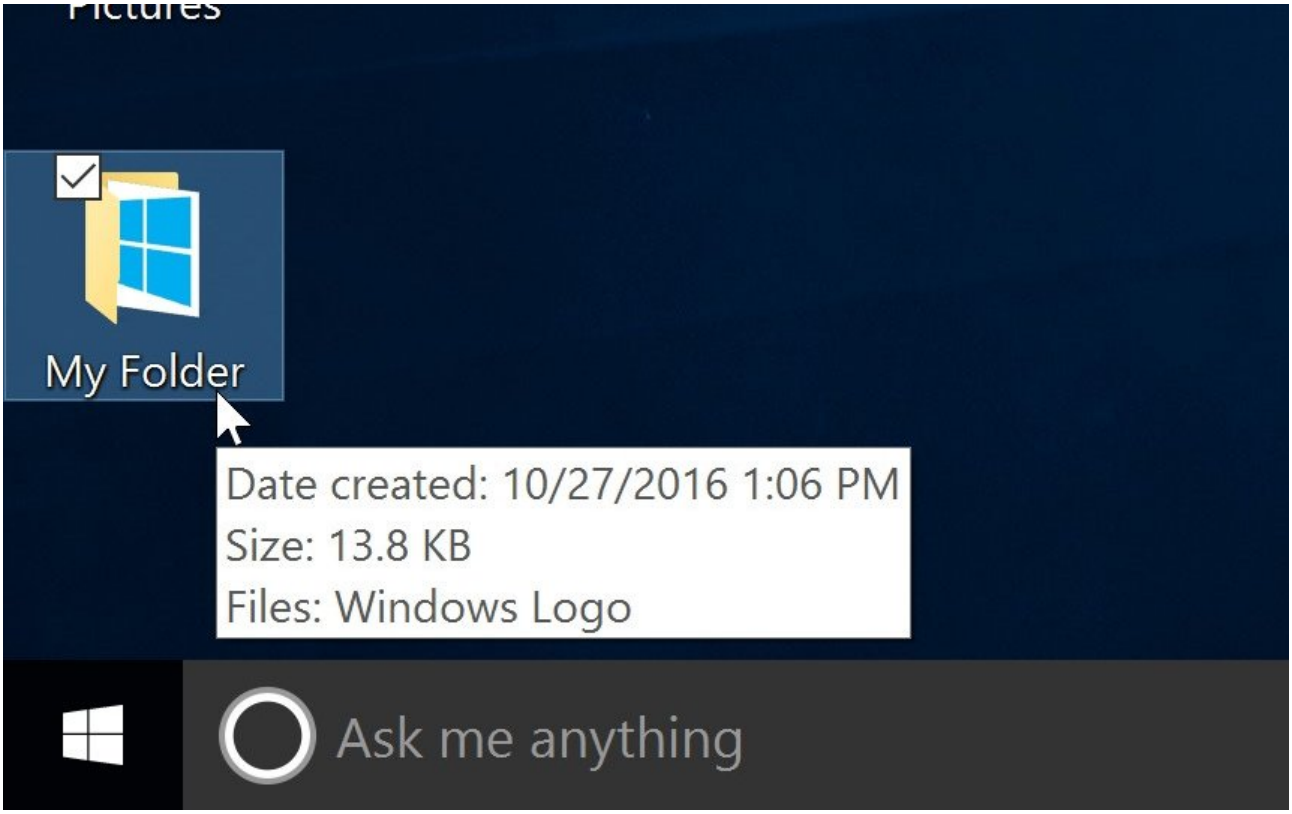
In this tab find the Folder pictures category, and click the “Choose file…” button.



This will bring up the folder's contents. Select the image you want to show in the folder's icon, and click Open.



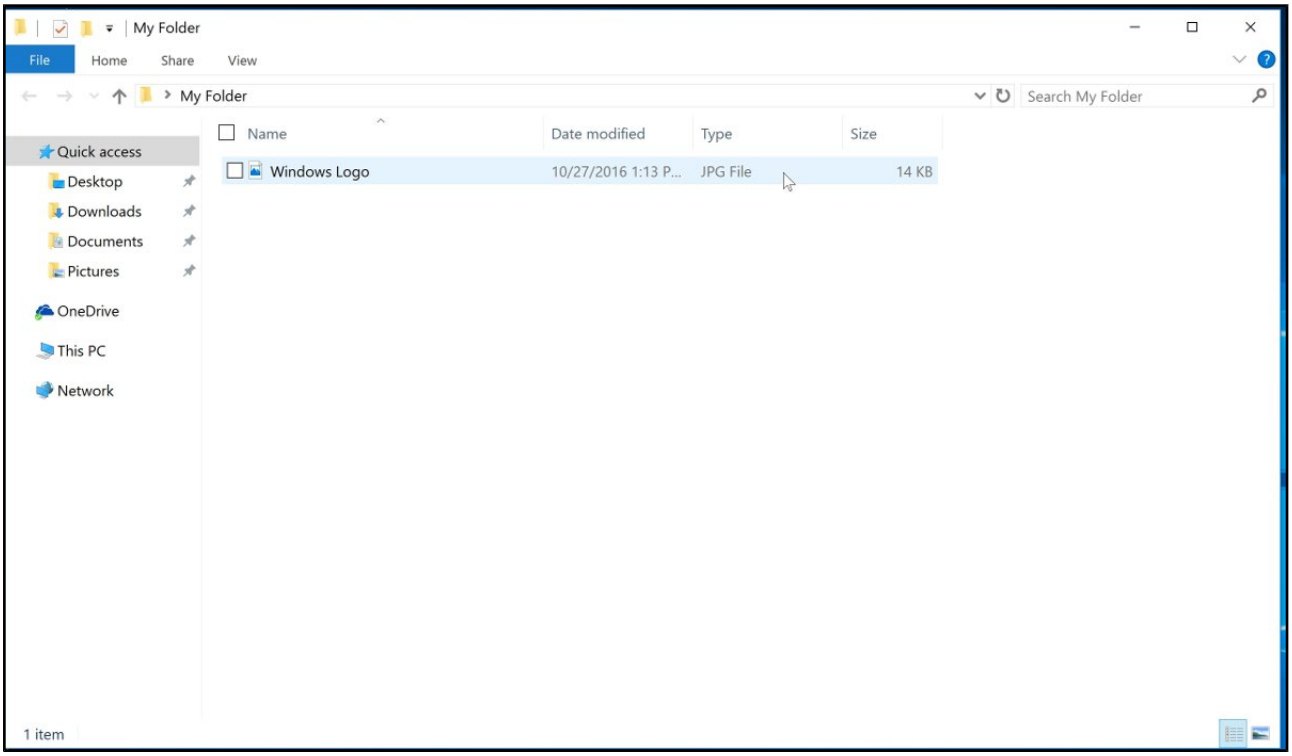
This will then change the folder's image so that it shows your selected image within it.



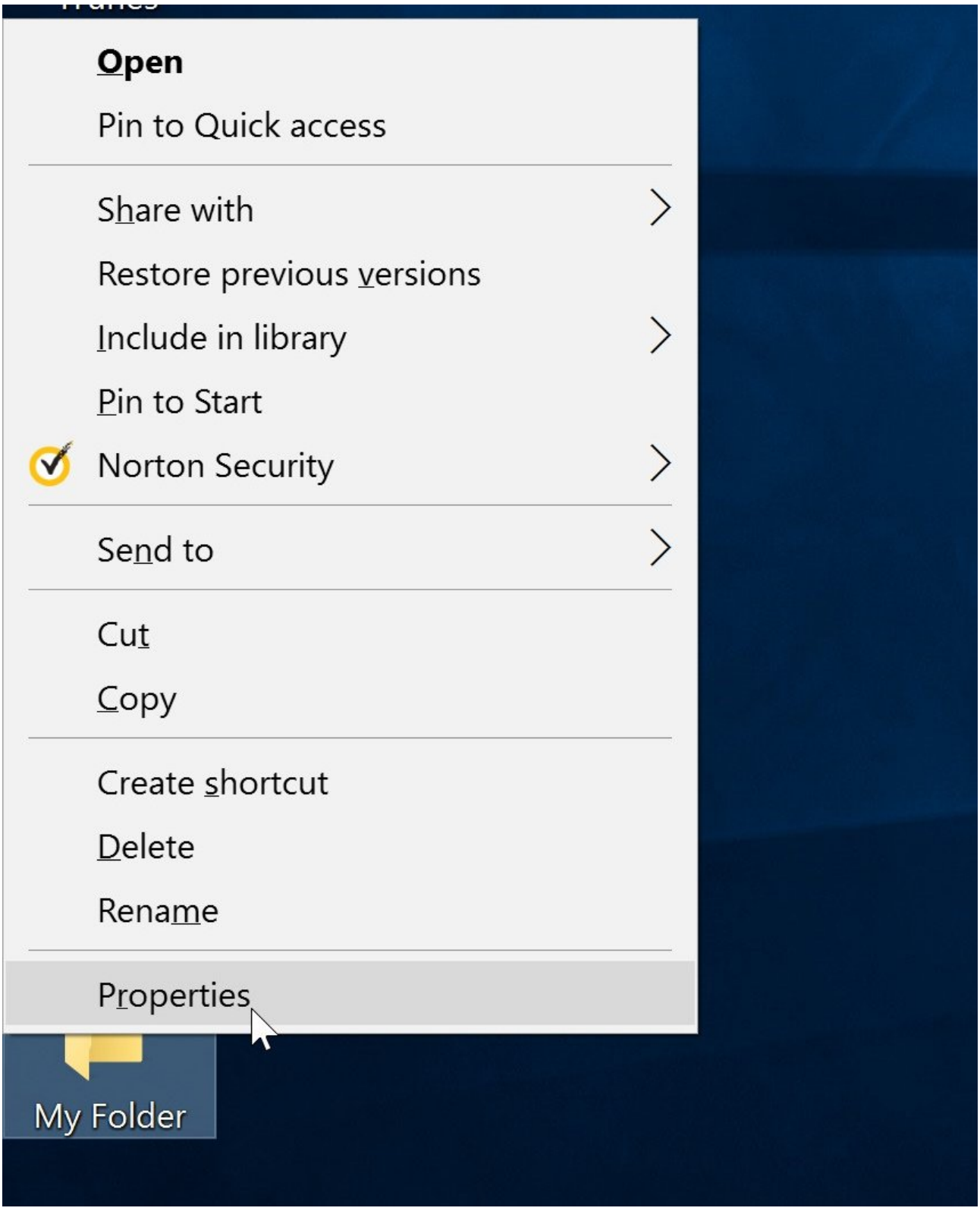
Optimizing Folders

If you want, you can even optimize folders for specific file types, such as pictures or music. What this means is that you can tell a folder to show the specific details you want to see for your files and hide ones that are redundant and useless. For example, if you have a folder full of music, you'll probably want to see the track number, artist, and album name, but probably aren't so enthusiastic to see the date it was modified.

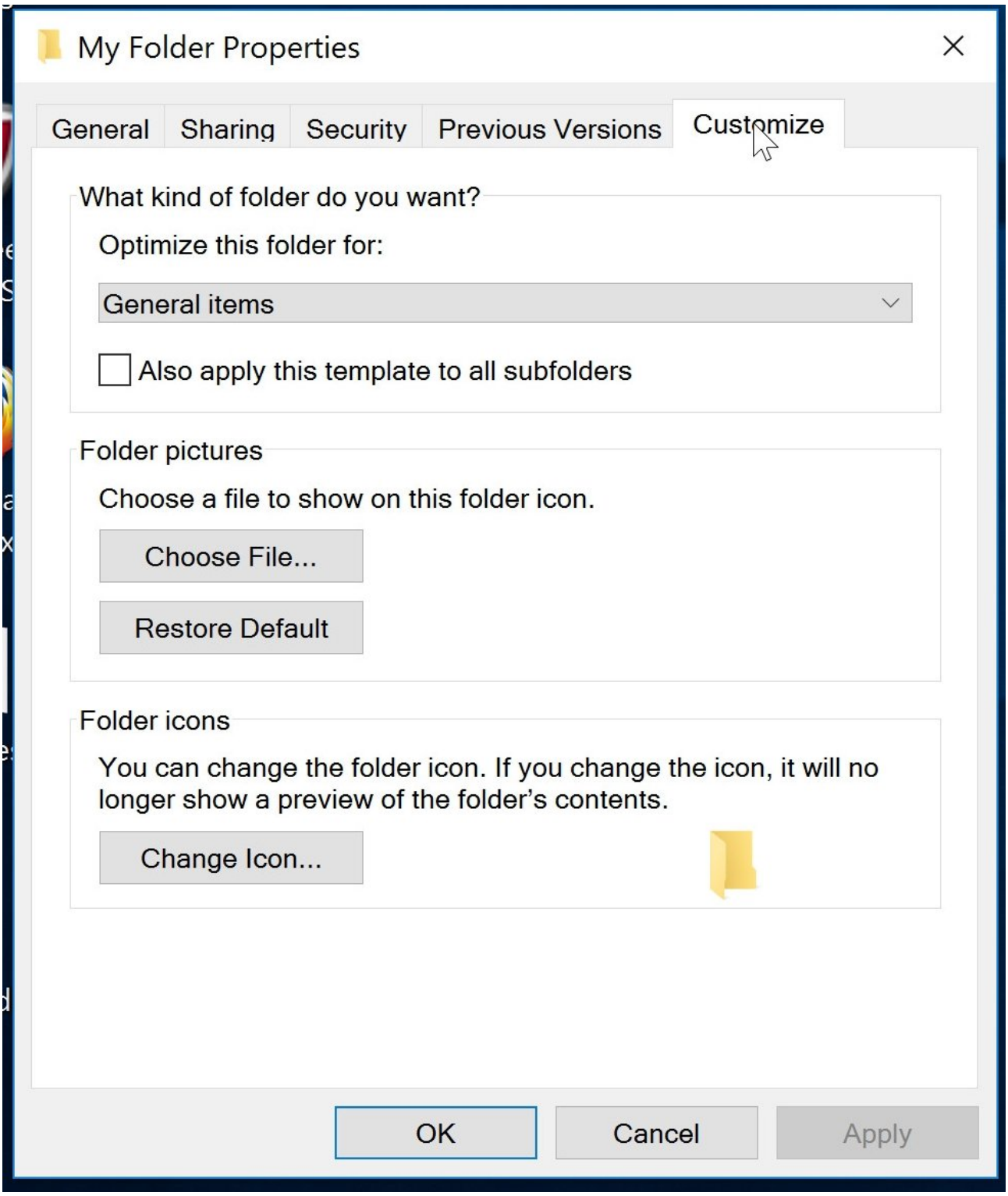
Here is an image folder we're going to optimize in this example:



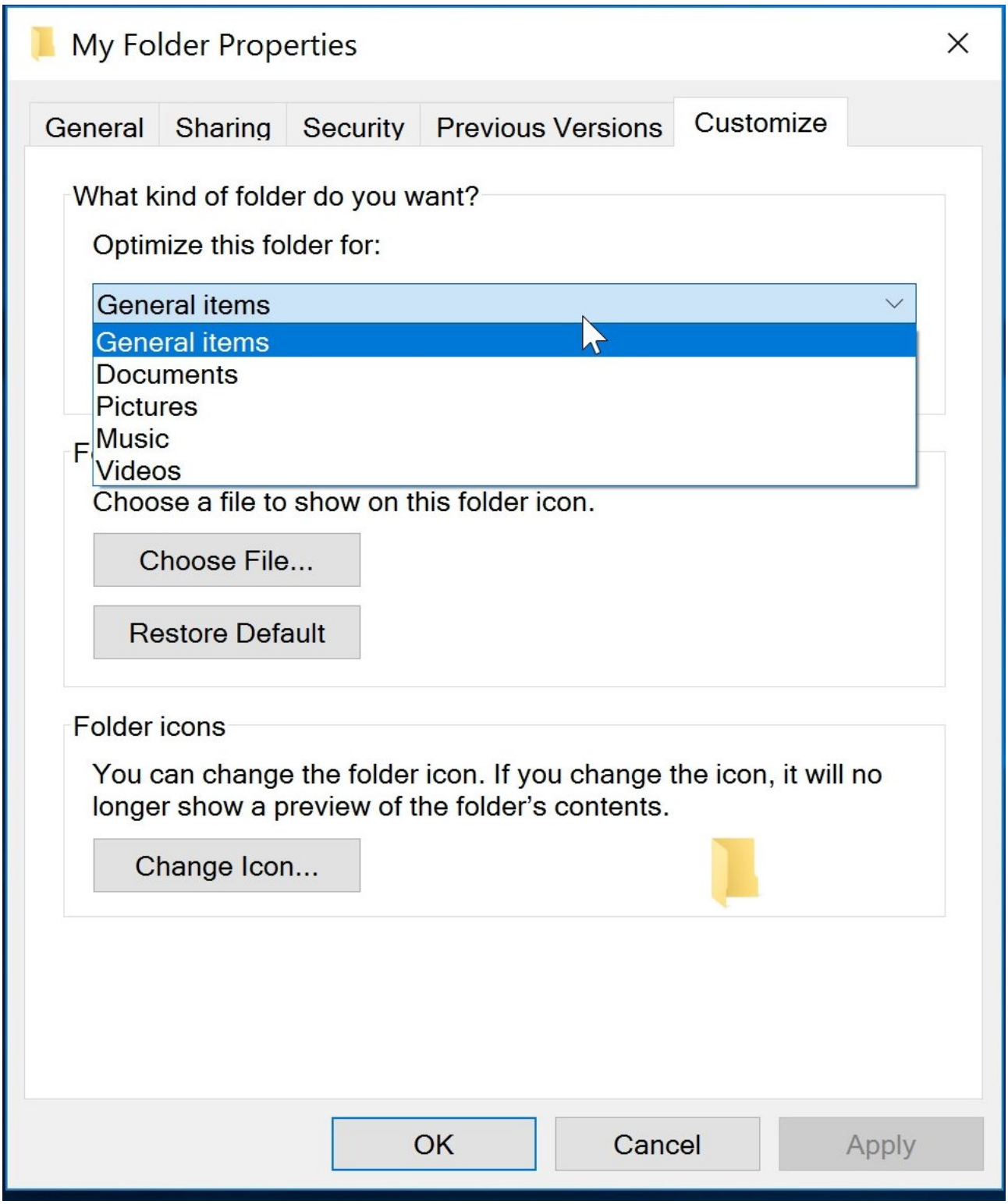
If you want to set your folder views to a specific template, right-click the folder you want to change and click Properties.



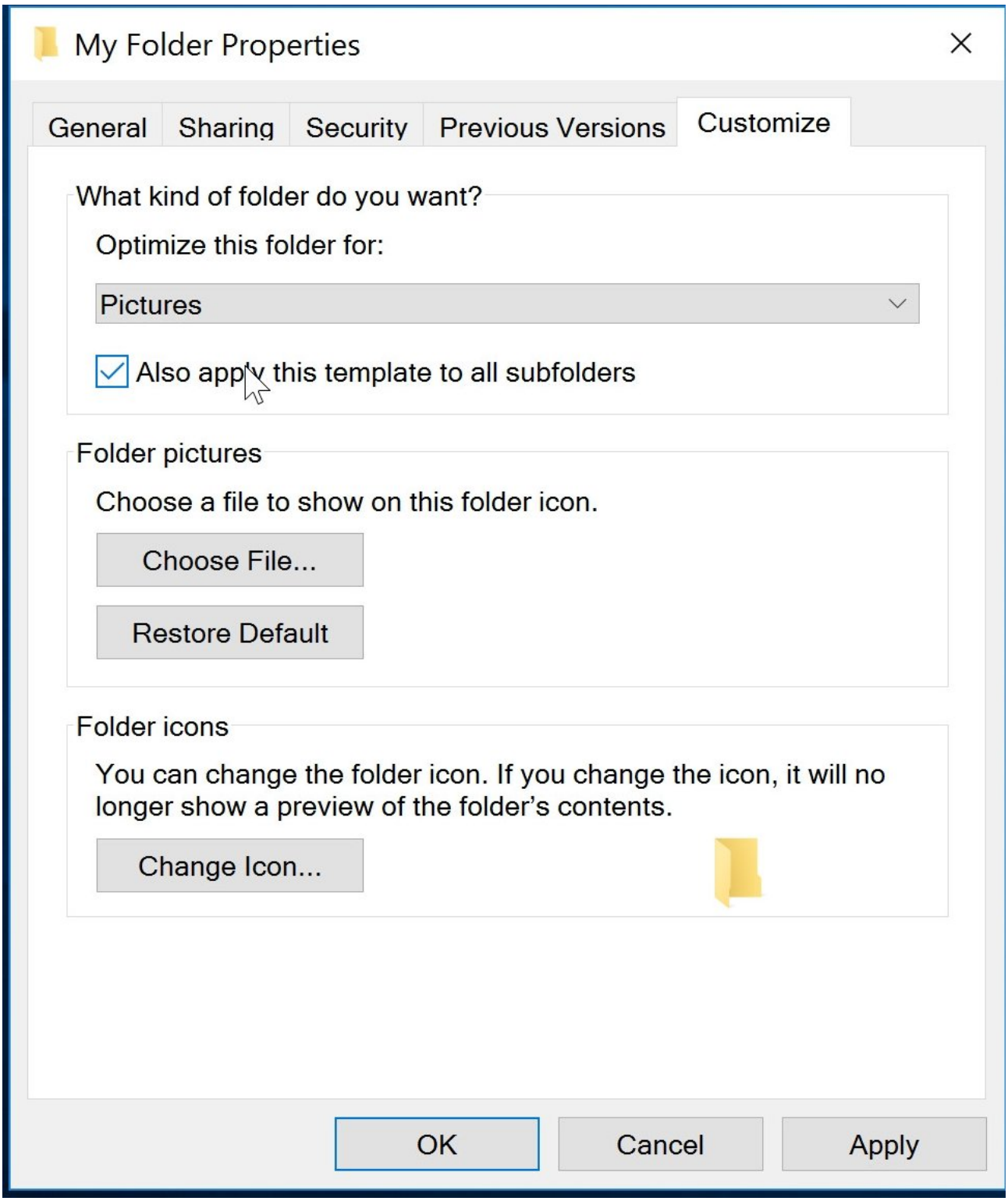
Click the Customize tab.



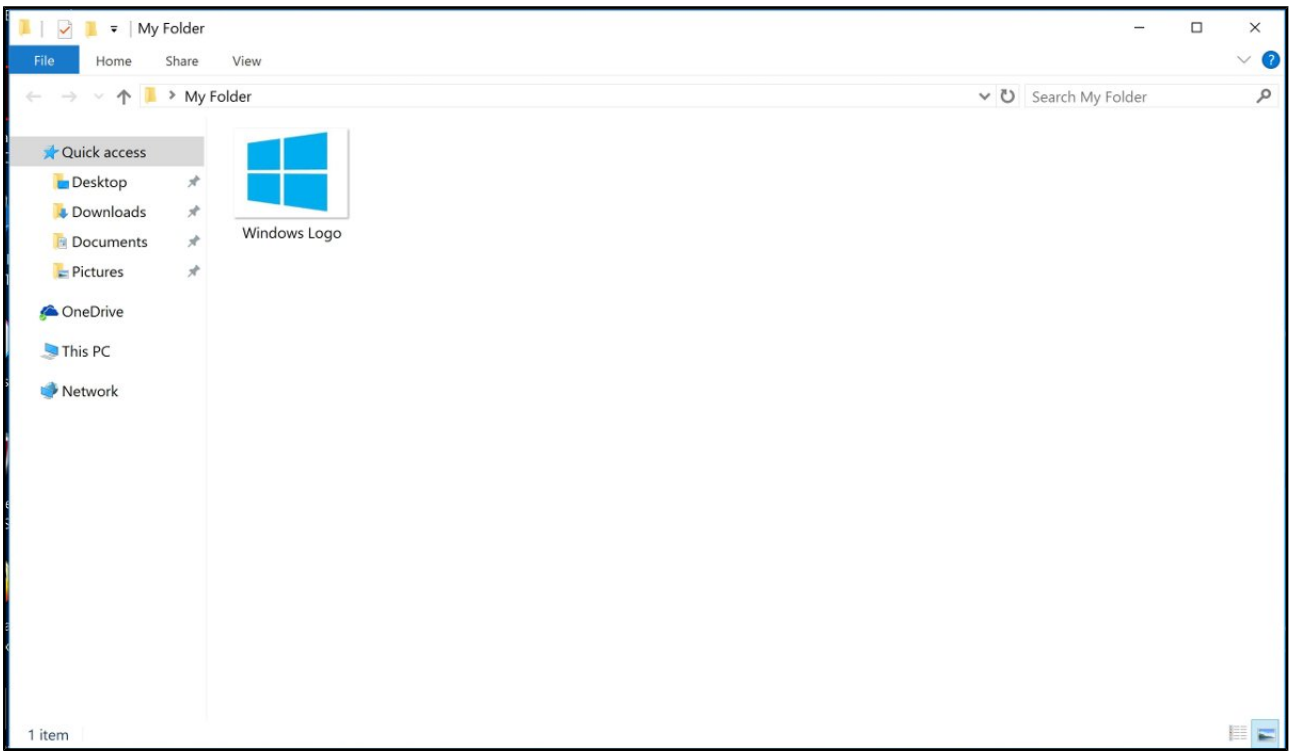
Under the category called “What kind of folder do you want?” is a drop-down menu called “Optimize this folder for”. Click this drop-down and select from a General, Documents, Pictures, Music or Videos view.



If you want, you can check the box underneath this drop-down menu. This will also apply this optimization to all folders within the one you're changing the settings for at this time.



Now when you access the folder, it'll present your files in a format suited for what you selected. Here is what the example folder looks like now that we've optimised it for images.



It’s now presented in a way where we can actually see the images in the preview, and the redundant information has been removed.

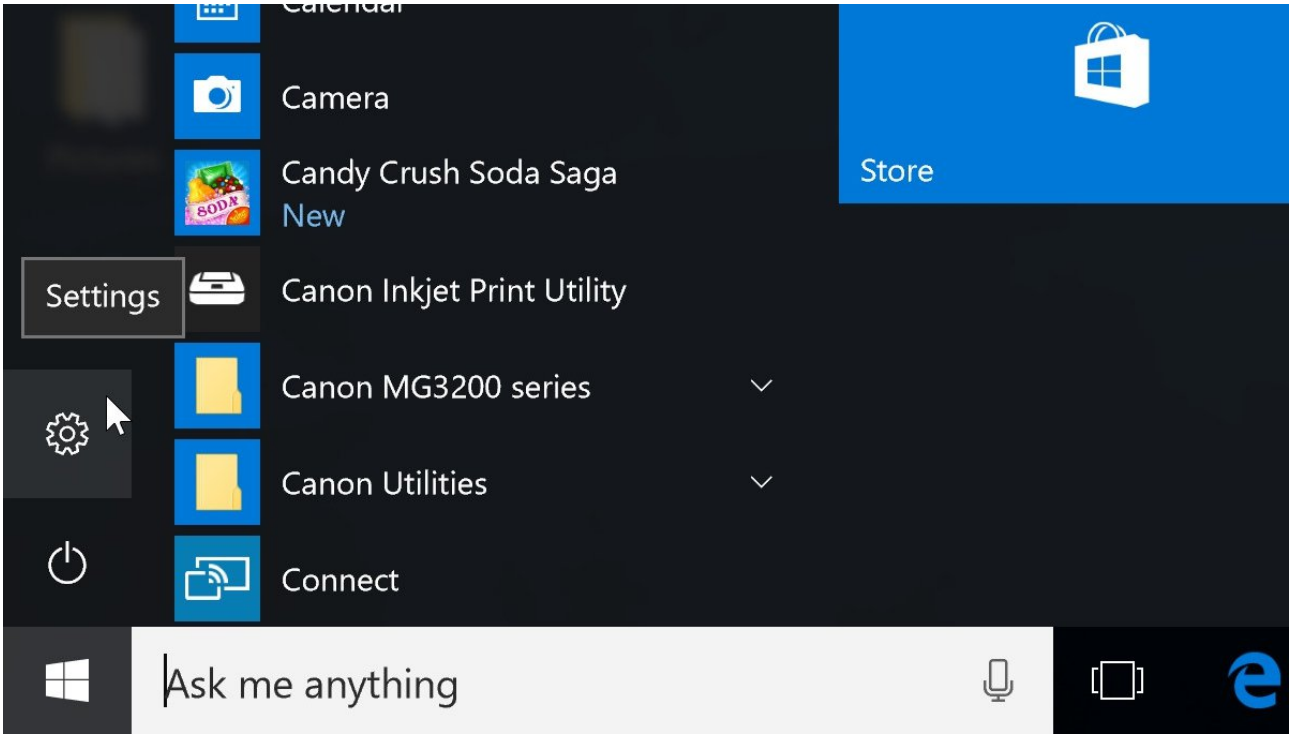
Chapter 3. Start Menu

Accessing the Start Menu Options

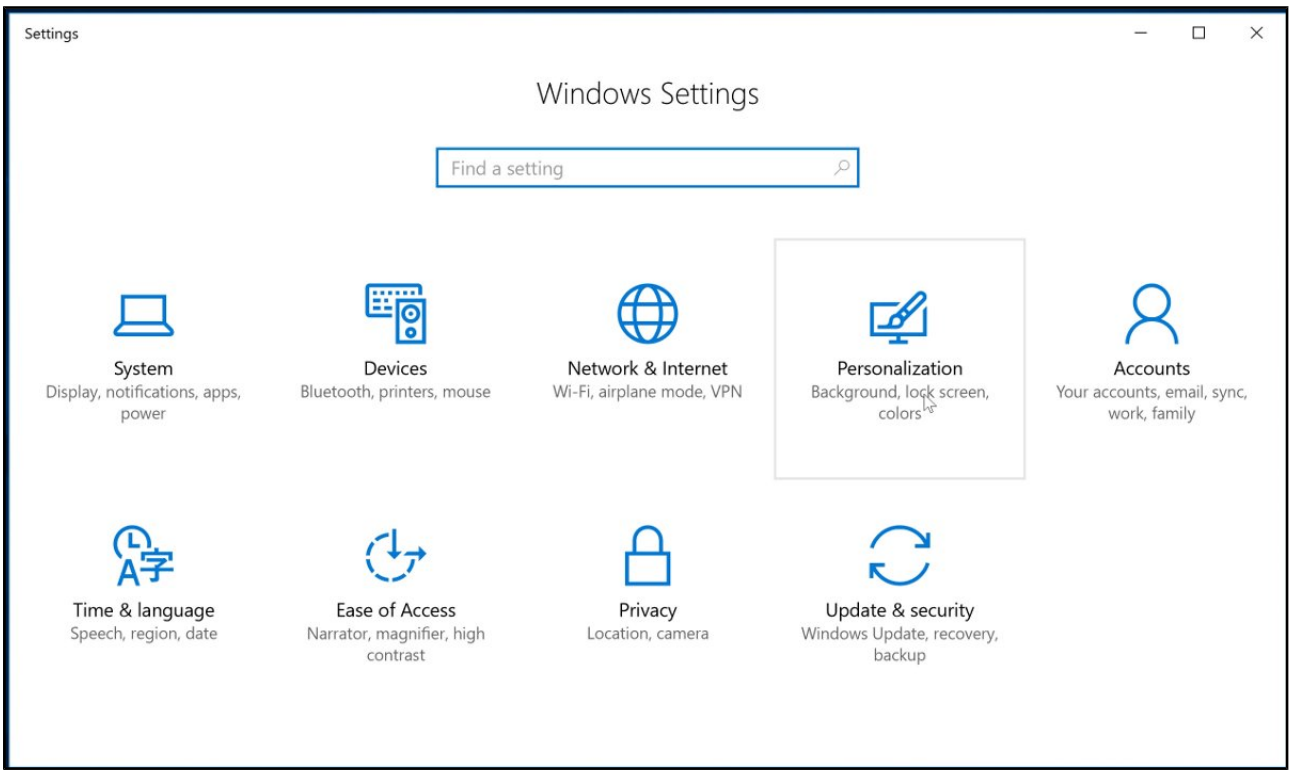
The Start menu that comes with Windows 10 is very interesting. It features something akin to the Windows 8 Metro theme, except contained within the Start menu instead of being a separate part of the operating system. It also comes with its fair share of options.

Since this chapter is all about customizing the Start menu, here's how to access the options so you're ready for the subchapters that follow this one.

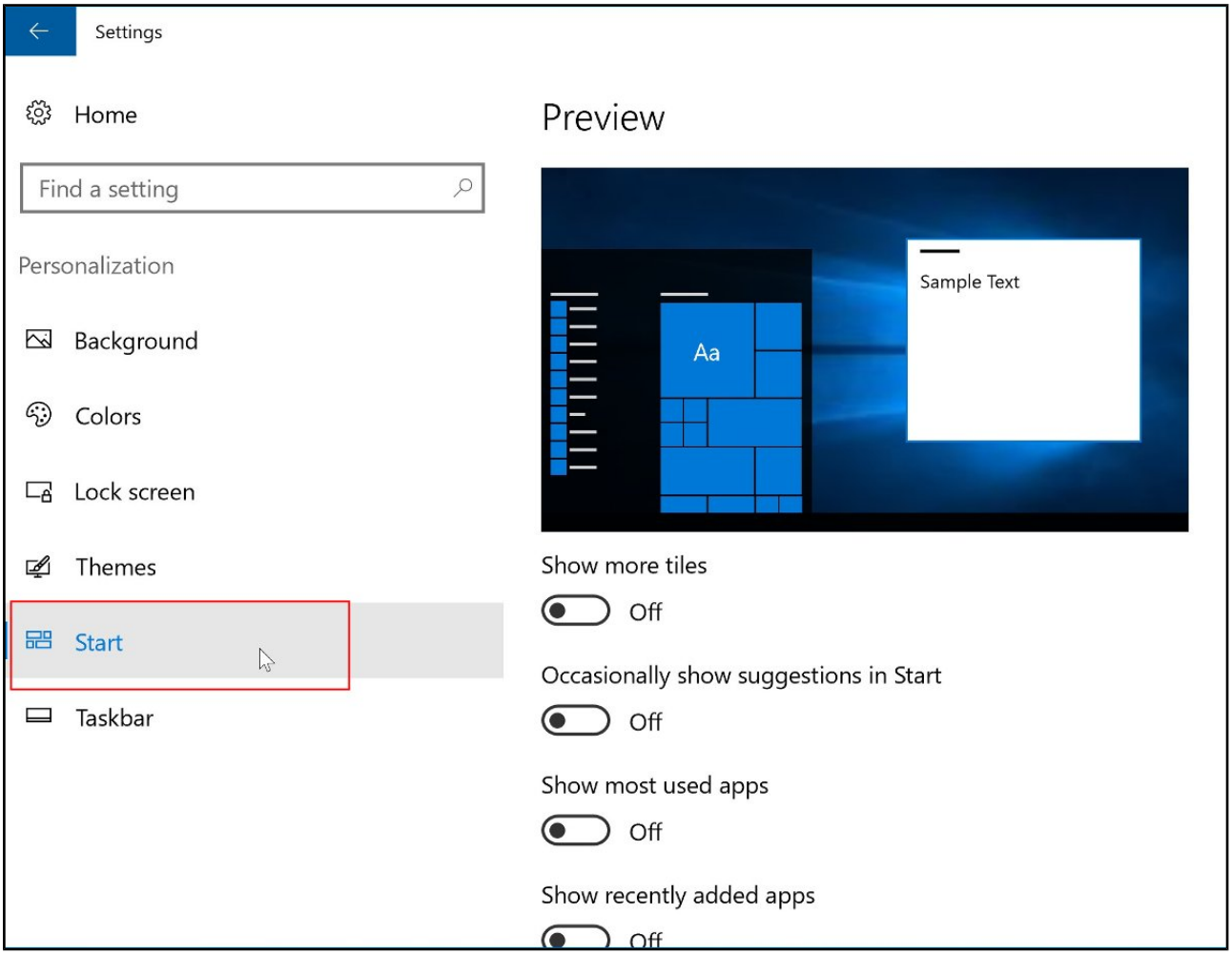
First, click Start, then the Settings cog on the left.



Click Personalization.



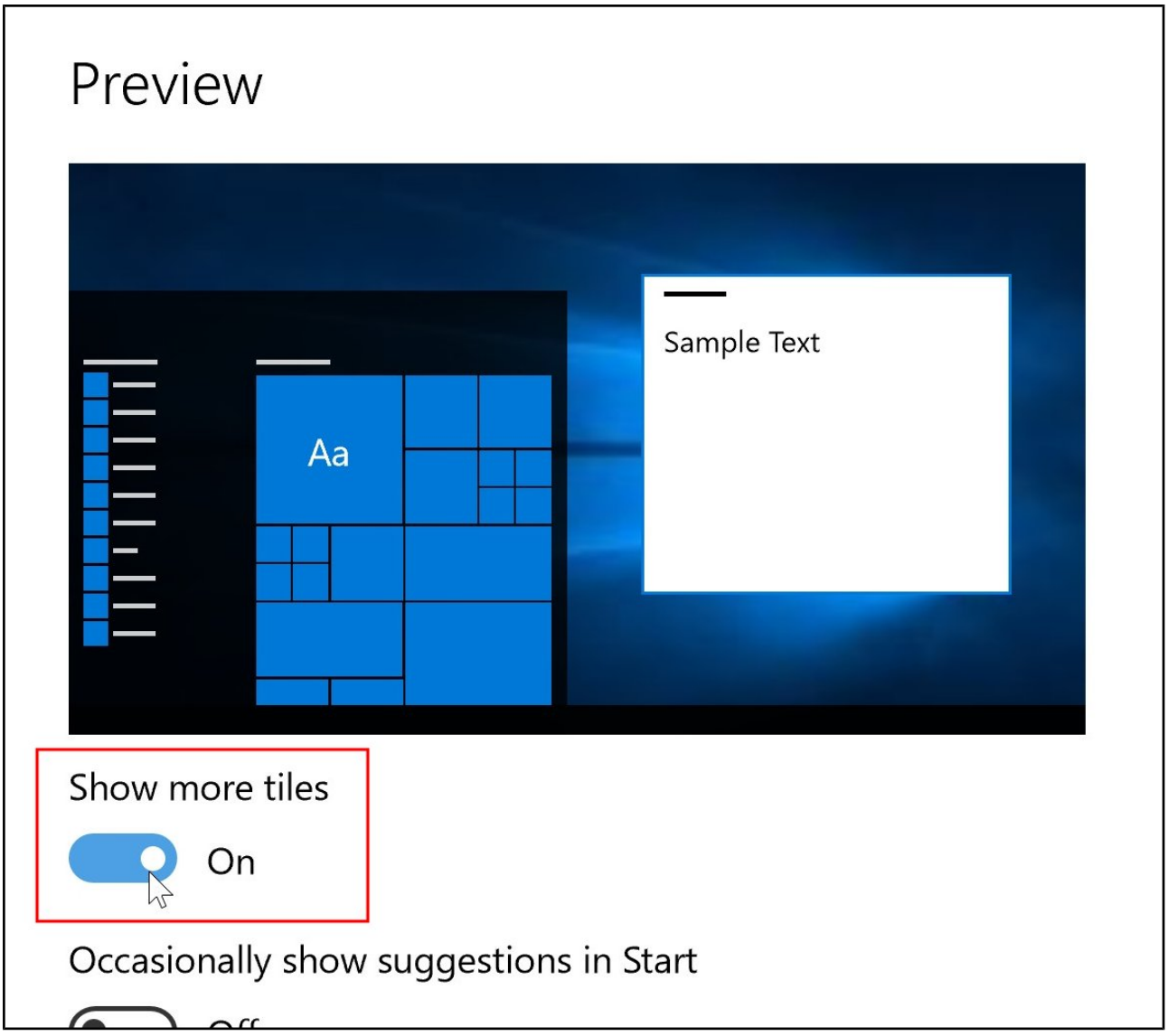
Then click Start on the left side.



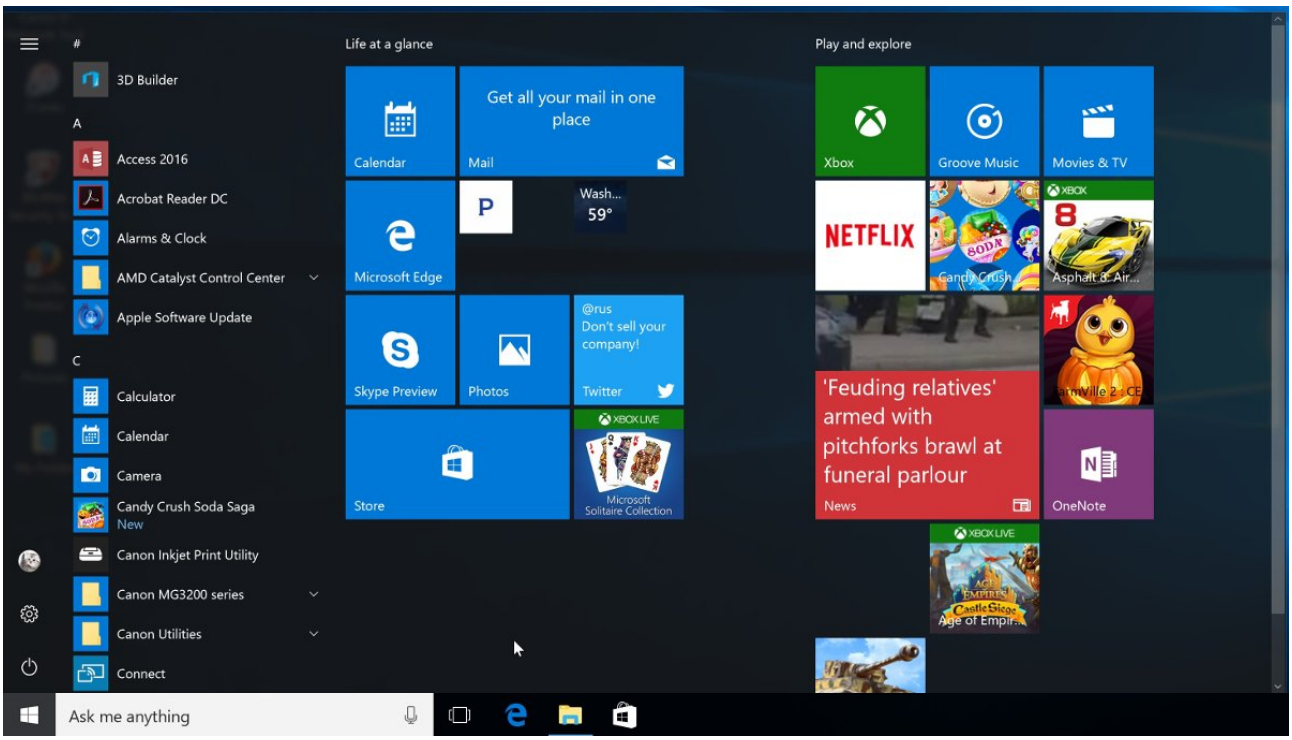
Add Room for More Tiles

If you get a lot of usage out of the Start menu, you may want to have more tiles to customize. If this is something you'd want, then it's very easy to tell Windows 10 to give you more tiles to use.

First, access the Start Menu Options as per Chapter 3.1. When here, find the option for Show more tiles, then turn it on.



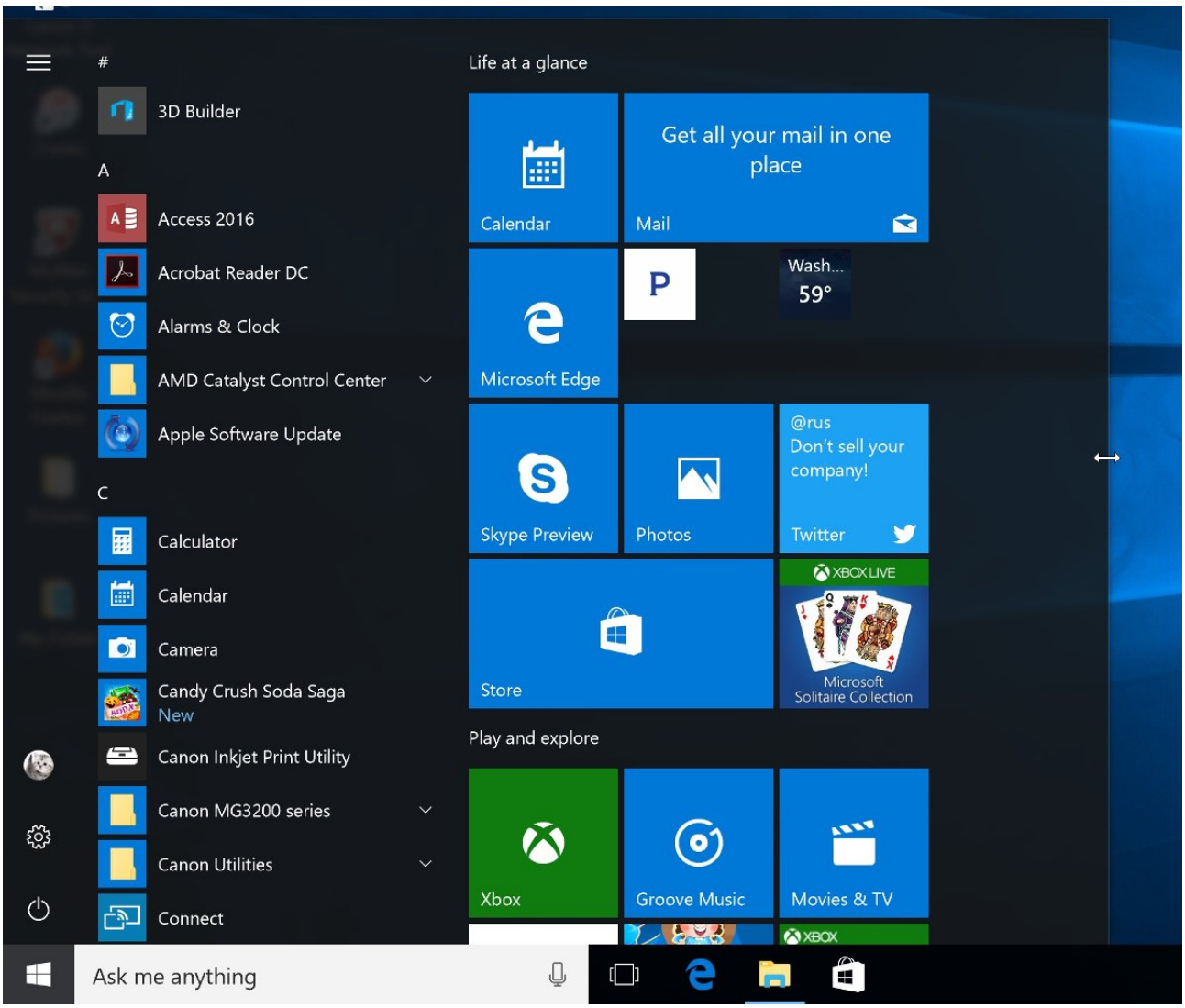
Now when you open the Start menu, you'll see you have more room to play with.


#
3D Builder
A
Access 2016
Acrobat Reader DC
Alarms & Clock
AMD Catalyst Control Center
Apple Software Update
C
Calculator
Calendar
Camera
Candy Crush Soda Saga
New
Canon Inkjet Print Utility
Canon MG3200 series
Canon Utilities
Connect
Life at a glance
Calendar
Get all your mail in one place
Mail
Microsoft Edge
Wash...
59°
Skype Preview
Photos
@rus
Don't sell your company!
Twitter
Store
XBOX LIVE
Microsoft Solitaire Collection
Play and explore
Xbox
Groove Music
Movies & TV
NETFLIX
Candy Crush
XBOX
Asphalt 8: Air...
'Feuding relatives' armed with pitchforks brawl at funeral parlour
News
OneNote
XBOX LIVE
Age of Empires
Ask me anything

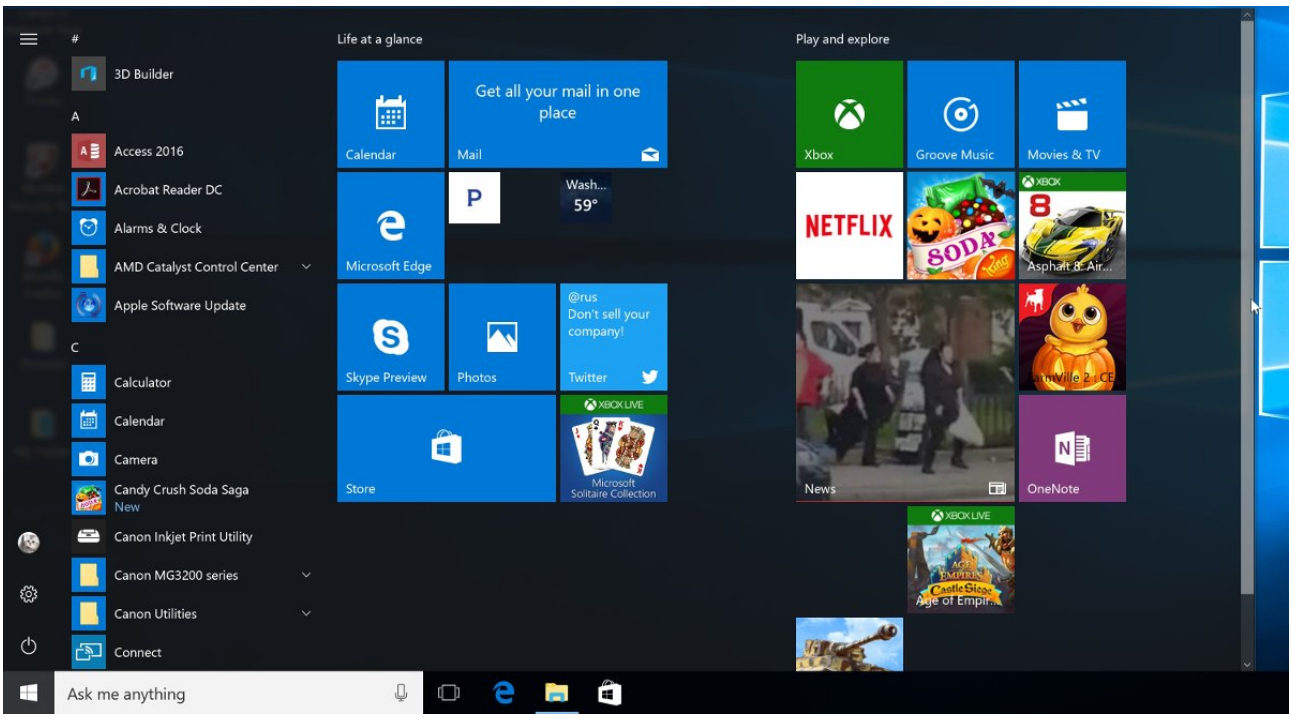
Change the Size of the Start Menu

You may find that your Start menu is either too big or too small for your liking. Did you know, however, that you can very freely change the size of the Start menu exactly like you would a regular window? There are no clues to tip you off that the Start menu can be resized in this way, so it's very easy to miss this handy trick.

In order to resize the Start menu, open it. Then, put your cursor on one of its edges: the top one if you want the menu to be taller or shorter or the right one if you want it to be wider or thinner. Your cursor will turn into a double-headed arrow.



Then, simply hold left-click and drag the Start menu in the direction you want it to go. Let go once you're happy with it.

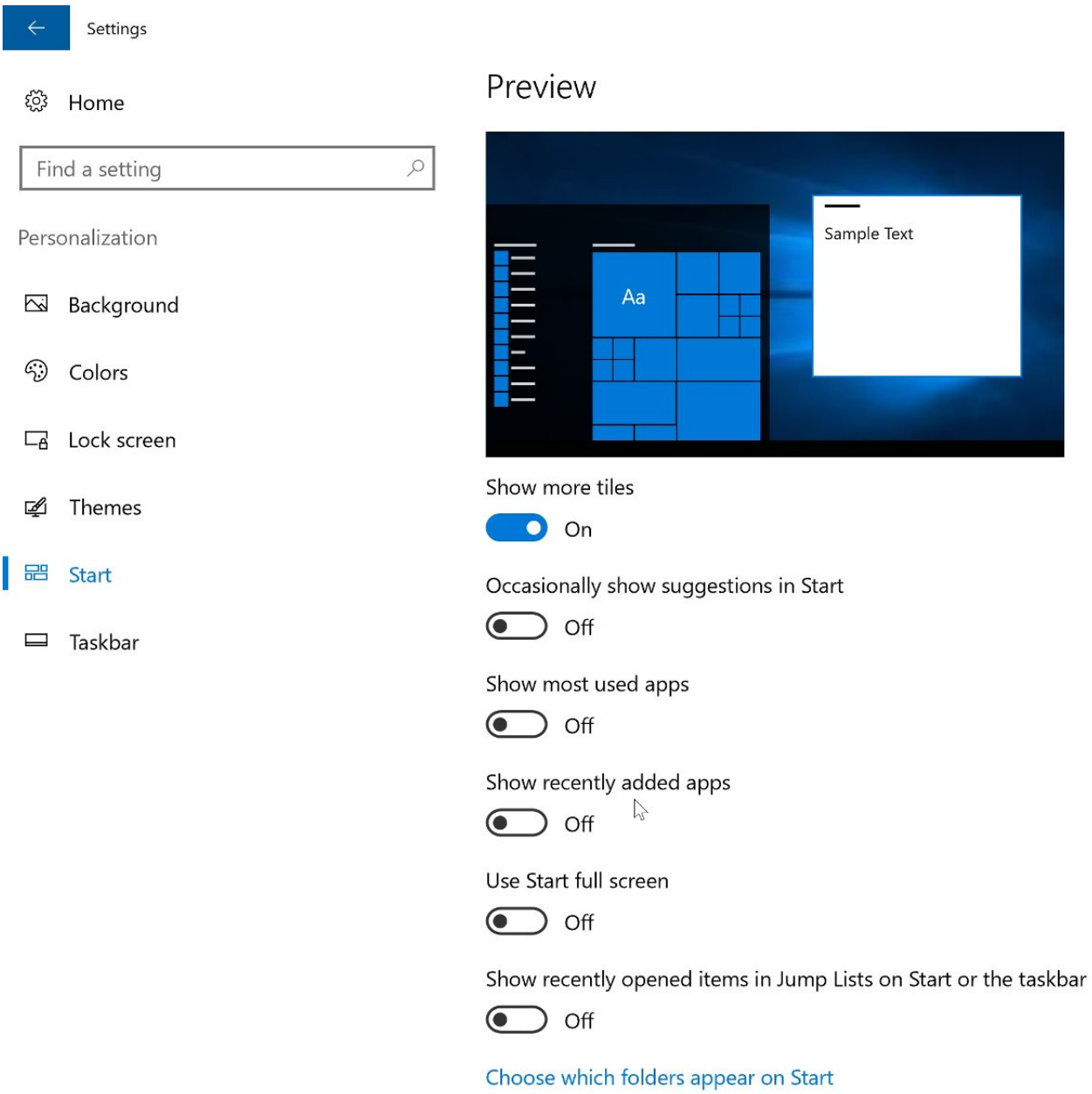


The Start menu will now stay the size you set it, regardless of whether you close and re-open it. Feel free to tweak it at any time should it prove troublesome.

Customize What You See in the Start Menu

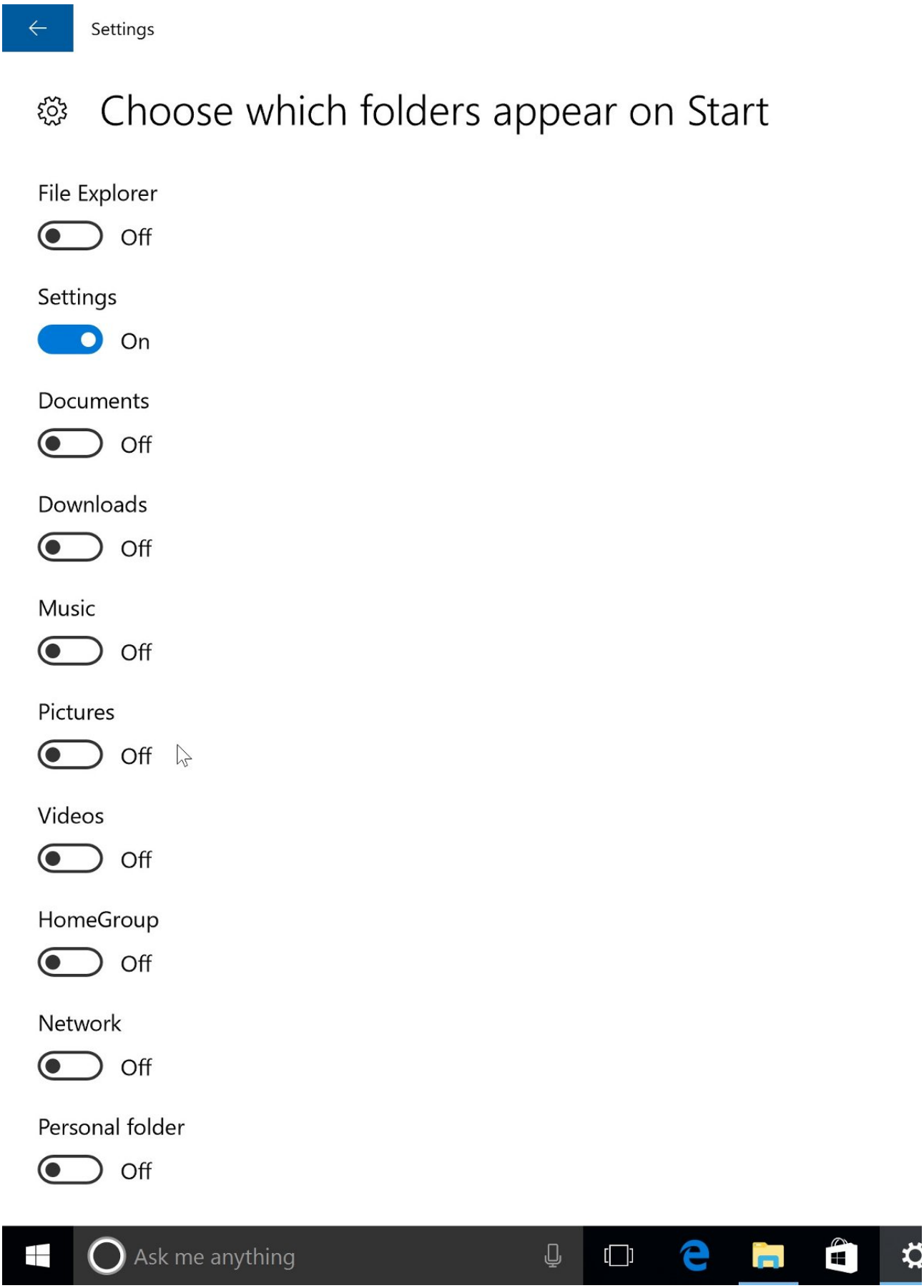
Of course, there's a good chance that your Start menu doesn't come with all the features you may want from it. Thankfully, you have a wide selection of options to customise the Start menu to better fit your needs. Let's explore the options you have available when it comes to modifying the content within Start.

First, access the Start Menu Settings as dictated in Chapter 3.1. If you look on this page, you'll see a lot of options for customising your Start menu such as showing the most-used or recently-added apps.



The link at the very bottom called "Choose which folders appear on Start" will take you to a different screen where Windows will show you a list of folders to choose from. You can

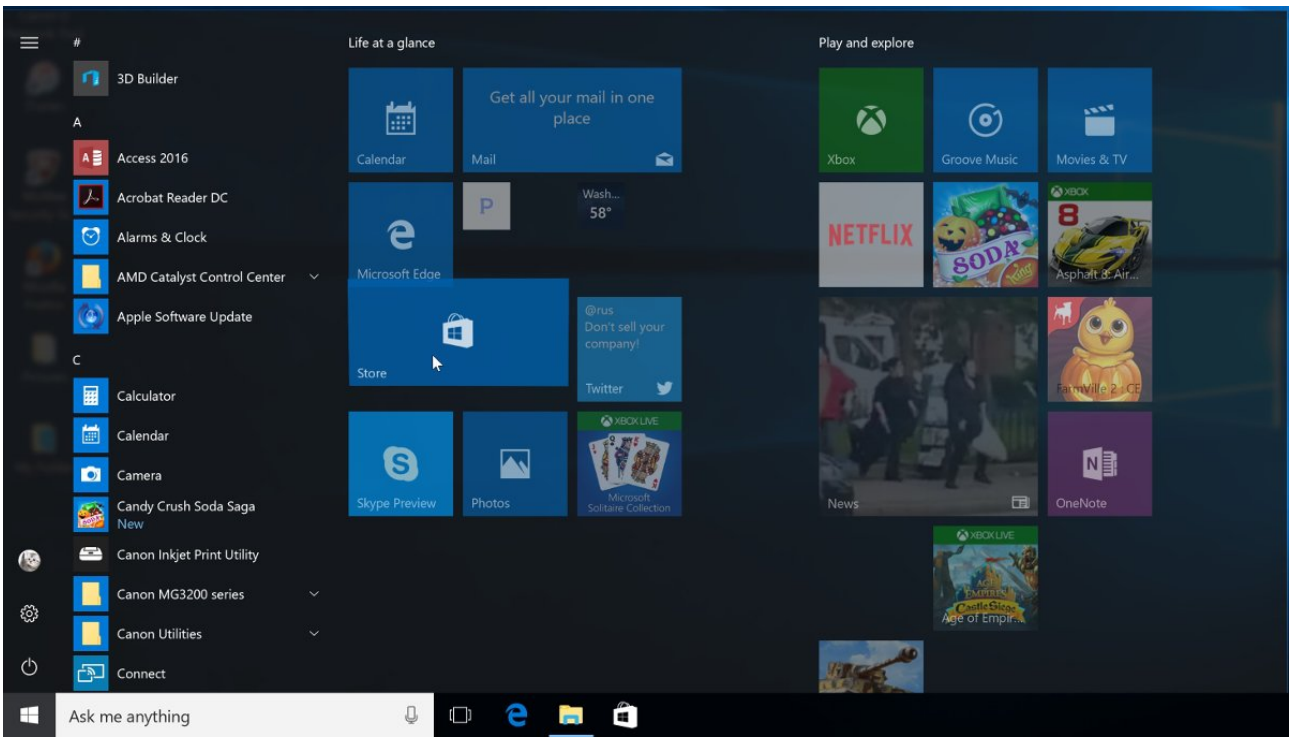
check and uncheck these options to show or hide these specific folders from your Start menu.


Settings
Choose which folders appear on Start
File Explorer
Off
Settings
On
Documents
Off
Downloads
Off
Music
Off
Pictures
Off
Videos
Off
HomeGroup
Off
Network
Off
Personal folder
Off
Ask me anything

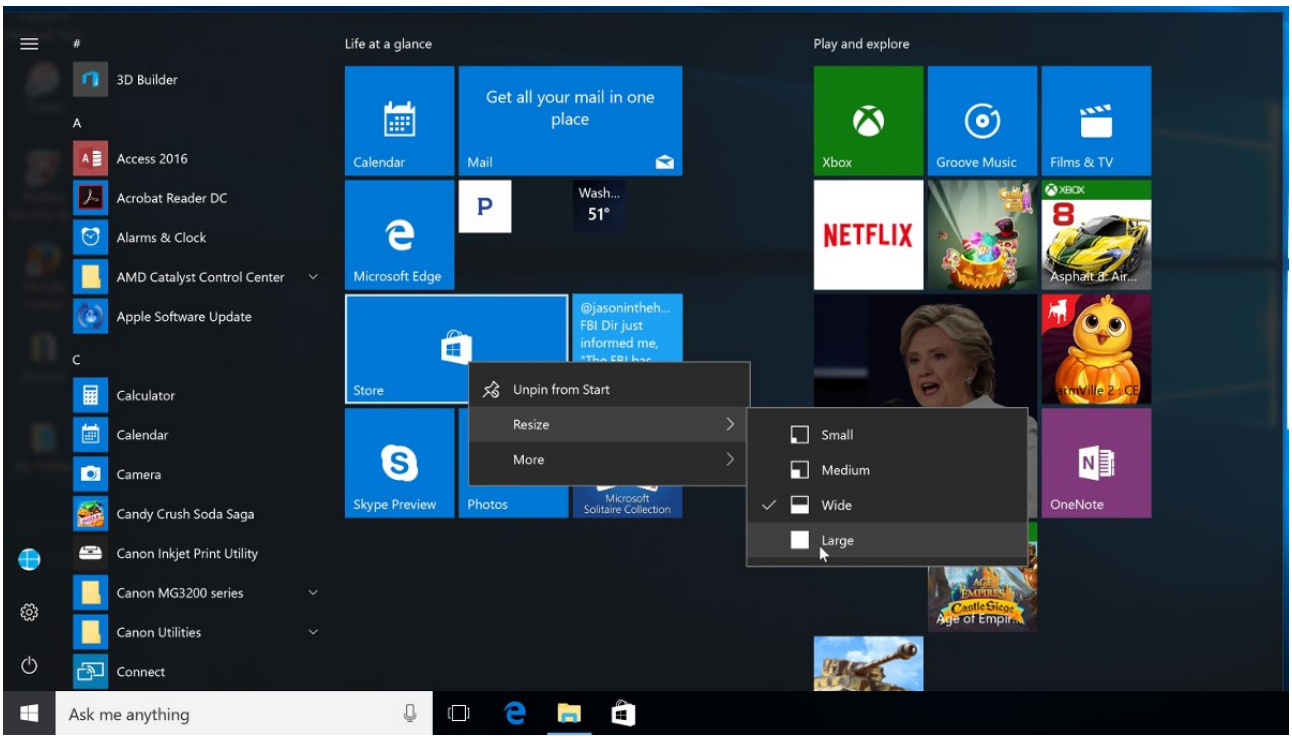
Modify Tiles on Start Menu

Did you know that the tiles you see on the Start menu can be moved around? If you want your Start menu to be organised in a specific way, this knowledge can be very useful to help speed up accessing vital apps or folders.

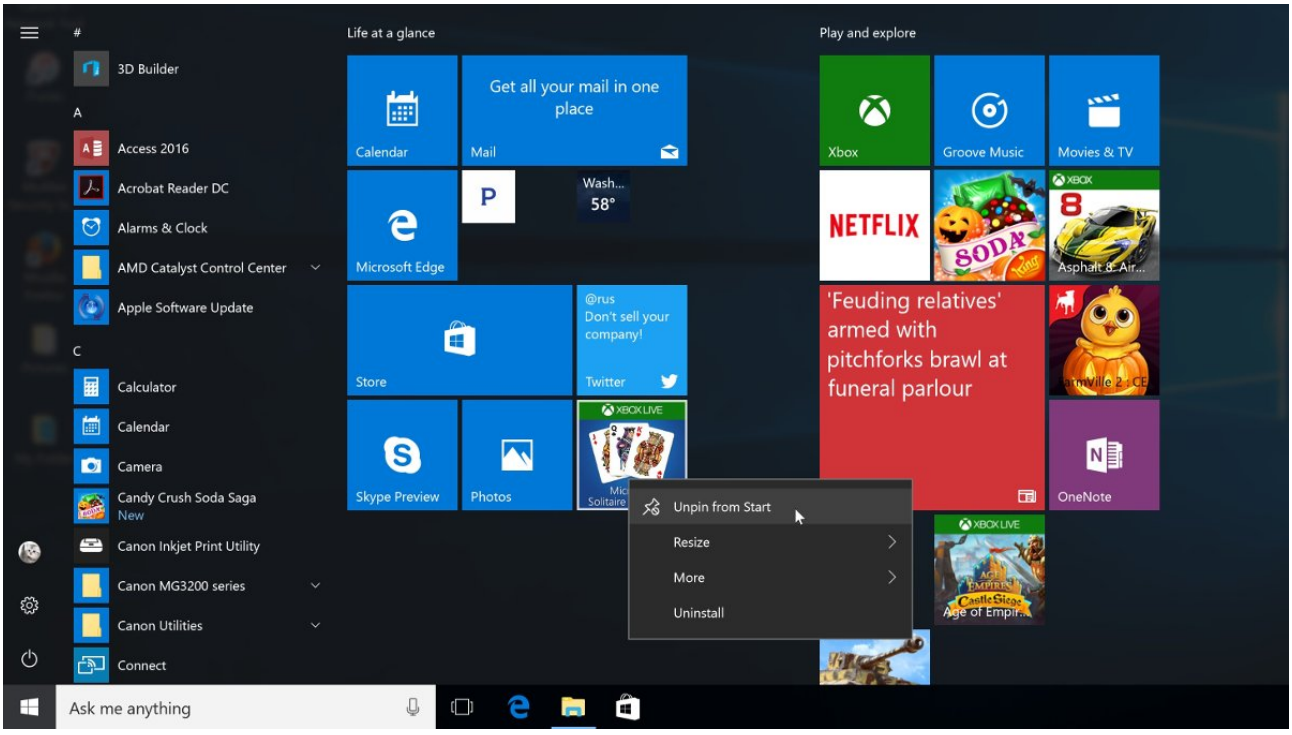
When in the Start menu, you can freely move tiles around by holding left-click on a tile, then dragging it to where you want. The tiles below where you drag the tiles will shift around so you can better position your tile. When you let go, the tile settles where you let go.



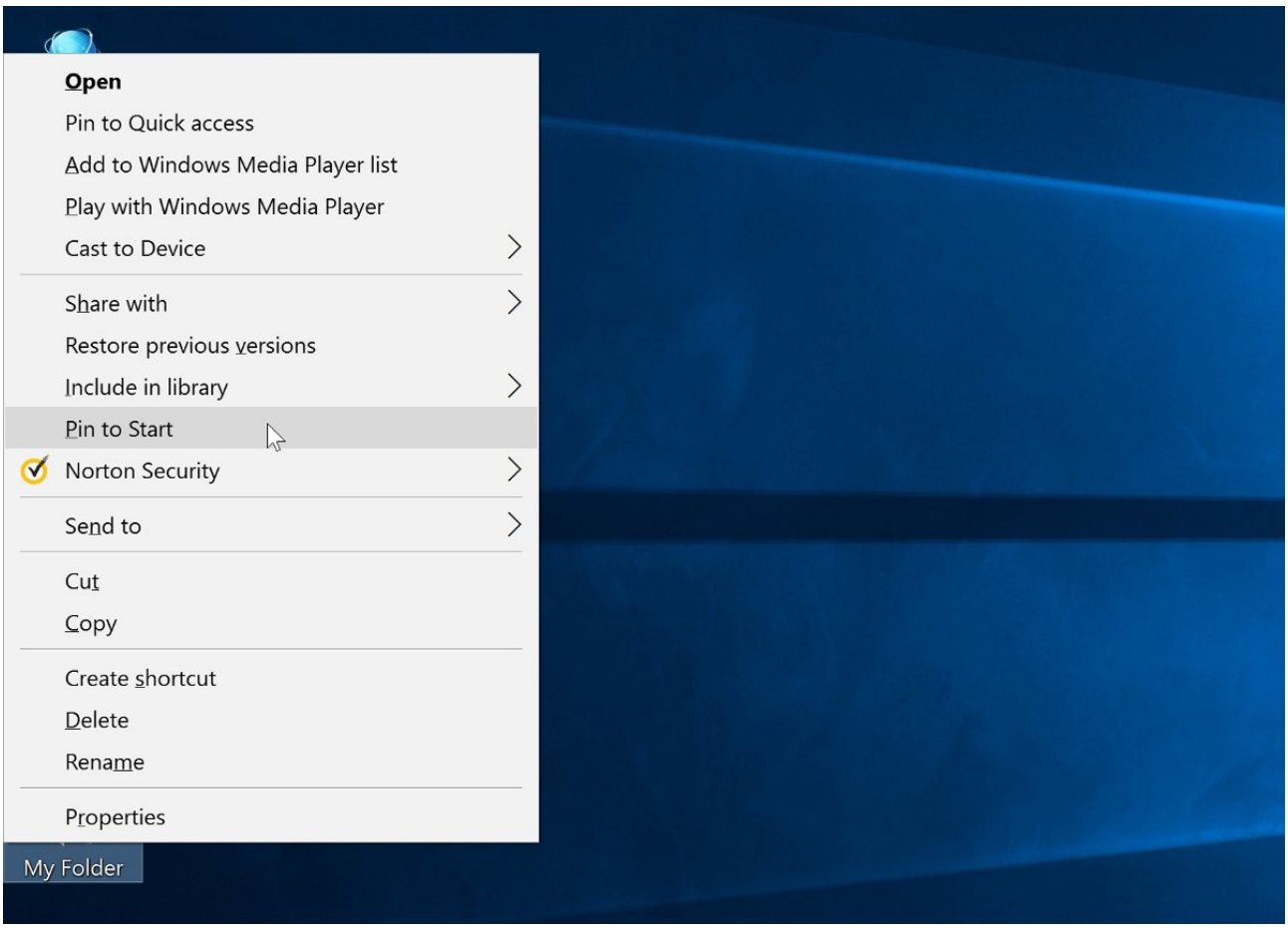
If a tile is too small or big for your liking, you can right-click it, click on Resize, and then pick a different size. Tiles can go from Small to Large, and making a tile bigger may allow it to display more information. If you notice a tile is missing some size options, it means the tile isn't compatible with that size.



If you have no interest in a tile whatsoever, you can right-click it and click Unpin from Start to remove it from Start.

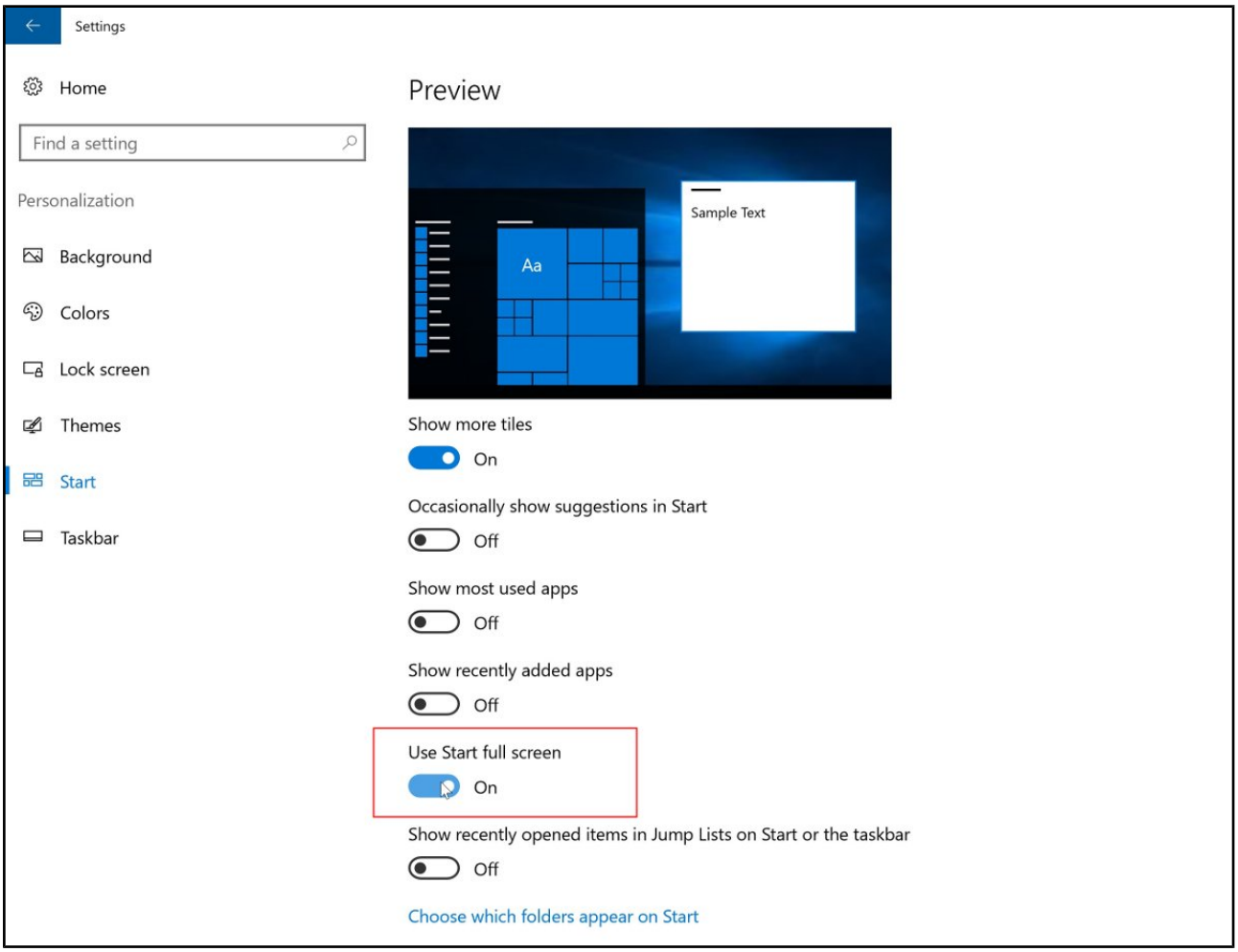


Likewise, you can add things to the Start menu as a tile by right-clicking them and selecting “Pin to Start”. This works for folders, so you can get quick access to popular locations on your computer.

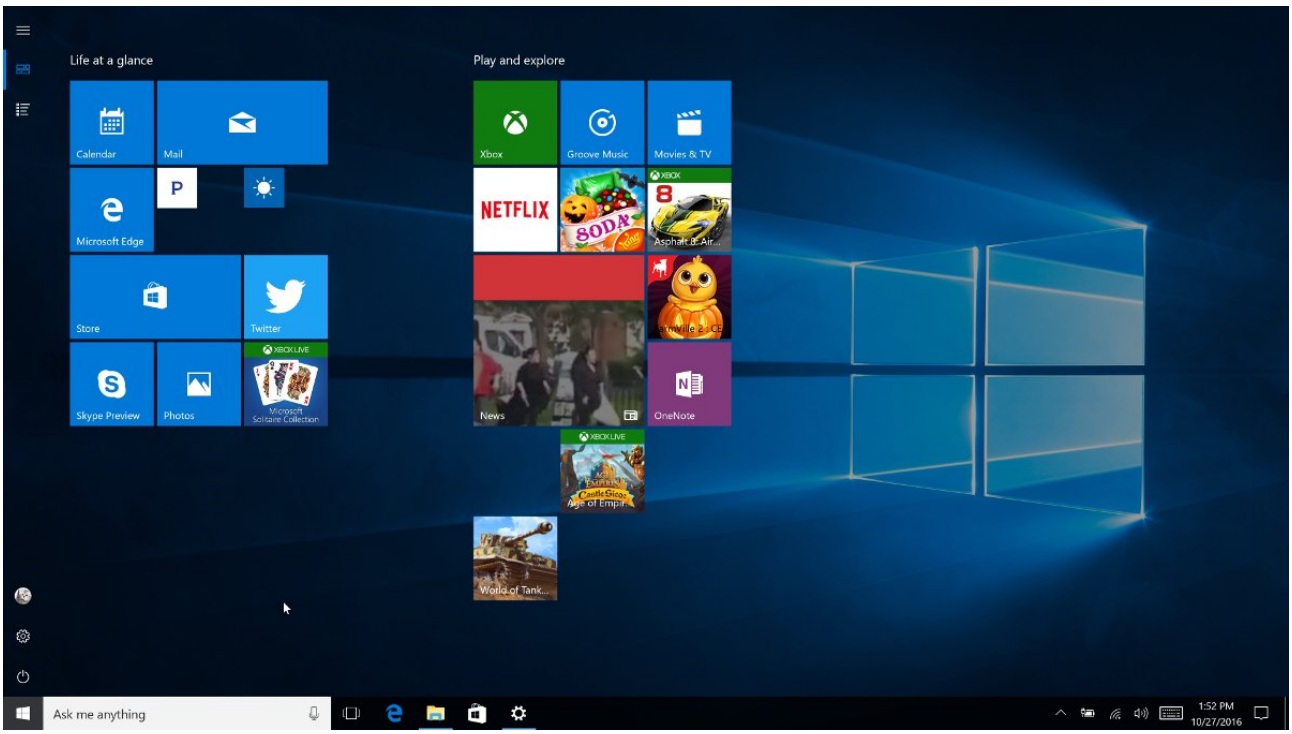

Open
Pin to Quick access
Add to Windows Media Player list
Play with Windows Media Player
Cast to Device
Share with
Restore previous versions
Include in library
Pin to Start
Norton Security
Send to
Cut
Copy
Create shortcut
Delete
Rename
Properties
My Folder

Make Start Open in Full Screen

If you really enjoy the Start screen, you can make it occupy the entire screen when it's opened. To do this, go to the Start Menu Settings as dictated in Chapter 3.1, then find the option that reads "Use Start full screen". Click it to turn it on.



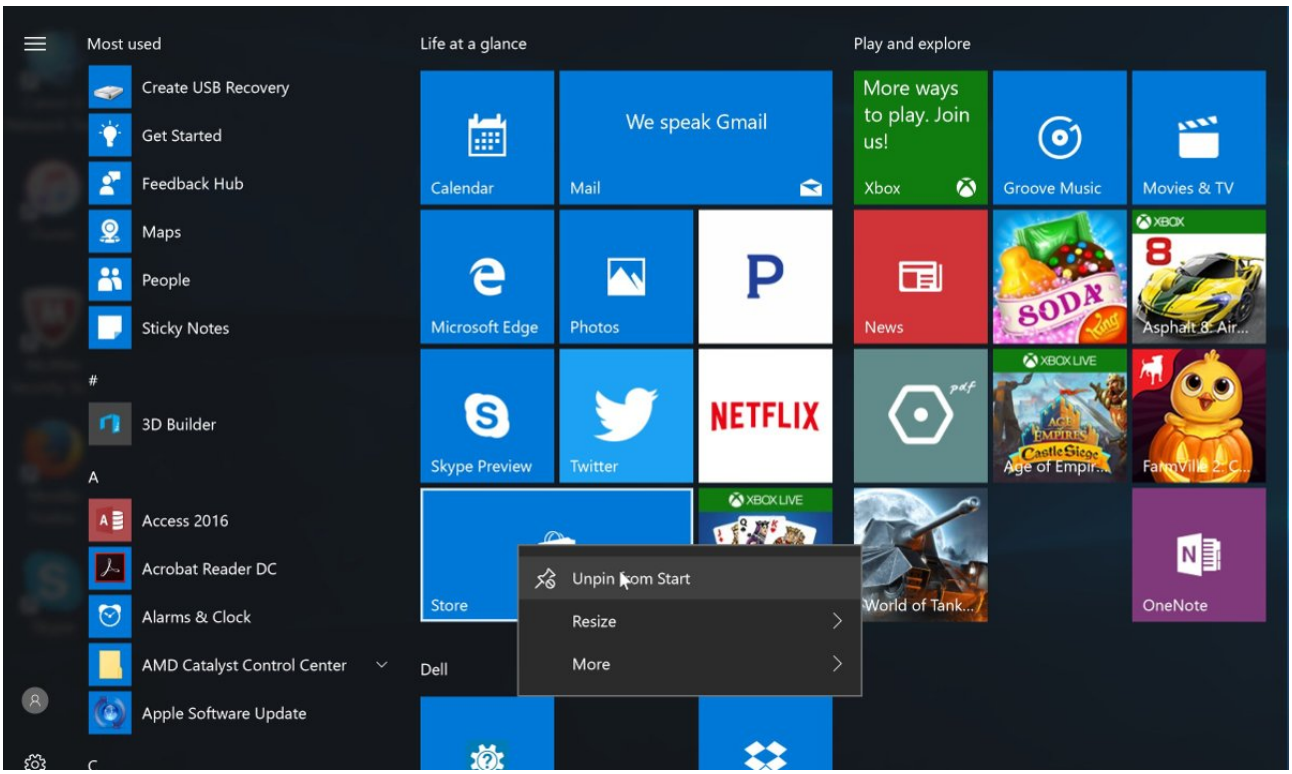
Now when you click the Start menu it will occupy the entire screen, like the following image.

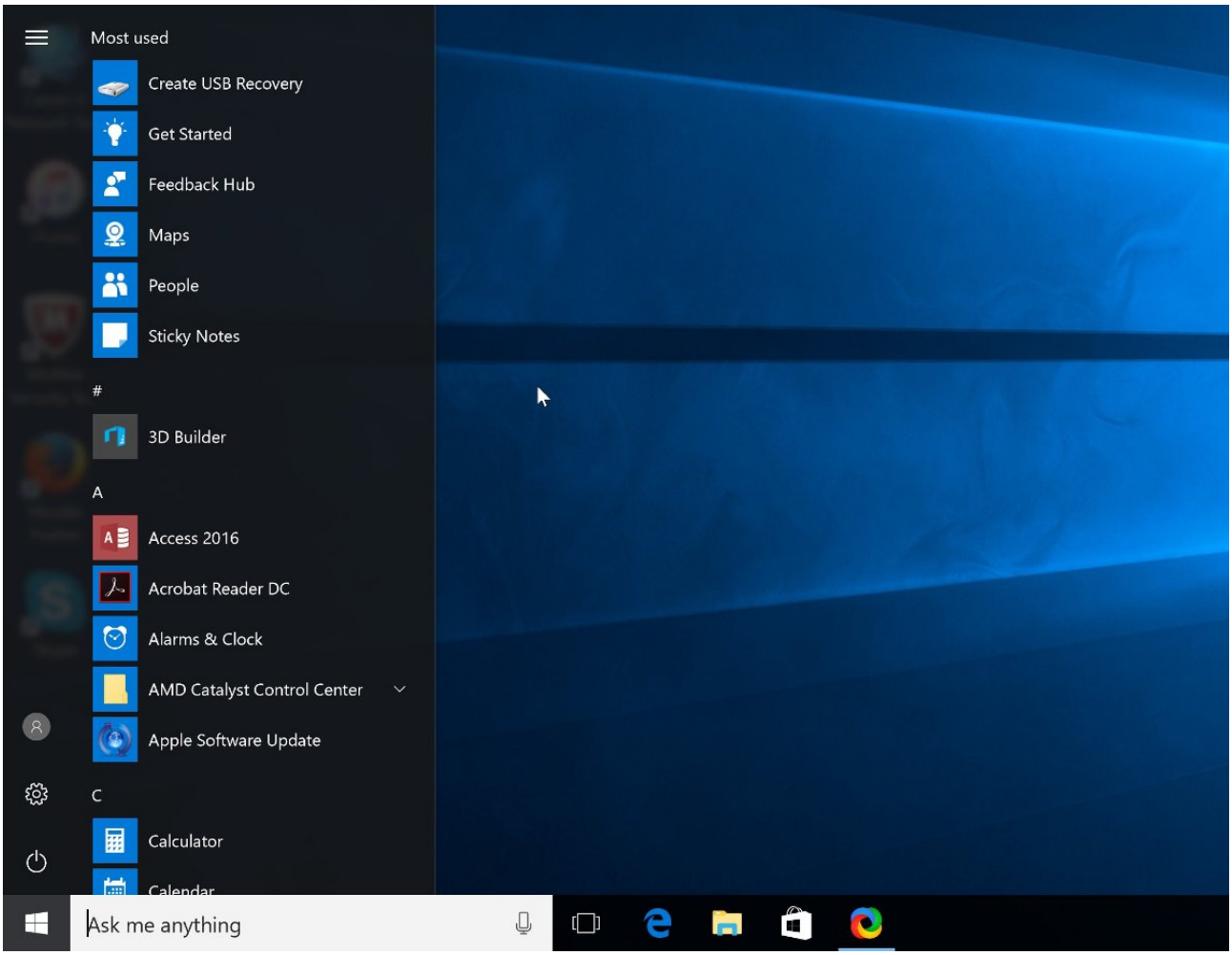


Windows 7 Style Menu (Manual)

Unfortunately, the recent move to a tile-based Start menu in Windows has not been well-received by some. If you really dislike the tiles on the Start menu and want something more akin to the Windows 7 Start menu, it's possible to create something that looks more like the classic menu using the options within Windows 10.

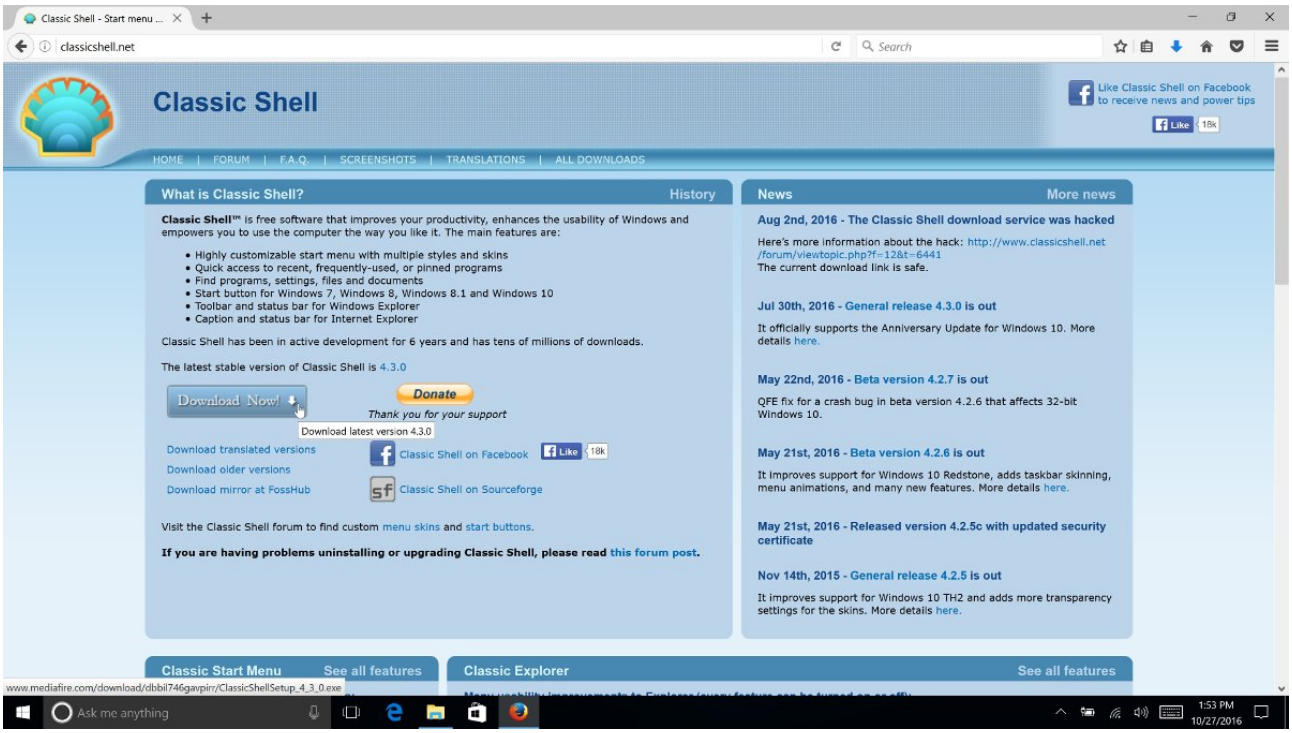
To do this, clear out all the tiles in the Start menu. Unfortunately, there is no switch to simply turn off every single tile, and if you try to resize the Start menu to hide all the tiles, it "jams" before hiding the final column. This means that to have a tileless Start menu, you have to right-click and select Unpin for each and every tile. Only then will Windows allow your Start menu to look more like its classic counterparts.


Most used
Create USB Recovery
Get Started
Feedback Hub
Maps
People
Sticky Notes
#
3D Builder
A
Access 2016
Acrobat Reader DC
Alarms & Clock
AMD Catalyst Control Center
Apple Software Update
Life at a glance
Calendar
We speak Gmail
Mail
Microsoft Edge
Photos
Skype Preview
Twitter
NETFLIX
Store
Dell
Play and explore
More ways to play. Join us!
Xbox
Groove Music
Movies & TV
News
Asphalt 8: Air...
Age of Empir...
FarmVille 2: C...
World of Tank...
OneNote
Unpin from Start
Resize
More

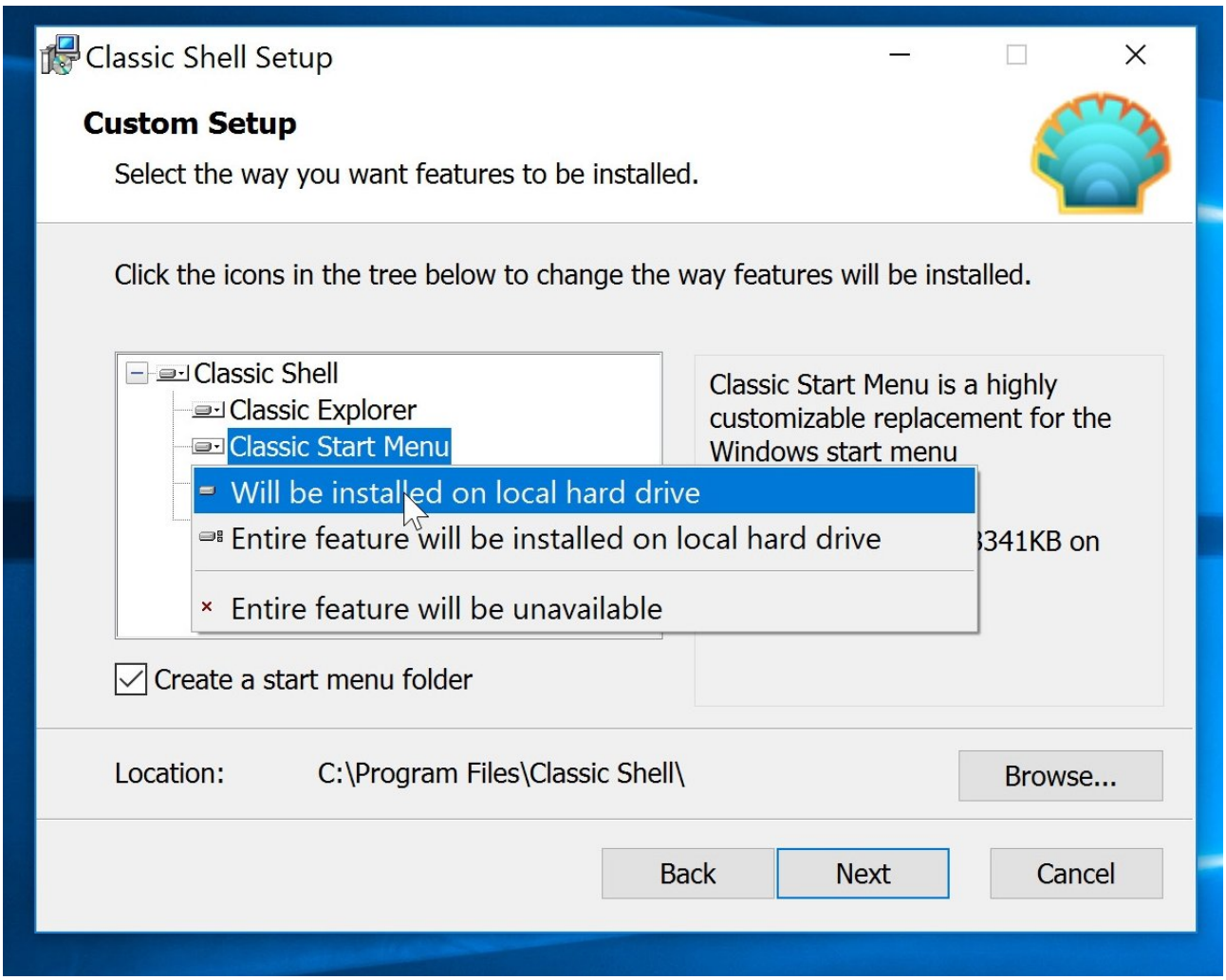

Most used
Create USB Recovery
Get Started
Feedback Hub
Maps
People
Sticky Notes
#
3D Builder
A
Access 2016
Acrobat Reader DC
Alarms & Clock
AMD Catalyst Control Center
Apple Software Update
C
Calculator
Ask me anything

Windows 7 Style Menu (Classic Shell)

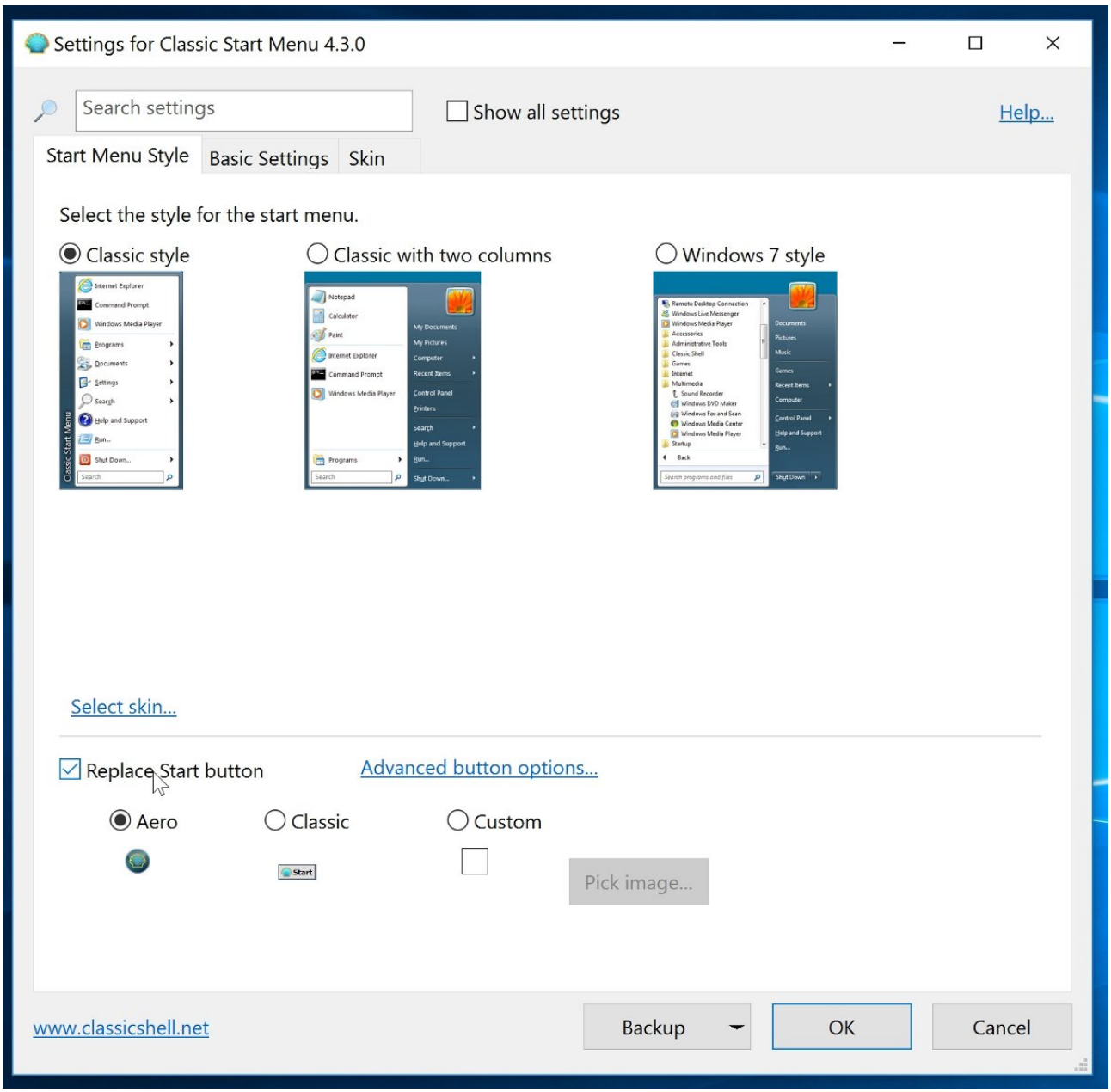
If a reduced-down Windows 10 Start menu is not to your liking, you can replicate a Windows 7 styled menu using a tool called Classic Shell. It's not an official Windows tool, so you'll have to download and install it from the website here (http://mte.gs/classicshell).



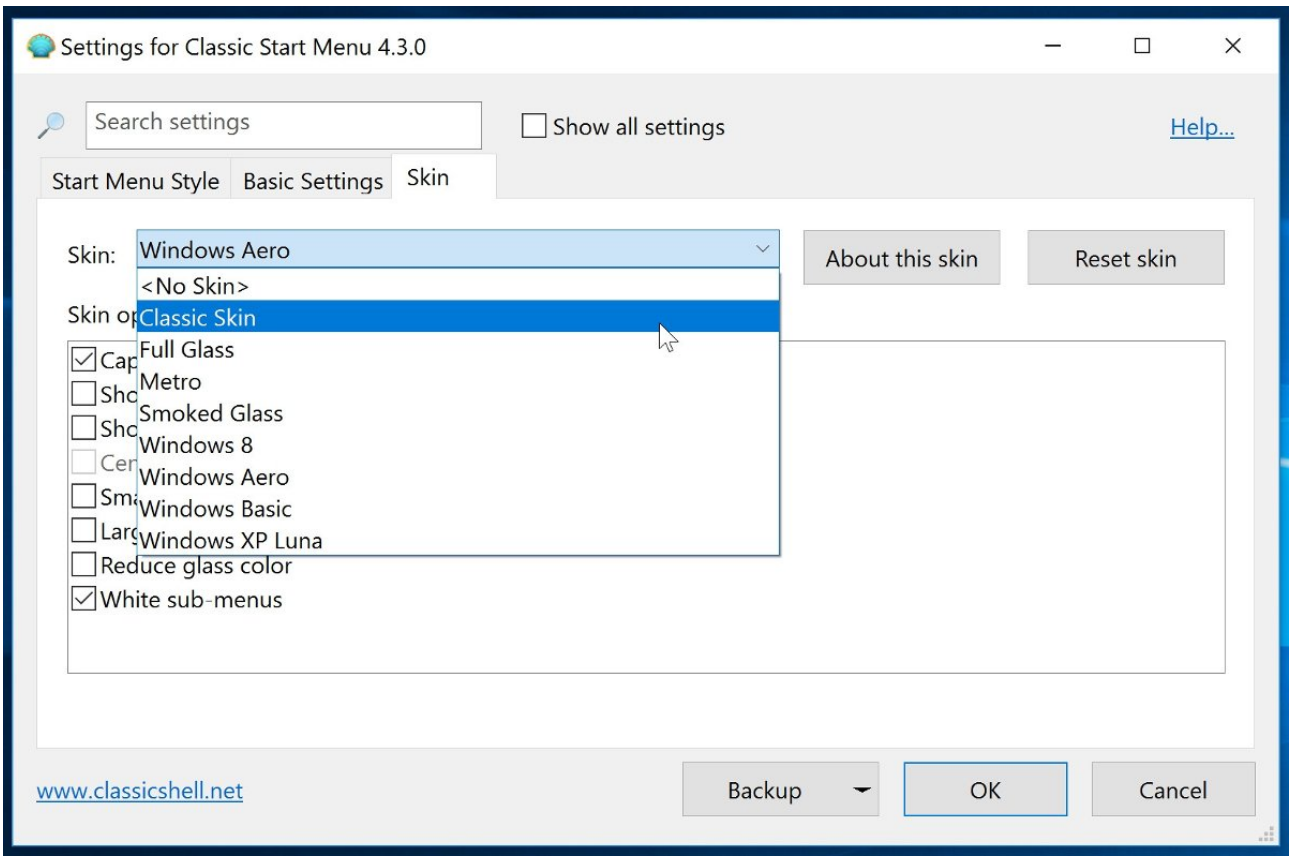
While installing this software, it will ask you what components of Classic Shell you want to install. You can tell it not to install certain elements; just make sure the Start menu option is set to be installed.



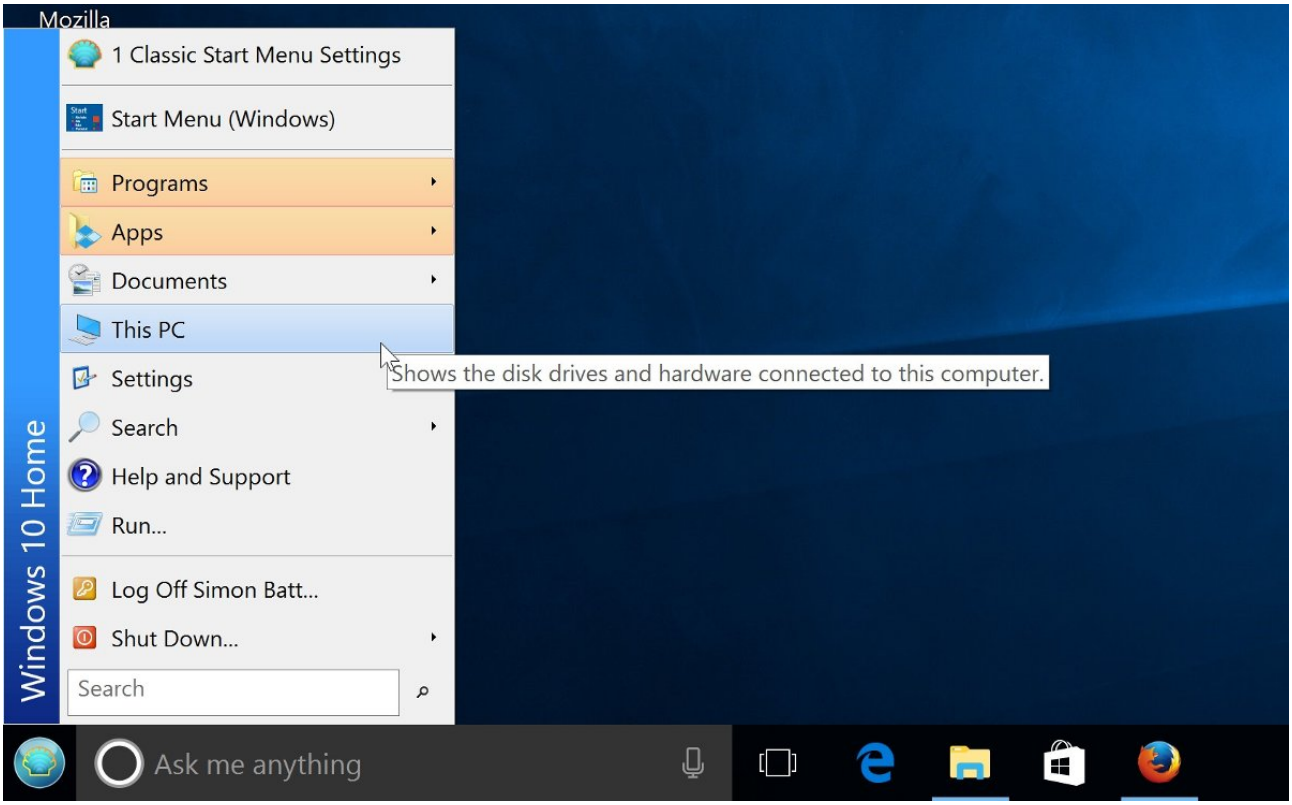
Once installed, Classic Shell will open a readme so you can learn how to use it. It will also open a window where you can select what style of Start menu you'd like. You can tick the "Replace Start button" option to unlock several Start button designs for you to use.



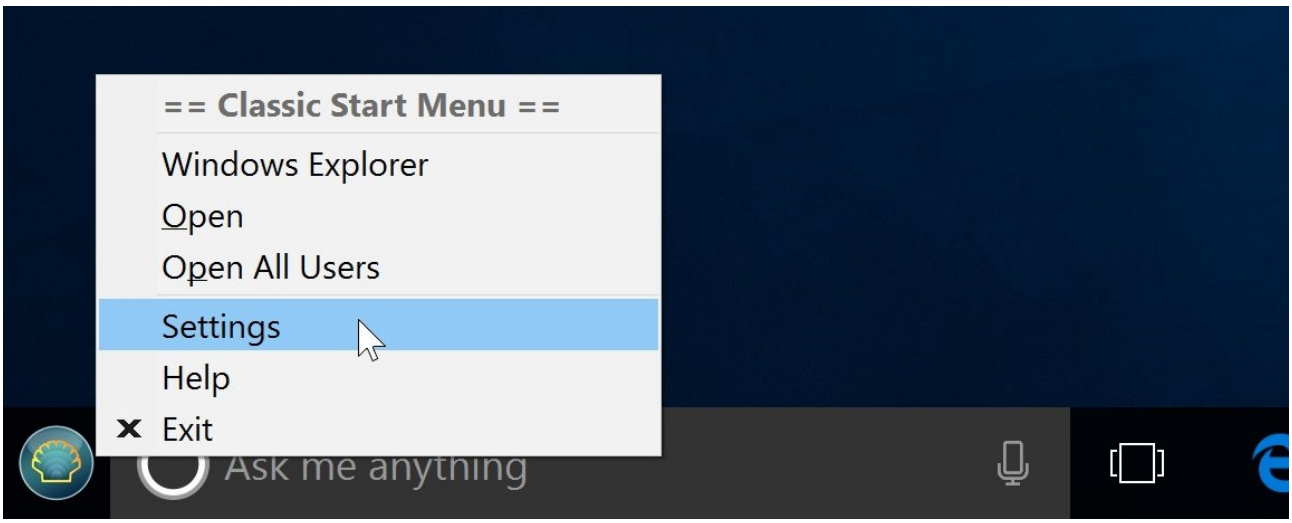
If you click the Skin tab, you can select how the Start menu looks. Metro is Windows 10, Aero looks like Windows 7, and Classic heralds back to the days of XP. Set the option to the OS you want to emulate.



Once finished, click OK, and your Start menu will now look nearly identical to the older Windows Start menus.



You can always change how it looks by right-clicking the Start button and clicking Settings.

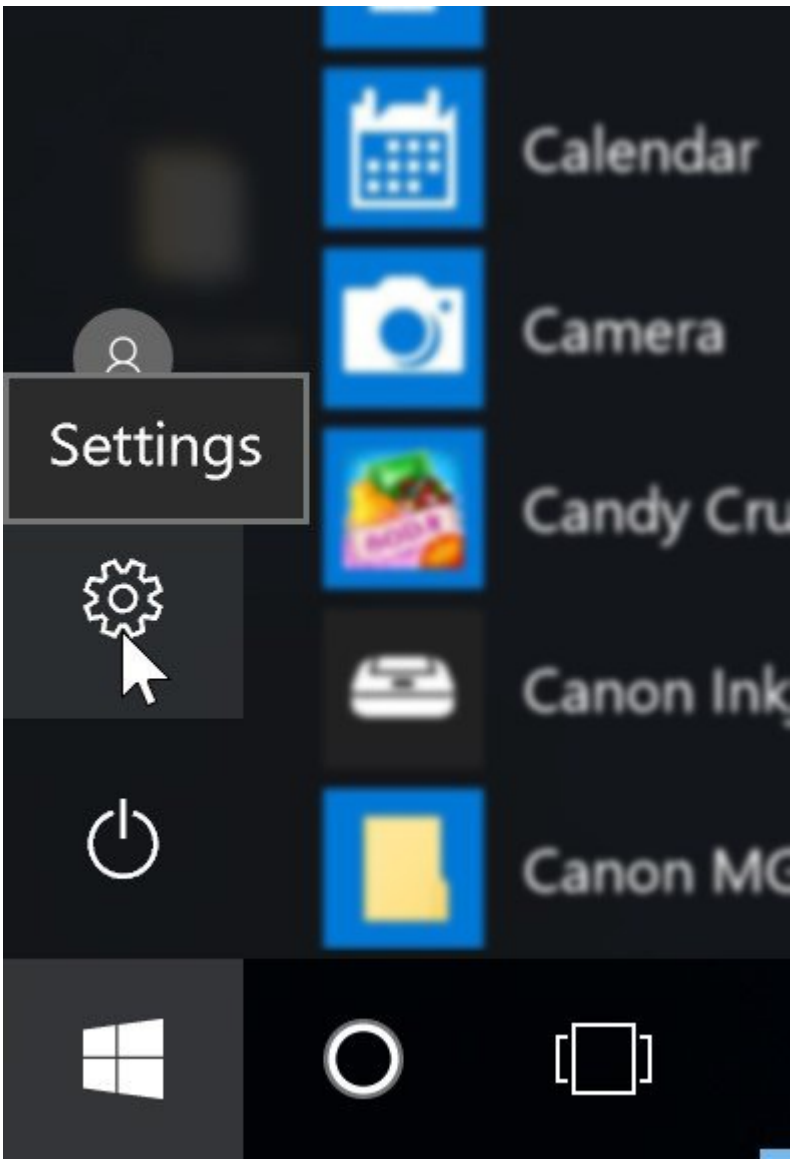


If you want to get rid of Classic Shell, you can uninstall it as described in Chapter 7.3.

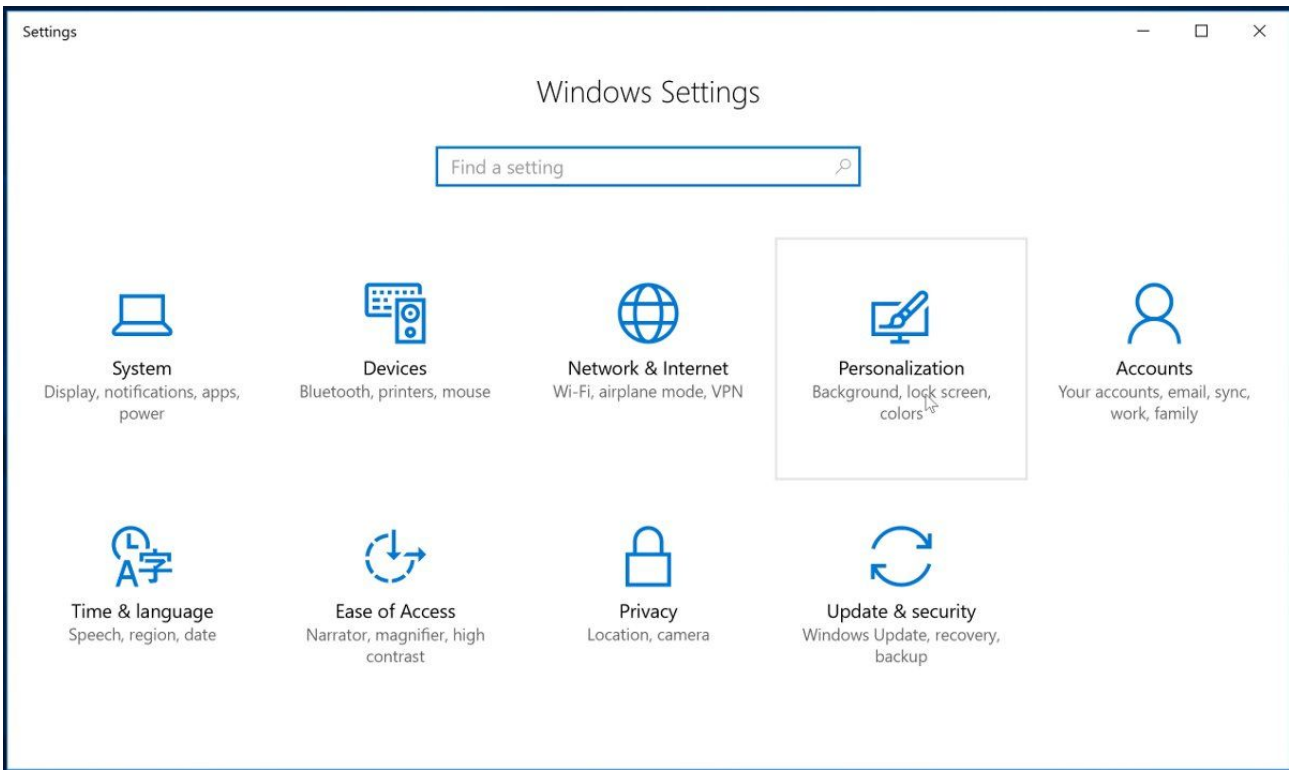
Windows 7 Style Menu (Creator's Update)

With the Creator's Update comes an easy new way to use a Start menu akin to Windows 7's own. The update brought in a new option that allows you to separate the apps and the tiles, so you can see one or the other and not both at the same time.

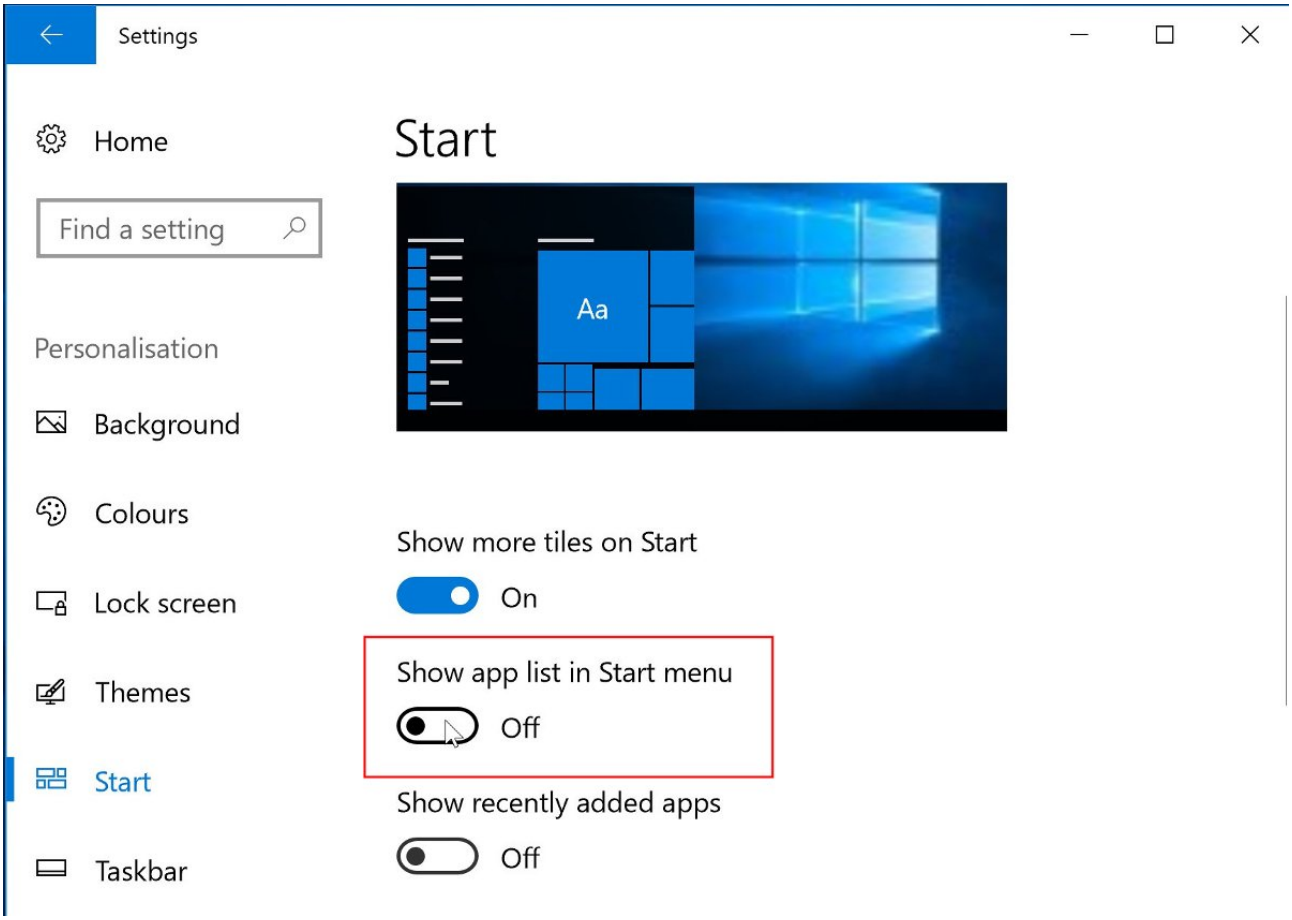
If you want to enable this option, click Start, then the Settings cog.



Go to Personalization.

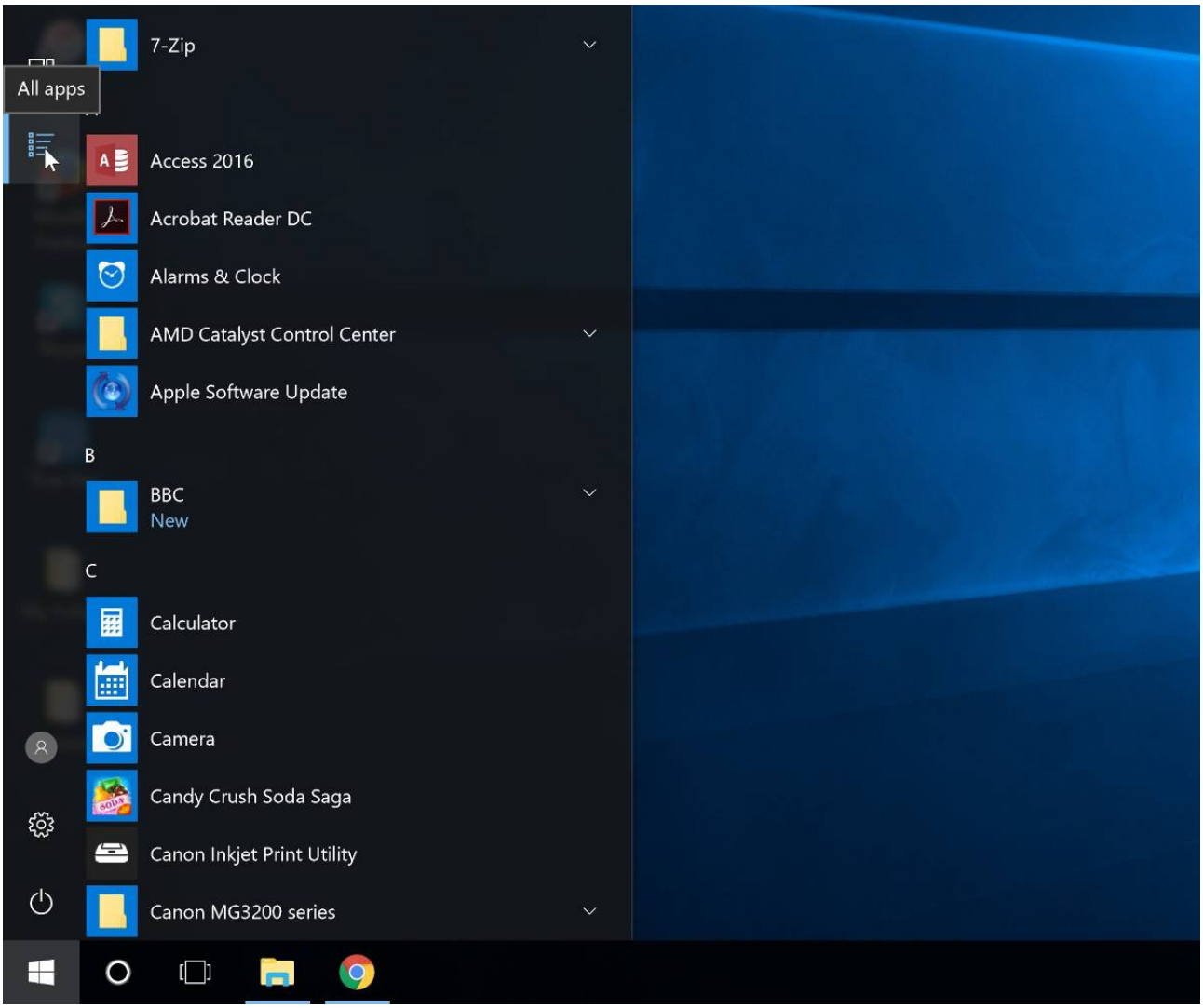


On the left, click Start, then find the option “Show app list in Start menu” and turn it off.



This separates the Start menu into tiles and app mode. You can switch between the two

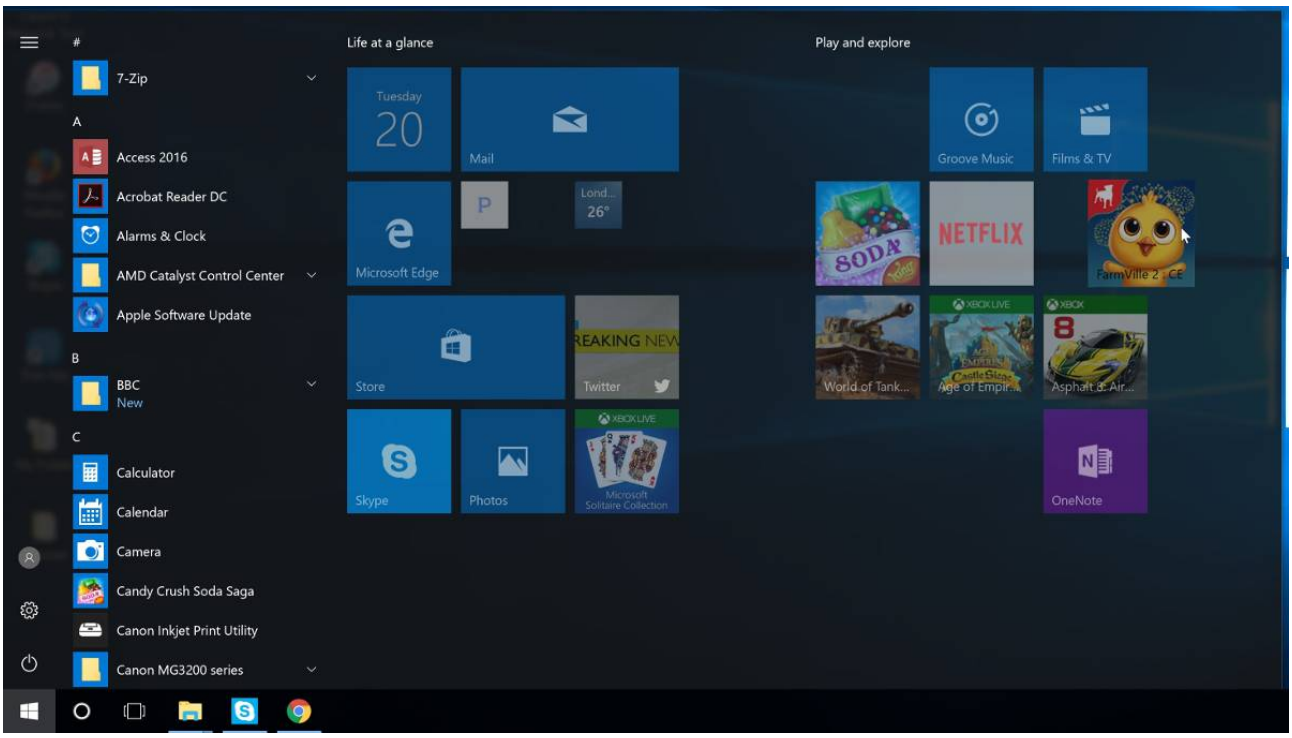
by clicking on the options on the upper-left of the Start menu when it's open.



Adding Folders (Creator's Update)

Amongst the array of new features that came with the Creator's Update was the ability to make folders in the tiles section of your Start menu. This is particularly handy if your Start menu is cluttered and you want a bit more organisation!

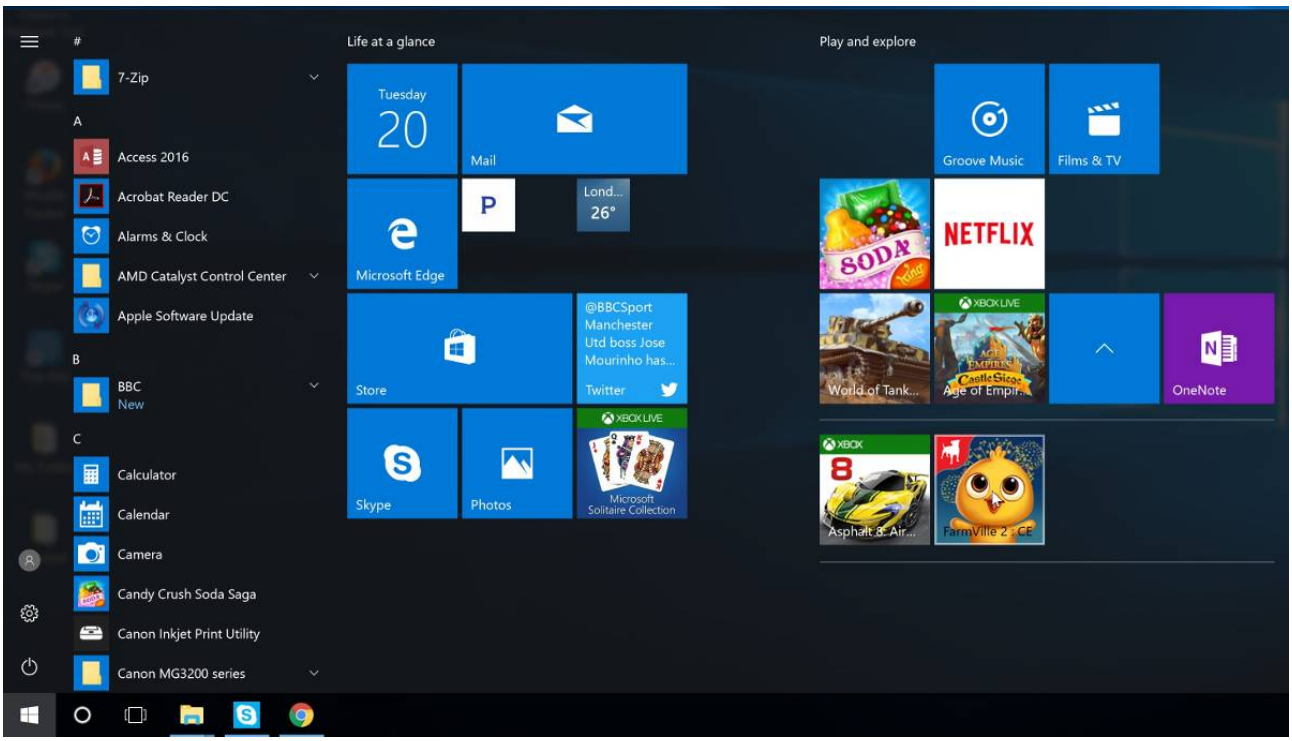
To make a folder, first identify at least two apps in your Start menu's app section you'd like to put into a folder. Then click and hold the left mouse button over one of the apps you'd like in the folder. You'll notice the other apps will "grey out."



Now, drag the app you're holding over an app you'd like it to share a folder with. Windows allows you to preview the changes you're about to make before you let go of your left mouse button, so pay attention to the greyed out apps as you do this.

If you notice the app you're hovering over "jumps out the way," Windows thinks you want to reposition the apps rather than make a folder. If this happens, simply drag your app back over the greyed out one, regardless of where it jumped to.

At one point you'll notice that the app you're dragging the current app over will increase in size a little. If you let go of the left mouse button at that point, Windows will make a folder including these two apps.



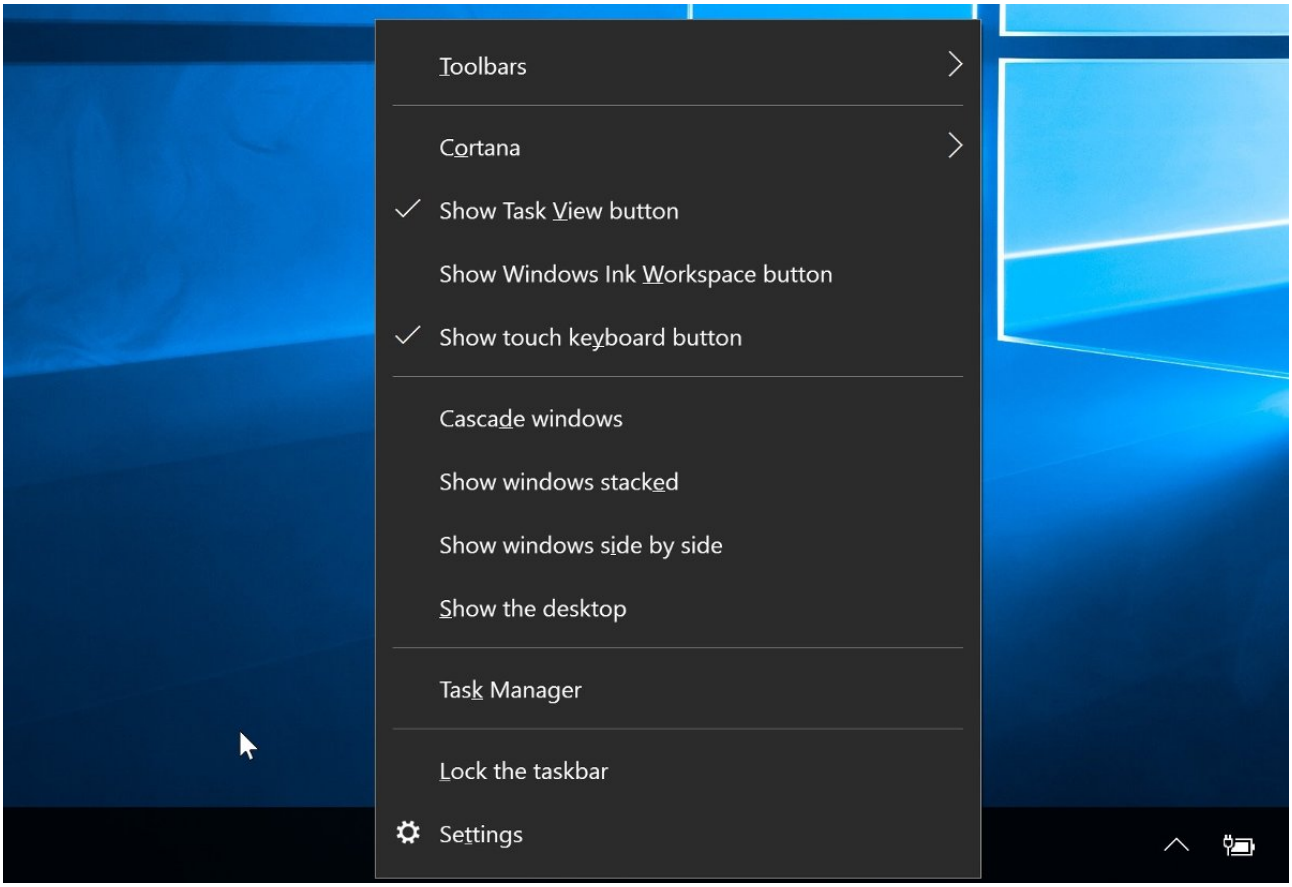
If you’d like to add more apps, just drag them into the folder directly. No need to repeat the above steps, as the folder has already been created.

Chapter 4. The Taskbar

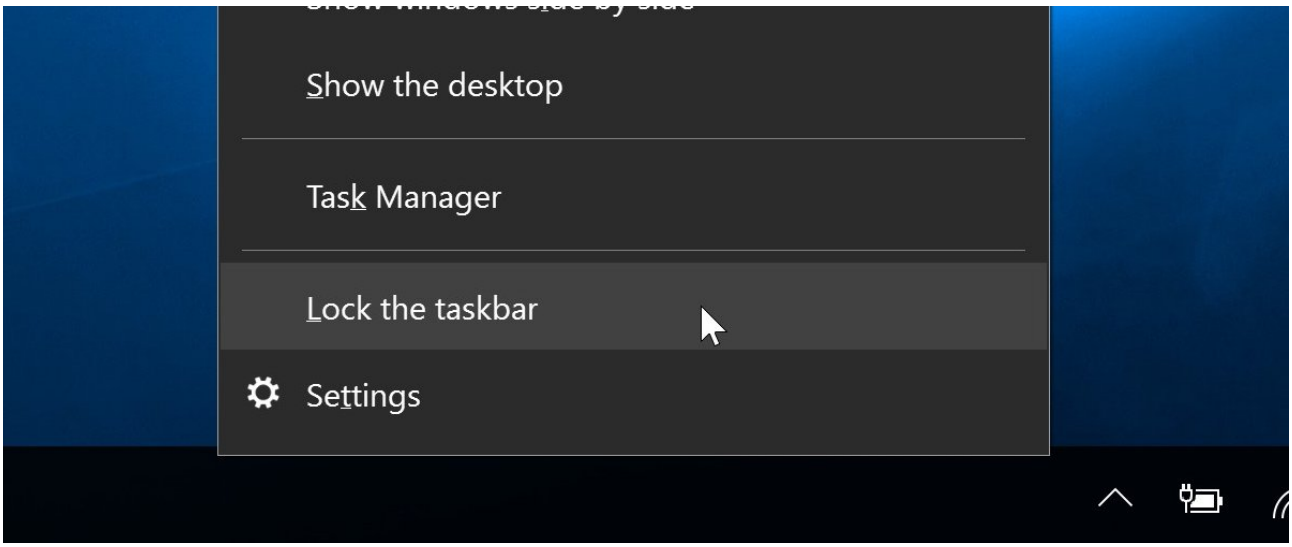
Prevent the Taskbar From Being Moved

The taskbar is the home of all your tasks. It lets you know what's running as well as system time, sound options, the Wi-Fi signal strength, and the Start button. While it does its job perfectly well, you can opt to change where the taskbar sits. Some people like it where it sits, however, and don't want to change its location. If this is you, follow these steps so you can avoid moving it around by accident.

First, right click the taskbar. Make sure you're right-clicking an empty space and not on an icon or the Start button.



Click Lock the Taskbar.



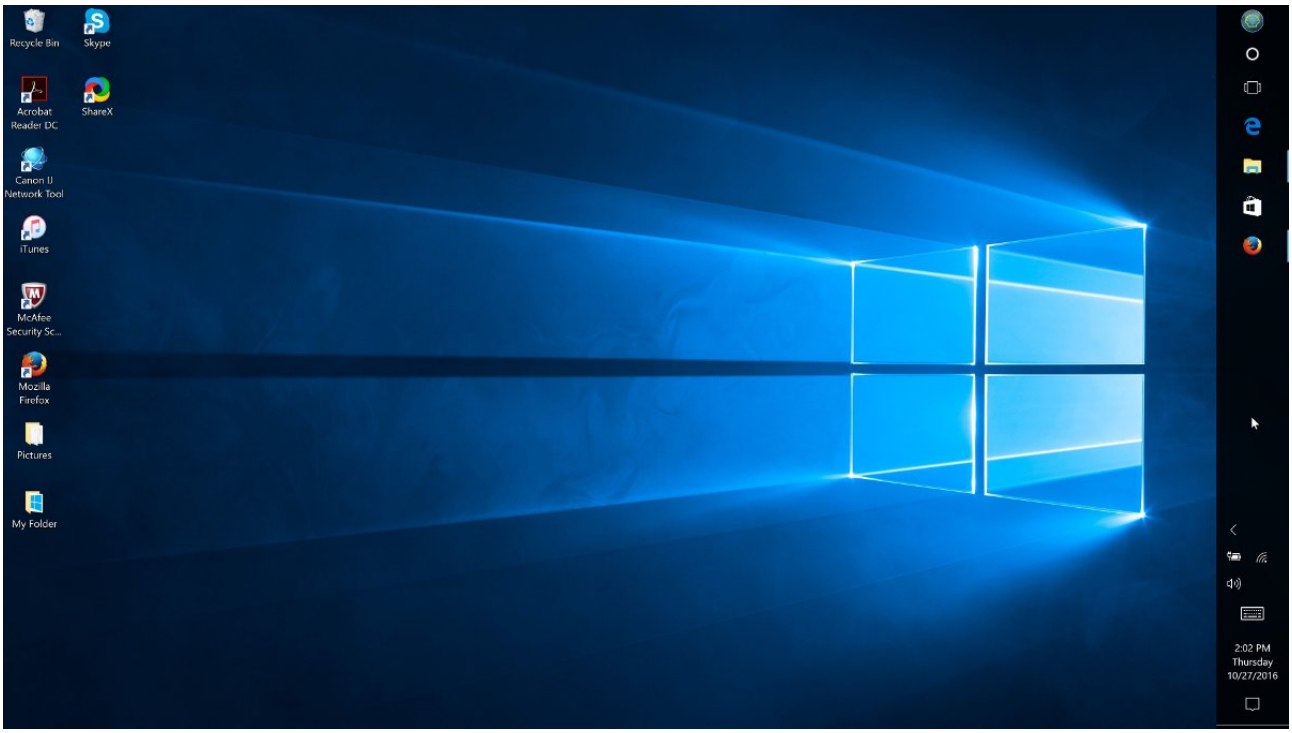
Now if you try to change the location of the taskbar, it will stay stuck where it currently is. It’s very useful if you like its current location and don’t want it accidentally moving.

Change Location of Taskbar

What if you don't like the current location of the taskbar? Thankfully, it's very easy to change that as well. First, ensure that the taskbar is not already locked. You can check whether it's locked or not using the instructions in Chapter 4.1. When you're sure it's unlocked, follow these steps:

First, find an empty area of the taskbar. Click and hold the left mouse button on that spot.

Then, with the mouse button still held down, direct your cursor toward an edge of the screen. You'll notice that the taskbar will follow you to the edge you're closest to.

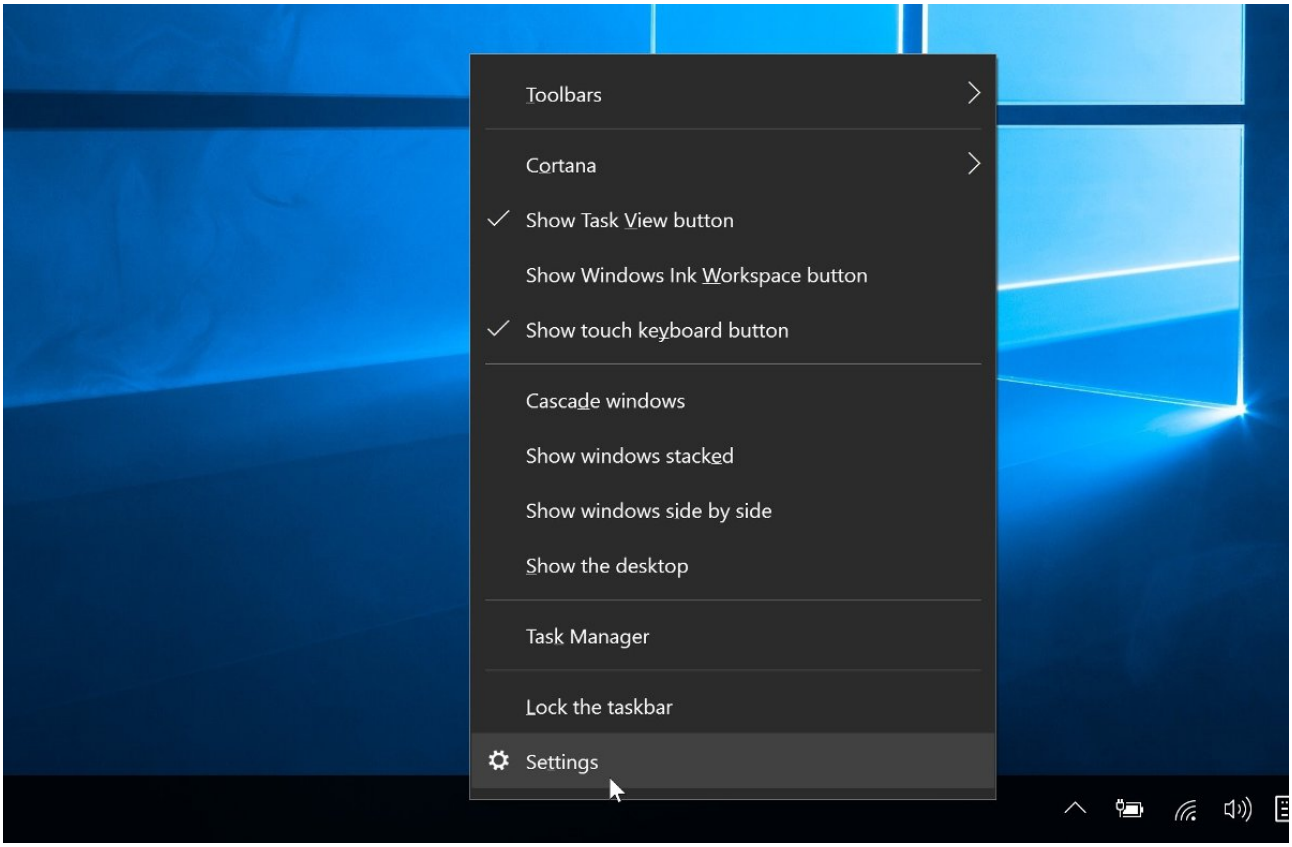


When you're happy with the location dictated by your cursor, release the left mouse button. The taskbar will stay in the location where you let go of the mouse button.

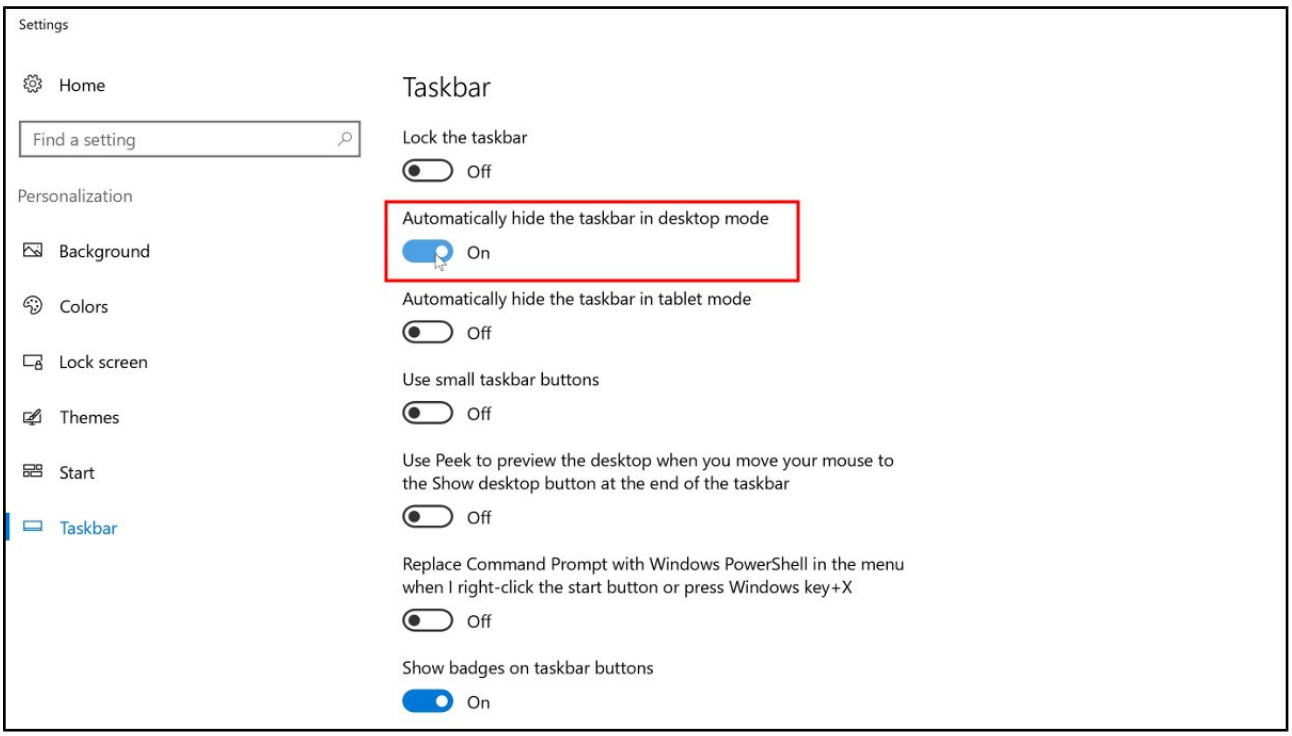
If you don't want to perform this trick by accident in the future, you can lock the taskbar by using the technique described in Chapter 4.1.

Hide The Taskbar

If even a locked, correctly-positioned taskbar is too problematic for you, you can make it so it hides when you're not using it. To do this, right click on an empty space on the taskbar, making sure you're not right-clicking the Start button, software on the taskbar, or any of the icons. Then click Settings.



In the window that appears, turn on the option that reads "Automatically hide the taskbar in desktop mode". If you use tablet mode and want it to hide as well, feel free to turn that option on tool.

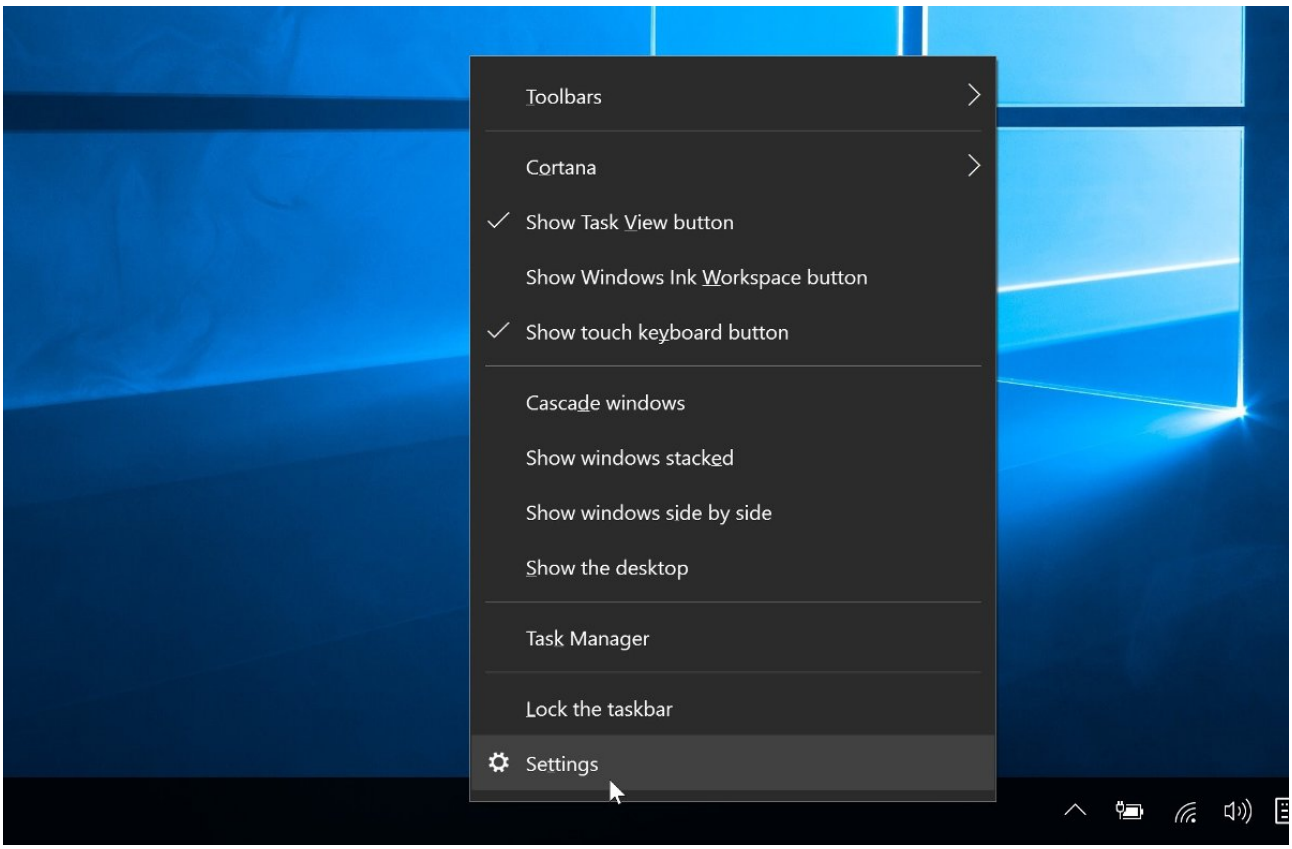


The taskbar will now slide away when you're not using it. To make it appear again, just hover your cursor where the taskbar 'should' be and it will reappear.

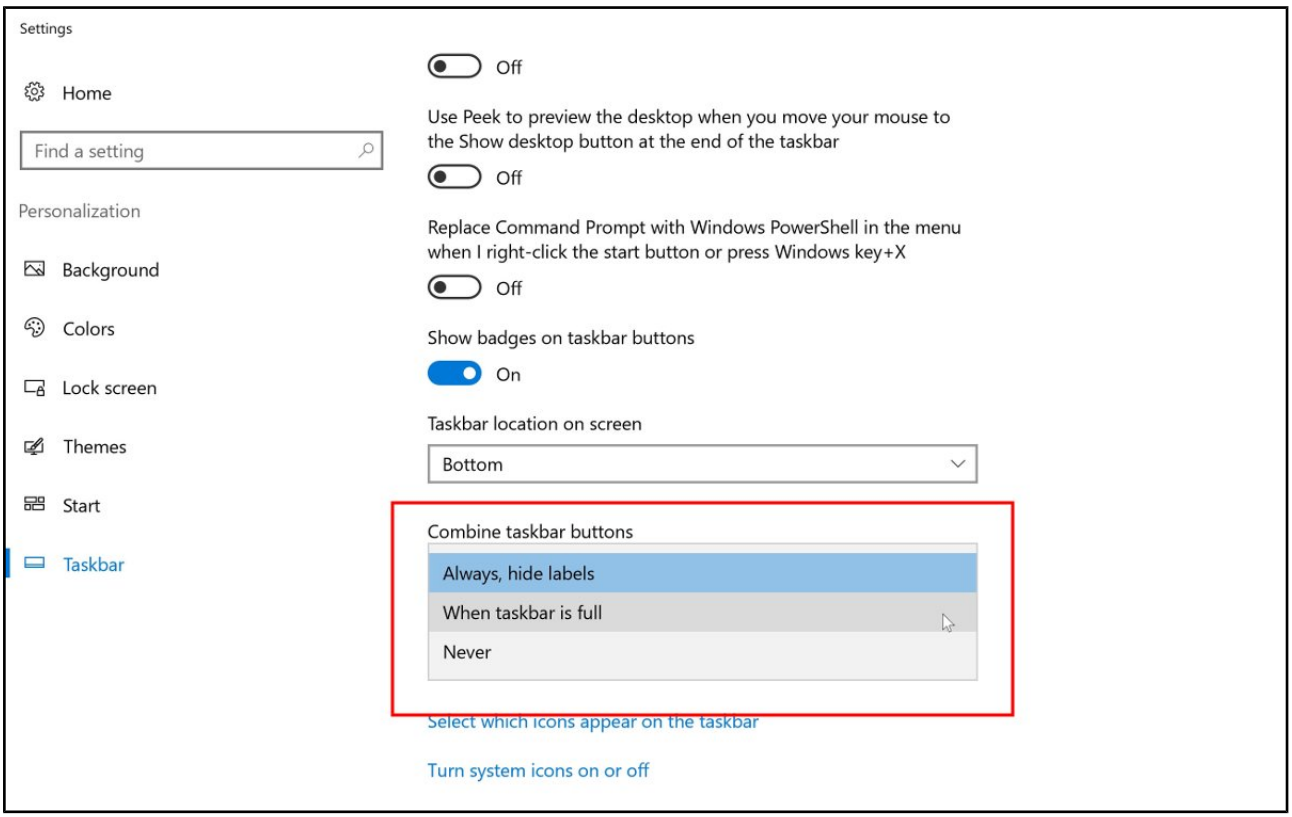
Combine and Uncombine Icons

By default, the taskbar will show open applications and windows as small boxes. If you want, you can change this so they show as bars instead. The benefit of this is that the box will also include detail as to what is in each window. This can be handy if your taskbar becomes cluttered with multiple identical icons, and you want to identify what each one contains from a brief glance.

If this sounds like something you'd like, it's easy to set up. Right-click on the toolbar, making sure you're not right-clicking on an icon or the Start button. Then click Settings.



In this new window, scroll down until you see a drop-down box called "Combine taskbar buttons". Click on the drop-down to see its options.



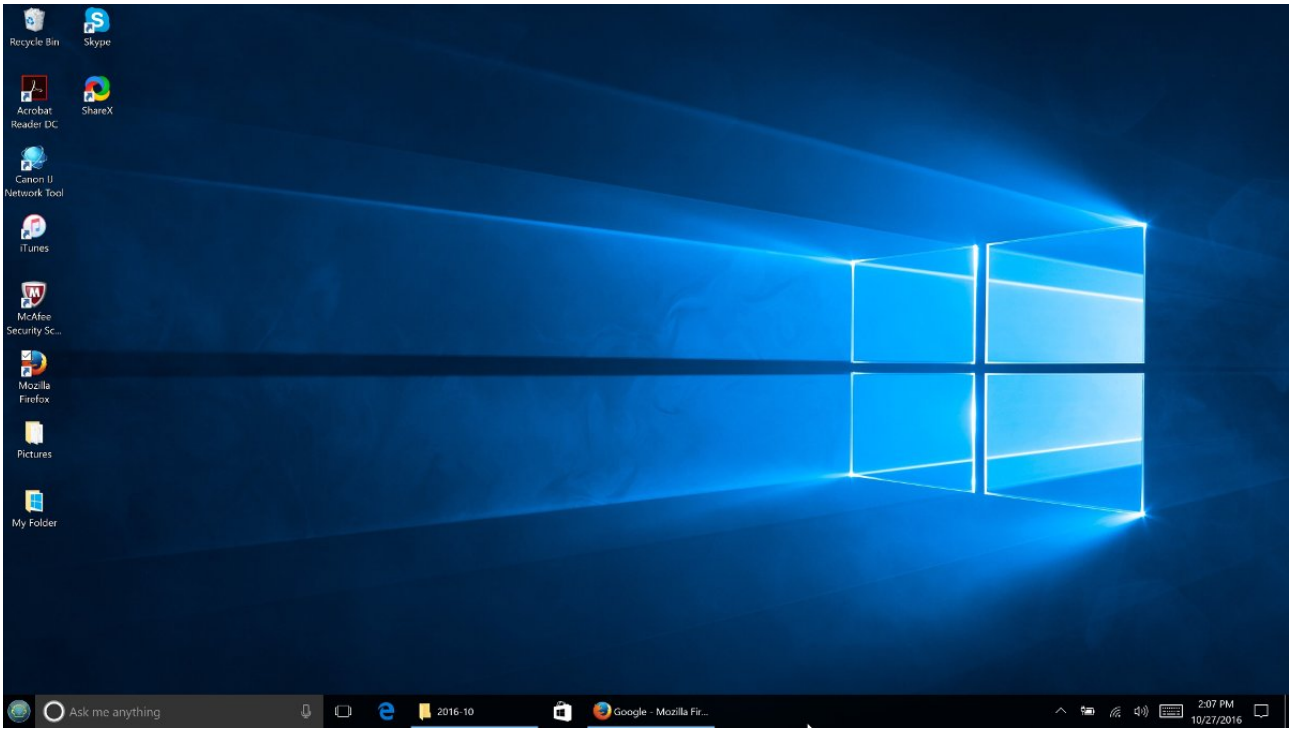
These options are as follows:

Always, hide labels: will always make icons appear on the taskbar as single boxes.

Never: will always make icons long boxes with some textual context of what each window is.

When taskbar is full: this is identical to the “Never” option, but when the taskbar fills up, it will swap to boxes instead.

Select the option you’d like, and the taskbar will automatically match what you’ve clicked.



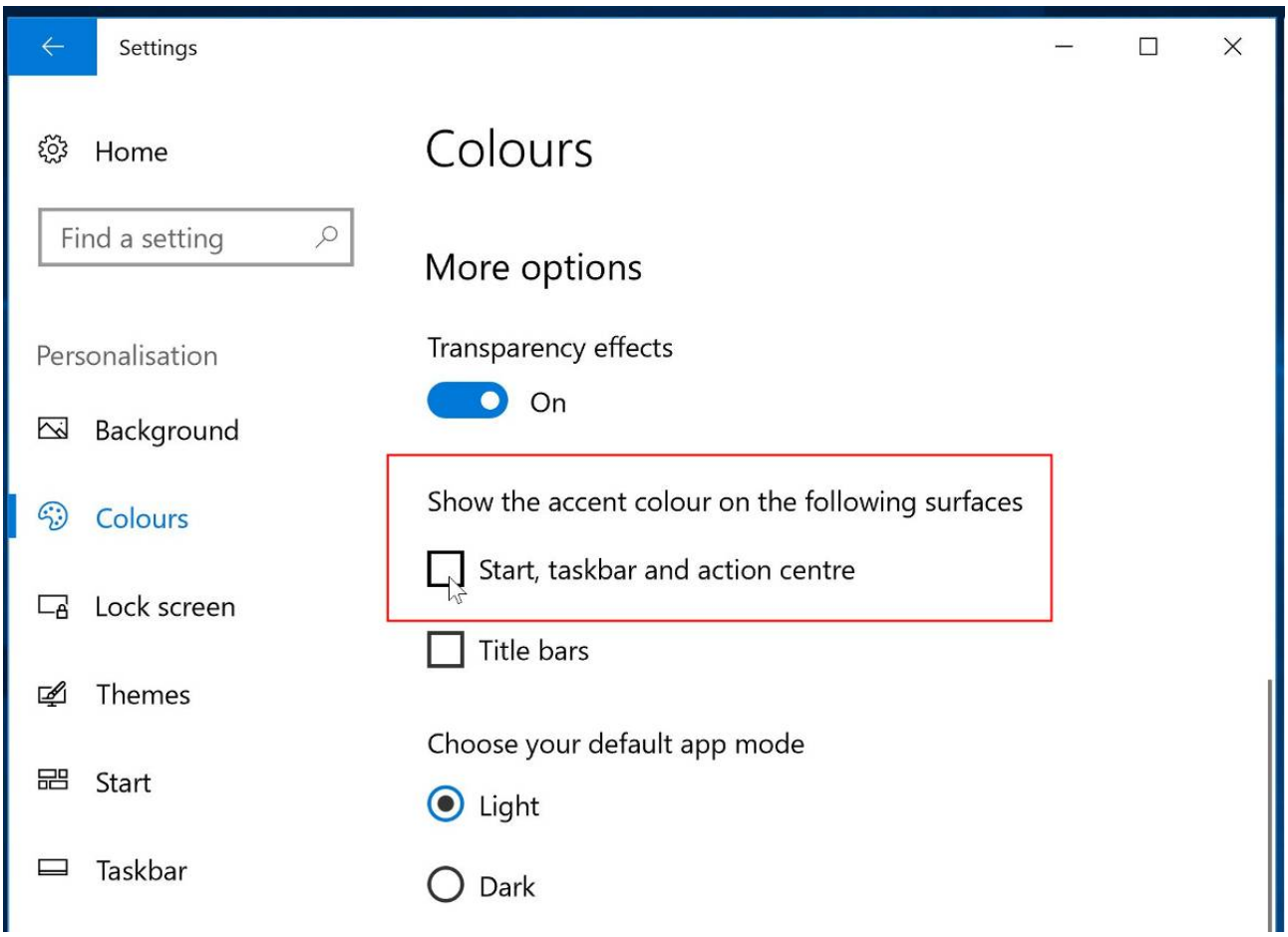
Customise Color and Transparency (Creator's Update)

Along with the above steps, you can also change the taskbar's color and transparency. If you have a color theme already set up and are annoyed the taskbar hasn't followed suit, or you'd just like a change in scenery, follow these steps.

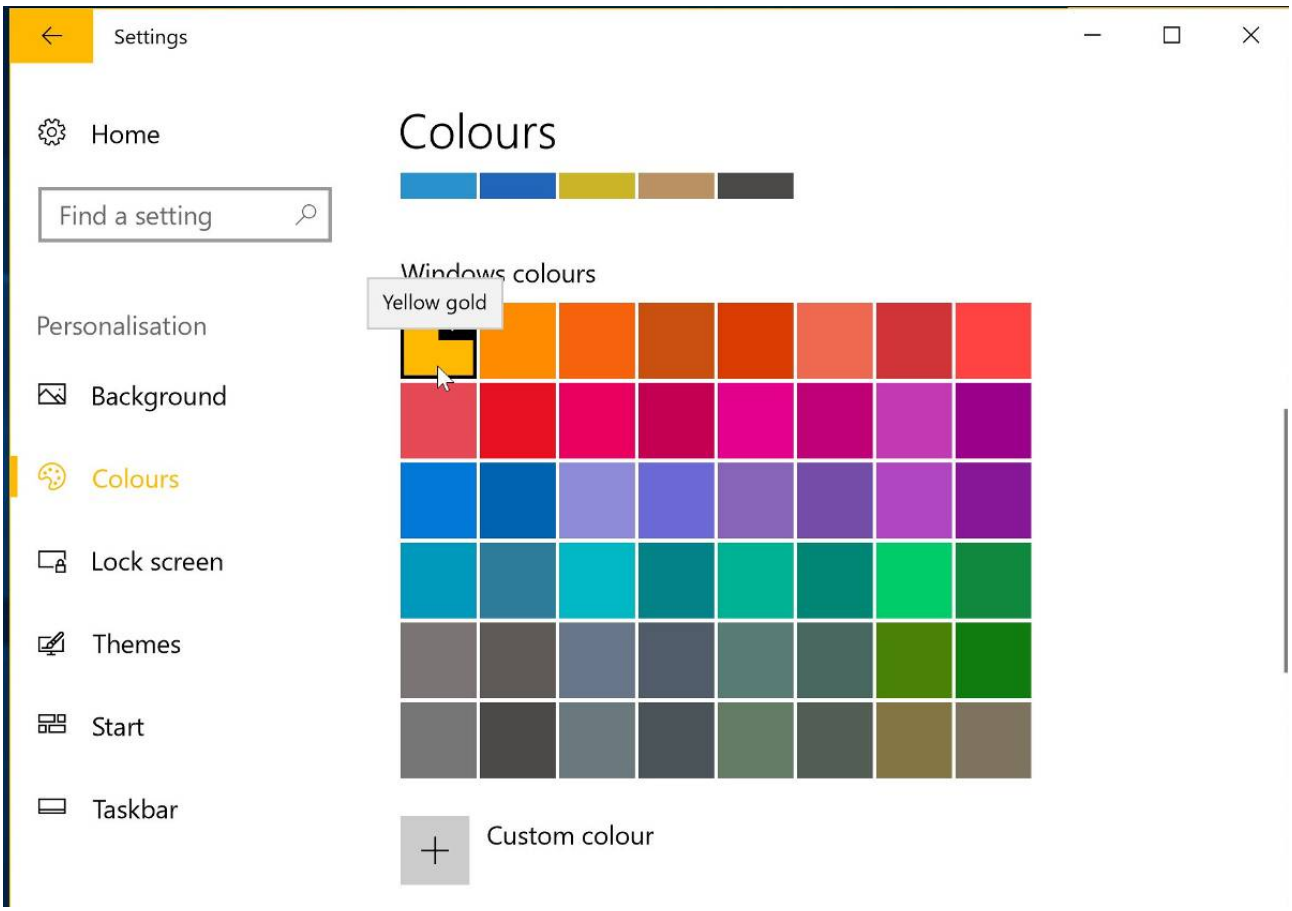
First, click on Start, then the Settings cog.

Next, click on Personalization.

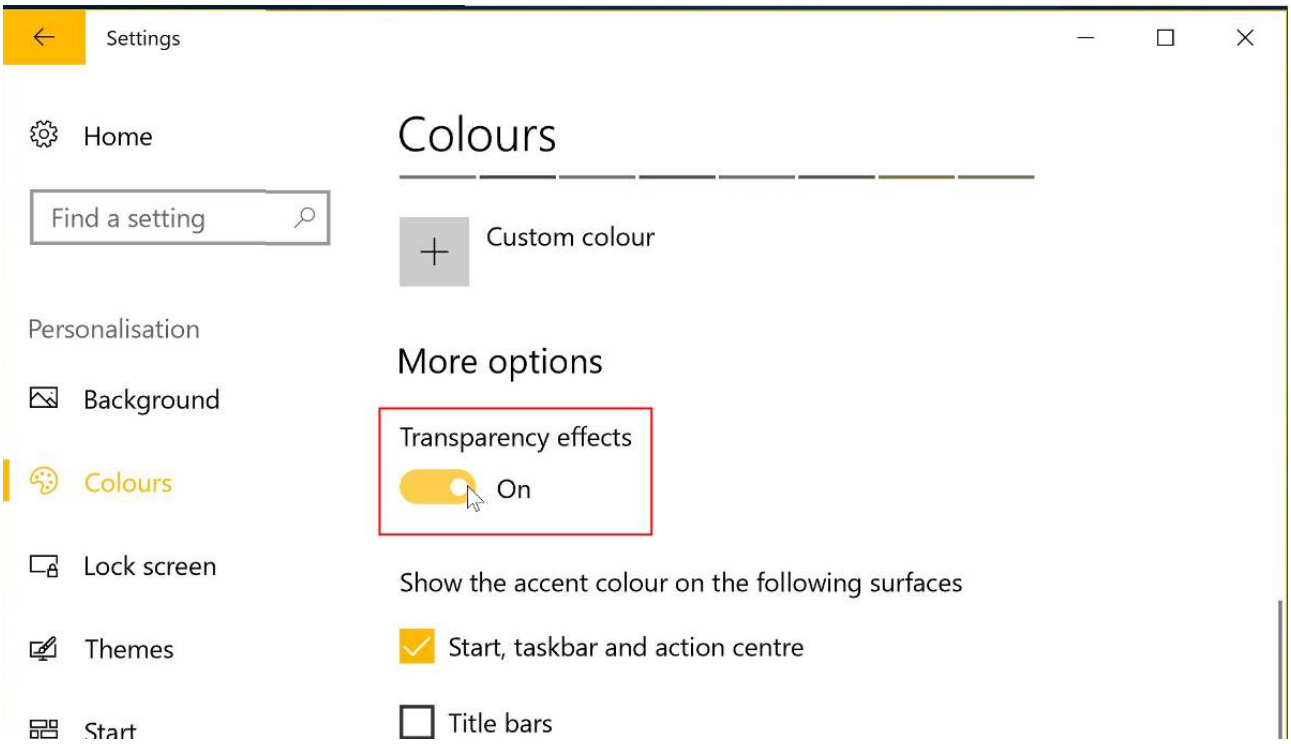
On the left click Colours. We touch upon this area in chapter 2.2 where we use the color picker to change the desktop's color scheme. This time, however, we'll be focusing on the taskbar. If you want to apply colour changes to the taskbar, simply scroll down to where it says "Show accent colour on the following surfaces and tick the box that reads Start, taskbar and action center.



Any colors selected will now show up on the taskbar. For instance, if we click this box with a strong yellow colour selected, you can see the stark difference between an uncoloured and coloured taskbar.



You can also turn transparency on or off here. If you have windows underneath the taskbar, transparency will allow you to see it through the bar. Turn this on or off as you see fit.

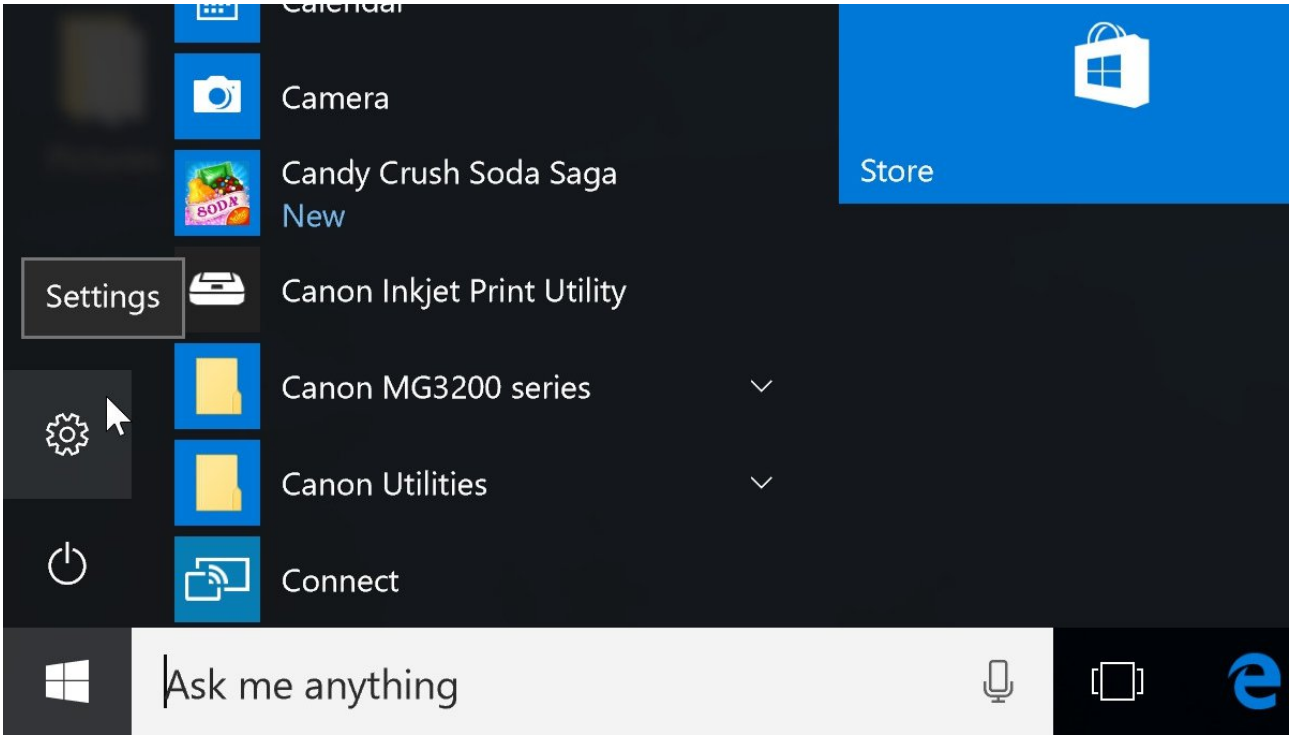


Chapter 5. Power Options and Screen Savers

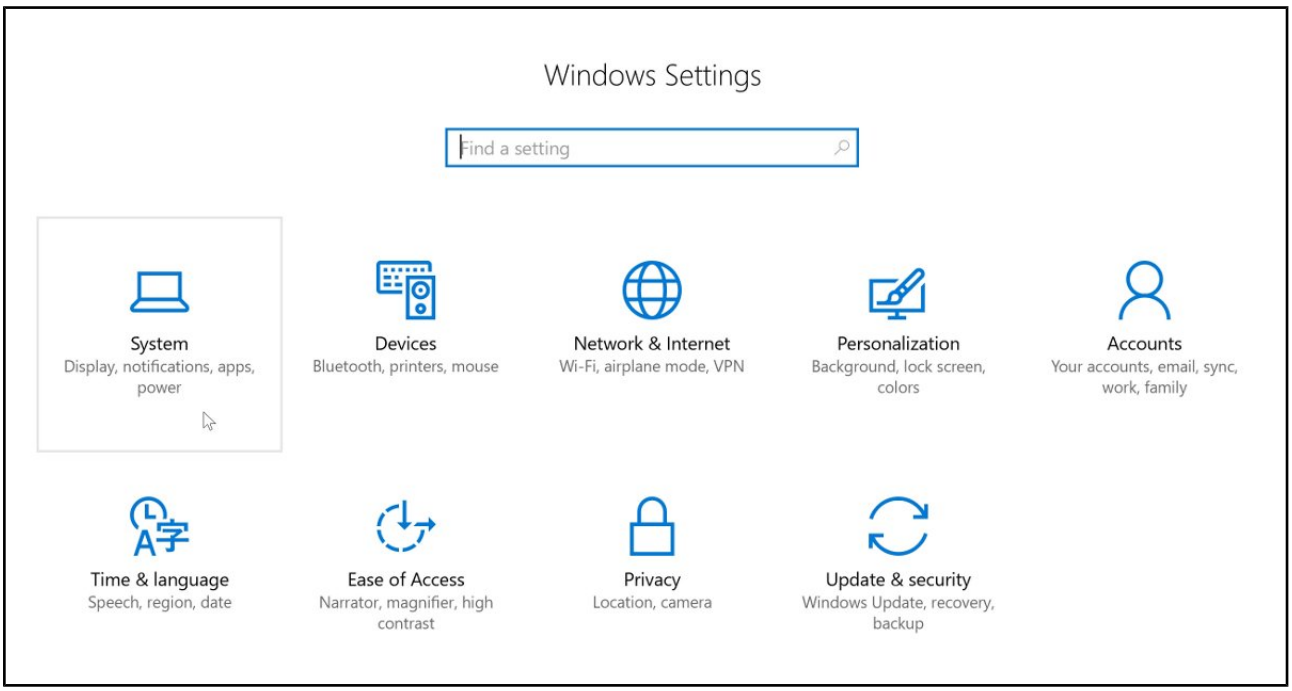
Change Power Plan

To change how your machine uses its power, you can visit the Power Options screen to modify settings. This is particularly good for laptop users who may want their laptop to automatically go into a lower power state when they unplug the laptop from the mains.

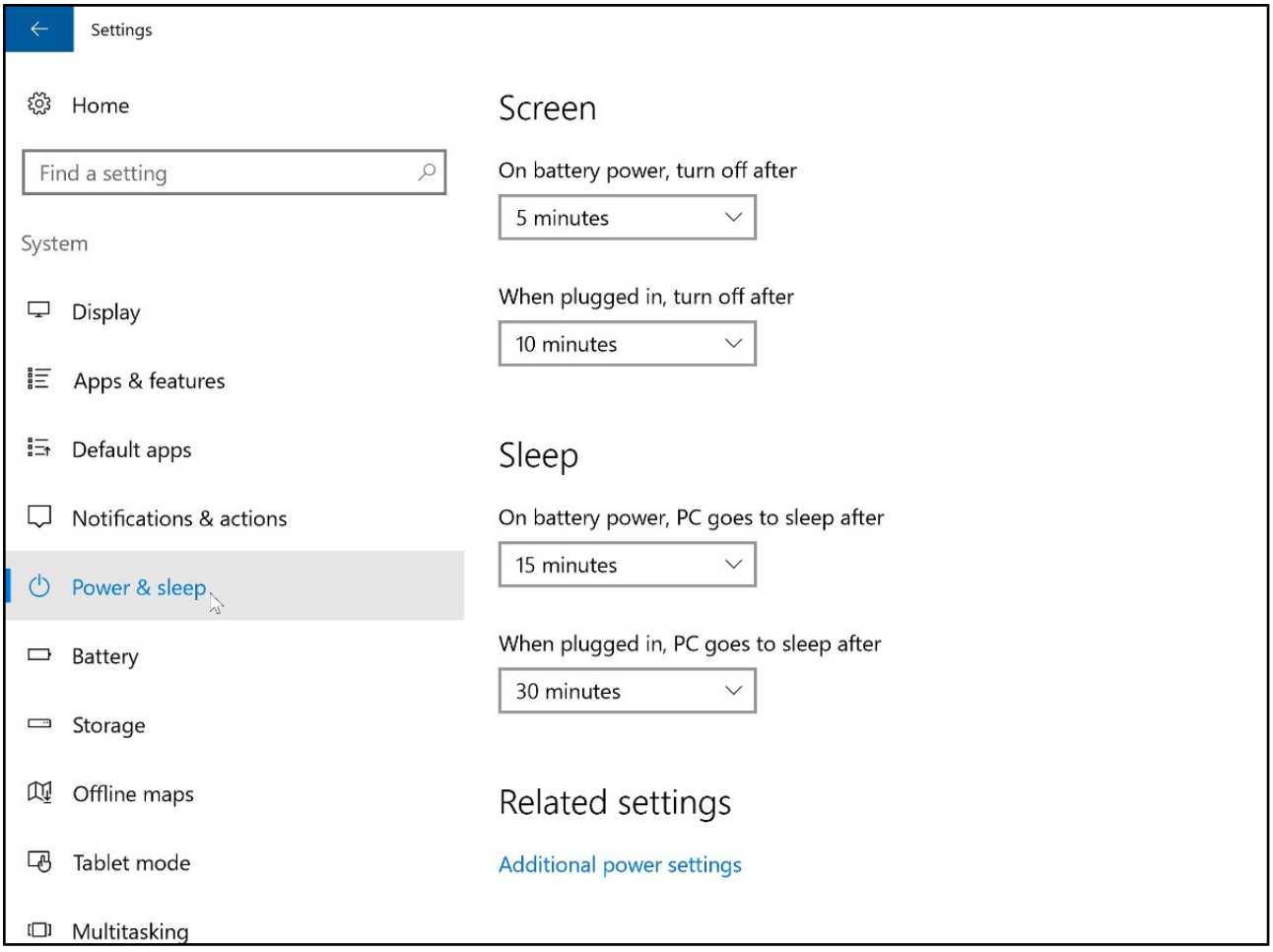
To access this Power Options screen, press Start, then Settings.



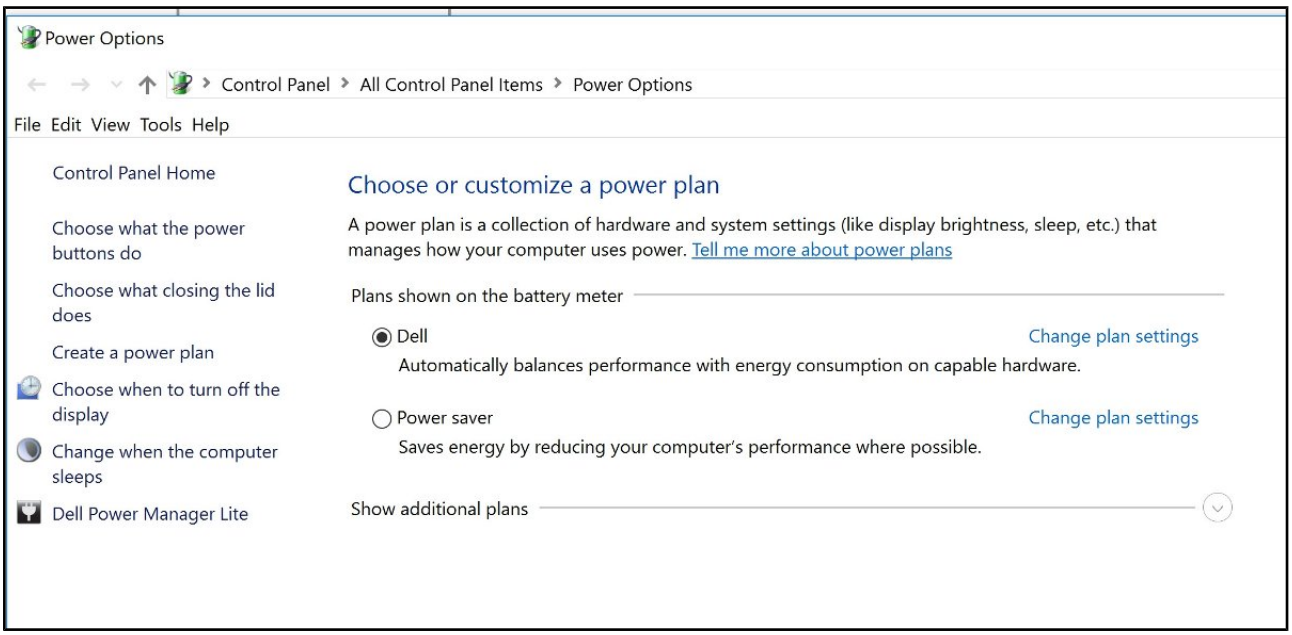
From here click System.



Then, on the left side, click “Power & Sleep”.



On this screen click “Additional power settings”.



Here you can see all the different plans your machine can use in different situations. Windows will come with some preset power plans, and sometimes your machine will have some power plans included by your computer manufacturer.

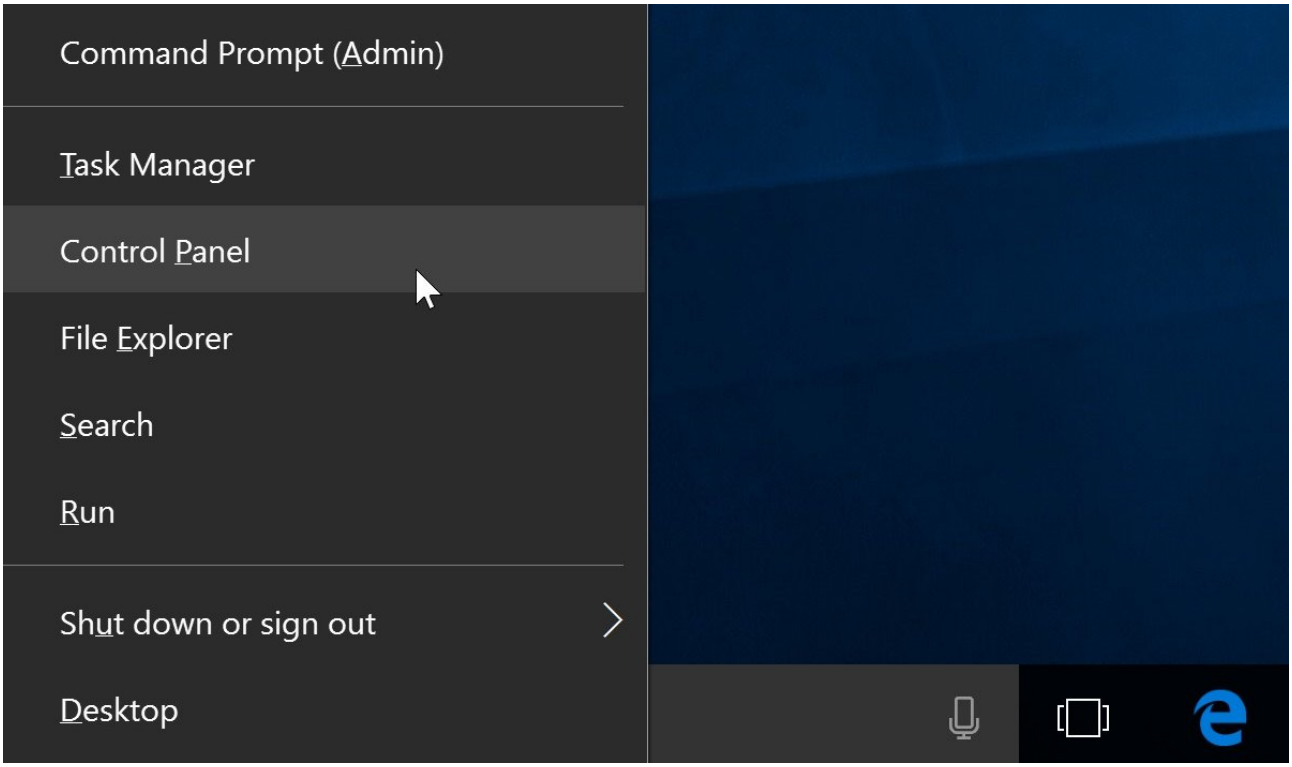
If you want to change the plan, simply click the radio button on the plan you'd like to use. If you'd like to edit the finer details of the plan you're using, click "Change plan settings" on the left to view the options you can toggle.

Customize What the Power Button and Closing Laptop Lid Does

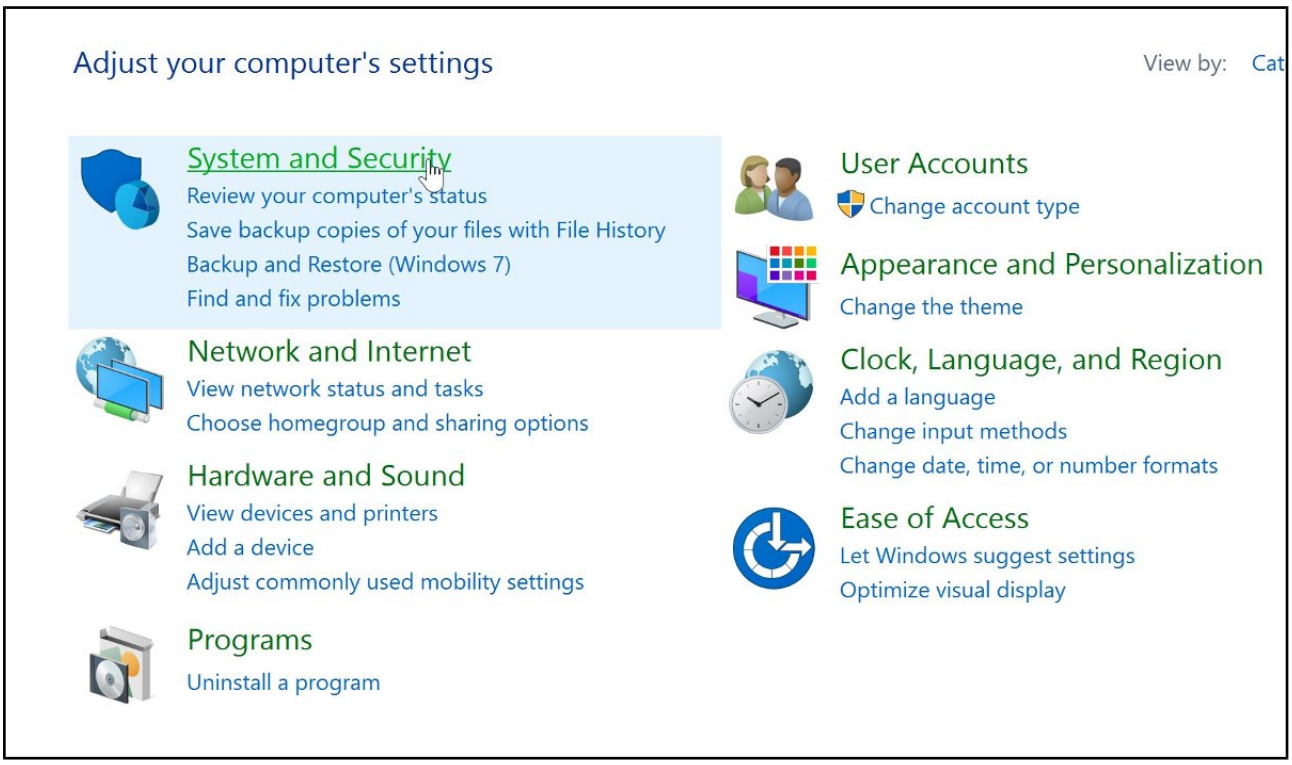
It may seem odd to learn that you can customize what happens when you press the physical power button on your machine. It feels like the power button only shuts off the computer, and that's all it can do. While holding down the power button for a few seconds will cause a computer to shut off its power, you can customize what happens when you simply press it.

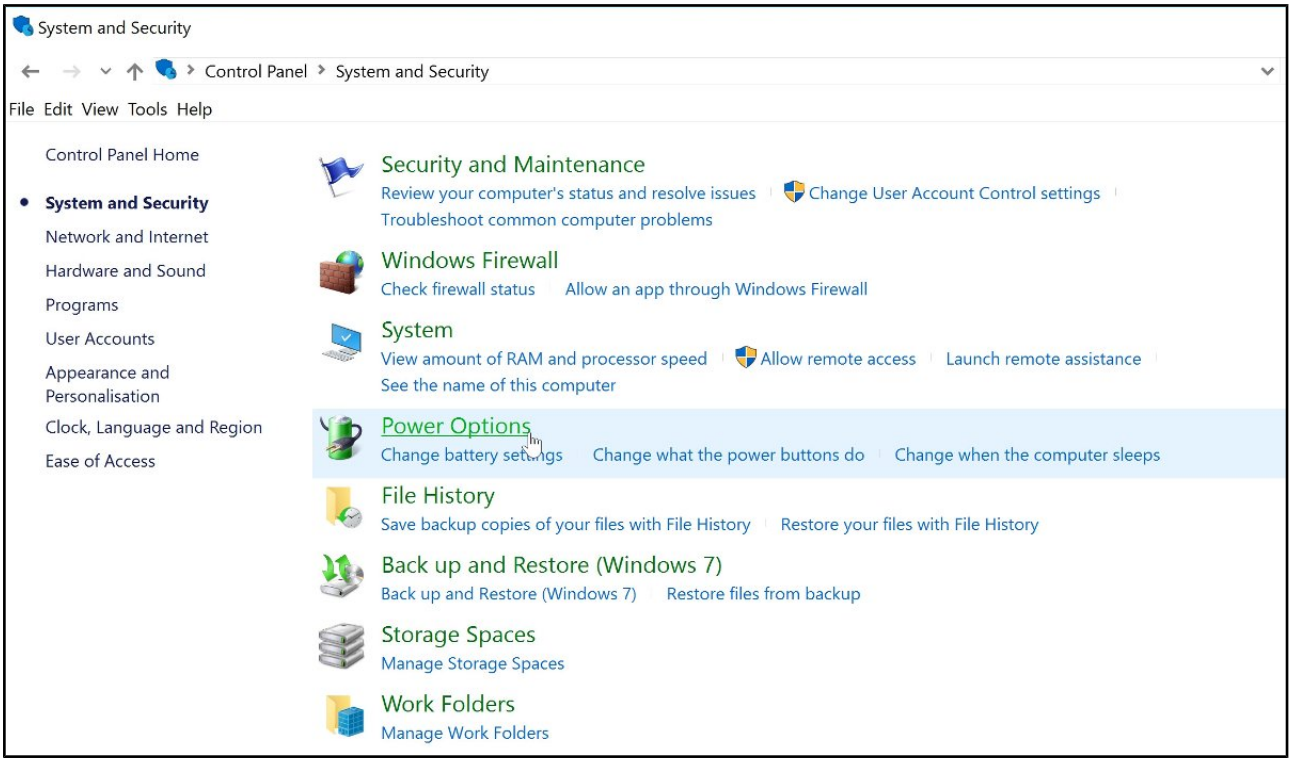
You can also change what your computer does when you close the lid on the laptop, but this is only really useful for those who own a laptop specifically. If you own a desktop PC, this option won't be helpful whatsoever.

To set these options, first right-click the Start button and click Control Panel.

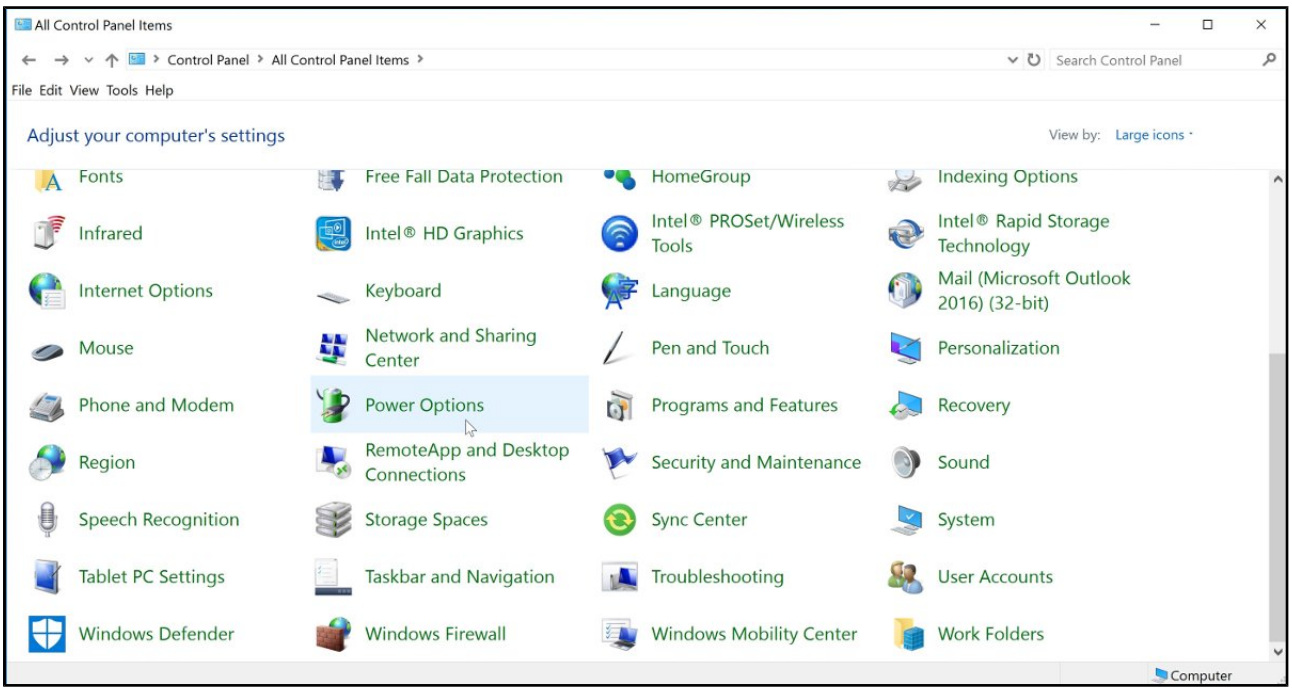


If you use Category View for Control Panel, first click System and Security, and then Power Options.





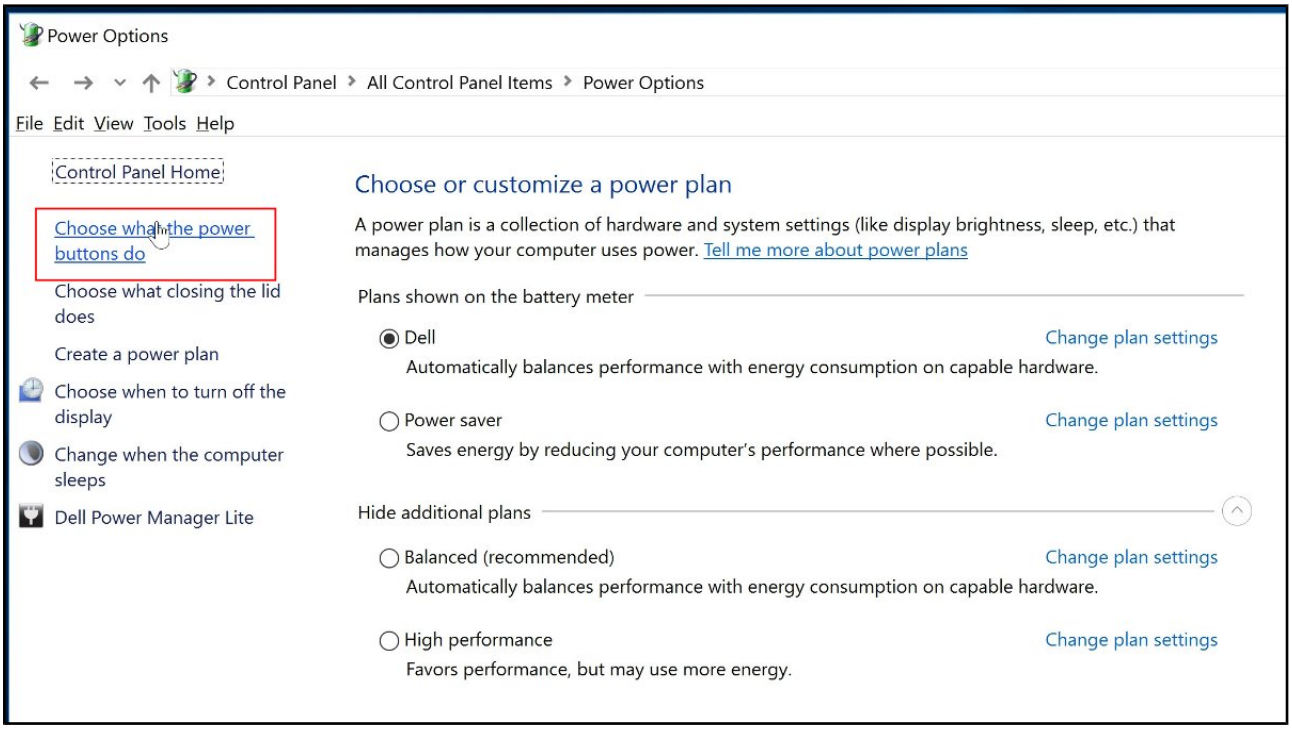
If you use Small or Large icon view, just find and click on Power Options.



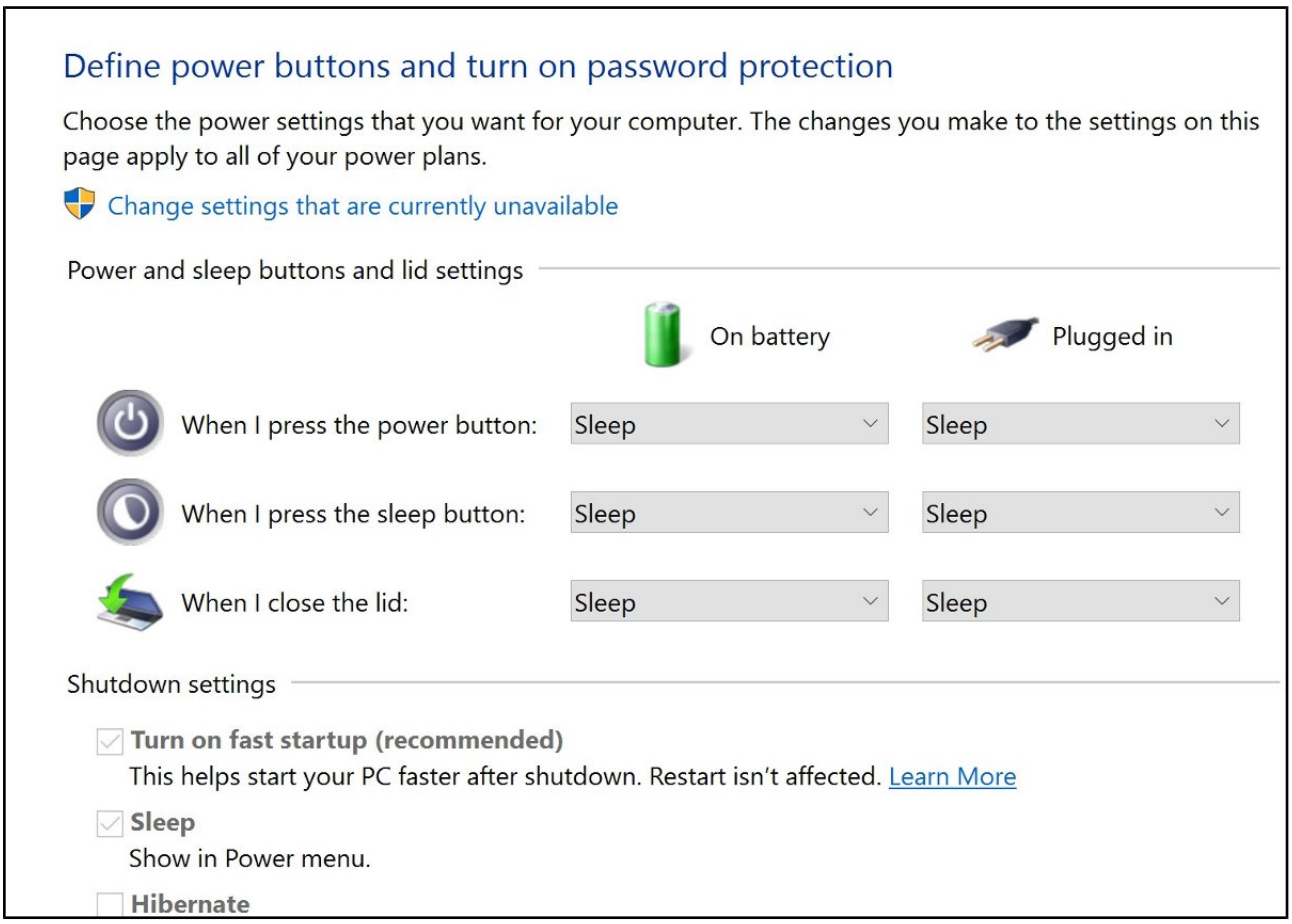
On the left you'll see two settings you can click on:

* Choose what the power buttons do
* Choose what closing the lid does.

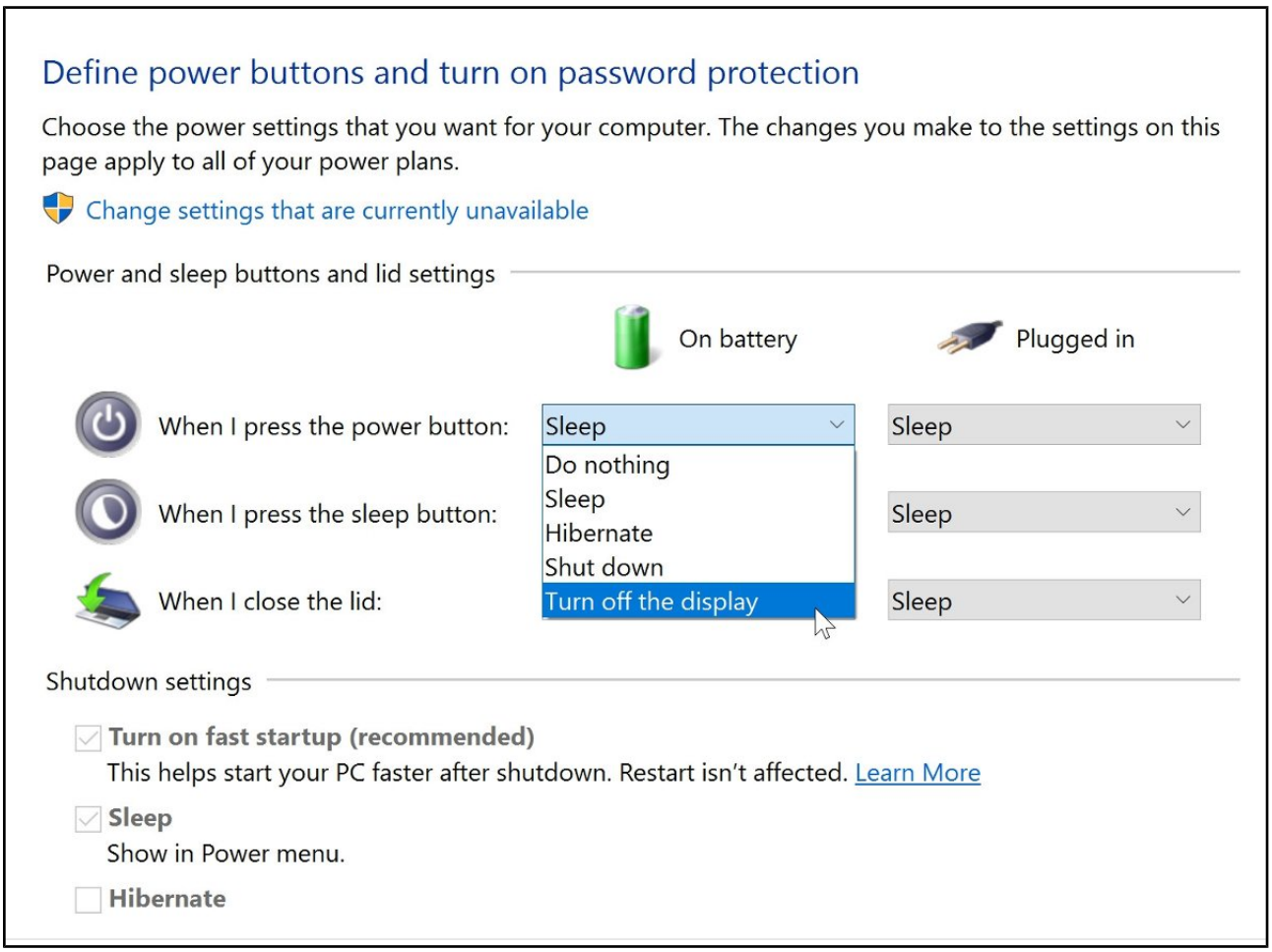
They both go to the same window, so click either one.



Here you can select what you want your computer to do when certain buttons are pressed. Your settings may look different if you don't have a lid or a sleep button.

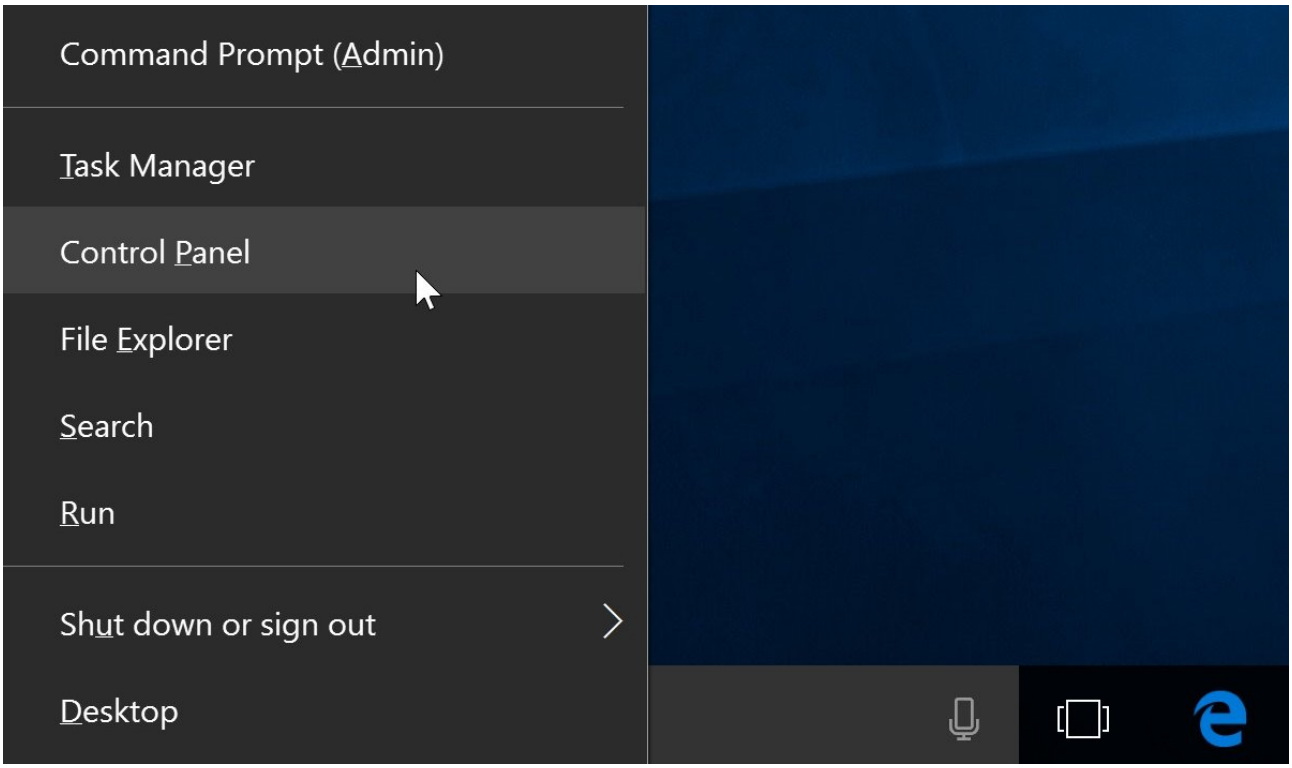


Simply click the drop-down menu for each button you want to change and select what you'd prefer it to do. Remember that you can set an option for both when the laptop is plugged in and when it's running on battery power.

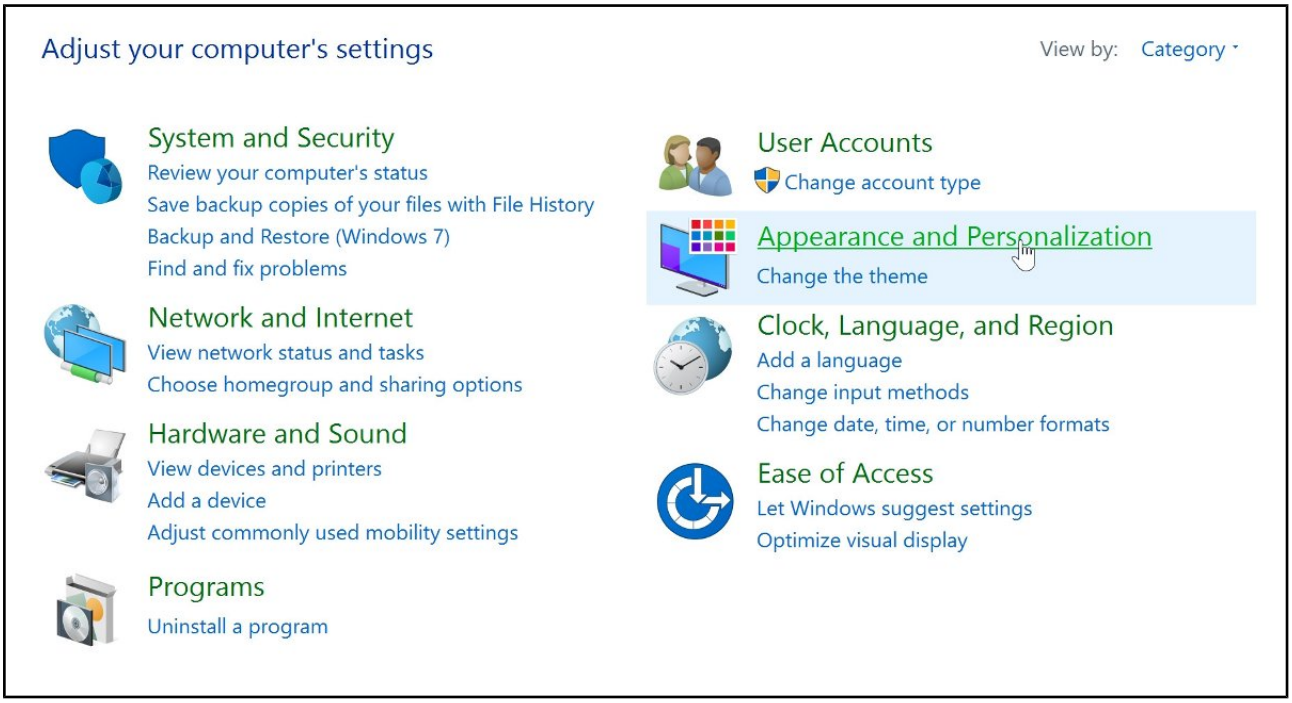

Define power buttons and turn on password protection
Choose the power settings that you want for your computer. The changes you make to the settings on this page apply to all of your power plans.
Change settings that are currently unavailable
Power and sleep buttons and lid settings
On battery
Plugged in
When I press the power button:
Sleep
Sleep
When I press the sleep button:
Sleep
When I close the lid:
Sleep
Do nothing
Sleep
Hibernate
Shut down
Turn off the display
Shutdown settings
Turn on fast startup (recommended)
This helps start your PC faster after shutdown. Restart isn't affected. Learn More
Sleep
Show in Power menu.
Hibernate

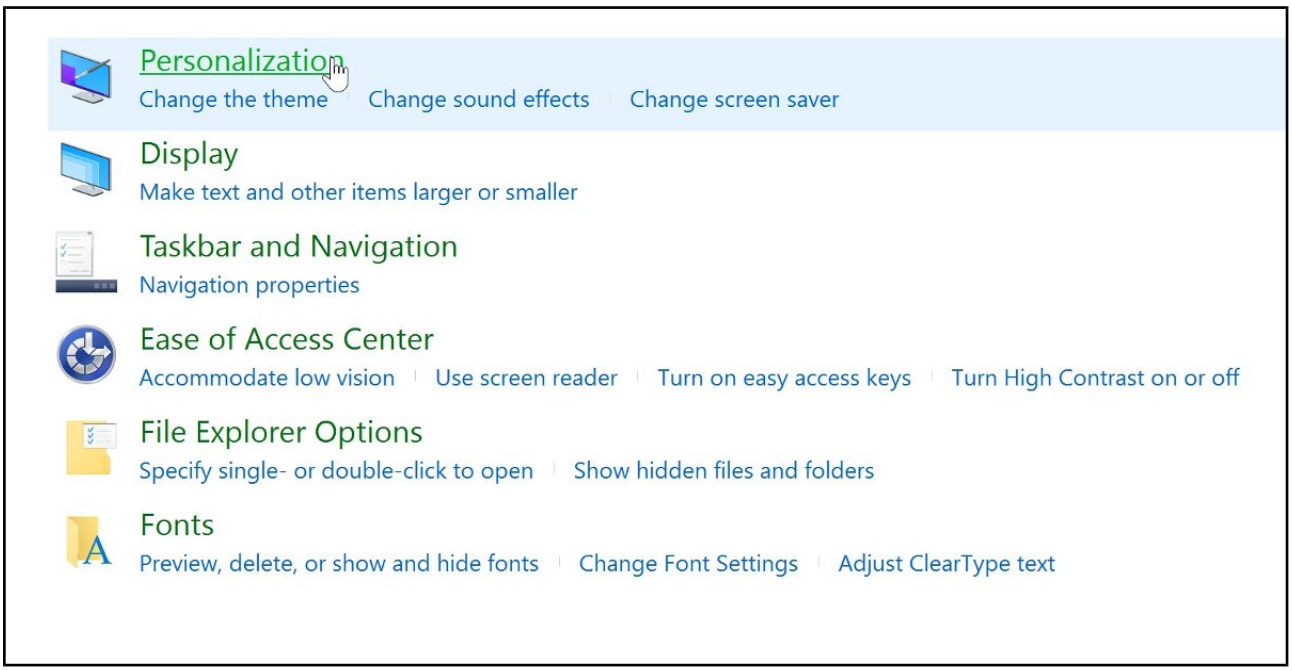
Set and Change the Screen Saver

If you're interested in customising your screen saver, it's easy to find the settings and set them to your needs. In order to do this we first need to access the Control Panel. Do this by right clicking the Start button, then clicking Control Panel.

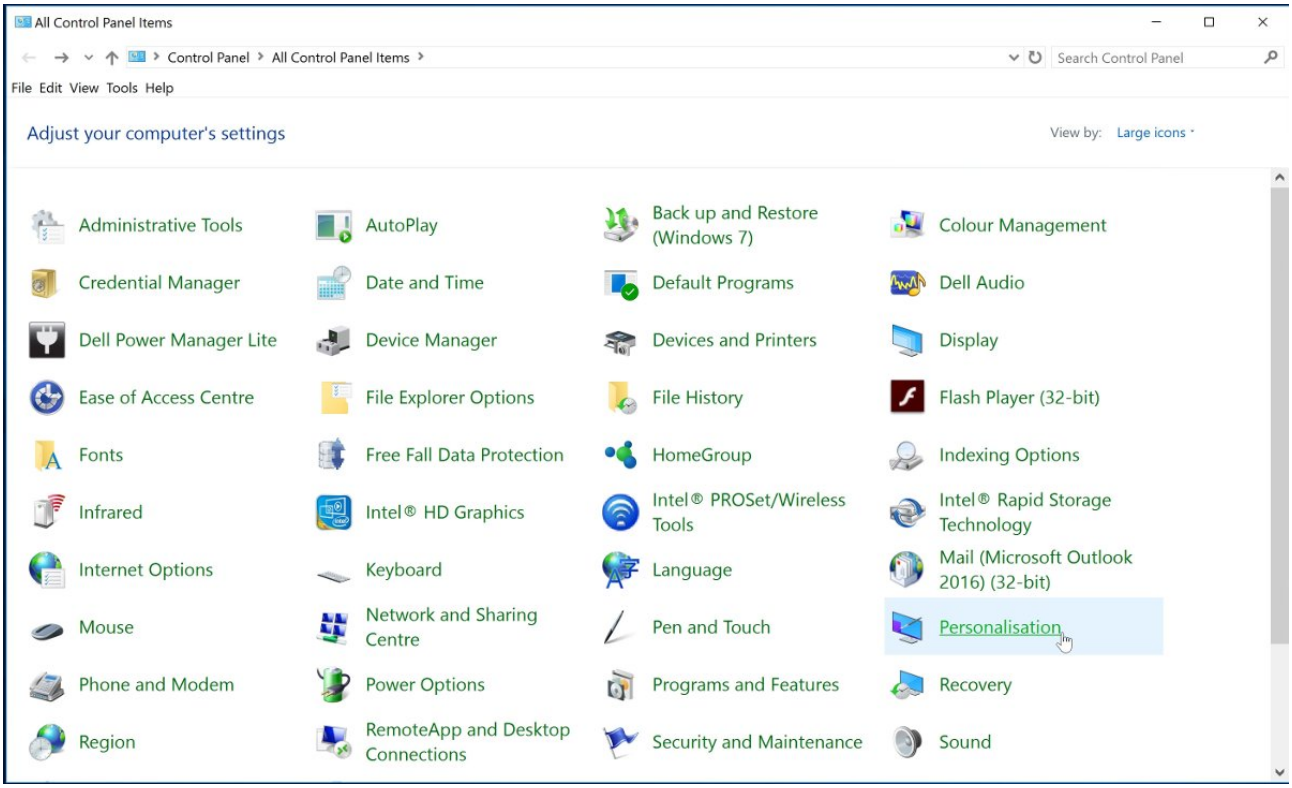


If you use Category View, first click on "Appearance and Personalization", and then Personalization.

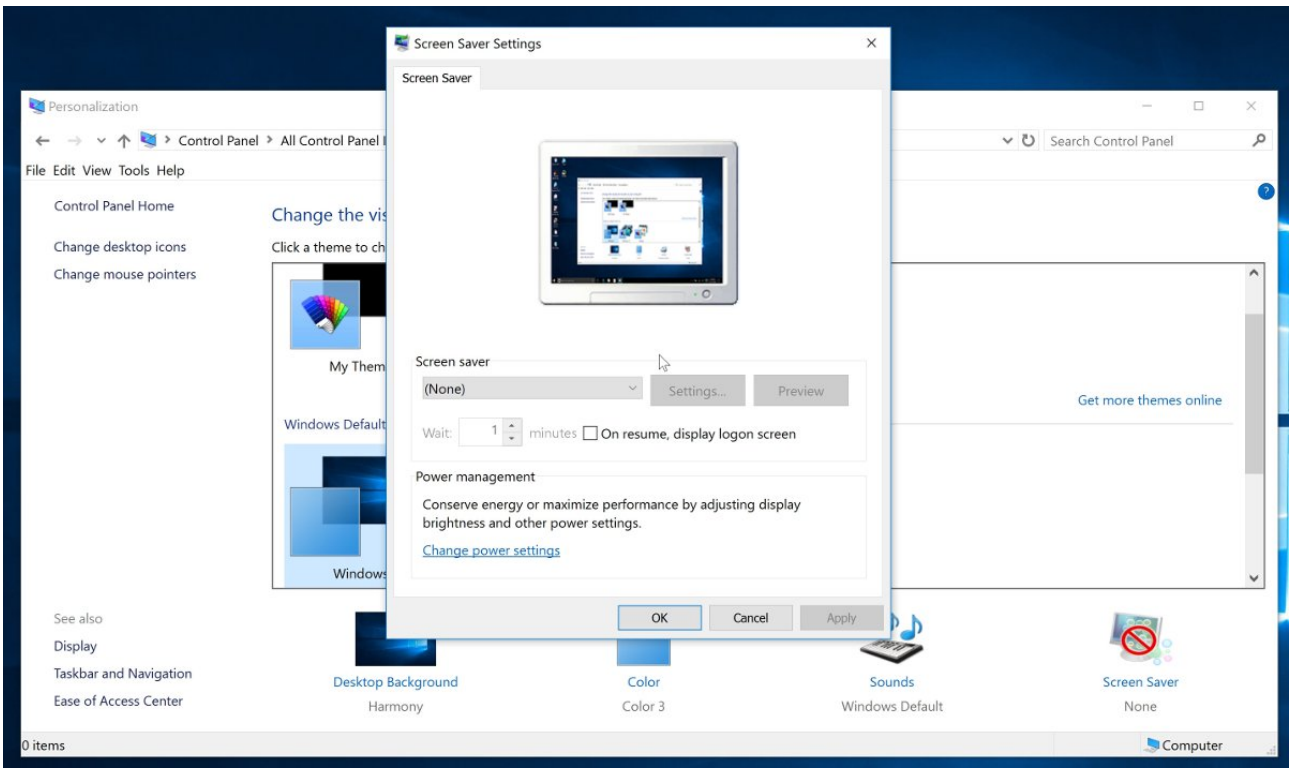




If you use Large or Small icon view, click on Personalization.



Then, click Screen Saver at the bottom right.



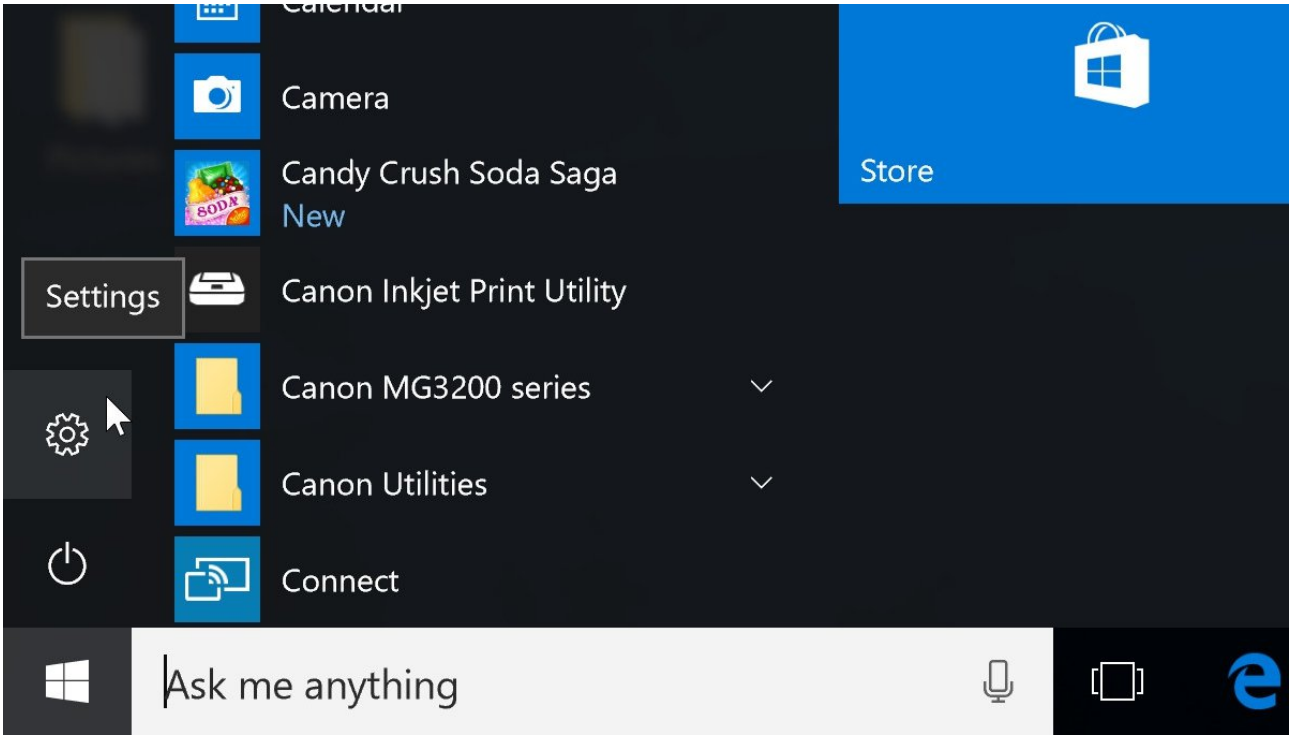
On this screen, you can select a screen saver you'd like to use, change its settings (such as adding text to specific screen savers), and set a timer for when the screen saver will turn on.

Chapter 6. Lock Screen and Screen Timeout

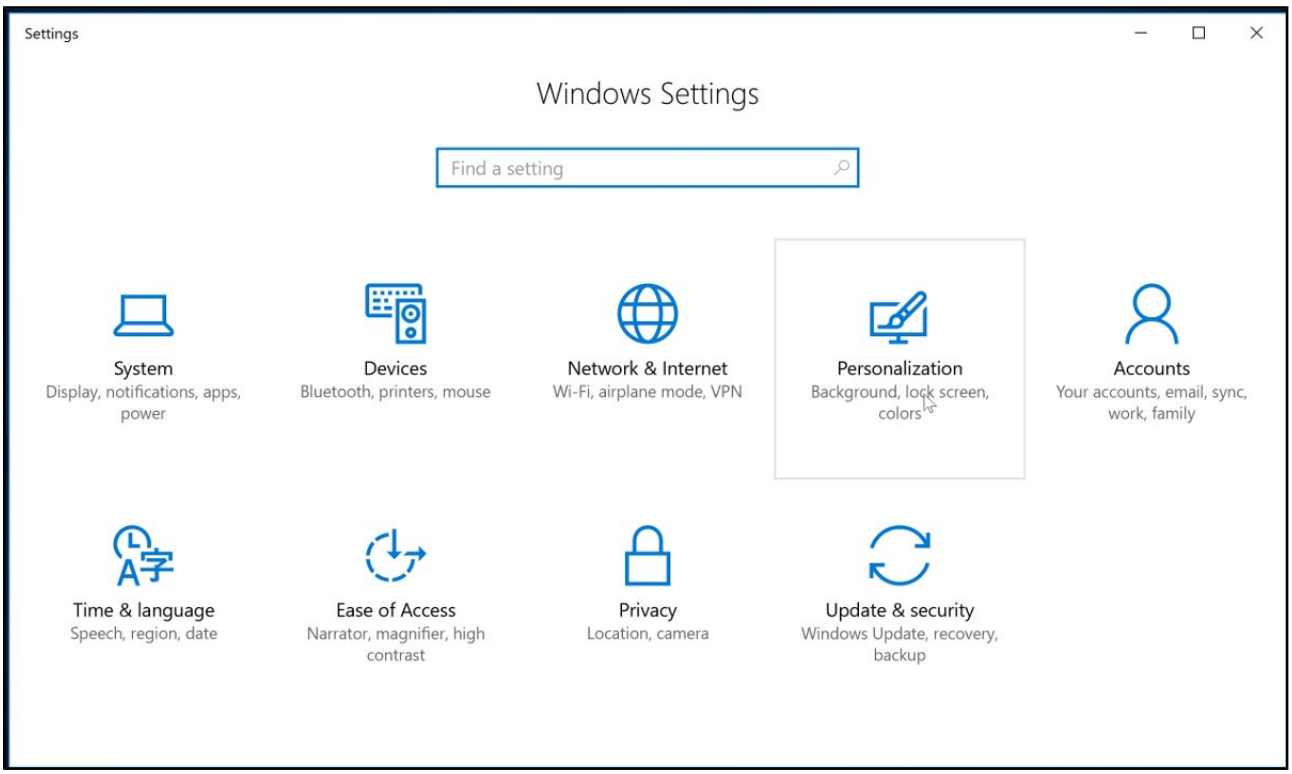
Accessing the Lock Screen Options

All of the instructions that are included within this chapter make use of the Lock Screen options page. To avoid unnecessary repetition, here are the instructions for accessing the page. From this window you'll be able to follow all the instructions within this chapter.

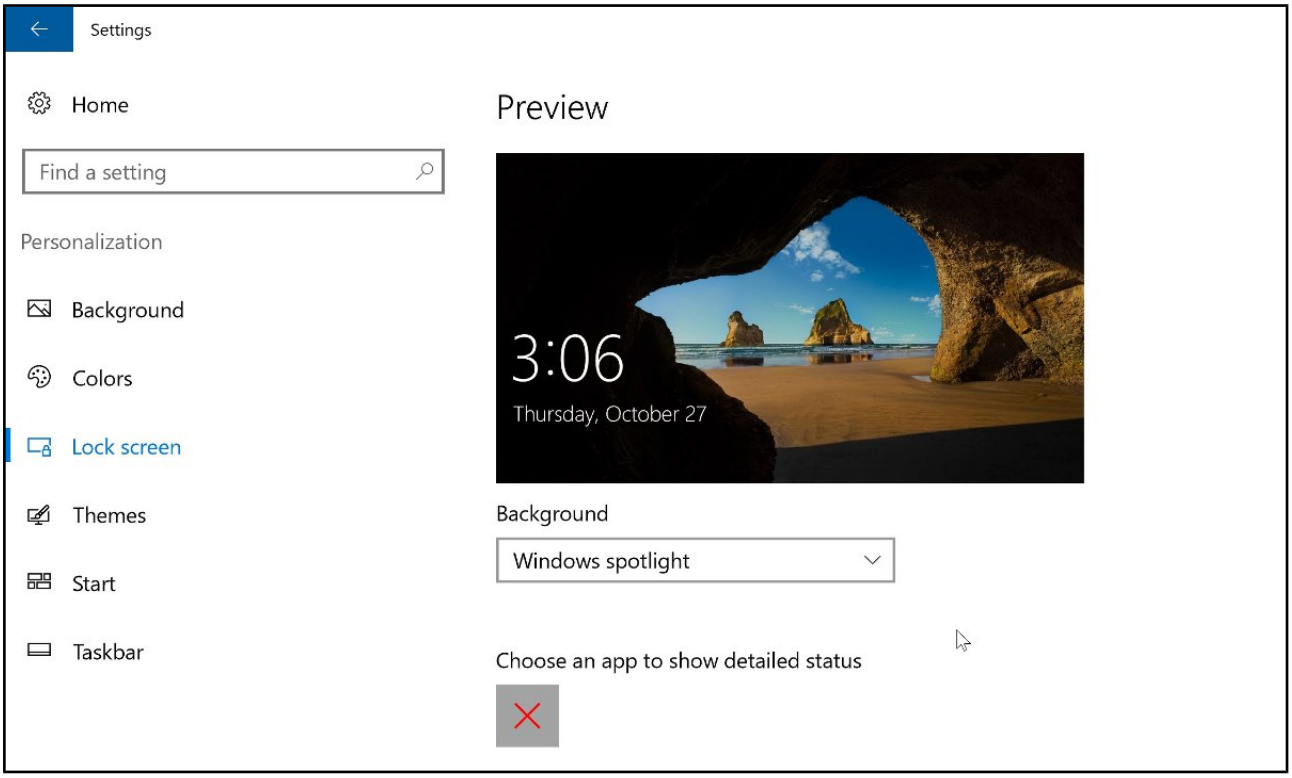
To access the options, click Start, then the Settings cog on the left.



Here click Personalization.



Click Lock Screen on the left.



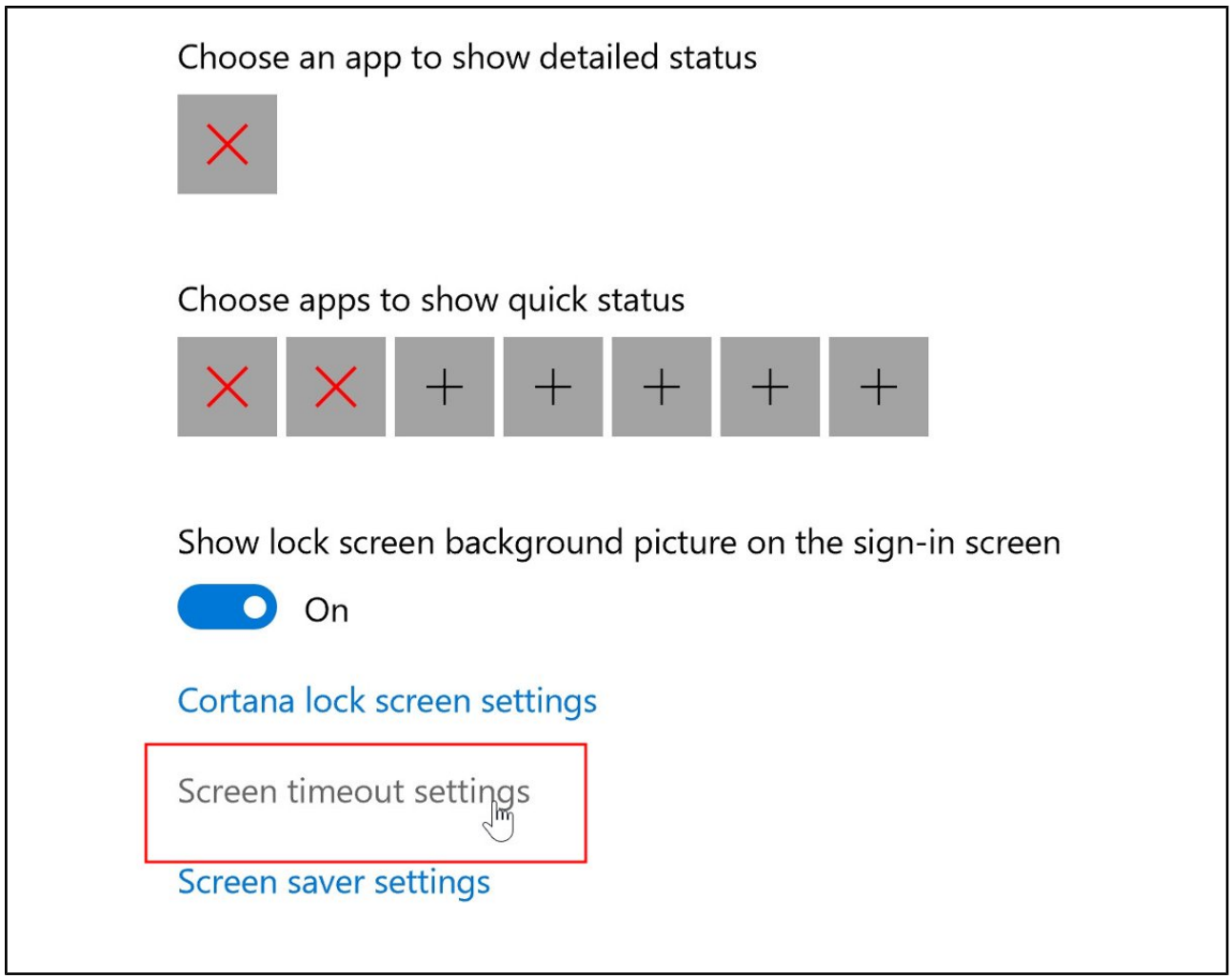
Now you’re ready to follow the instructions mentioned within this chapter.

Change Screen Timeout and Sleep Timers

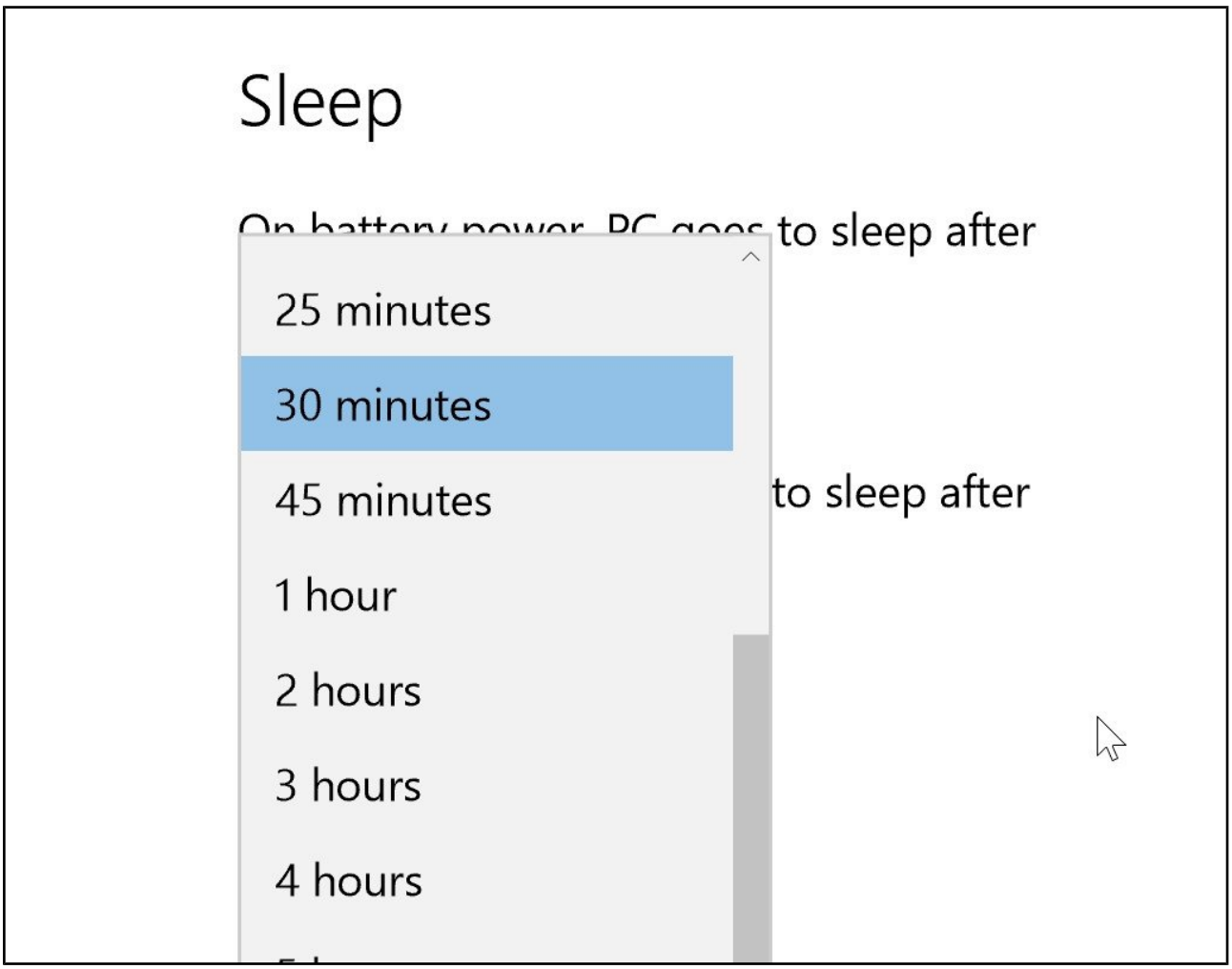
You may have noticed that if you leave your computer alone for a period of time, it automatically turns the screen off. Sometimes, if you leave it for long enough, the computer will go into a sleep mode and will take a little while to resume operations again.

These are both good ways to save power, but you may want to alter the time at which they turn off. Perhaps you want the timers to be shorter or longer, or perhaps you want to turn off the timers altogether so your computer never goes into sleep mode automatically.

To change these timers, first access the Lock Screen settings as mentioned in Chapter 6.1. Then, find the option for “Screen timeout settings” near the bottom of this window and click it.



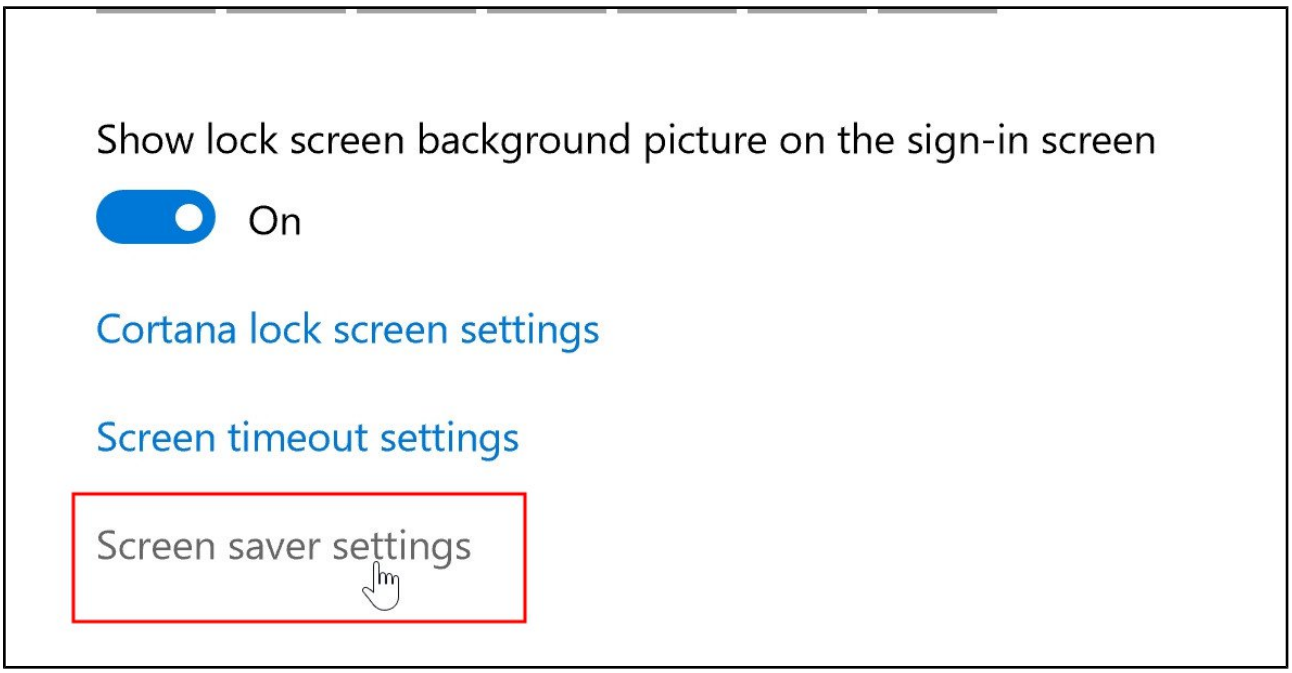
This will take you to a new screen where you can change when the screen turns off and when the computer goes into sleep mode. Click the drop-down menus for each setting to change them. If you want to turn them off altogether, click “Never” at the very bottom of the list.


Sleep
to sleep after
25 minutes
30 minutes
45 minutes
to sleep after
1 hour
2 hours
3 hours
4 hours

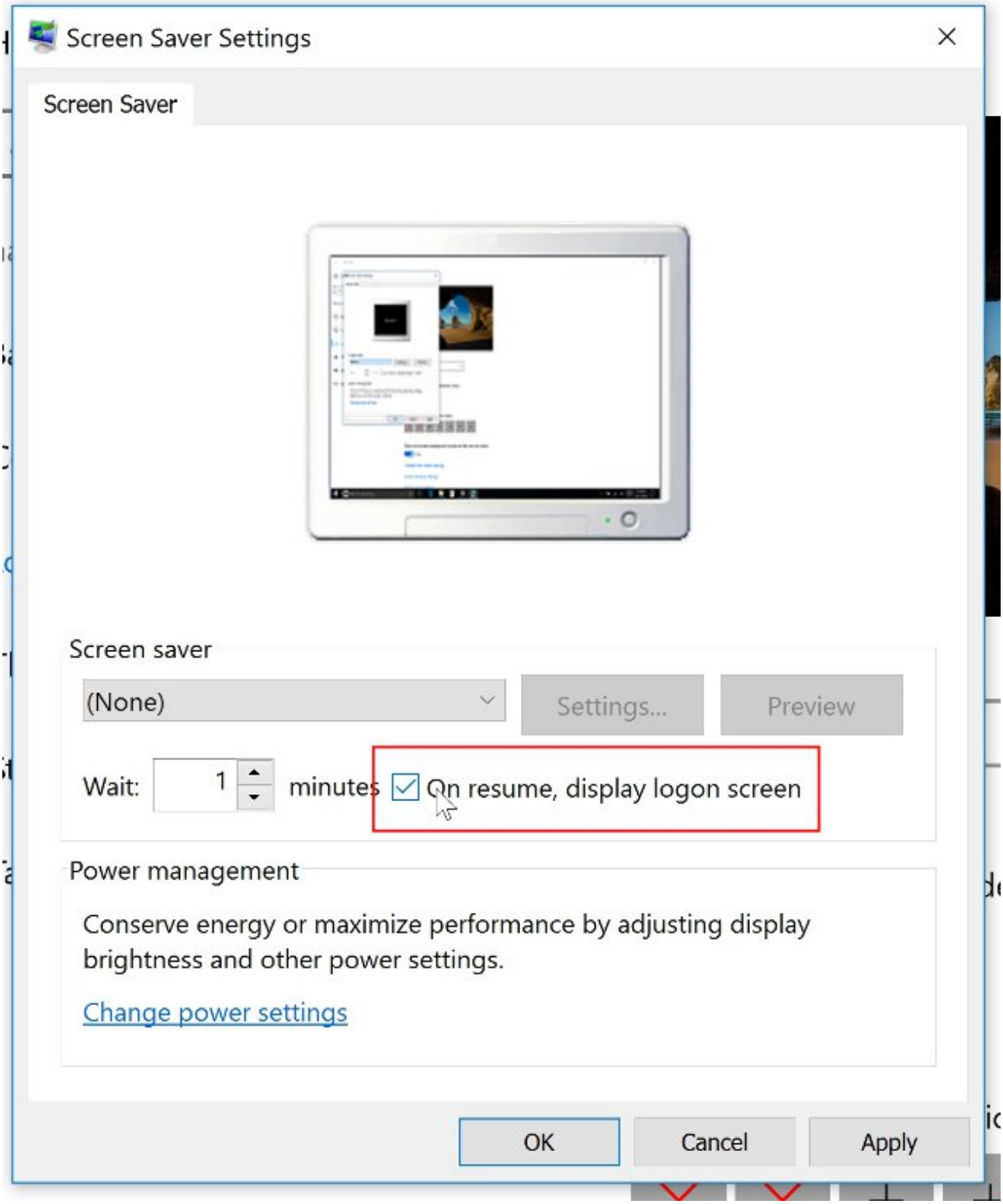
Set an Automatic Lock Screen After Screensaver

If you're worried about people using your computer when you've left it unattended, you can set up Windows so that it automatically locks the computer after a screensaver has been interrupted. This means that anyone trying to use your PC while you're away will have to use your password to access your computer.

To set an automatic lock screen, first access the options by following the instructions mentioned in Chapter 6.1 Then, scroll down to the very bottom of this screen. You'll find an option called Screen saver settings. Click this.



Here check the box for "On resume, display logon screen".

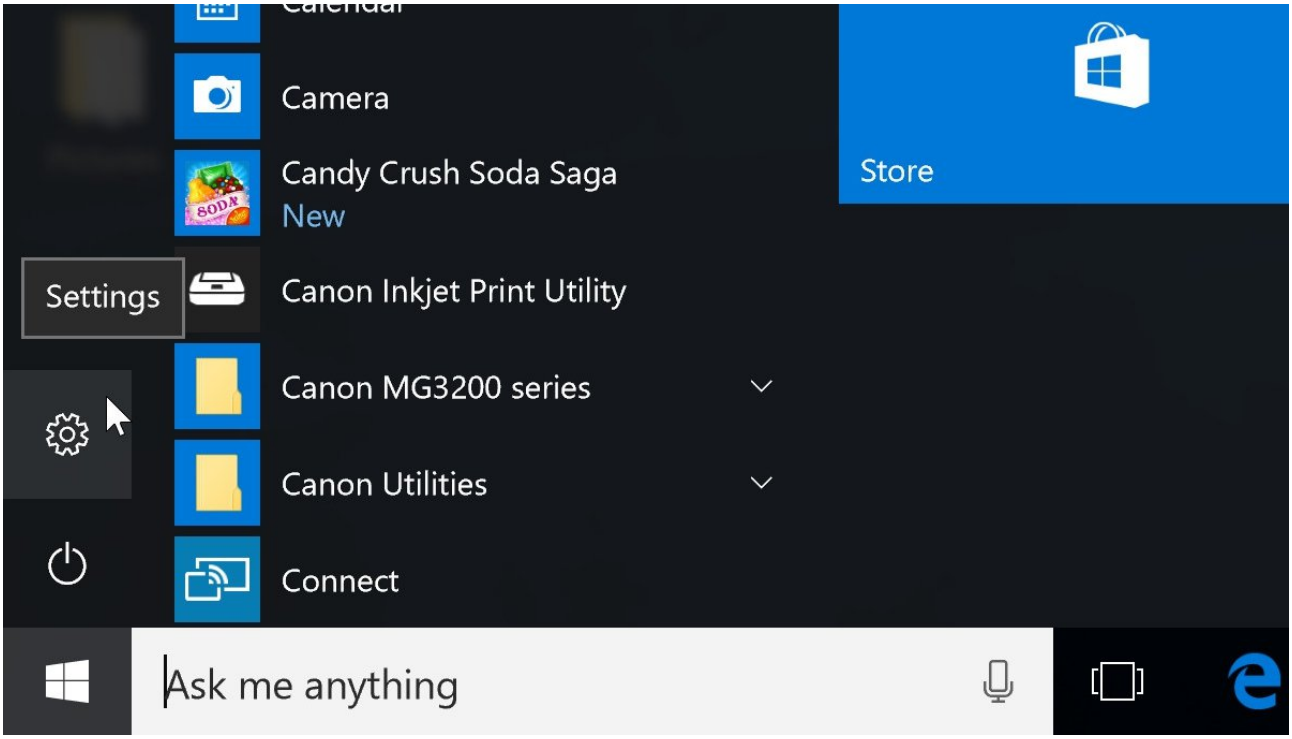


Now, after a screensaver is interrupted, Windows will ask for login credentials.

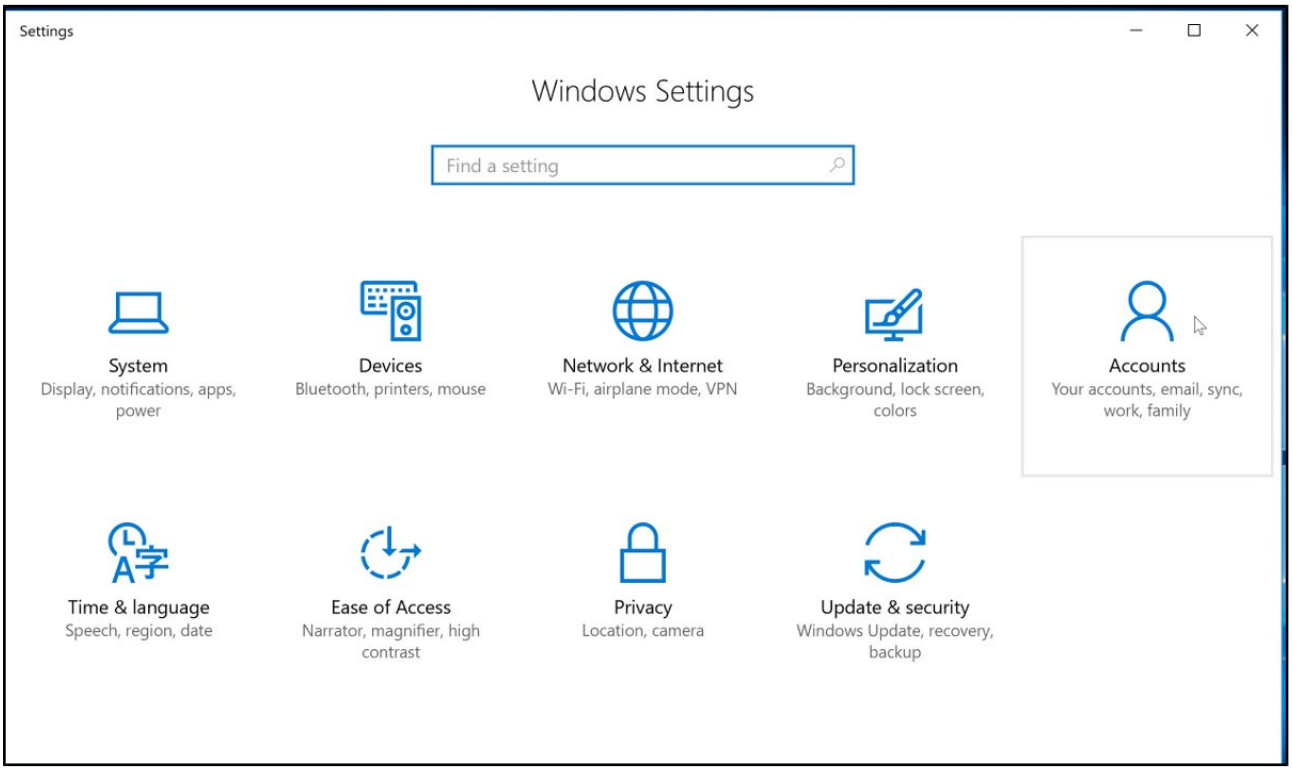
Set an Automatic Lock Screen After Sleep Mode

As well as after a screensaver, you can turn on the option to have the computer display the lock screen after the computer has gone into sleep mode.

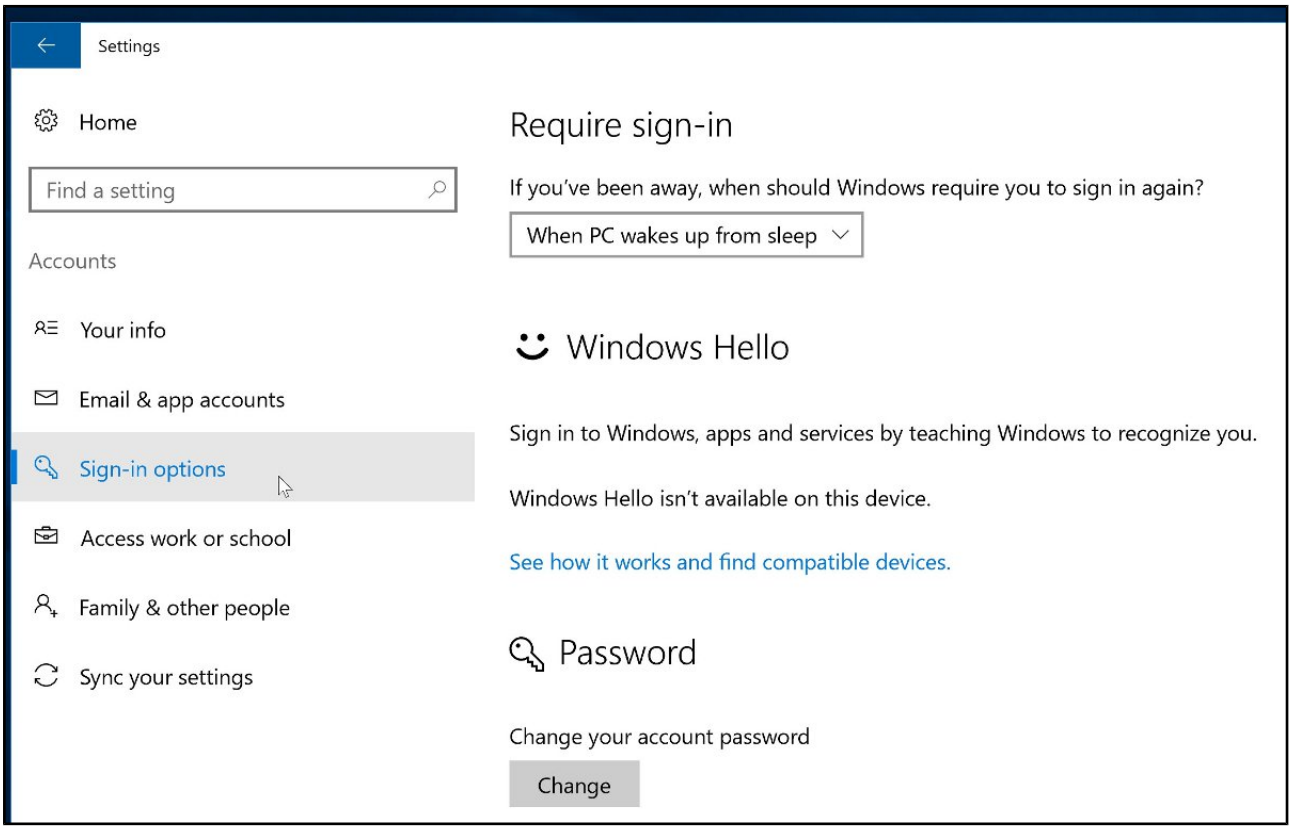
To activate this option, click on Start, then the Settings cog on the left.



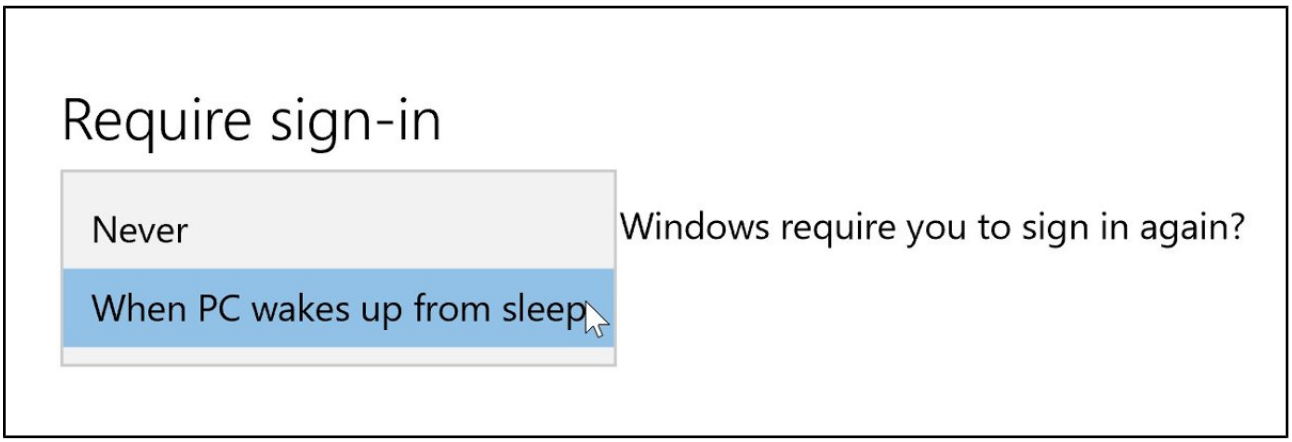
Click on Accounts.



Click Sign-In Options on the left.



Here look for the category called “Require sign-in” In the drop-down box under this category, set it to “When PC wakes up from sleep”.

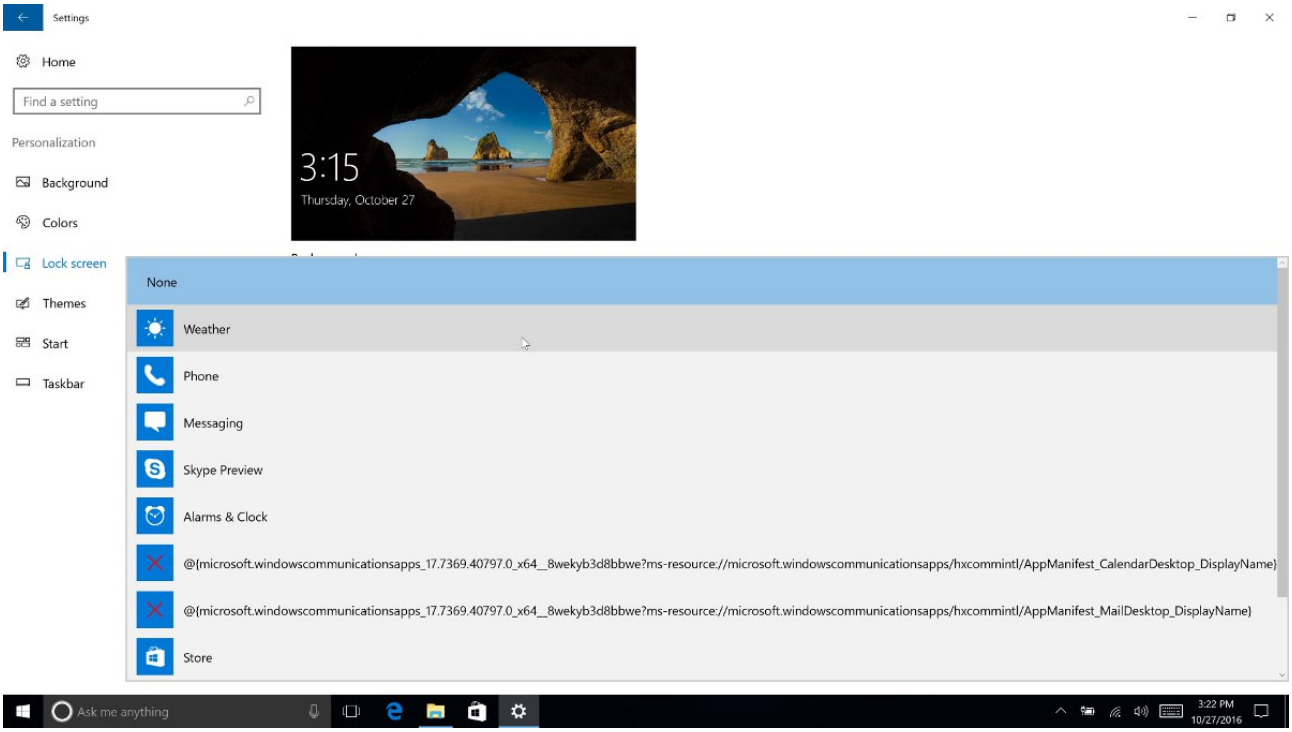


Show App Status on Lock Screen

Lock screens don't just keep trespassers out. You can also change the lock screen to display app information, such as new mail or the weather forecast, so you can get vital information from a quick glance at the lock screen.

First, access the Lock Screen window as mentioned in Chapter 6.1. Near the middle of this page you'll find several app-based options to pick and choose from.

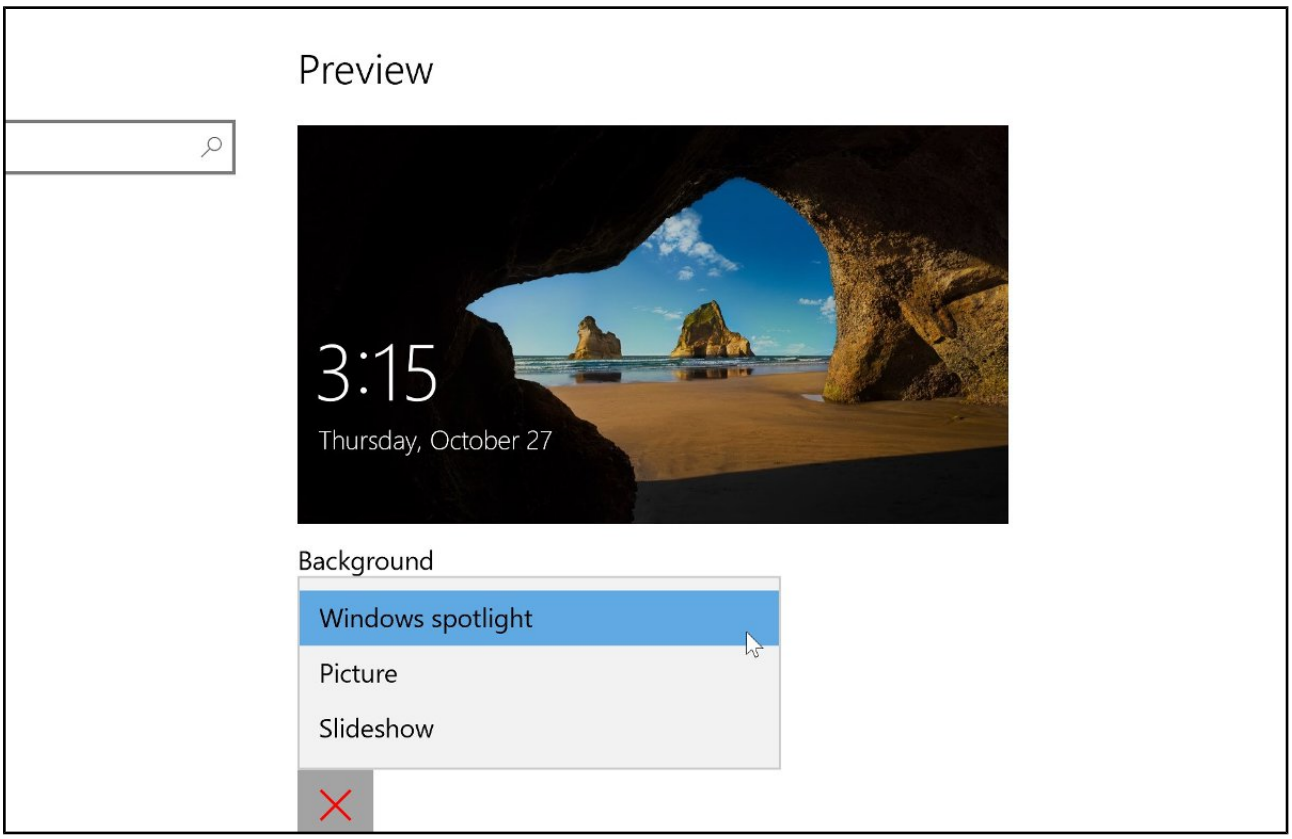
This includes Windows and Cortana giving you tips, selecting an app to give detailed status, and choosing several apps to give quick and simple statuses. This is very useful if you want to check mail or instant messages without unlocking the machine.



Set Lock Screen Image or Slideshow

You can also change the picture shown on the lock screen or even set it up so that it goes through a gallery of pictures. This means your computer will carry your identity even while it's locked up tight.

First, access the Lock Screen window by following the instructions mentioned in Chapter 6.1. At the top of this window you'll see the drop-down option called Background. From this you can select if you want a standard picture, a slideshow, or what's called "Windows Spotlight."



Picture allows you to choose from a range of pictures or browse for your own. **Slideshow** will ask you to select a folder of images on your PC, and it will cycle through the images within that folder. **Windows Spotlight** will feature a new set of images every day directly from Windows. Pick the option you'd like to see, and it'll start displaying on your lock screen.

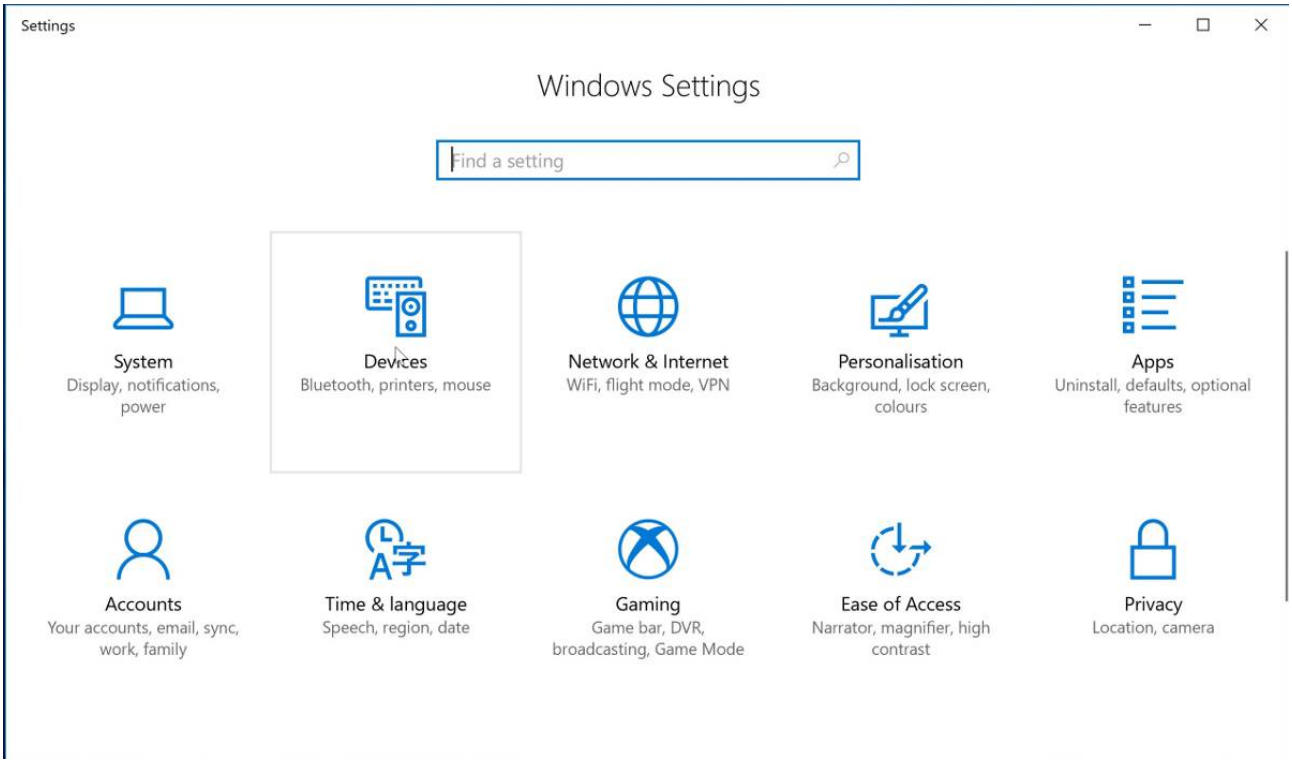
Adding Dynamic Lock (Creator's Update)

Dynamic Lock is a new feature within the Creator's Update that allows you to lock a PC via Bluetooth. The idea is that you pair your phone or device with the computer before activating Dynamic Lock. Afterward, should your phone leave the Bluetooth range (perhaps because you've left to go to the store and took your phone), Windows waits for thirty seconds before automatically locking your computer. This is especially good if you're

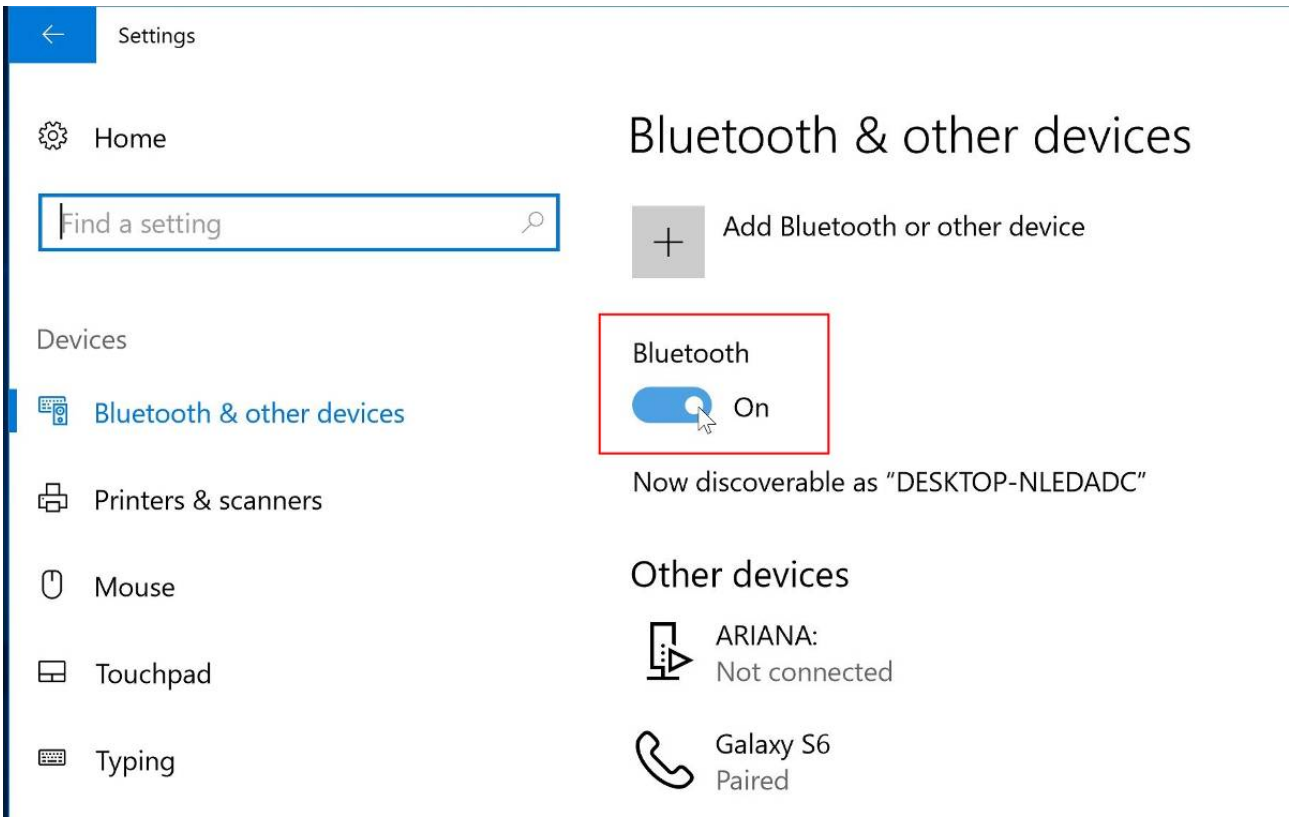
always forgetting to lock your computer when you leave the house or office.

To add a dynamic lock, first ensure both your computer and your device have Bluetooth enabled. Once done, pair your device with the computer. Consult your phone's manufacturer's manual on how to do this on your phone. As for your PC, click Start, then click the Settings cog.

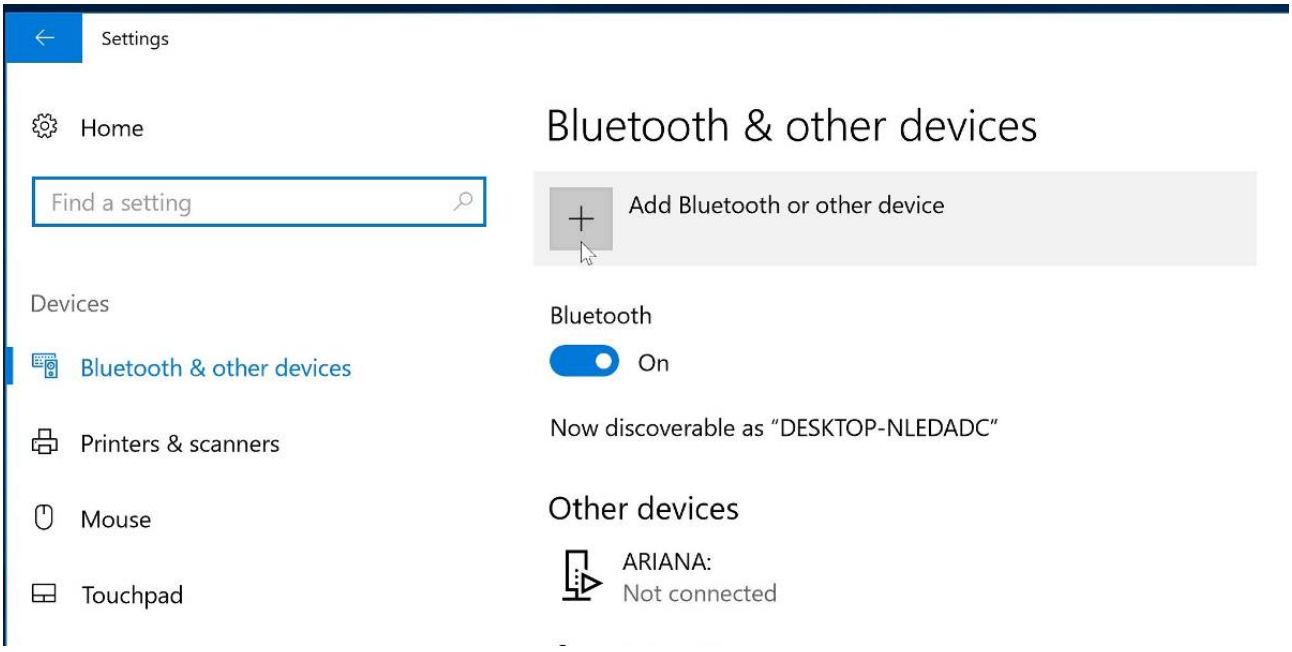
Click Devices.



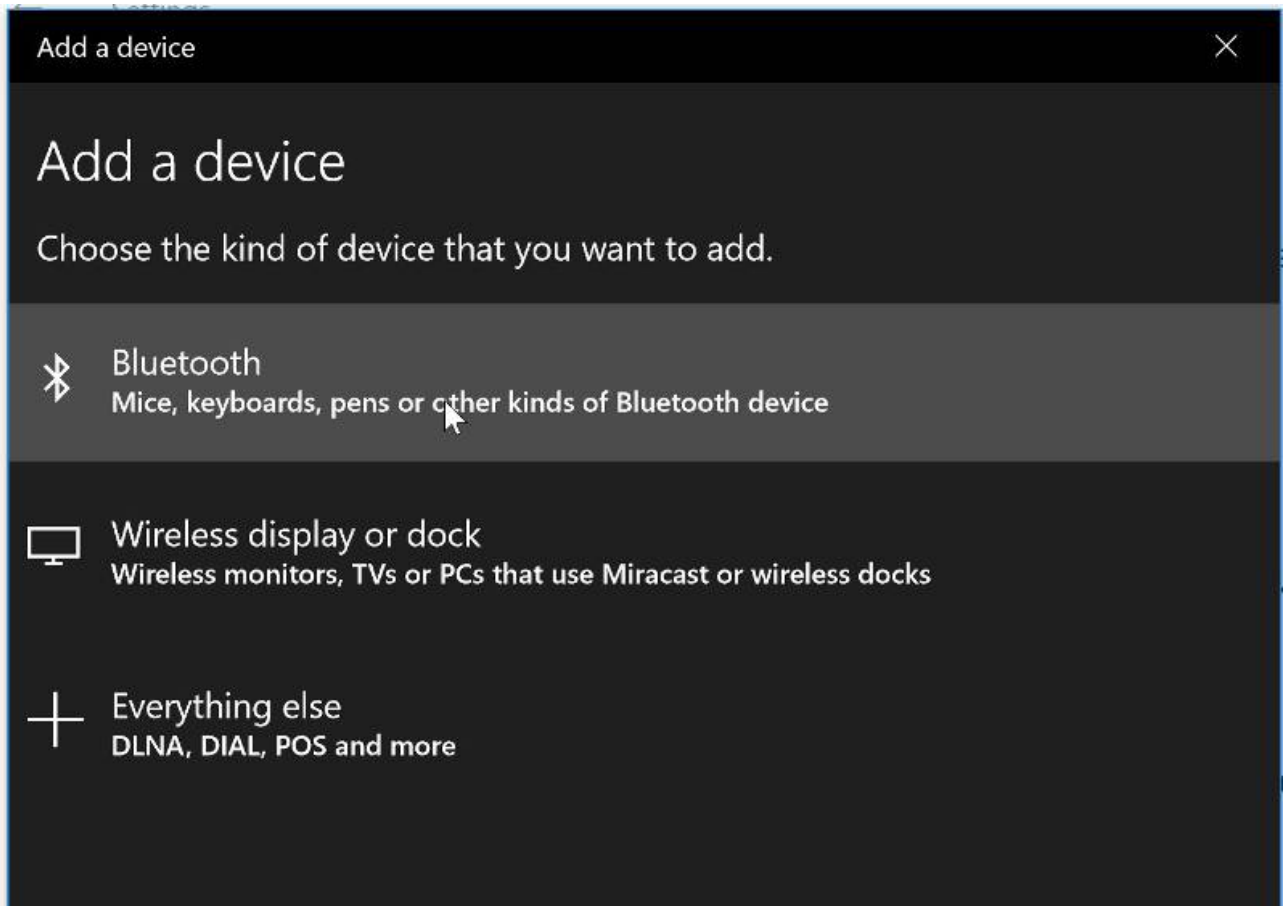
Go to "Bluetooth and Other Devices" and toggle Bluetooth on.



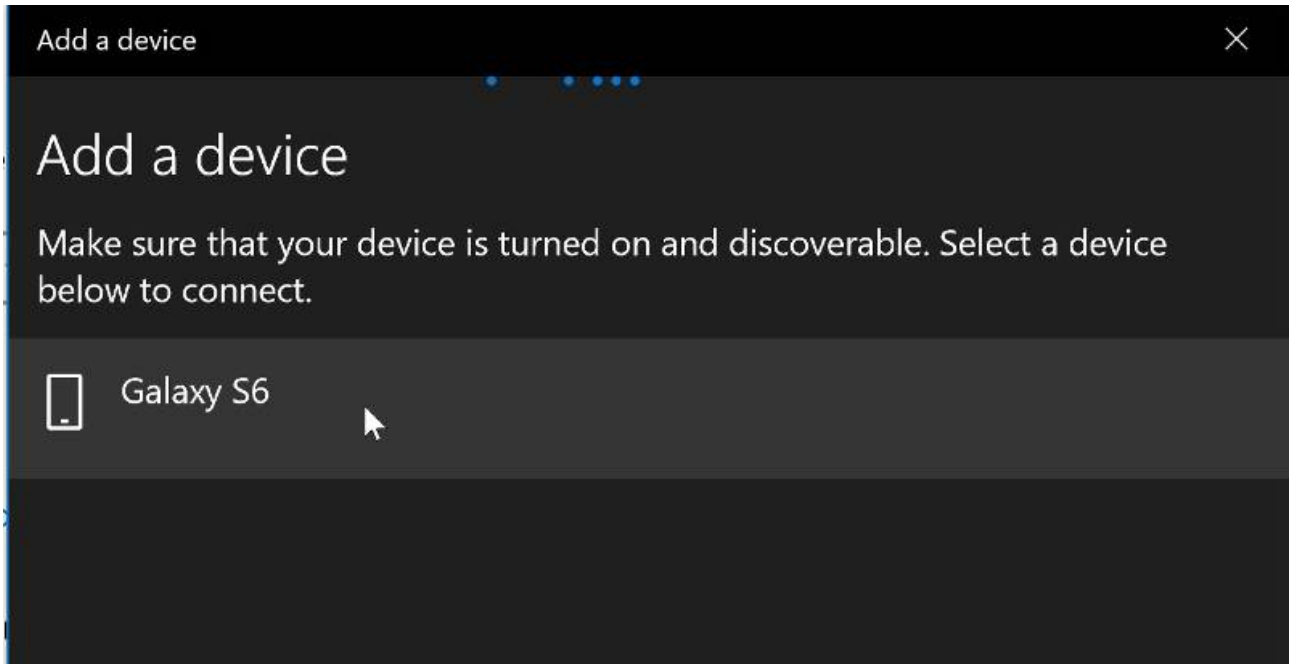
Click the + symbol next to Add Bluetooth or other device.



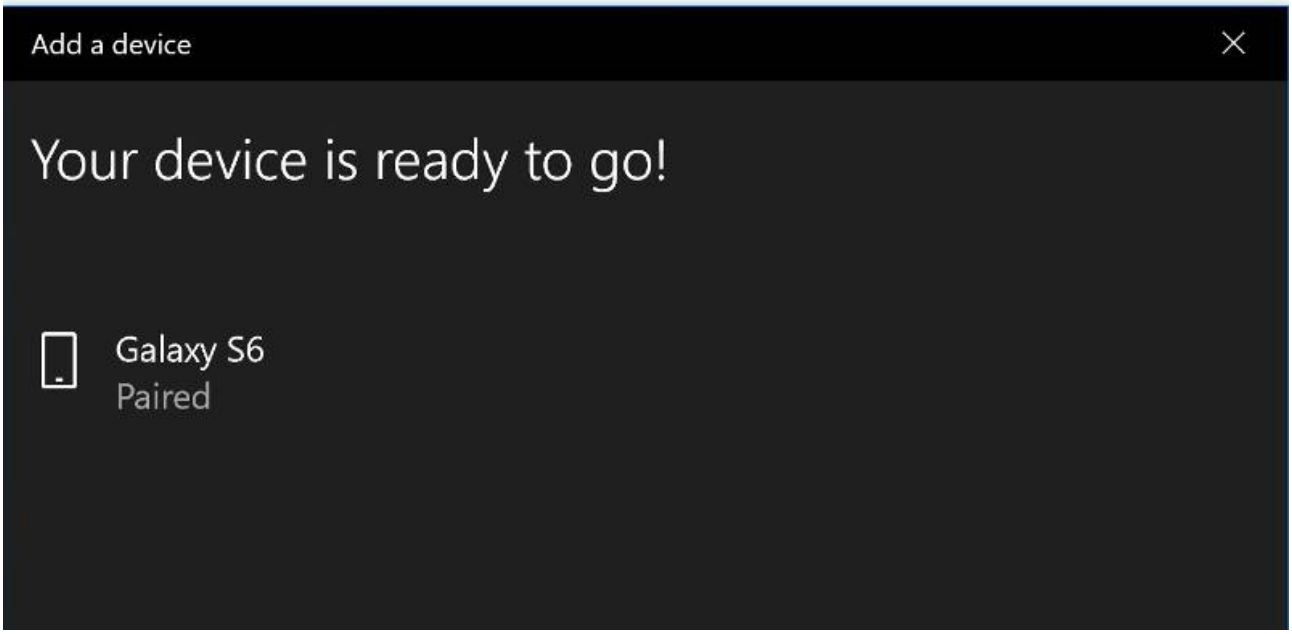
Click Bluetooth.



Windows will begin looking for the device. Once found, it'll show up on the list.

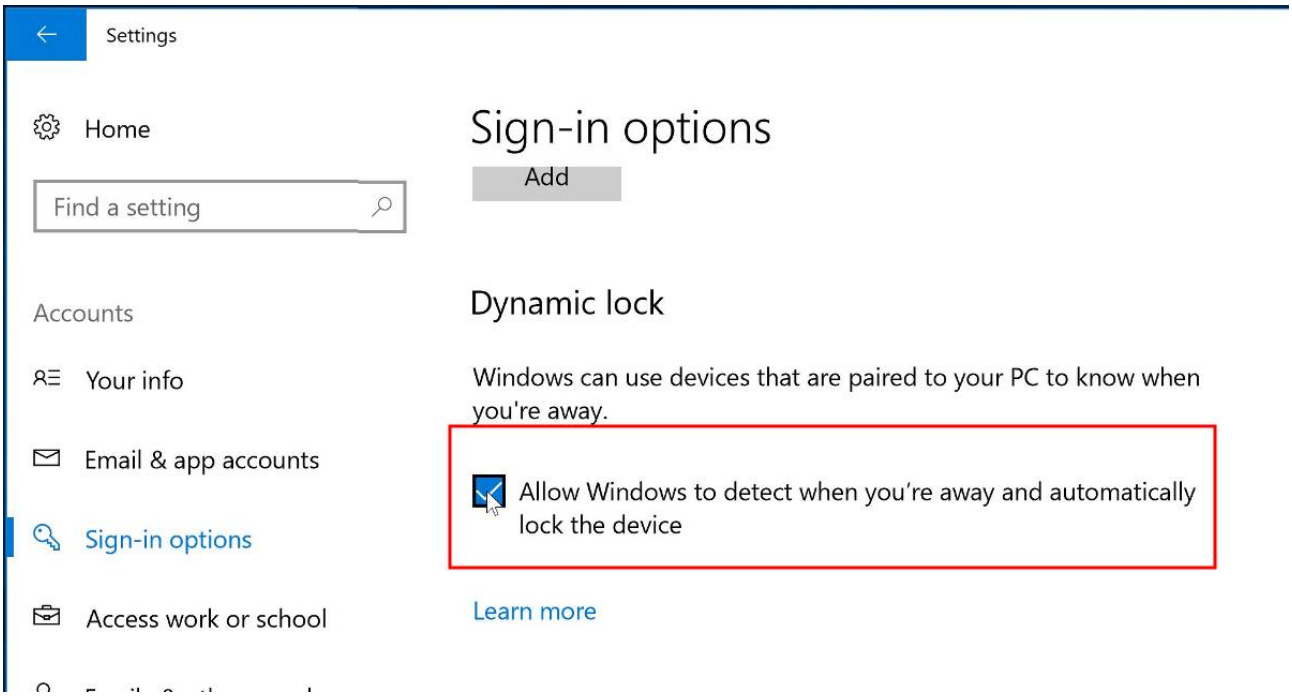


Click on the device to pair it. Windows may show you a PIN number and asks you if your phone is showing the same number. If they both are, hit Connect on both devices. Windows will then confirm the pairing.



Once paired, go back to the main Settings screen. Click Accounts.

Click Sign-In options on the left, then scroll down to Dynamic Lock and tick the box that reads “Allow Windows to detect when you're away and automatically lock the device”.



Now, whenever you leave the computer with your phone, it’ll automatically lock the computer within 30 seconds of it leaving Bluetooth range.

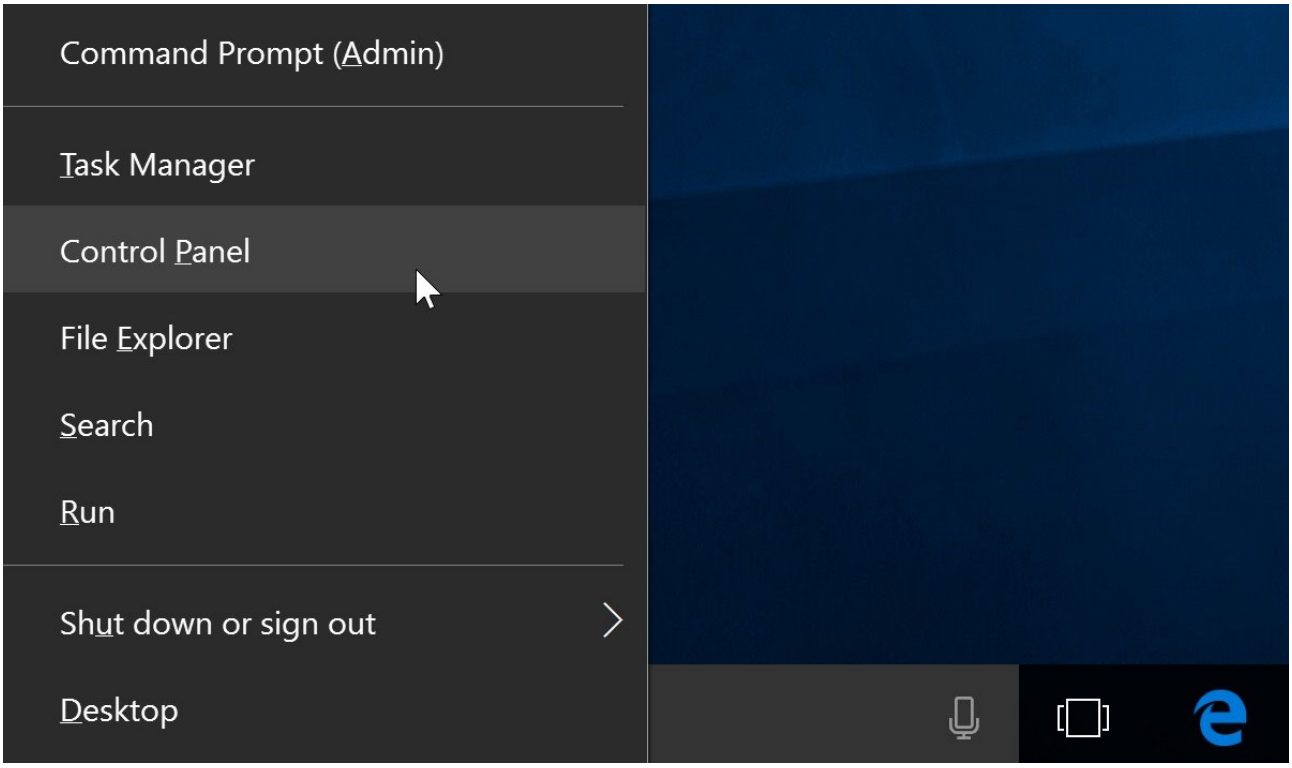
Chapter 7. App Settings

Set Default Apps for Files

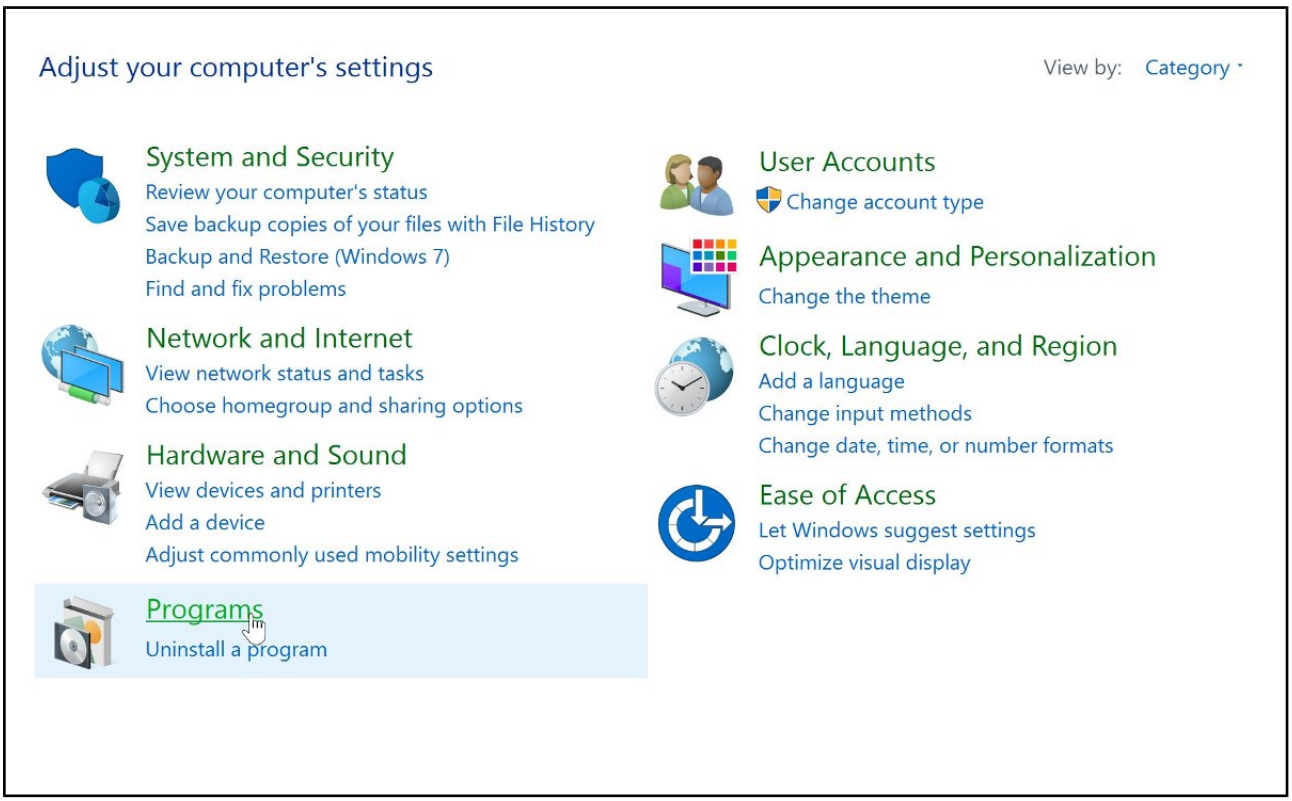
You may have noticed that when you open a file, such as a word document or music, Windows 10 will open the file automatically using software either it has chosen or that you have selected in the past. This can be infuriating, as if you've downloaded and installed new software to handle those files, sometimes Windows 10 won't use it and opt to continue using the old software.

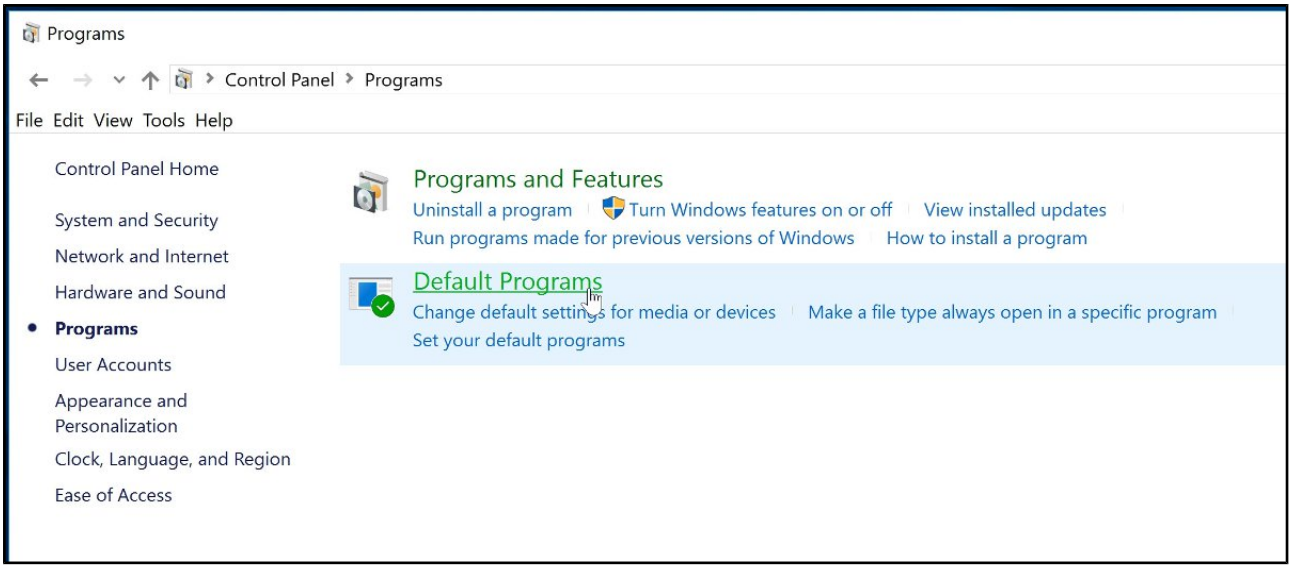
This is because Windows has set the old software as its "default app" for that specific file type. As long as Windows believes the old software is the default one to use, it will automatically keep using it unless you specifically use an 'Open With…' command on the right-click menu. Thankfully, we can change what Windows believes is a default app ourselves, so we can select which app we want to open with which files.

The first way is by accessing the Control Panel. Right-click the Start button, then click Control Panel.

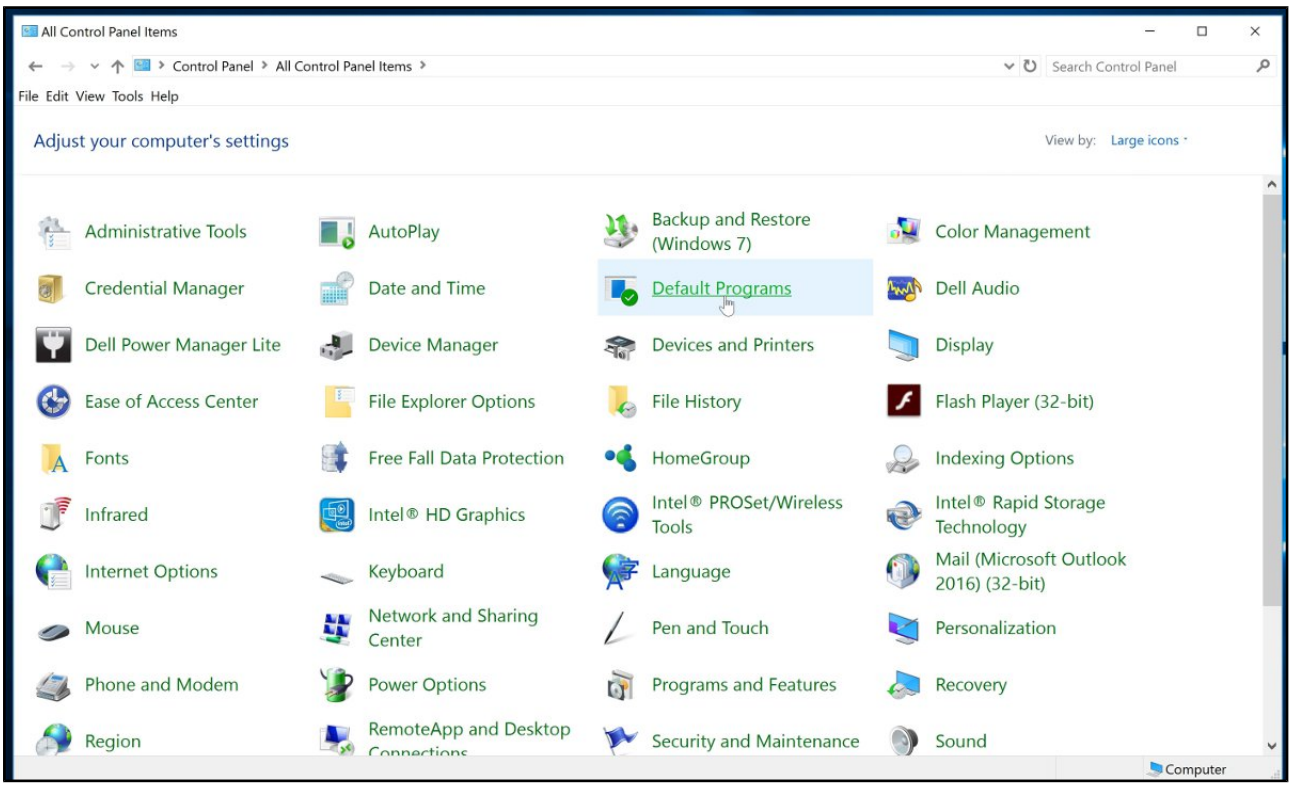


If you're using Category View, click Programs, then Default Programs.

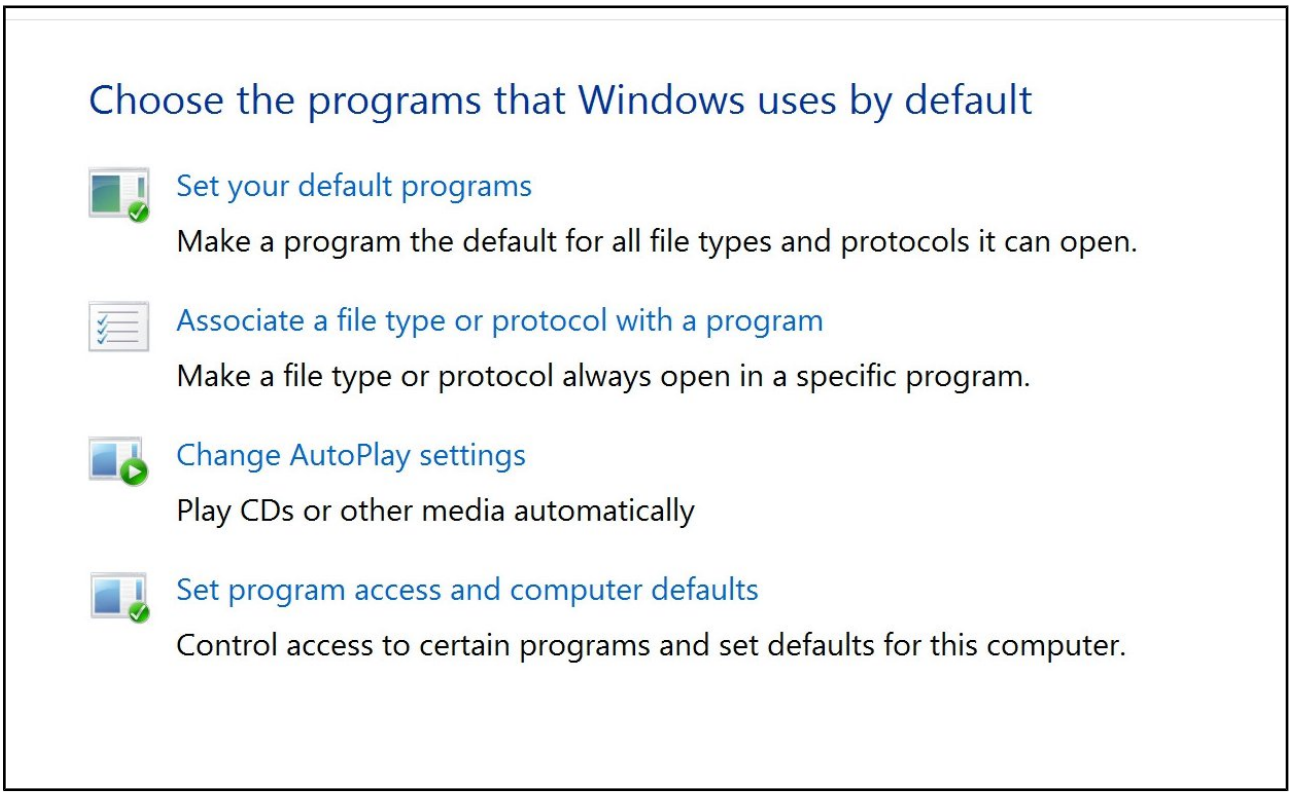




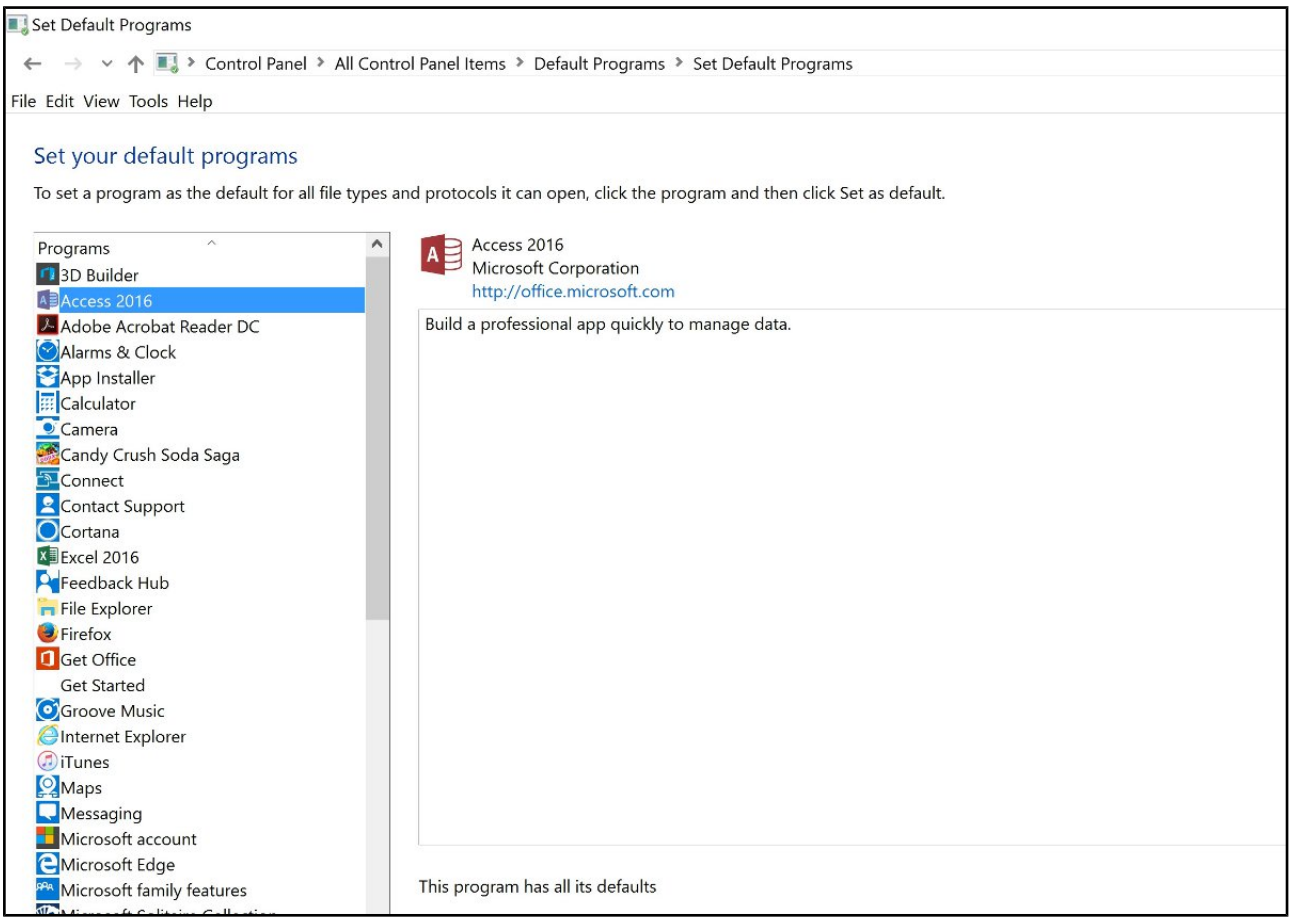
If you're using Large or Small Icons View, click Default Programs.



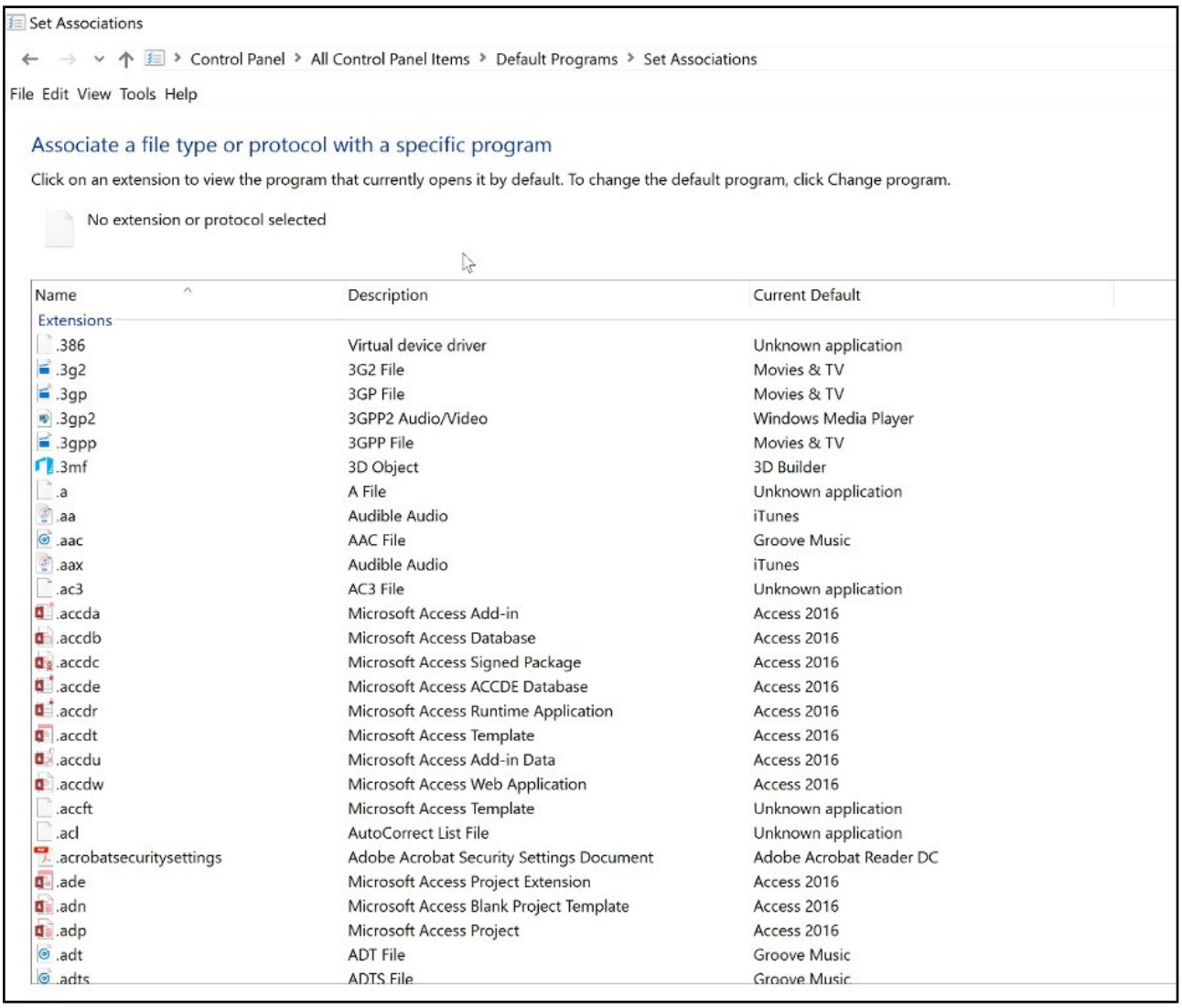
You'll be presented with the following screen.



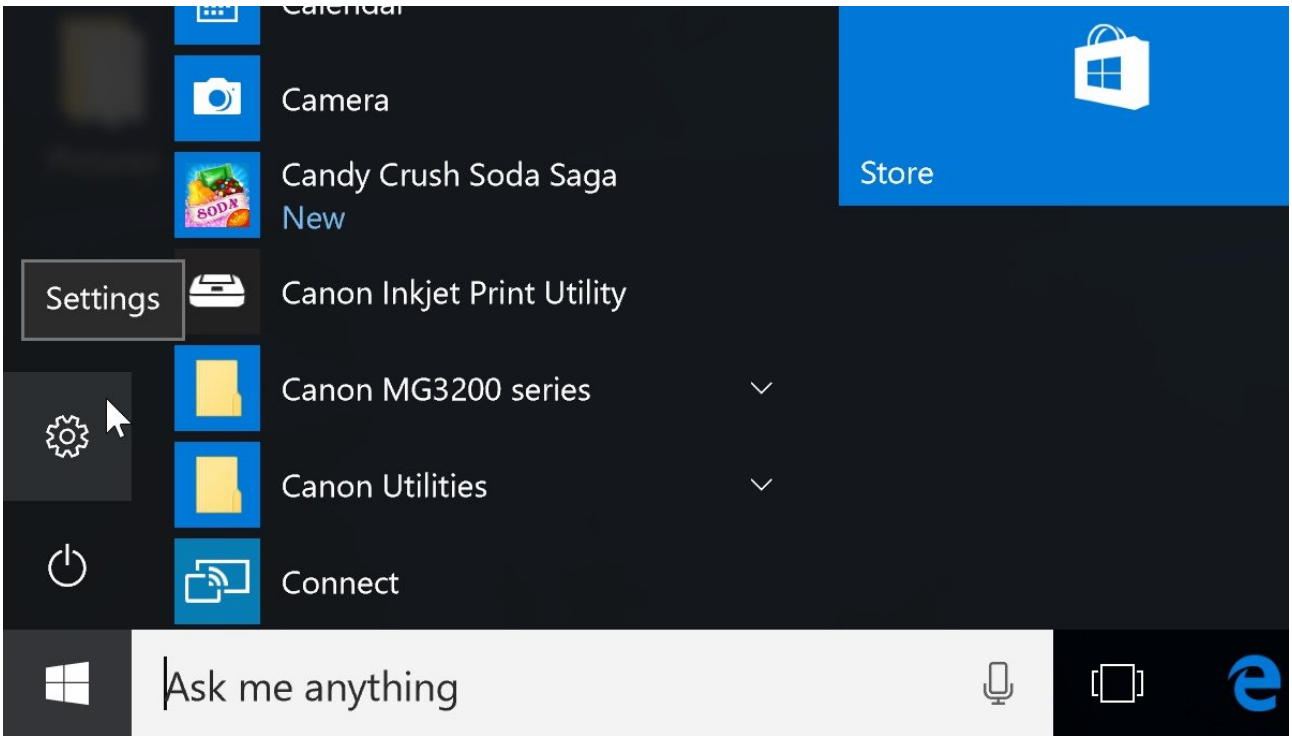
Here you have two routes. Set your default programs allows you to select software from a list, then either set it as the default option for all the file types it supports or pick the file types individually.



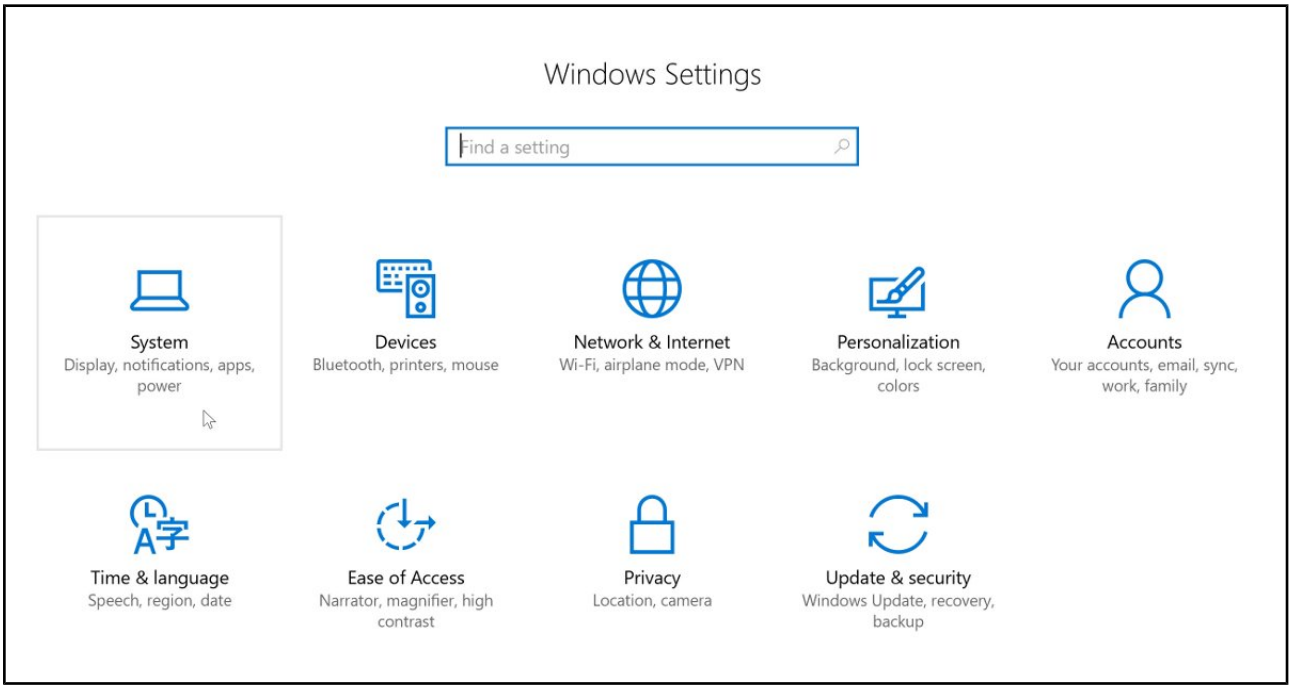
Associate a file type or protocol with a program instead shows you a list of file extensions and allows you to set what program opens those specific files.



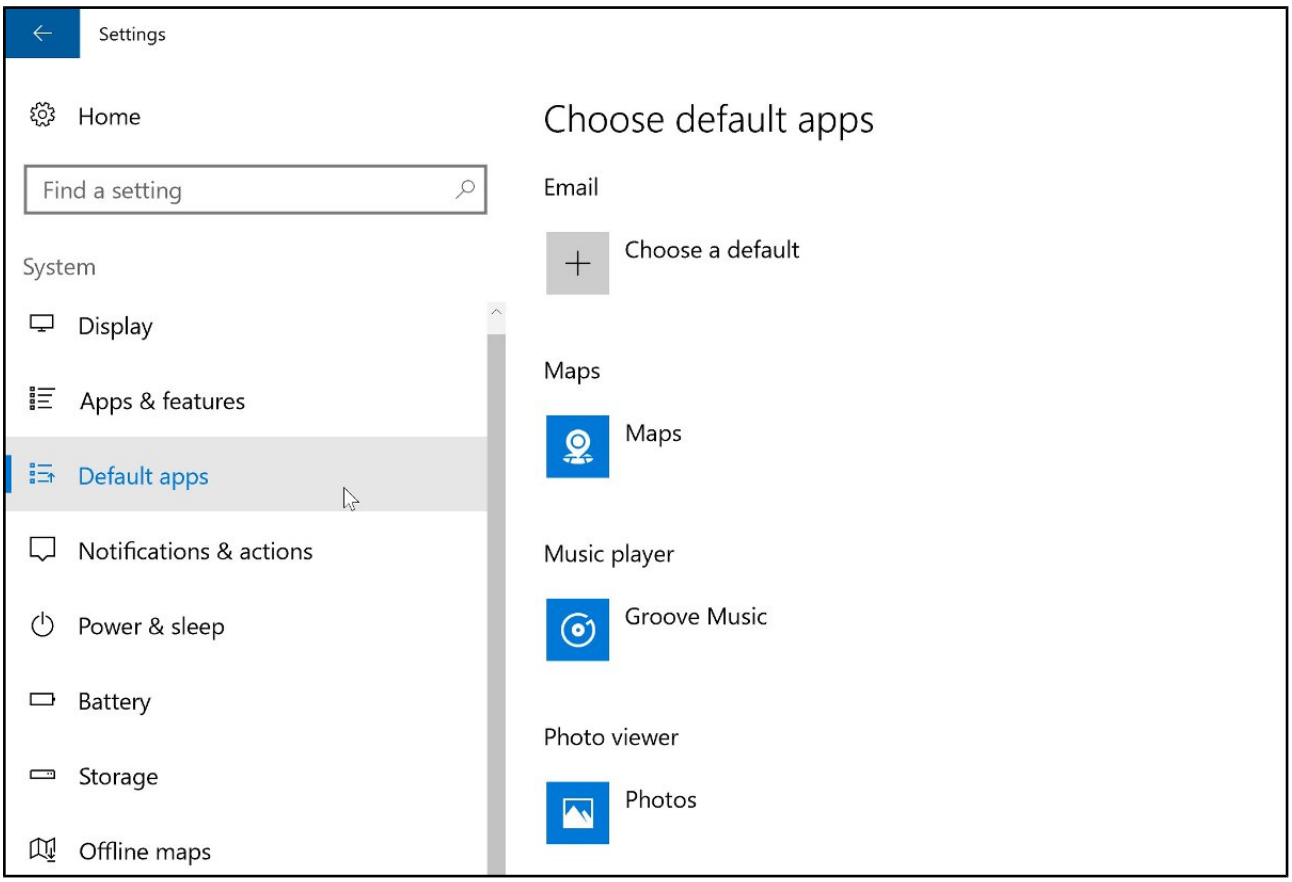
The second way of changing the default apps is via the Settings menu. Open the Start menu and click the Settings cog on the left.



Then click on System.



On the left click Default Apps.

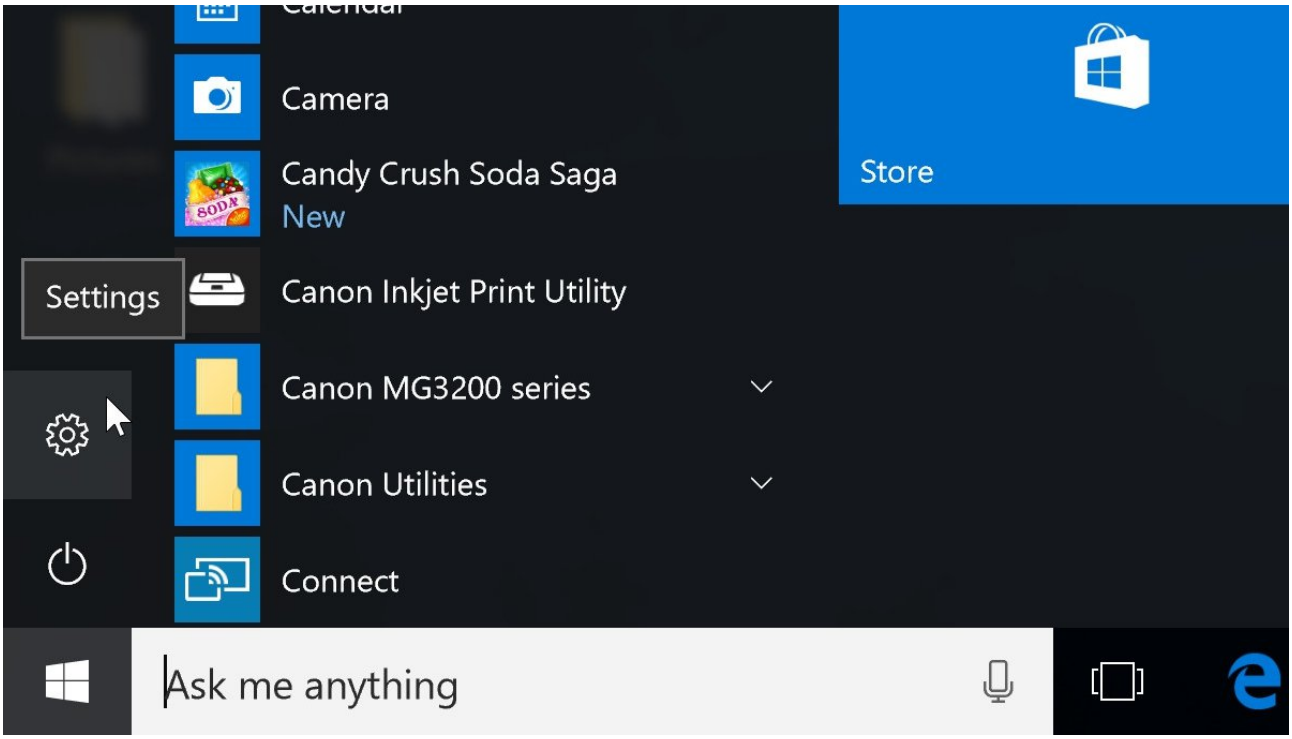


Here you can click on the different categories and set what programs you'd like to control what kind of media and files.

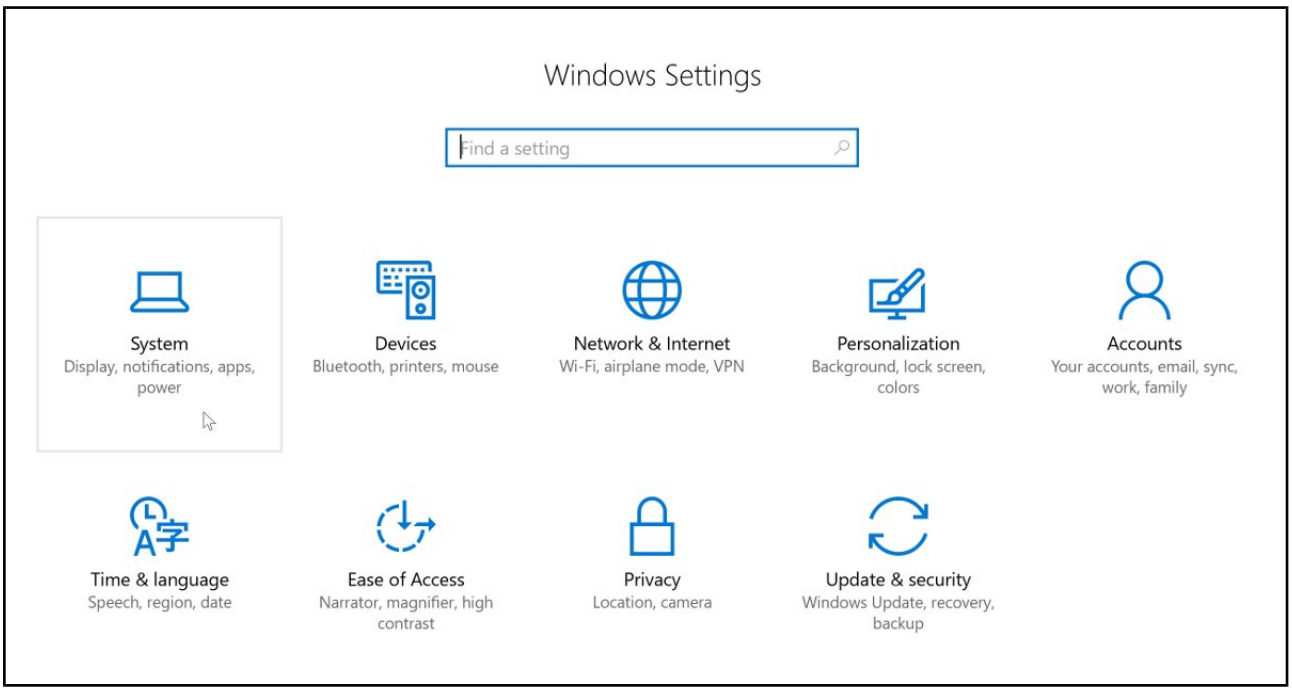
Change Which Drive New Files Are Saved To

When downloading certain file types, you may want to have them saved to a different drive than the one Windows 10 is currently on. For example, you may have a secondary hard drive where you'd prefer data to go, or you may want to save things to a memory stick. If you want to change the default drive for files, it can be done very easily.

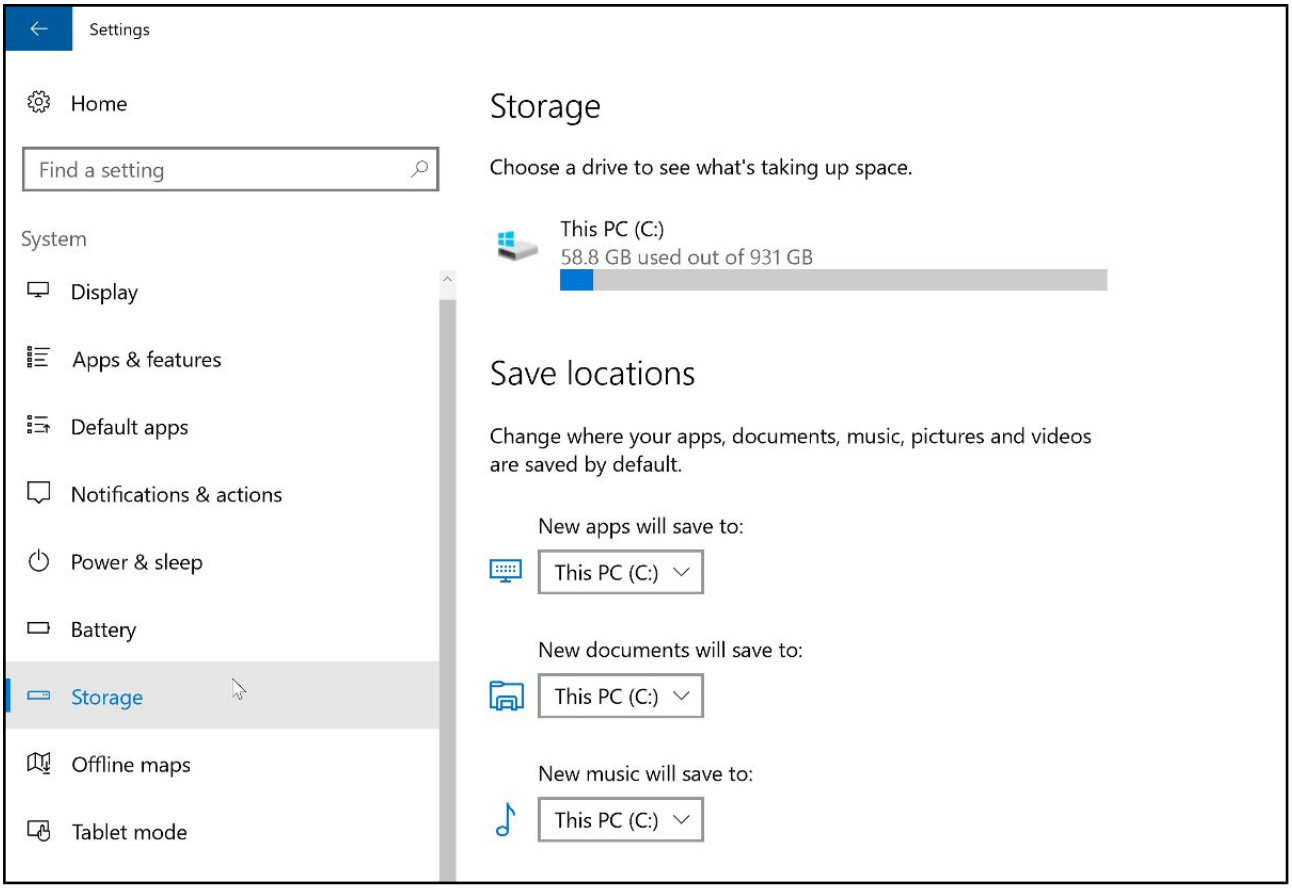
First, go to the Start menu and click the Settings cog on the left.



Then, click System.



Click on Storage on the left.

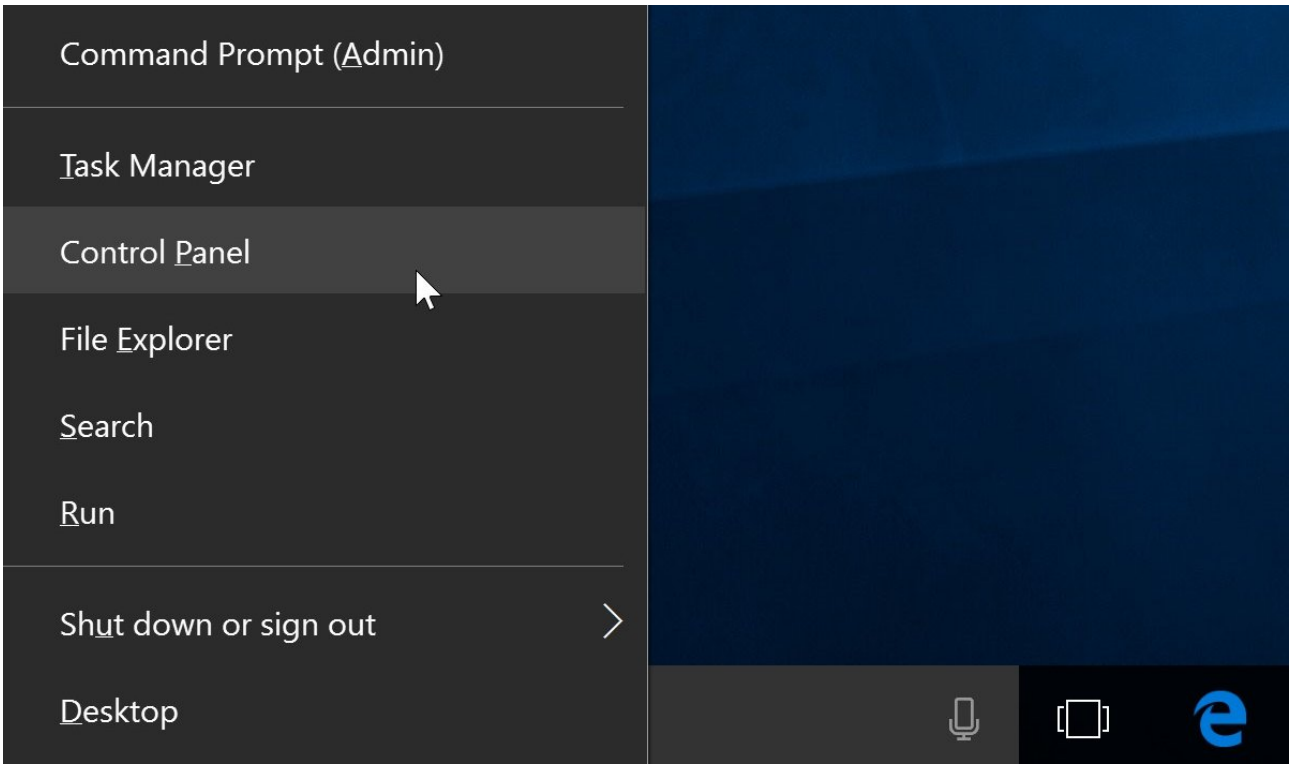


You can see how much you have left on your computer and can change the drive specific file types are saved on. Set them to the drive you want them to be saved on.

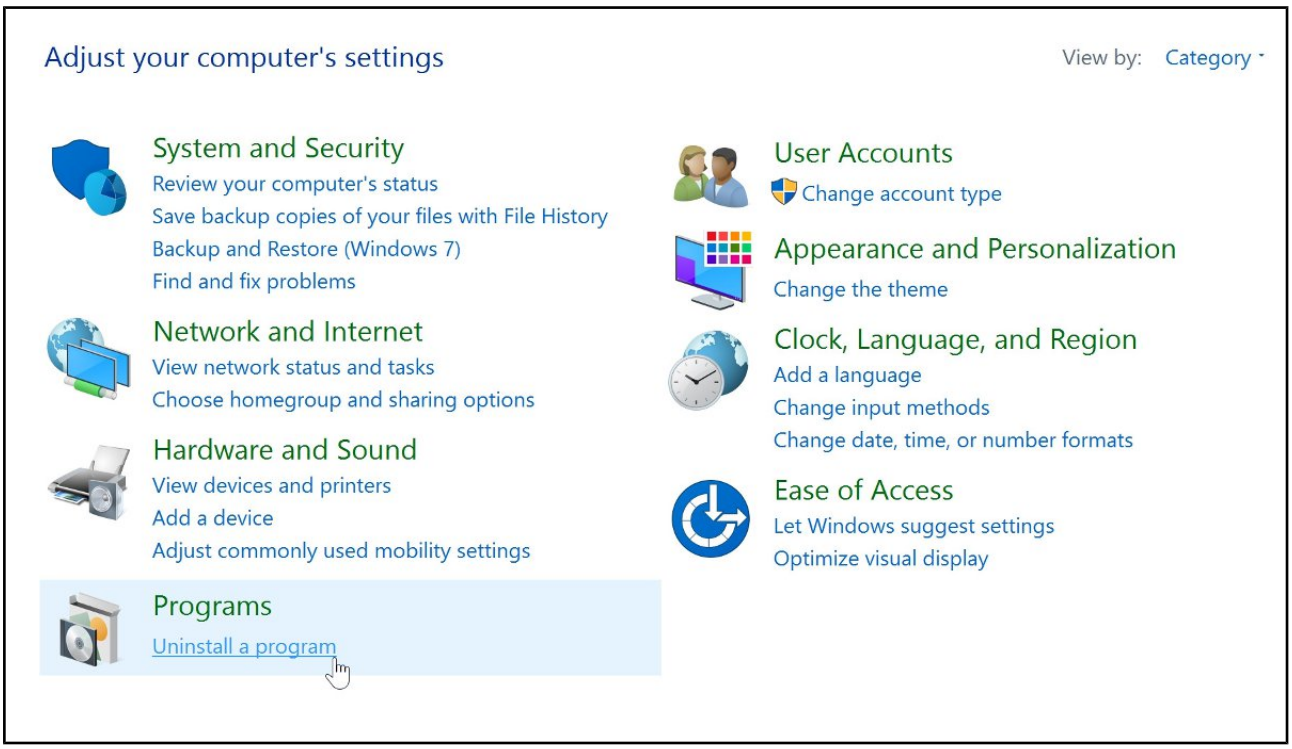
Uninstall Software

While downloading and installing software is a great way to use your computer at its absolute best, sometimes you tired of a piece of software. Perhaps the software came pre-installed on the computer and you want to get rid of it. If you're interested in removing software already installed, just follow these steps.

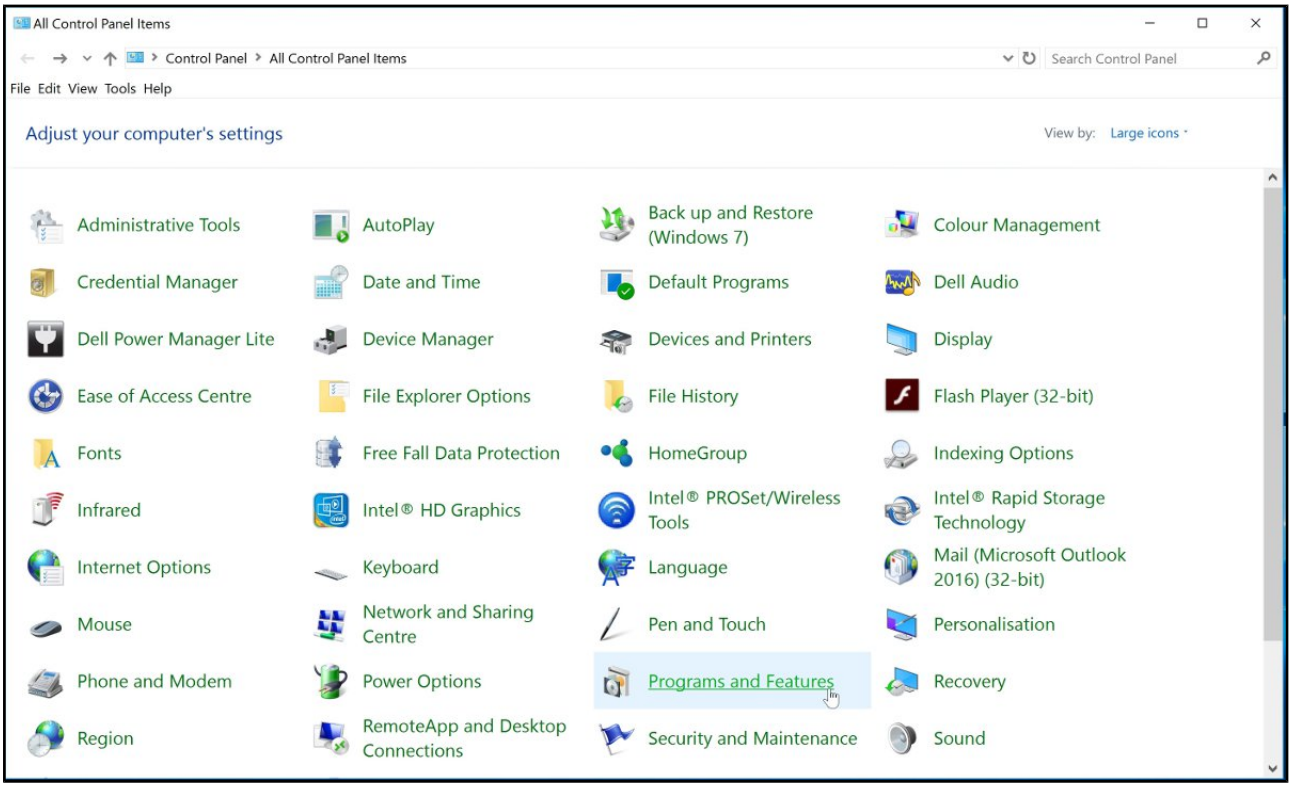
Right click the Start button, then click Control Panel.



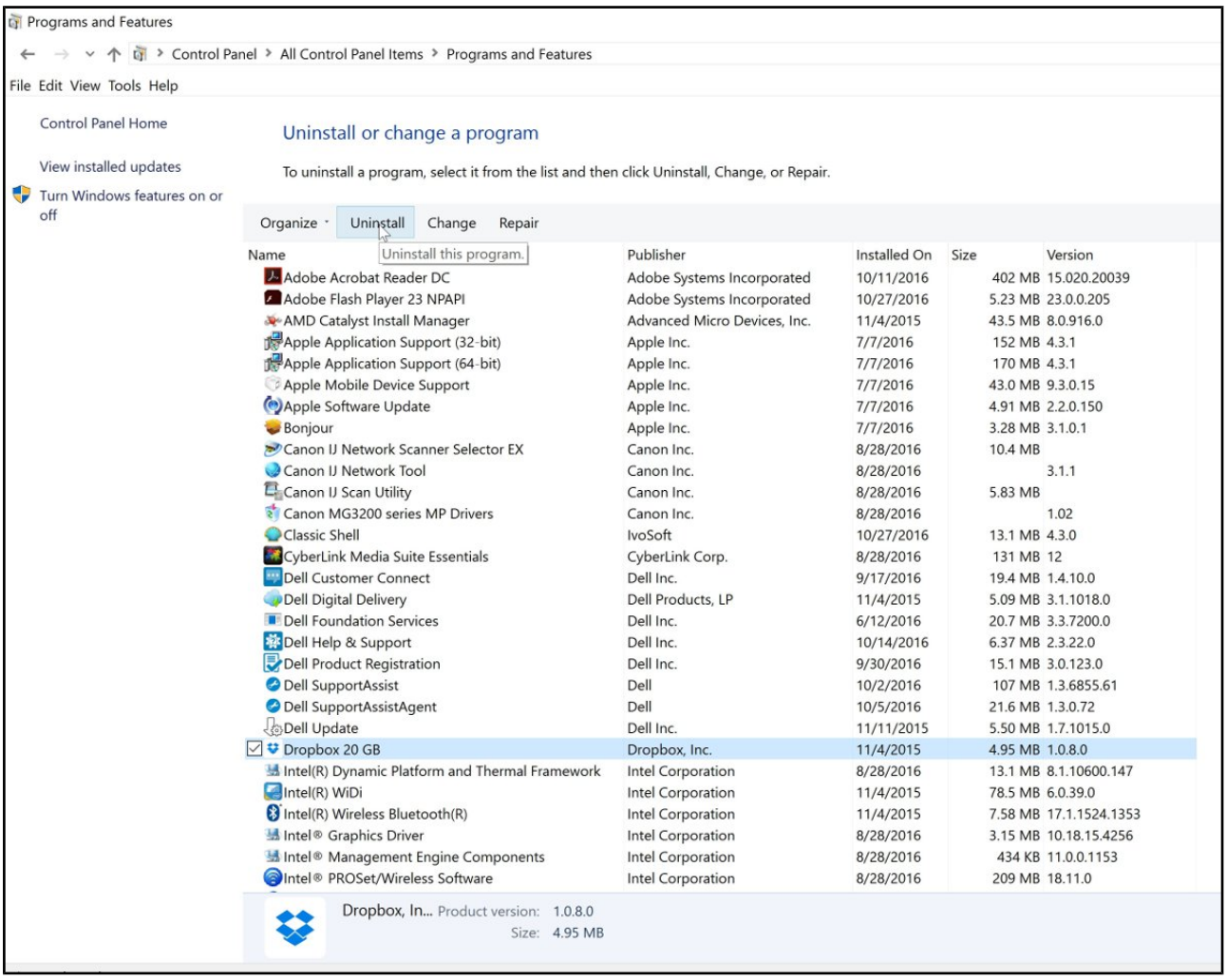
In Category view, click "Uninstall a program".



In Large or Small Icons view, click “Programs and Features”.



Select the program you want to get rid of, and click the Uninstall button.



This will remove the software from your system.

If you can’t find the software on the list, this may be due to a few reasons:

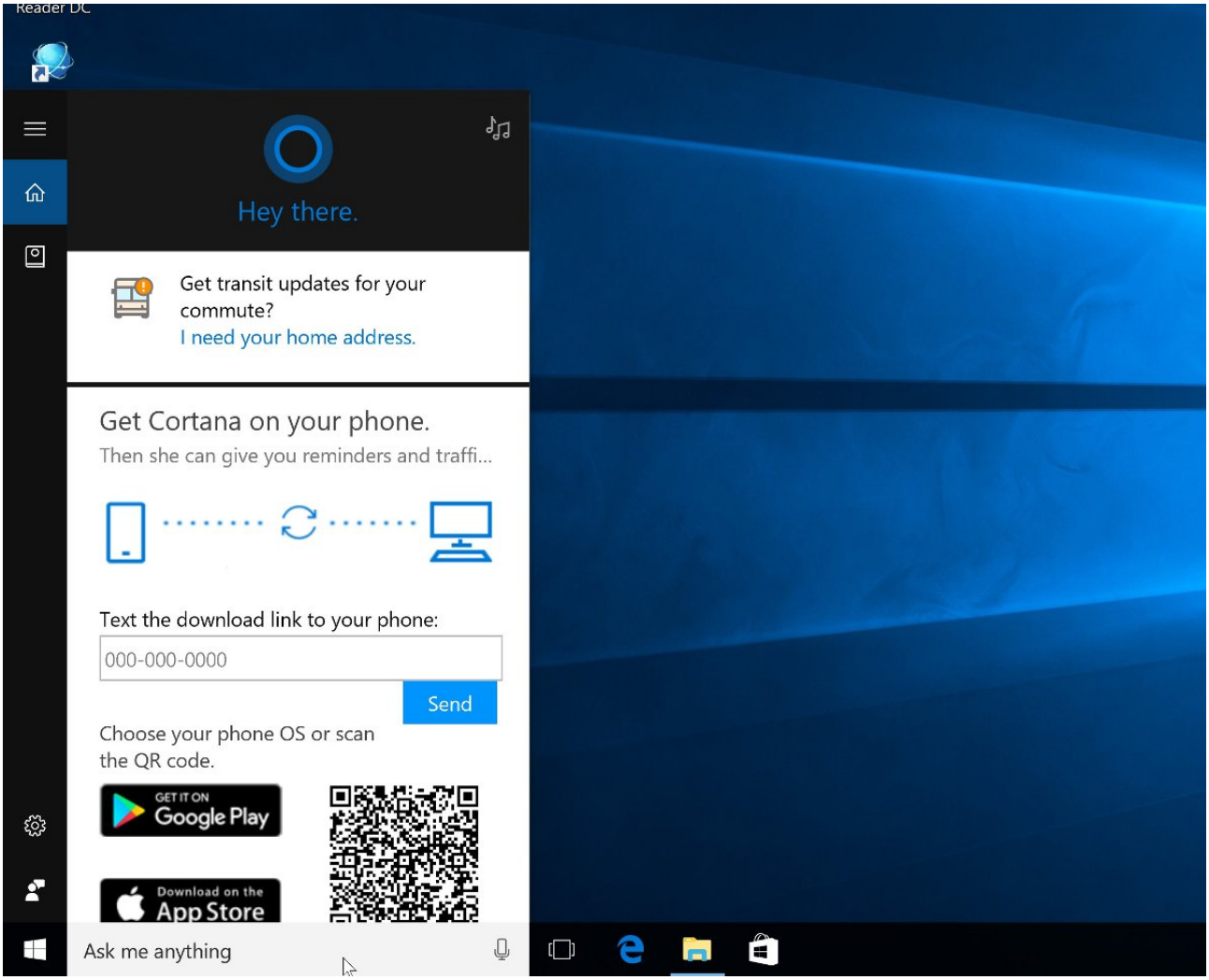
* Sometimes the program is listed differently on the list, such as Word being called “Microsoft Word” on the list, meaning it will be found under M instead of W.

* Sometimes software you download and run doesn’t install and runs as an independent .exe file at which point you don’t need to uninstall it - simply deleting the software’s files and folders will suffice.

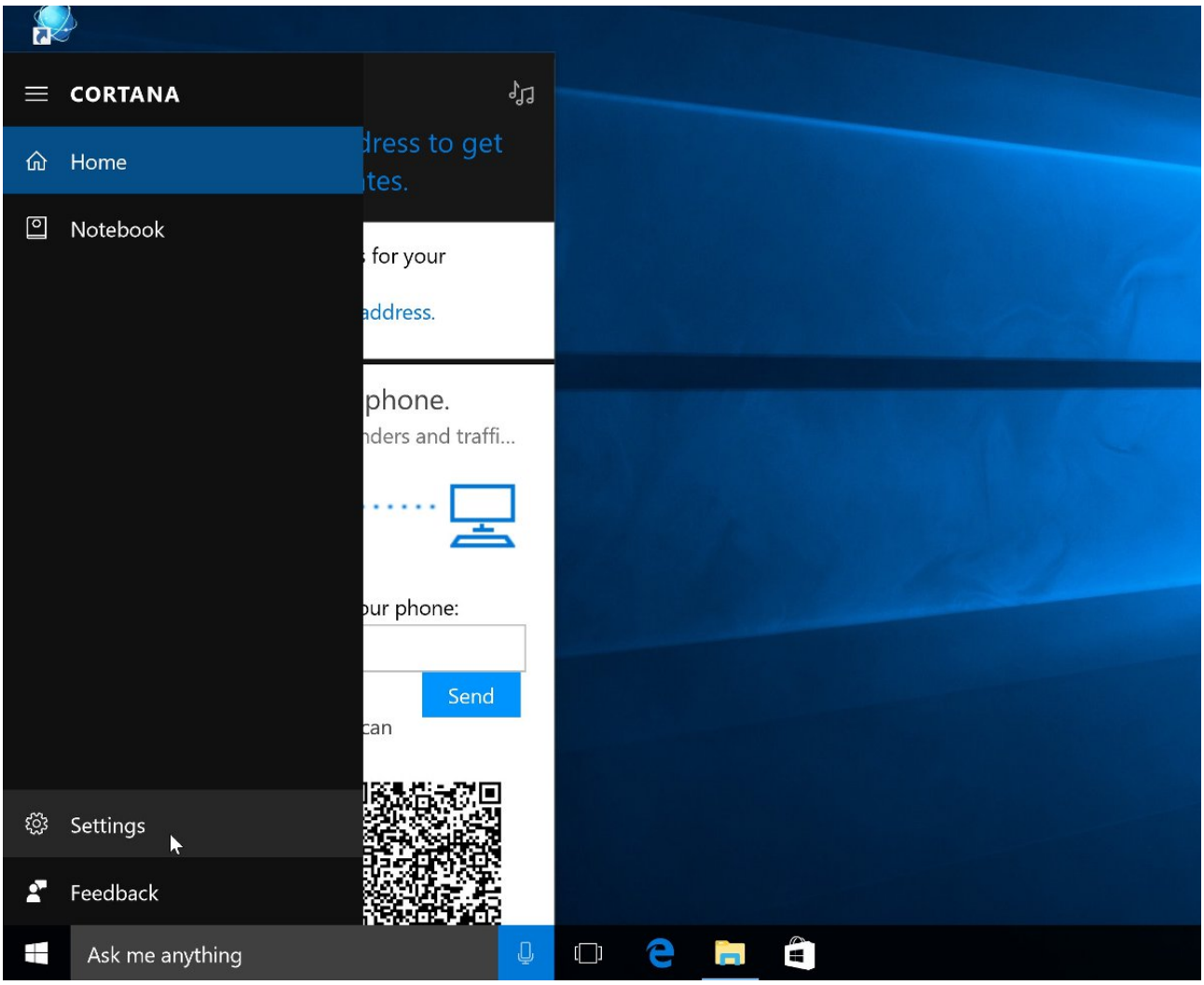
Chapter 8: Cortana

Modify Content

Cortana is a new addition to Windows 10 which allows you to easily search for information both online and on your computer. Cortana comes pre-installed with some settings set, but it can be modified to better suit your needs. If you want to change the content in Cortana, you can access the Cortana options so Cortana has more or less control over your data. To change the details, first click on the Cortana bar on the lower left.



While open, click the three bars at the top, and then the Settings cog on the bottom left.

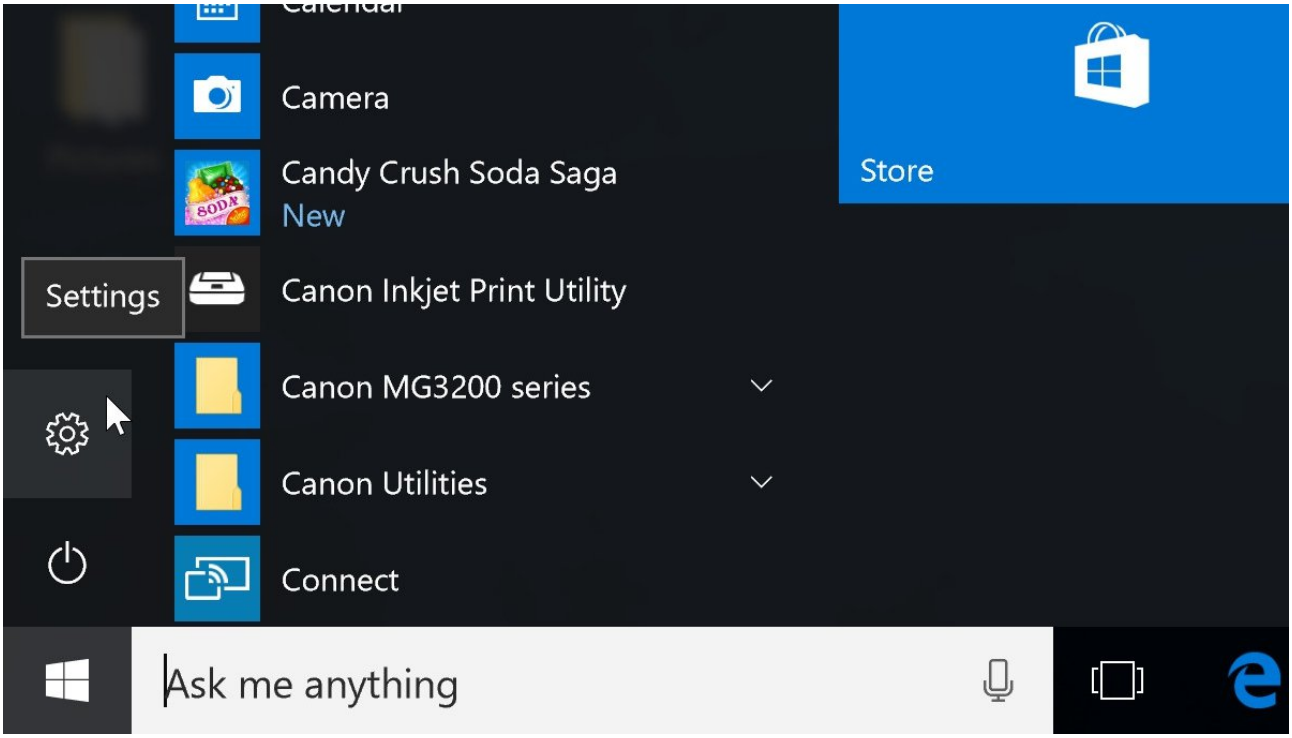


This brings up a list of options you can toggle on and off, including allowing Cortana to stay on when your computer is locked, what language Cortana uses, and if Cortana can show you your web and search history.

Enable/Disable “Getting to Know You”

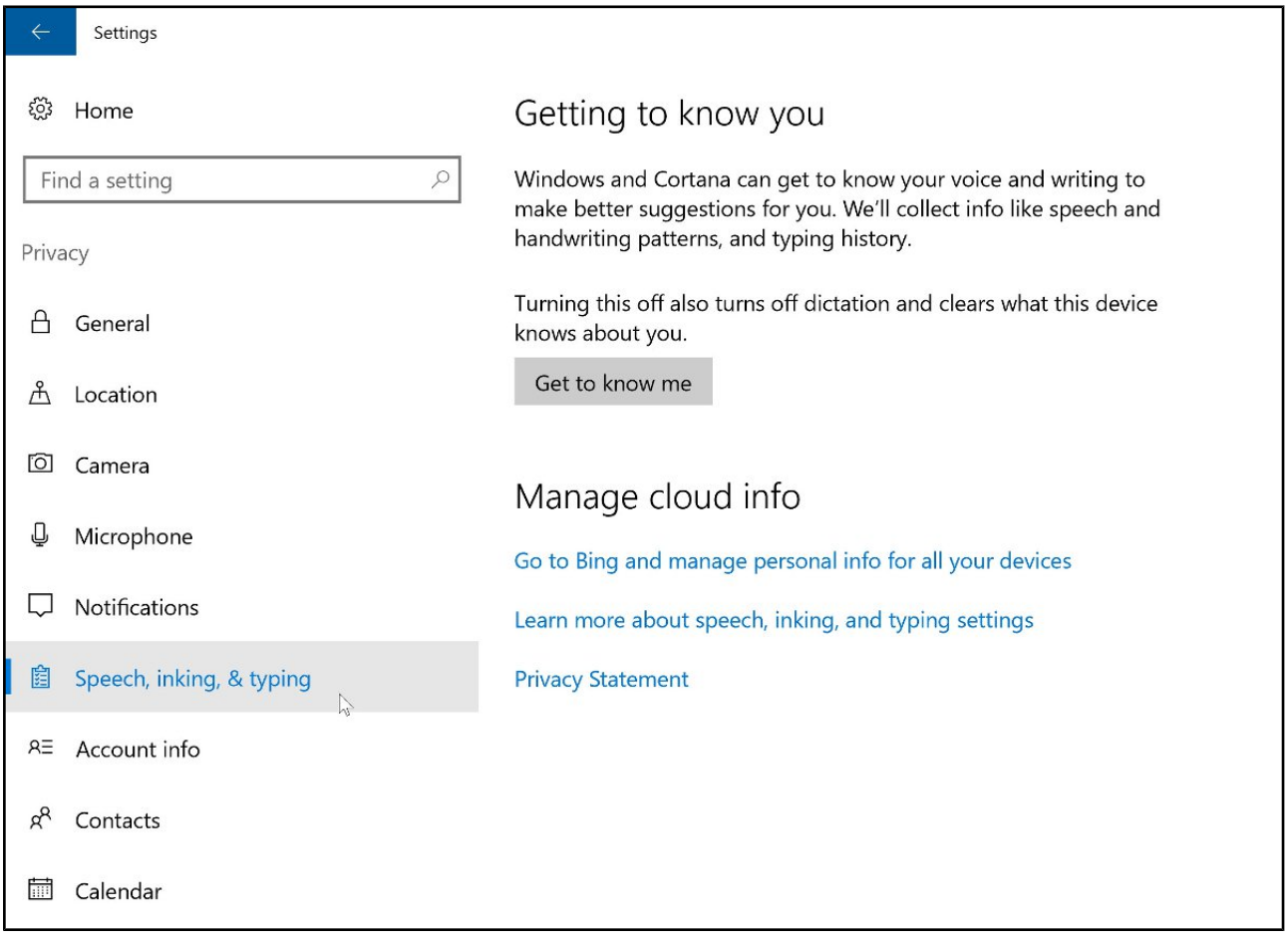
When using Cortana, Windows 10 uses a feature called “Getting to Know You.” This is hidden away within the Windows 10 privacy options, so you may or may not know that this option is currently on. When on, Windows 10 will monitor what you type so that it can deliver a better user experience to you. Some people, however, don’t like the idea of Windows monitoring what they type and want to disable this feature.

To do this, first click the Start button, then the Settings cog on the left.



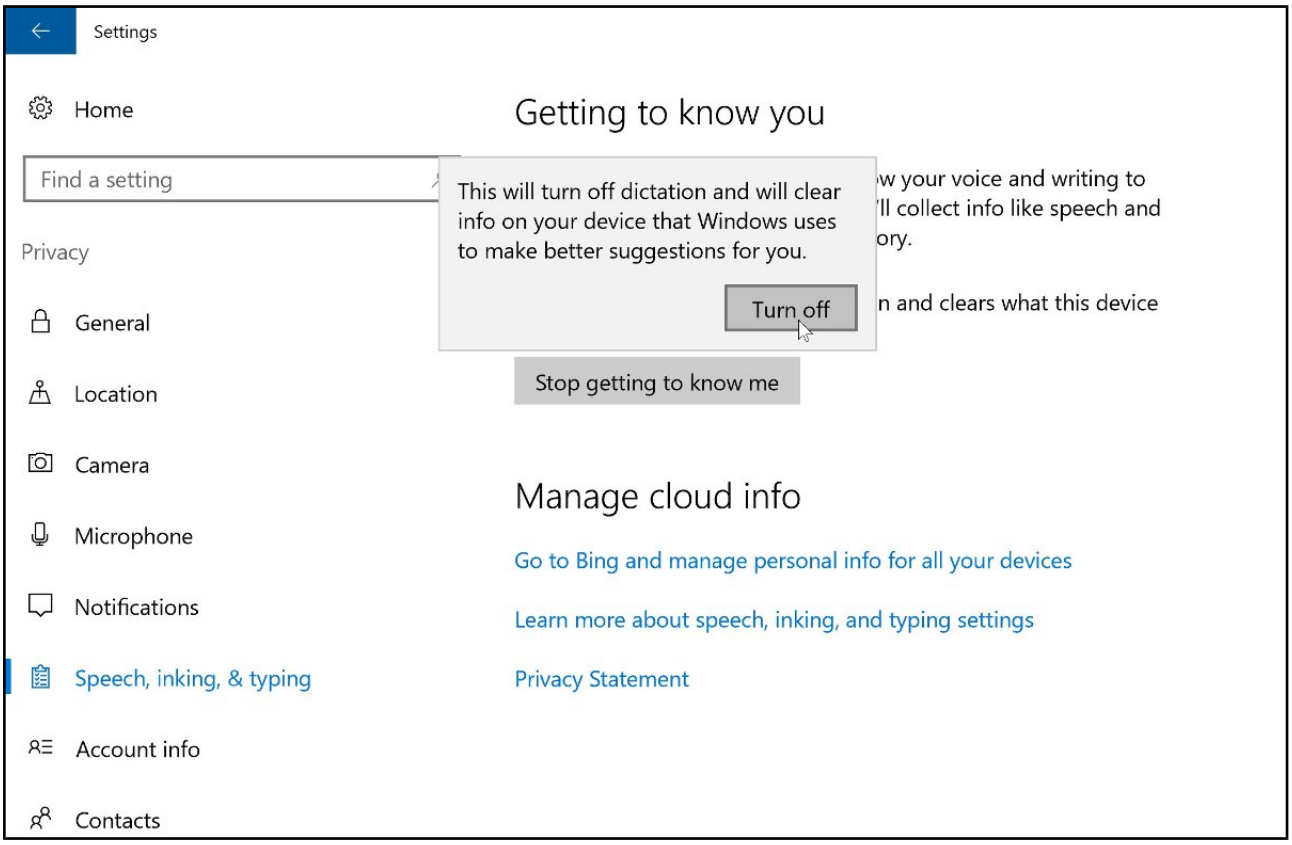
Then, click the Privacy category.

On the left bar click the “Speech, inking & typing” option.



You’ll arrive at the “Getting to know you” section of the Privacy window. There is a brief description of what this feature does, what it tracks, and why it tracks your data. It also

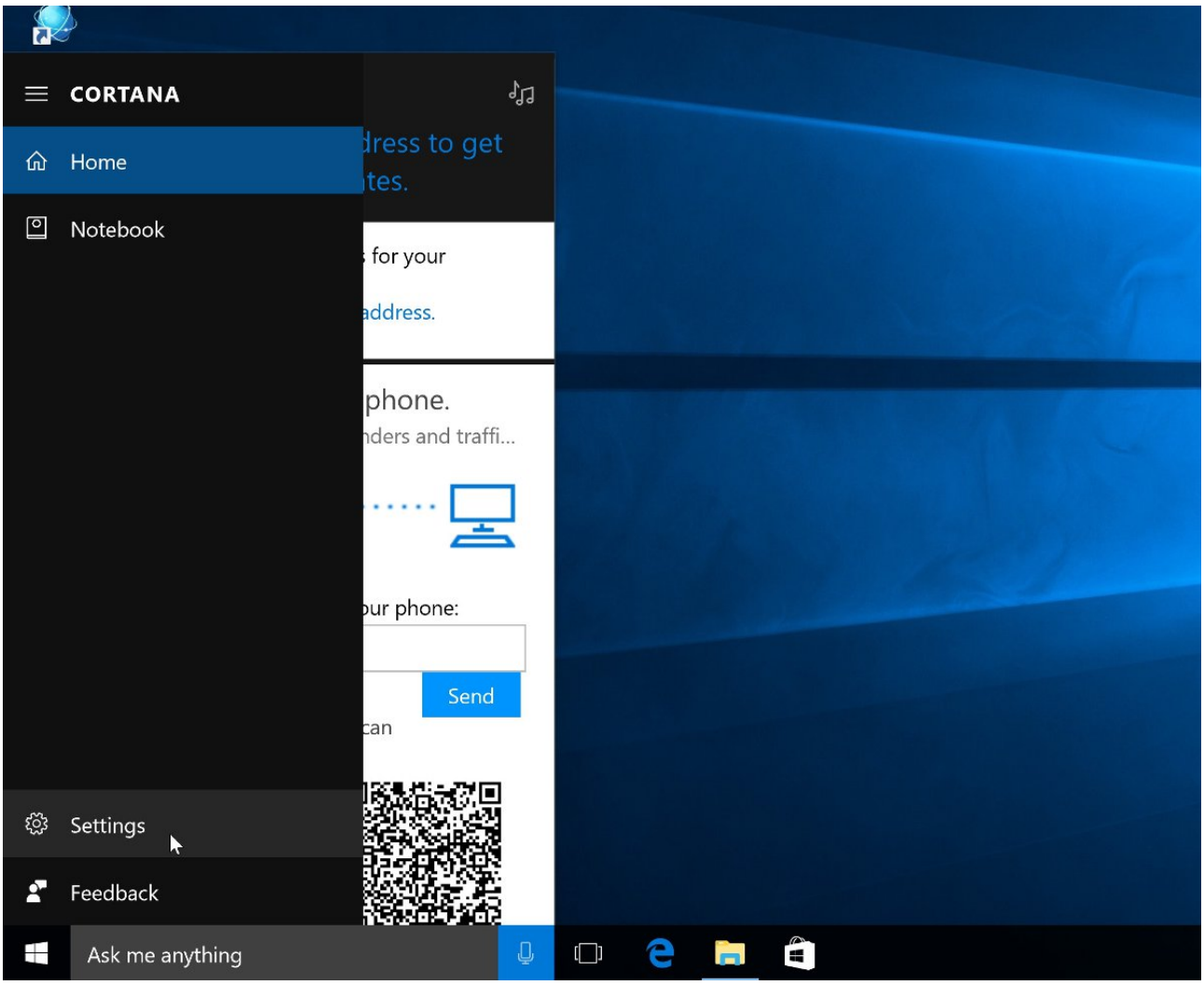
comes with a button. If this feature is currently enabled, it will read “Stop getting to know me”. Simply click this button, and Windows 10 will stop tracking your input. If the button reads “Get to know me”, the feature is currently off.



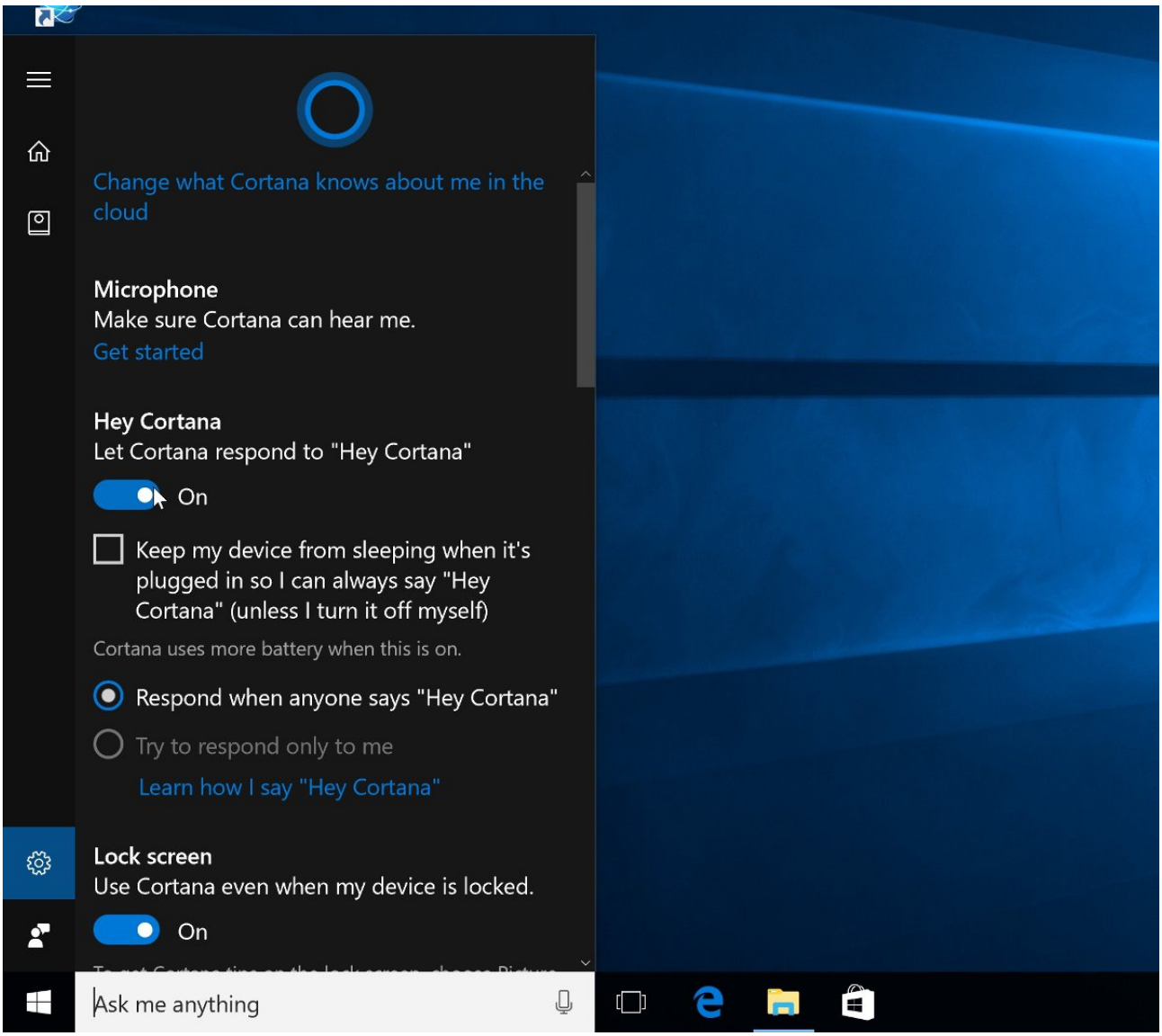
Enable “Hey Cortana”

If you really enjoy using Cortana, you can turn on “Hey Cortana” for easier use. Hey Cortana is a setting that allows Cortana to listen to your microphone at all times. When Cortana hears you say the phrase “Hey Cortana,” it will automatically activate and prepare itself for your request. This is especially useful if you use the voice features of Cortana a lot.

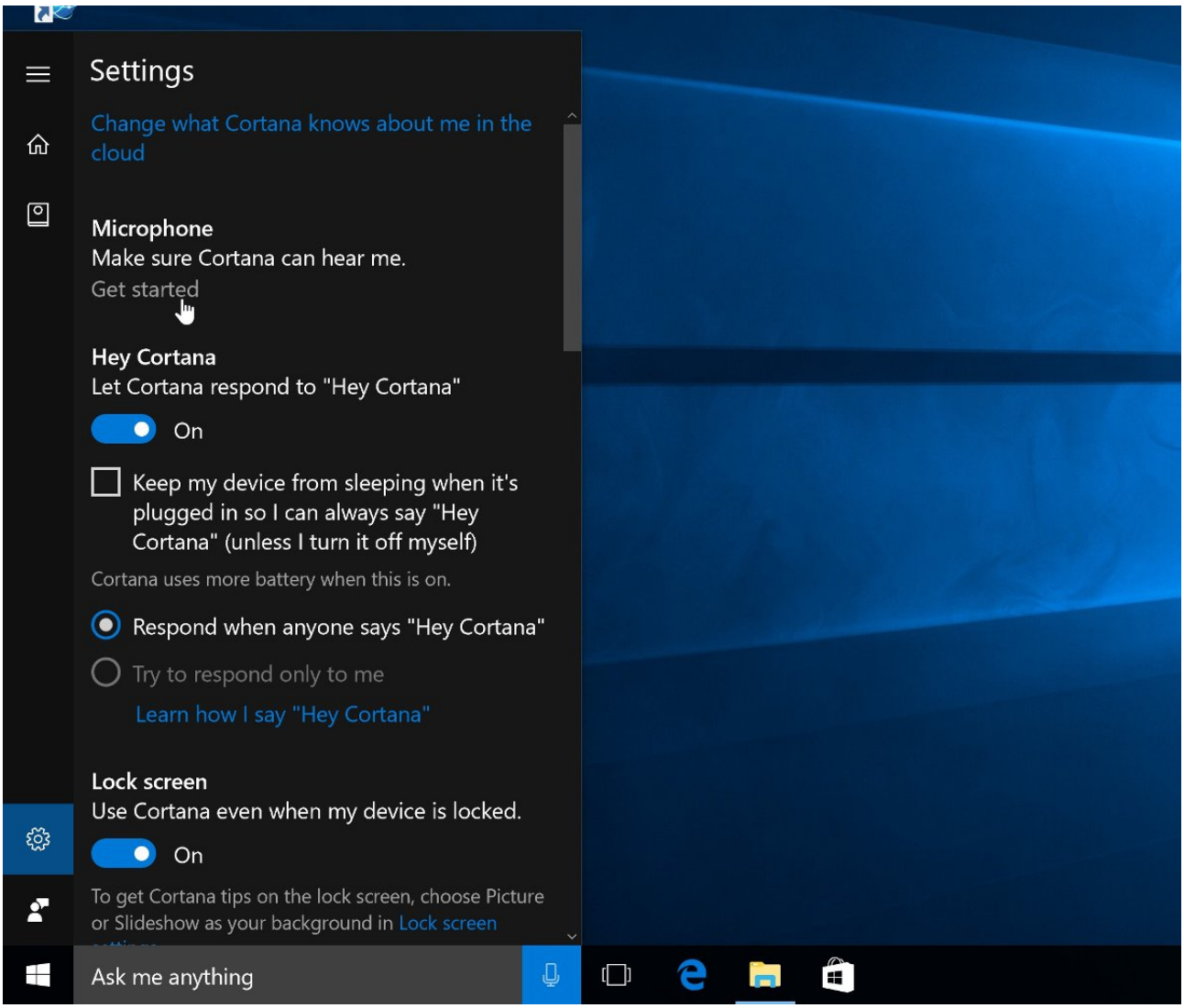
If this sounds like something you’d like to activate, you can set it by clicking the Cortana bar, then the Settings cog on the left.



Find the option called “Hey Cortana”, and turn it on.



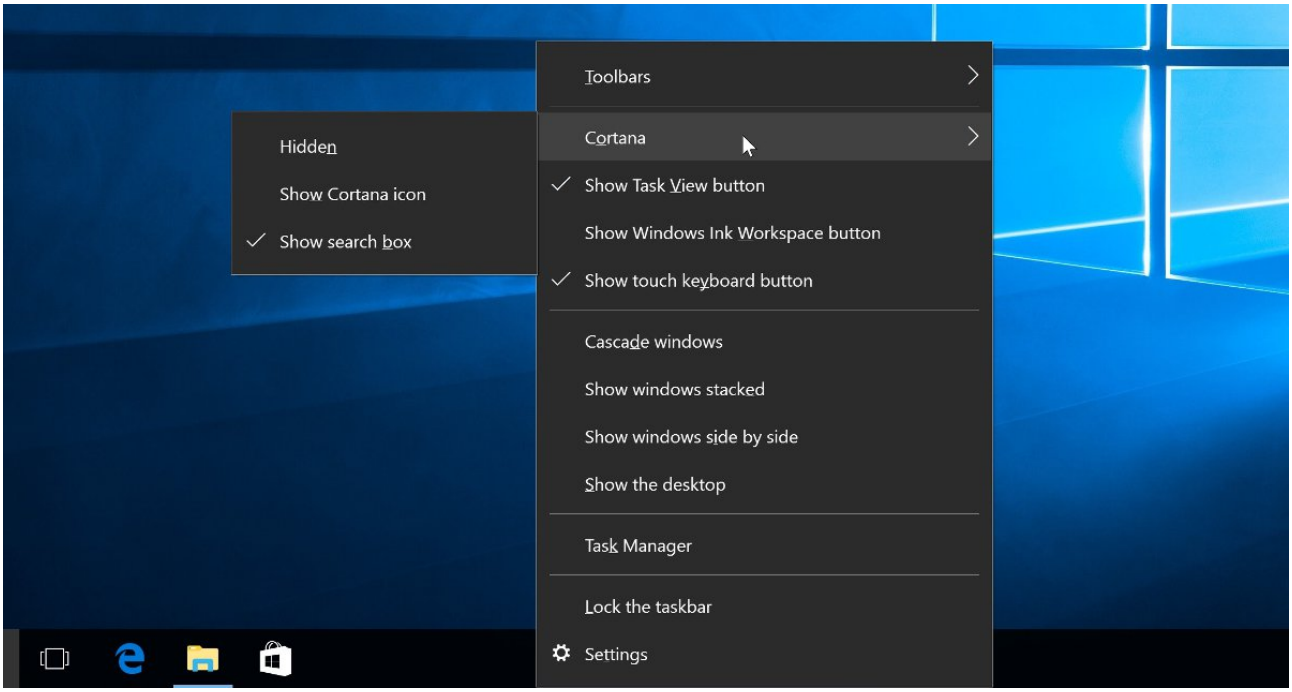
In order to make sure Cortana can hear you, click the “Get Started” link under Microphone to set up Cortana to hear you. Then, when it’s all set up, saying “Hey Cortana” into the microphone will activate Cortana. **Be warned**, however; this setting will mean Cortana will drain your battery faster, as it’s always listening for your voice. Be careful with this setting when using a laptop.


Settings
Change what Cortana knows about me in the cloud
Microphone
Make sure Cortana can hear me.
Get started
Hey Cortana
Let Cortana respond to "Hey Cortana"
On
Keep my device from sleeping when it's plugged in so I can always say "Hey Cortana" (unless I turn it off myself)
Cortana uses more battery when this is on.
Respond when anyone says "Hey Cortana"
Try to respond only to me
Learn how I say "Hey Cortana"
Lock screen
Use Cortana even when my device is locked.
On
To get Cortana tips on the lock screen, choose Picture or Slideshow as your background in Lock screen
Ask me anything

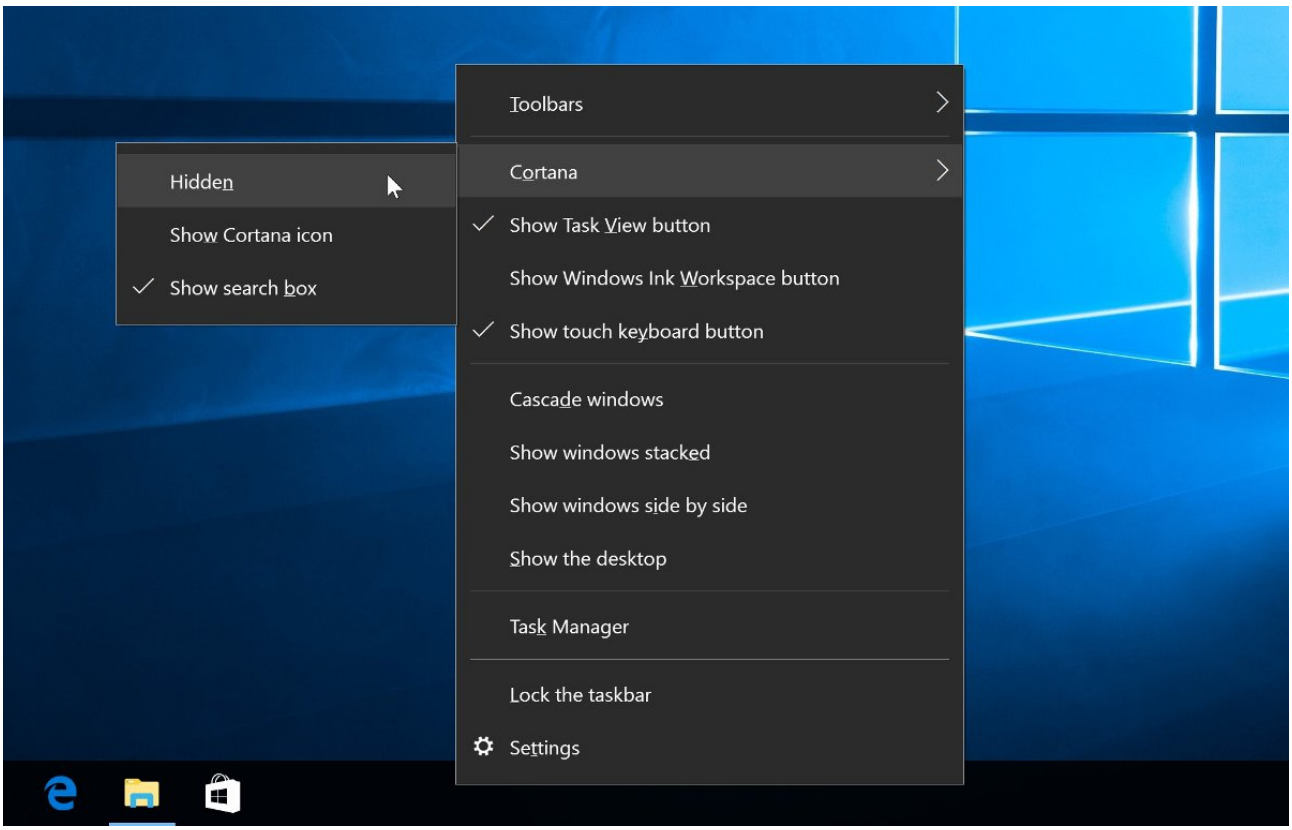
Remove Cortana From Taskbar

Not everyone will find use with Cortana, however. In fact, some people might find Cortana a great nuisance. Thankfully, there's a way to hide Cortana so it doesn't get in your way anymore.

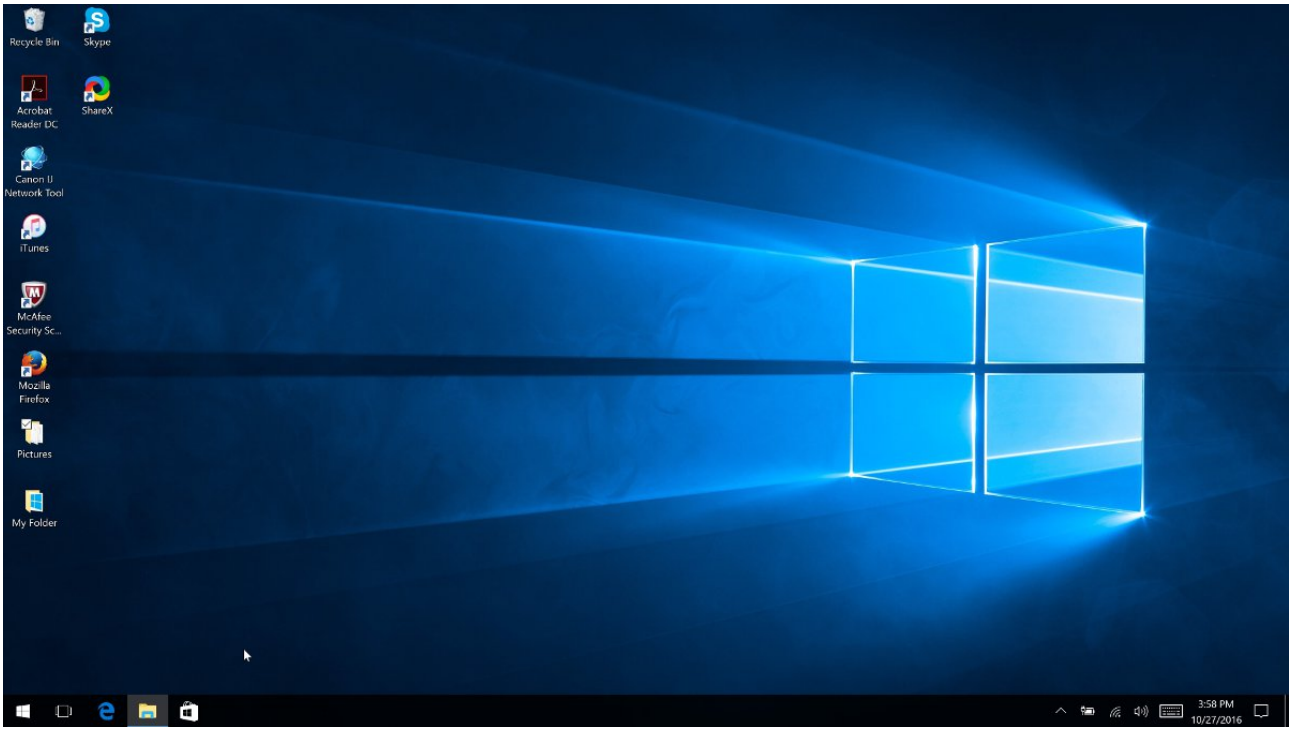
To hide Cortana, right click an empty spot on the toolbar, making sure you don't right-click an icon or the Start button. On the menu that appears, mouse over the option that reads Cortana.



A small window will appear with several options. From here, select Hidden.



Cortana will now no longer show itself on the taskbar.



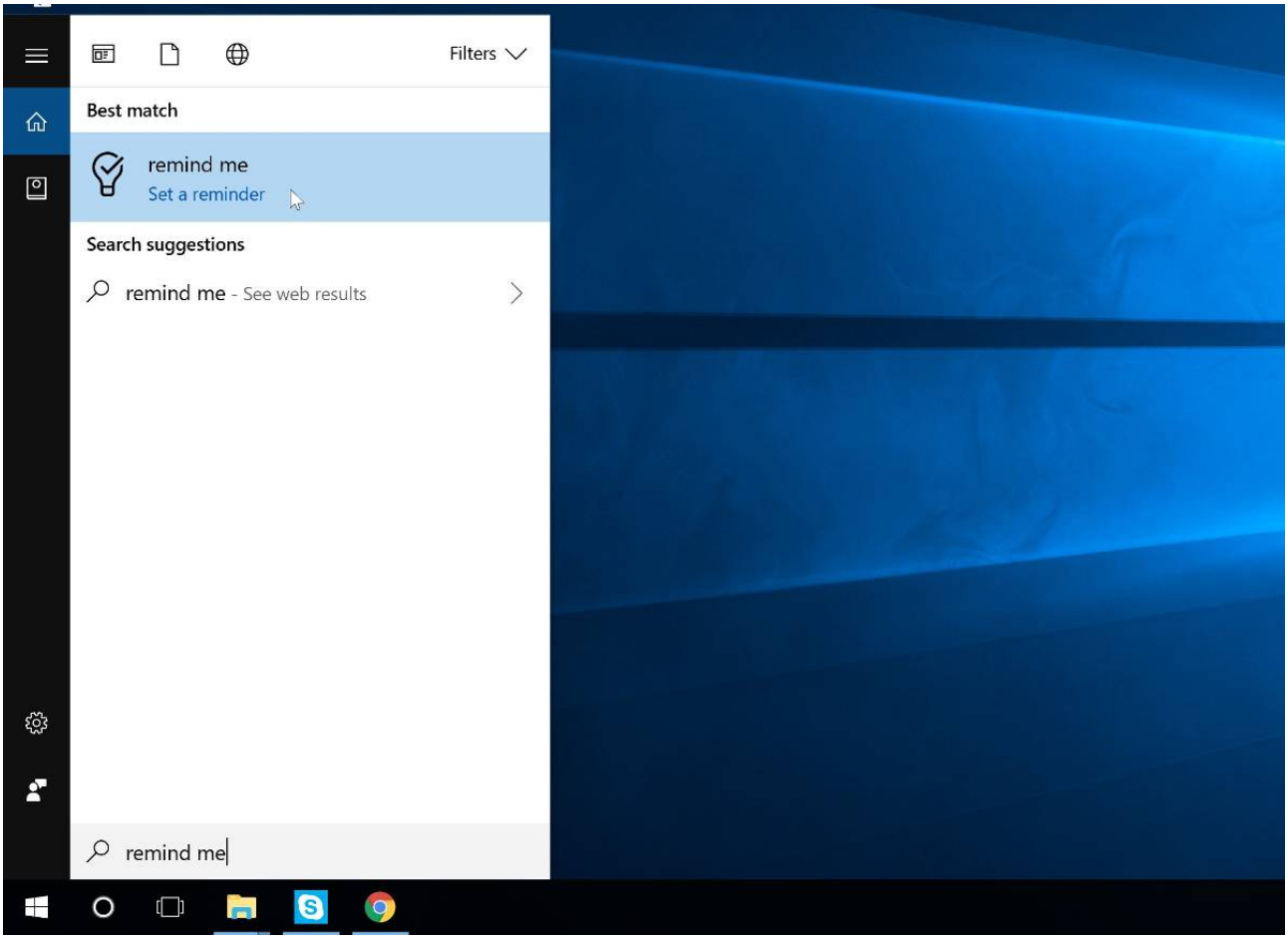
Add Weekly/Monthly/Yearly Reminders (Creator's Update)

New with the Creator's Update comes the ability to set advanced reminders for Cortana. You can set these to occur every day, every week, every month, or even every year. If you

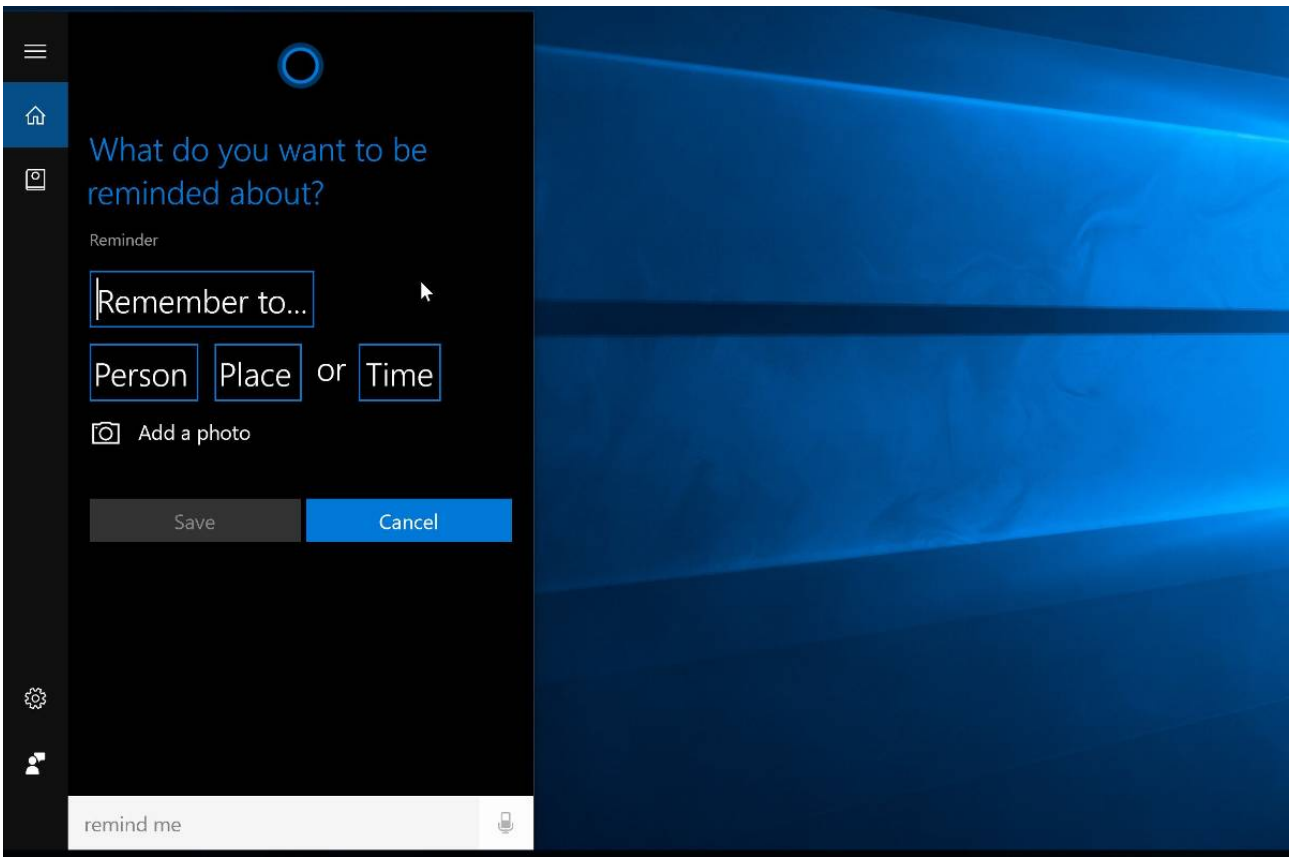
struggle to remember important dates and times and need a little help, tell Cortana about it, and you'll get a little reminder on your PC when the date and time comes around.

To make a reminder, click the Cortana icon. It should be on your taskbar if you haven't hidden her. If you have, consult chapter 8.4 and undo the actions stated there.

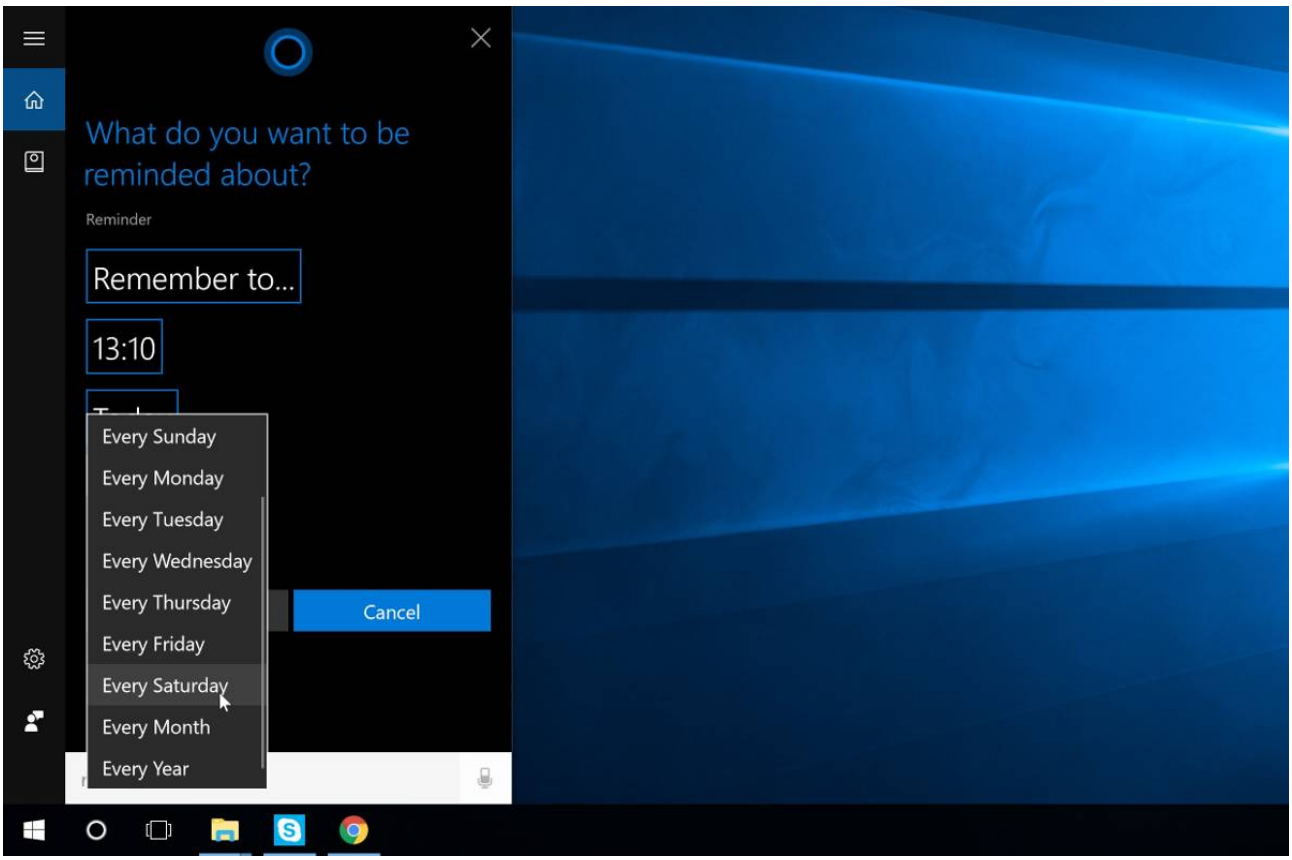
Type "remind me" into the search box that appears. Cortana will automatically bring up an option called "Set a reminder". Click this option or press Enter.



Cortana will think for a little, then present you with a reminder screen. This is where you're going to type in the details of your reminder.

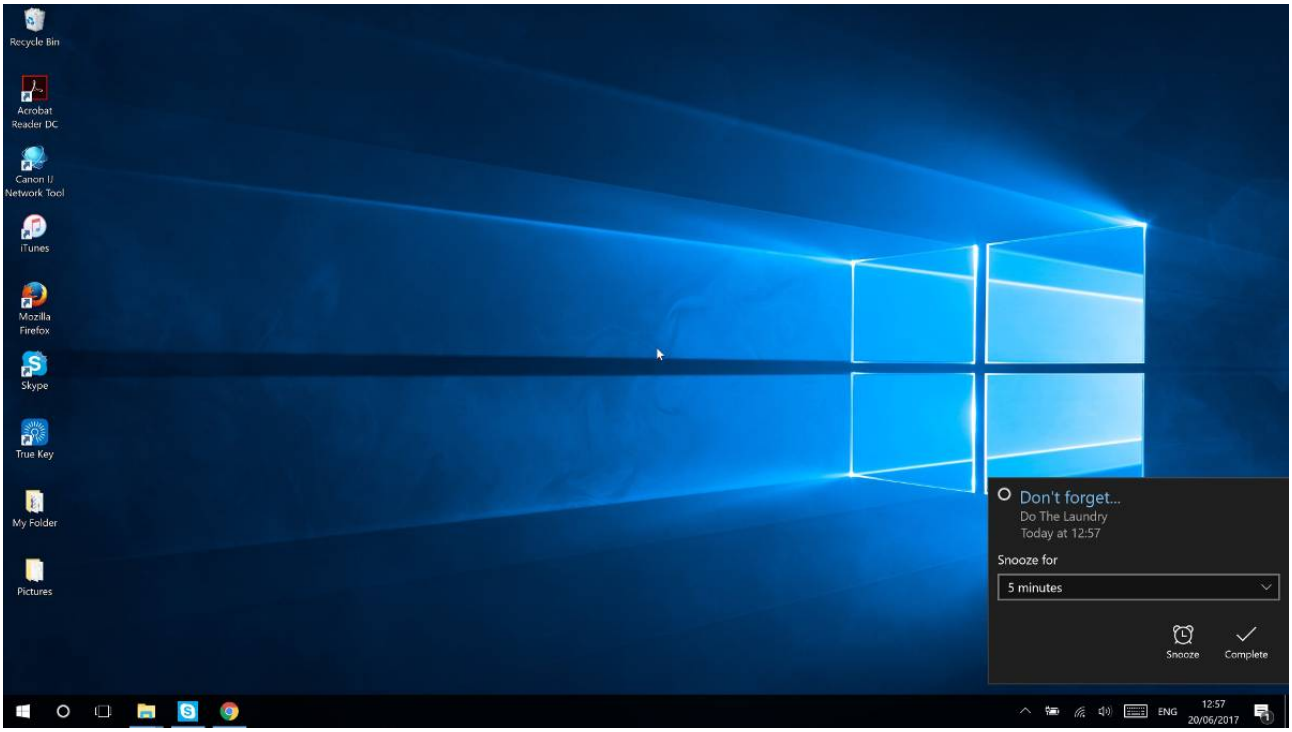


“Remember to…” is where you write what you want to be reminded of. Person and Location both require additional privacy options for Cortana to use but will give you the added ability to set a person and a place in the reminder. Time gives you a few basic options to choose from, but clicking “Another time…” gives you a lot more freedom.



You can also add a photo to the reminder if you wish.

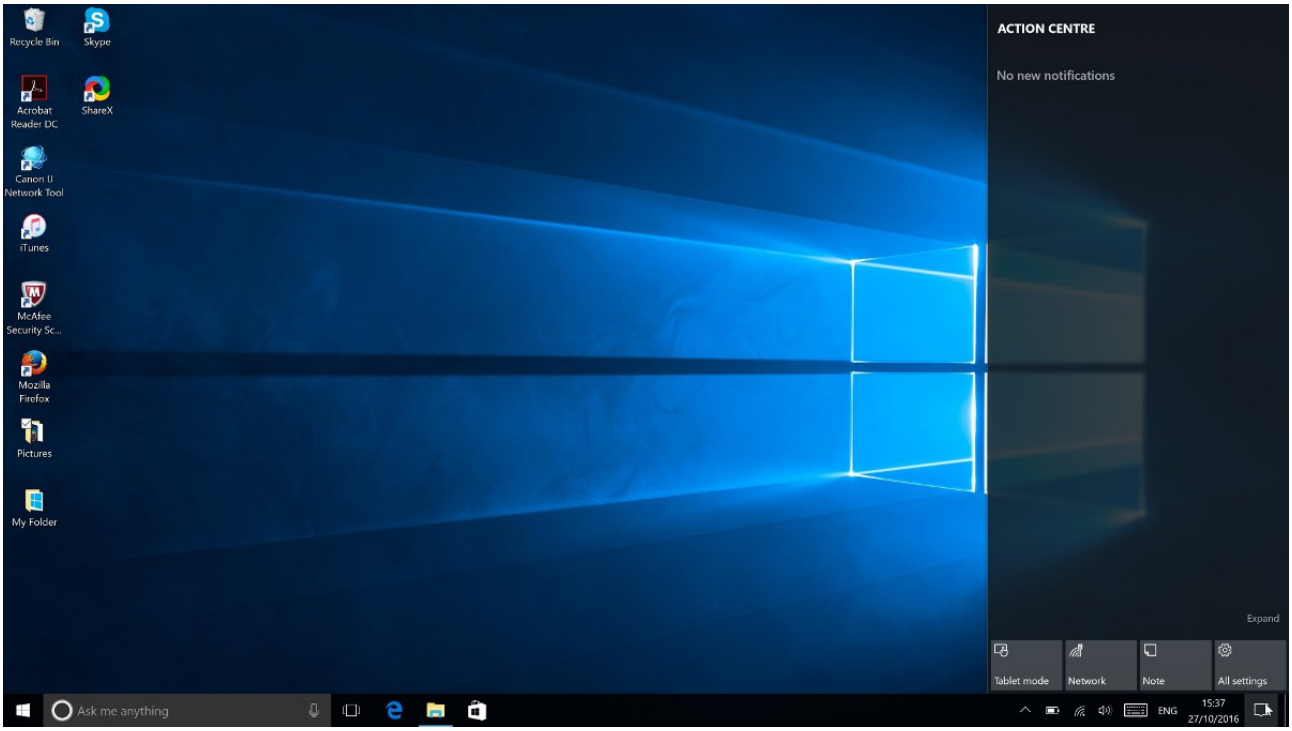
Once done, click Save, and Cortana will remind you the next time your specified date and time comes up.



Chapter 9: System

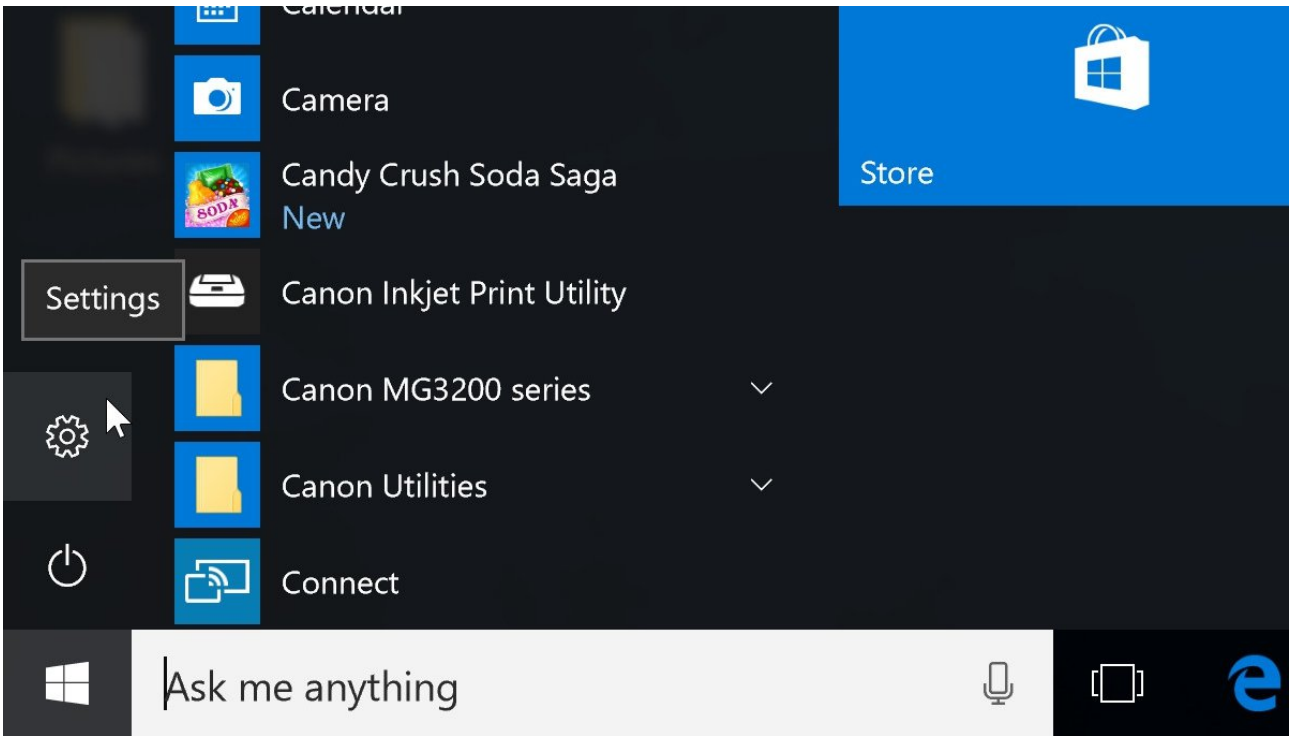
Set Up Quick Actions

Windows 10 features the Quick Actions menu which allows you easy access to a selection of pre-set actions, found by clicking the bottom-right of the screen on the speech bubble icon.

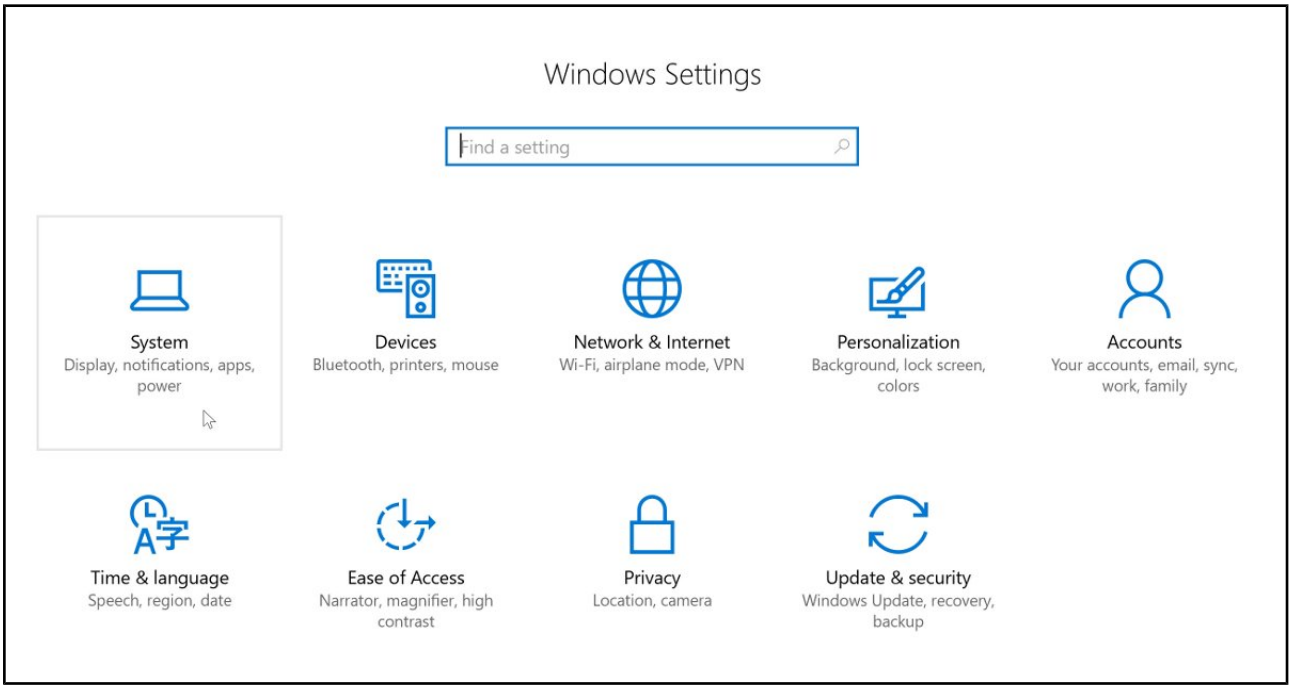


You may find, however, that the selection given to you by Windows 10 to begin with is lacking. If you want to add more actions or you have a good idea for an action you'd like, you can change what appears using these steps.

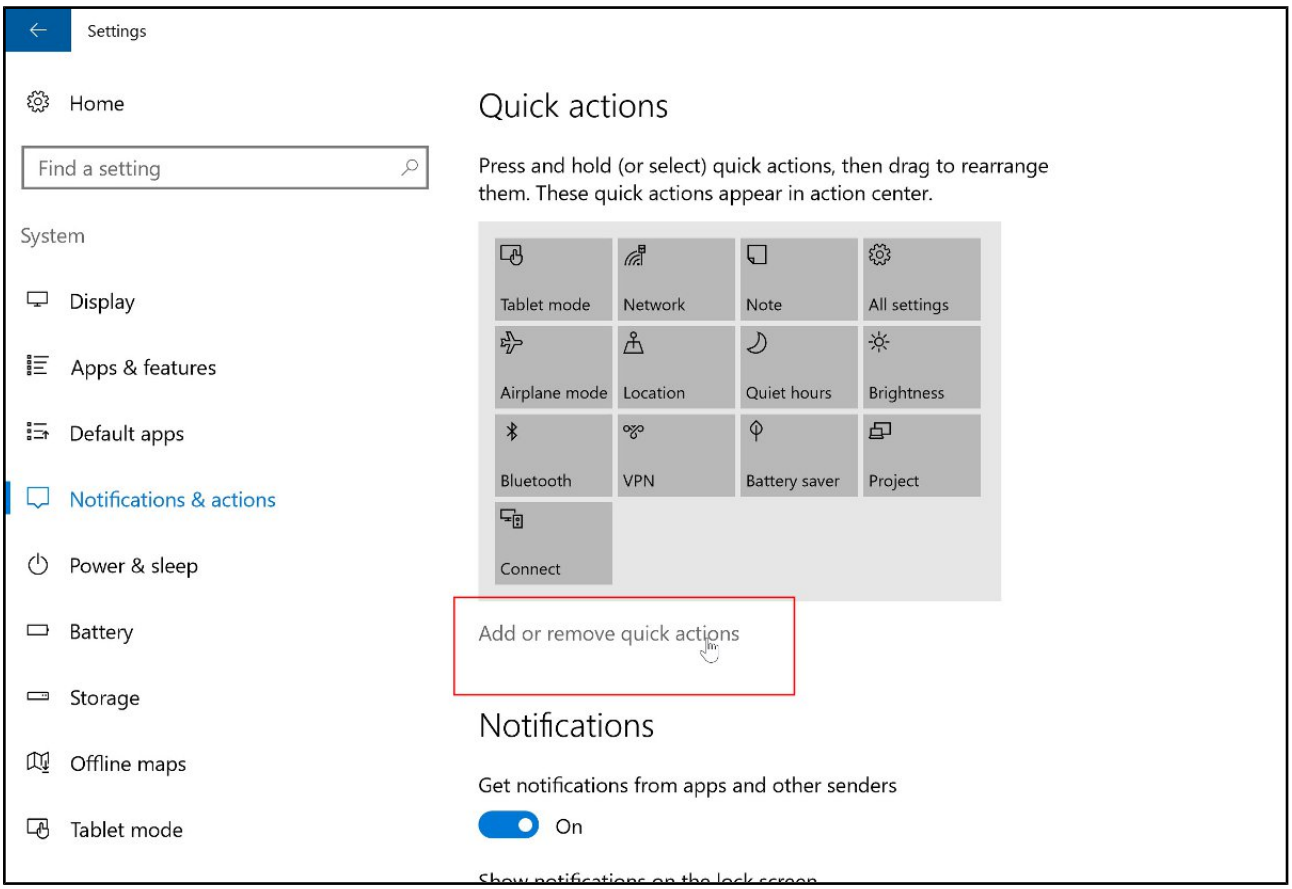
First, click the Start button, then go to Settings.



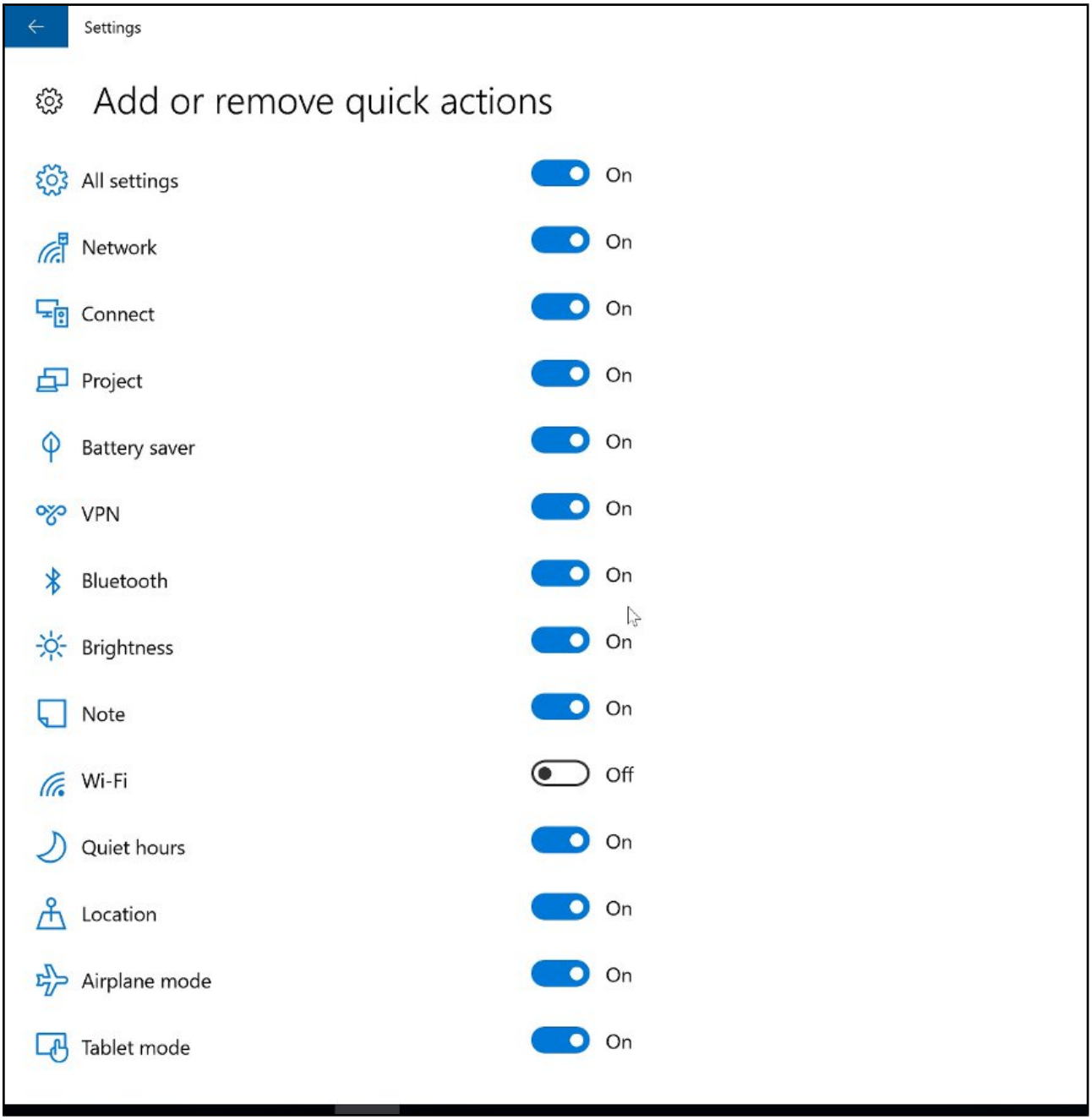
Click System.



In System, click “Notifications & Actions”, then click “Add or remove quick actions”.



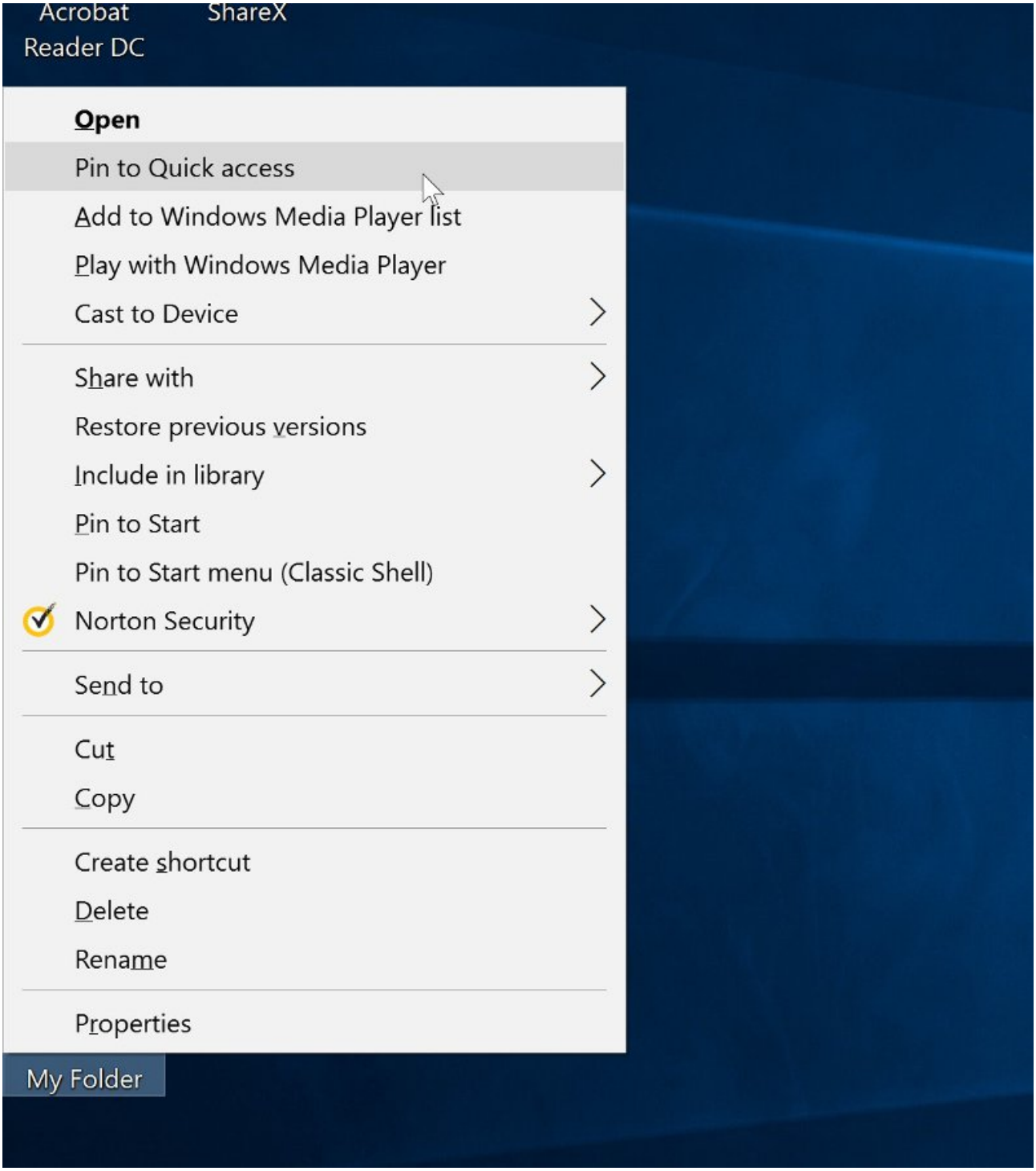
This will bring you to a screen where you can toggle different options for what you'd like to see on Quick Actions. Browse through them and see what kind of actions you'd like to add.


Settings
Add or remove quick actions
All settings
On
Network
On
Connect
On
Project
On
Battery saver
On
VPN
On
Bluetooth
On
Brightness
On
Note
On
Wi-Fi
Off
Quiet hours
On
Location
On
Airplane mode
On
Tablet mode
On

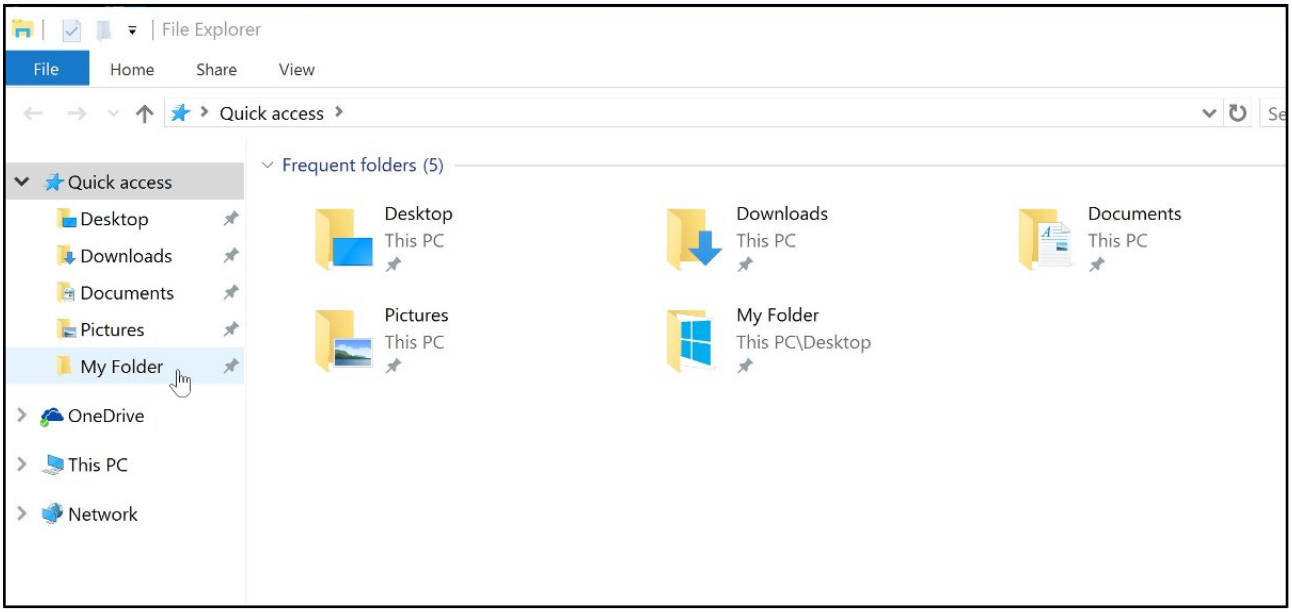
Set Quick Folders

Do you find yourself constantly returning to certain folders on your computer? It can be very annoying to constantly have to go through your file system to get at a specific folder. If you find yourself constantly returning to a specific folder, it can be a lot easier to pin the folder on the Explorer's sidebar so you have instant access to it at any time you like.

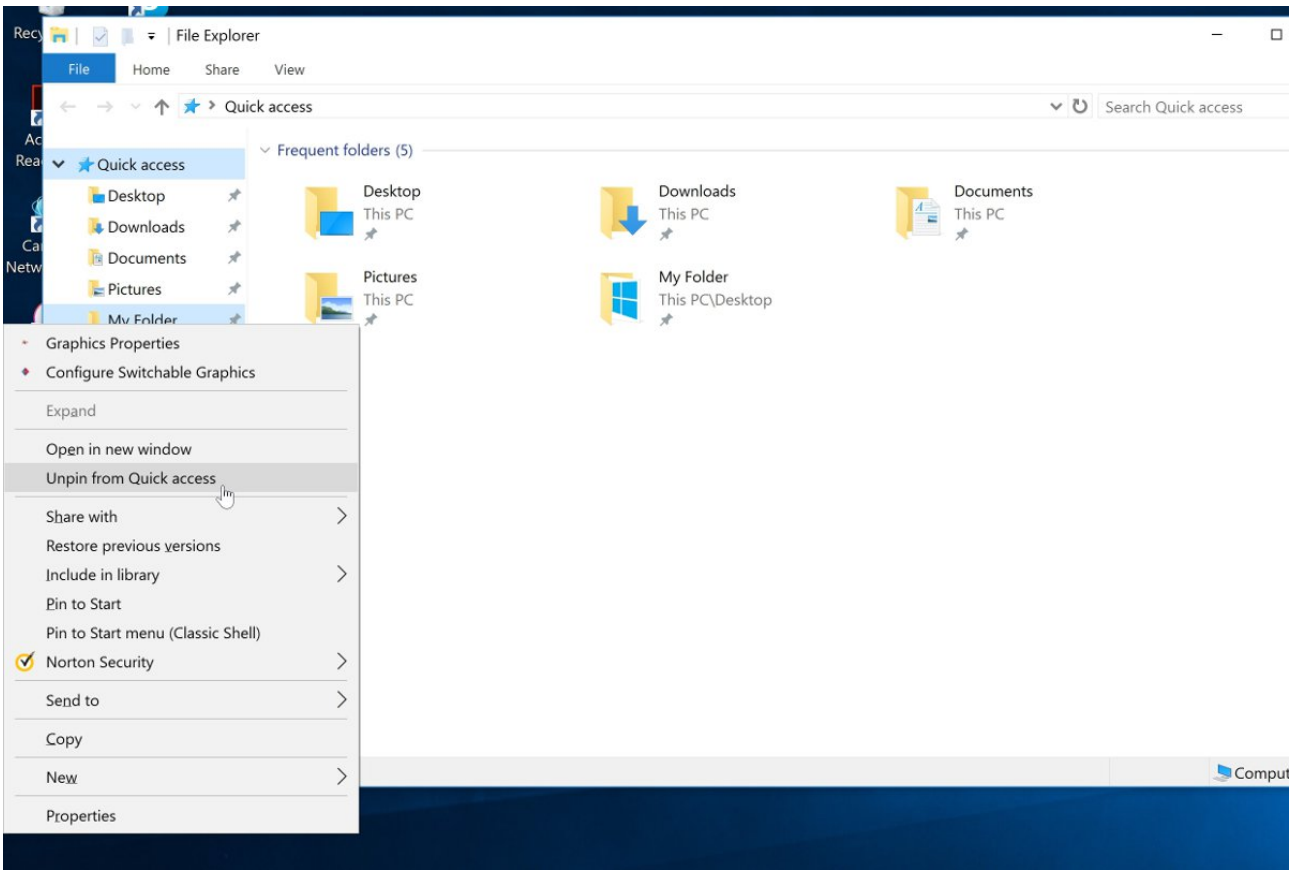
To perform this useful action, first navigate to the folder you'd like to put onto the sidebar and right-click it. On the menu that pops up, click "Pin to Quick access".



It will now appear on the side bar when Explorer is open, allowing you to click it at any time to visit it.



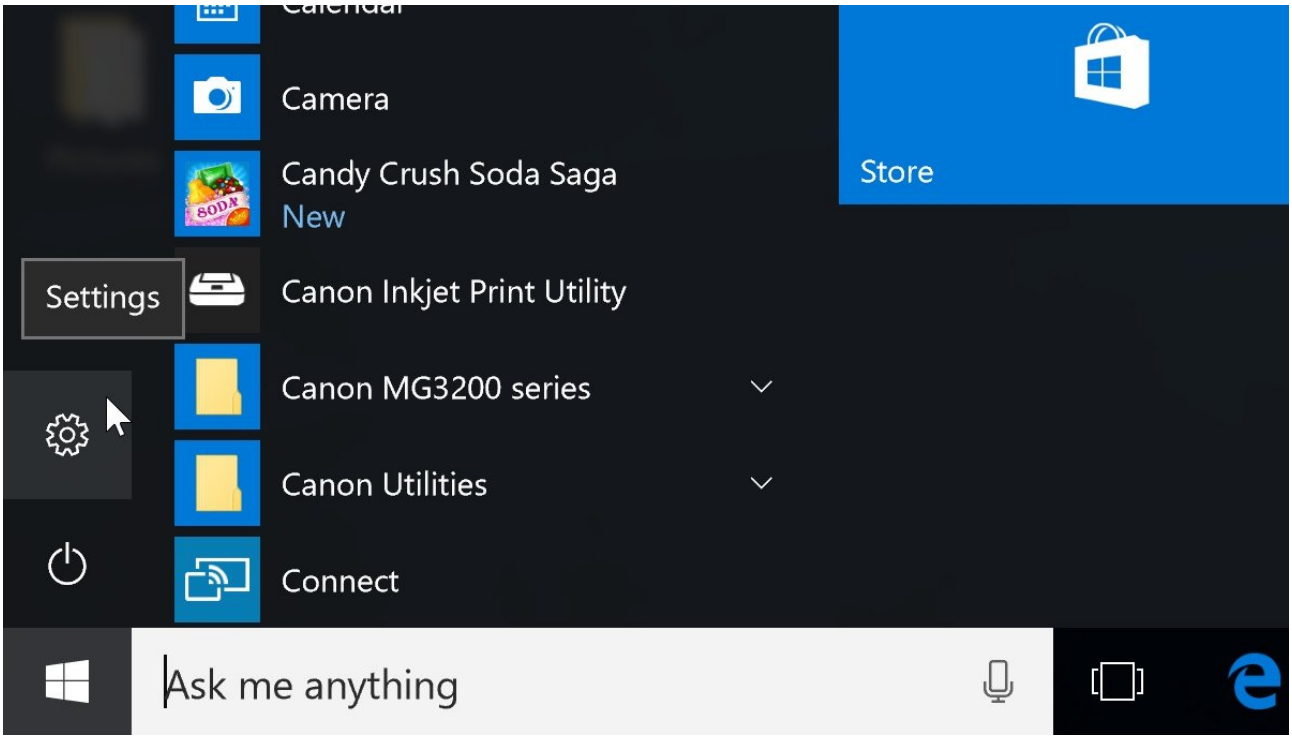
If you want to remove folders from this bar, right click it in the sidebar and click “Unpin from Quick access”.



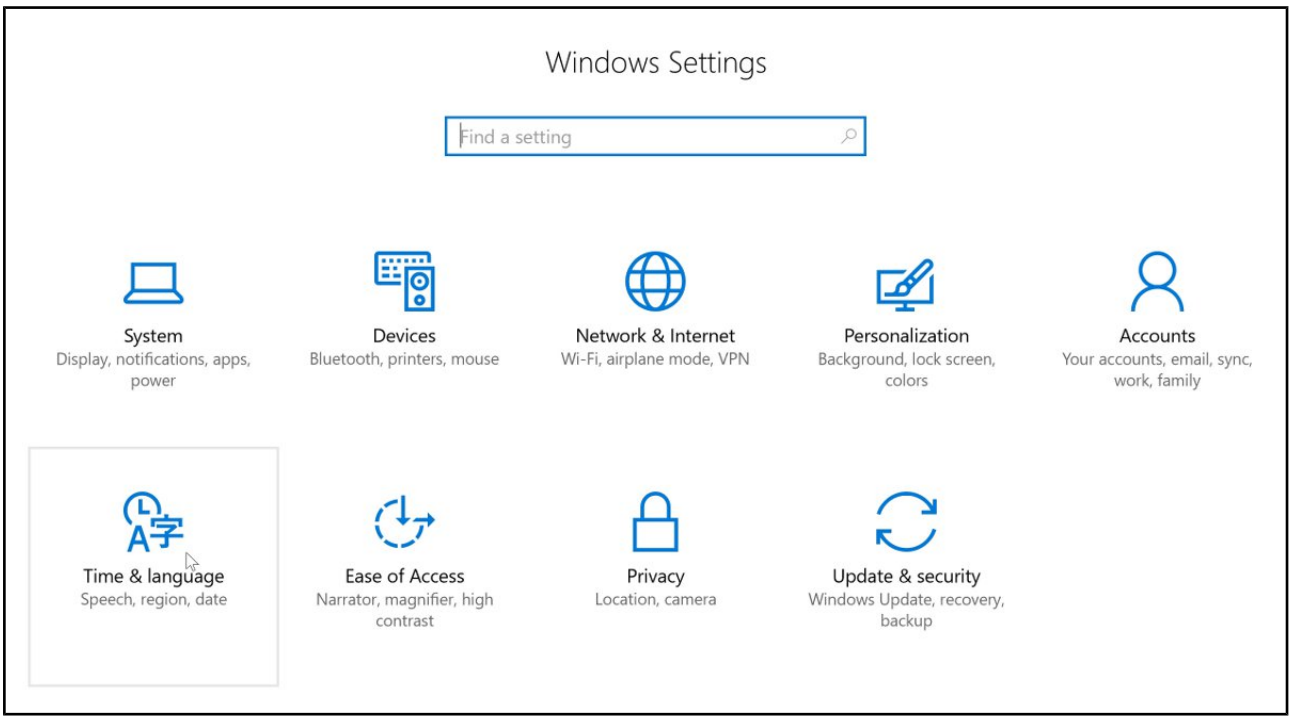
Change System Language

If you want your computer to use a different language by default, you can tell Windows 10 to change the language it uses by default to better suit your needs. The system will then use the language you pick for everything, from system messages to menus.

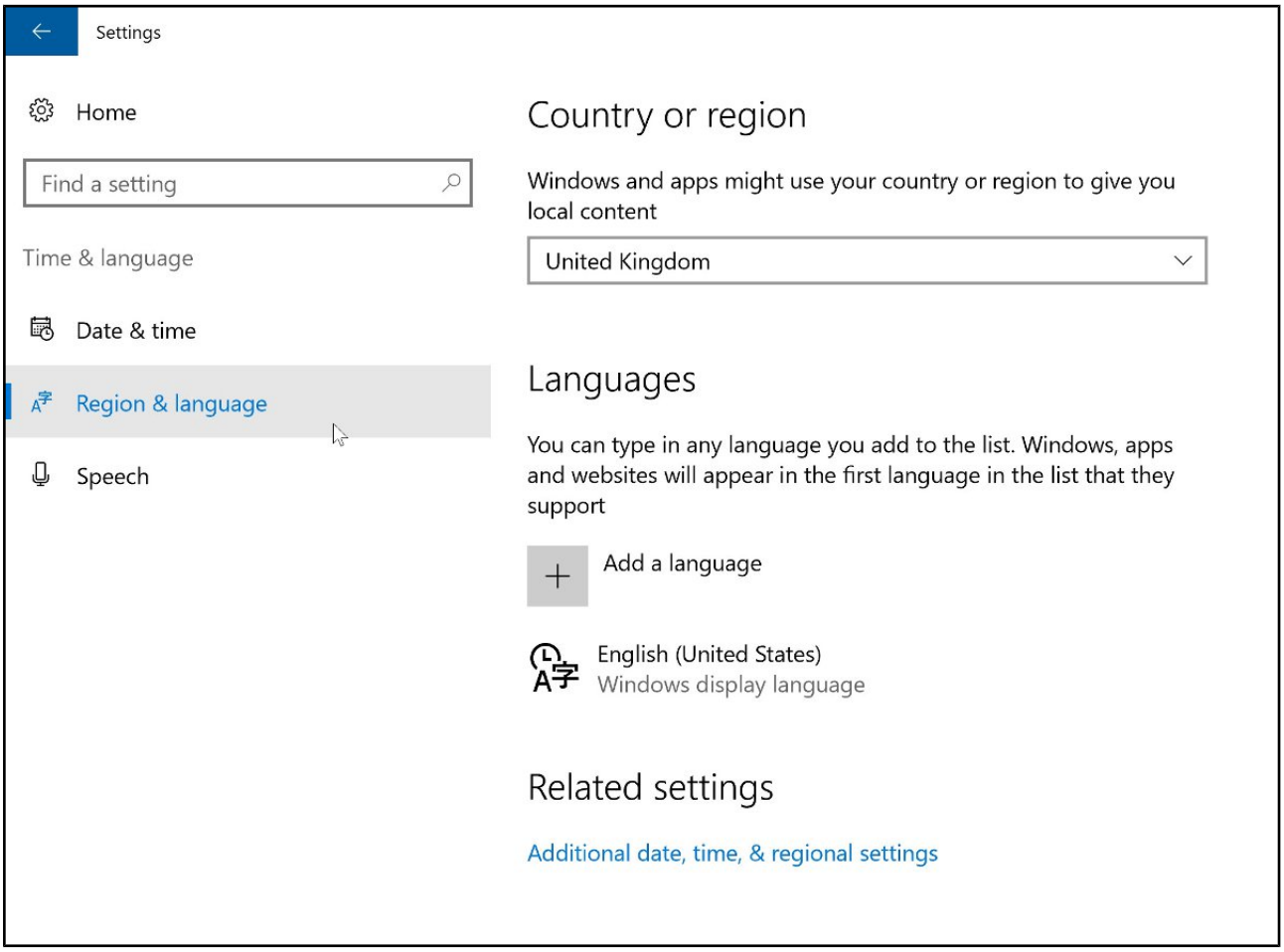
If you want to change the language, first click the Start button, then the Settings cog on the left.



Click Time & Language.



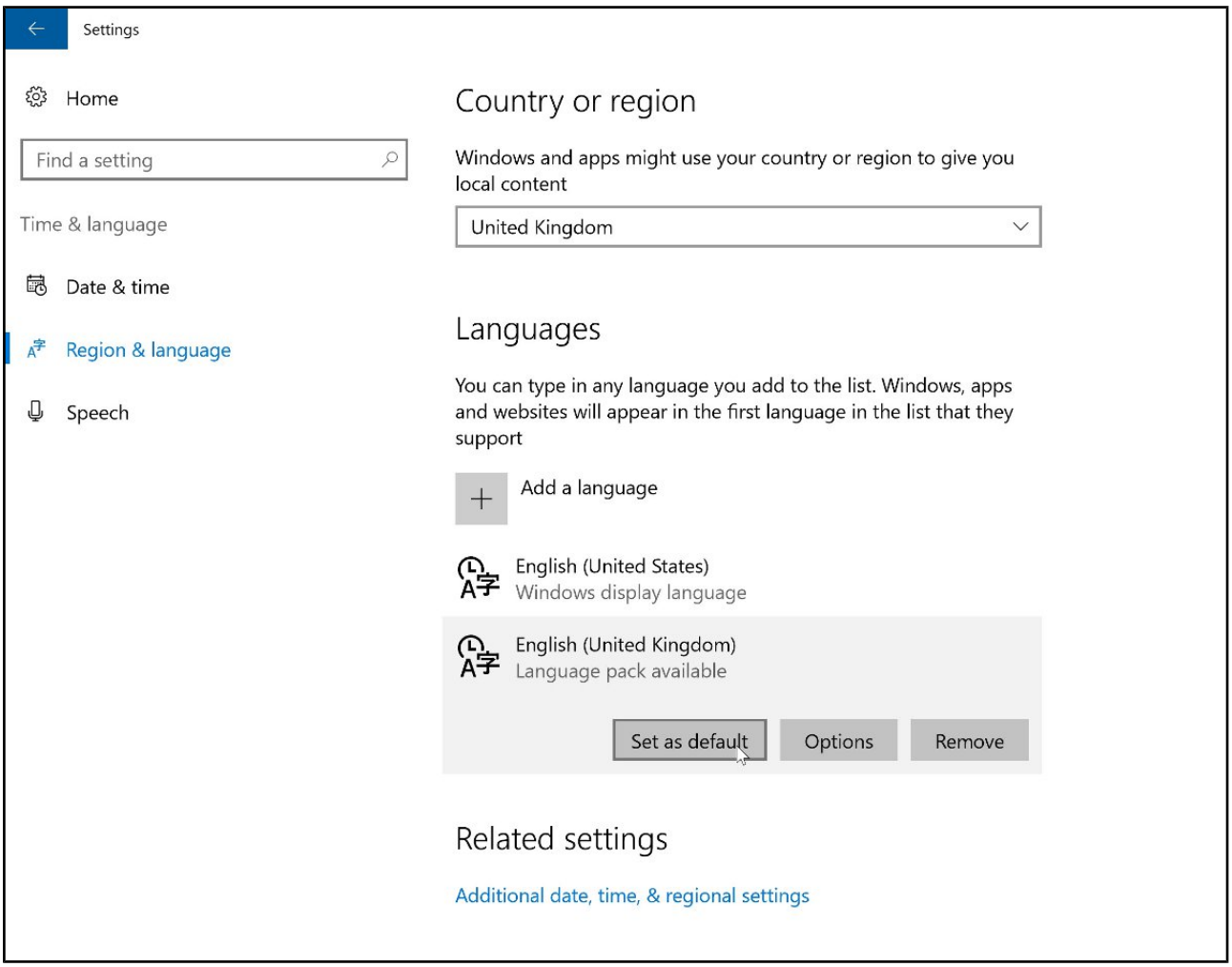
Click Region & Language.



You'll see all the language you can set the computer to. If you can't see your language

listed, click the “Add a language” button to add it. This may require a download.

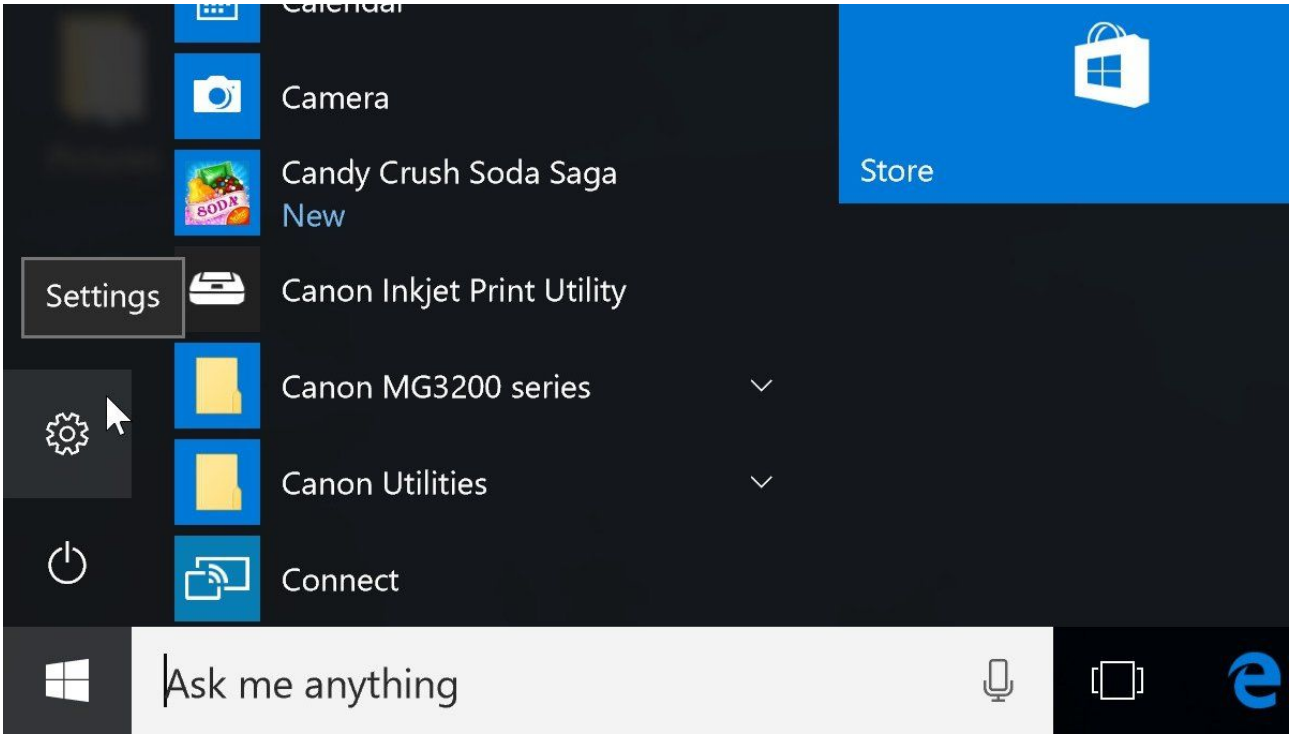
Once done, click “Set as default”.


Settings
Home
Find a setting
Time & language
Date & time
Region & language
Speech
Country or region
Windows and apps might use your country or region to give you local content
United Kingdom
Languages
You can type in any language you add to the list. Windows, apps and websites will appear in the first language in the list that they support
Add a language
English (United States)
Windows display language
English (United Kingdom)
Language pack available
Set as default
Options
Remove
Related settings
Additional date, time, & regional settings

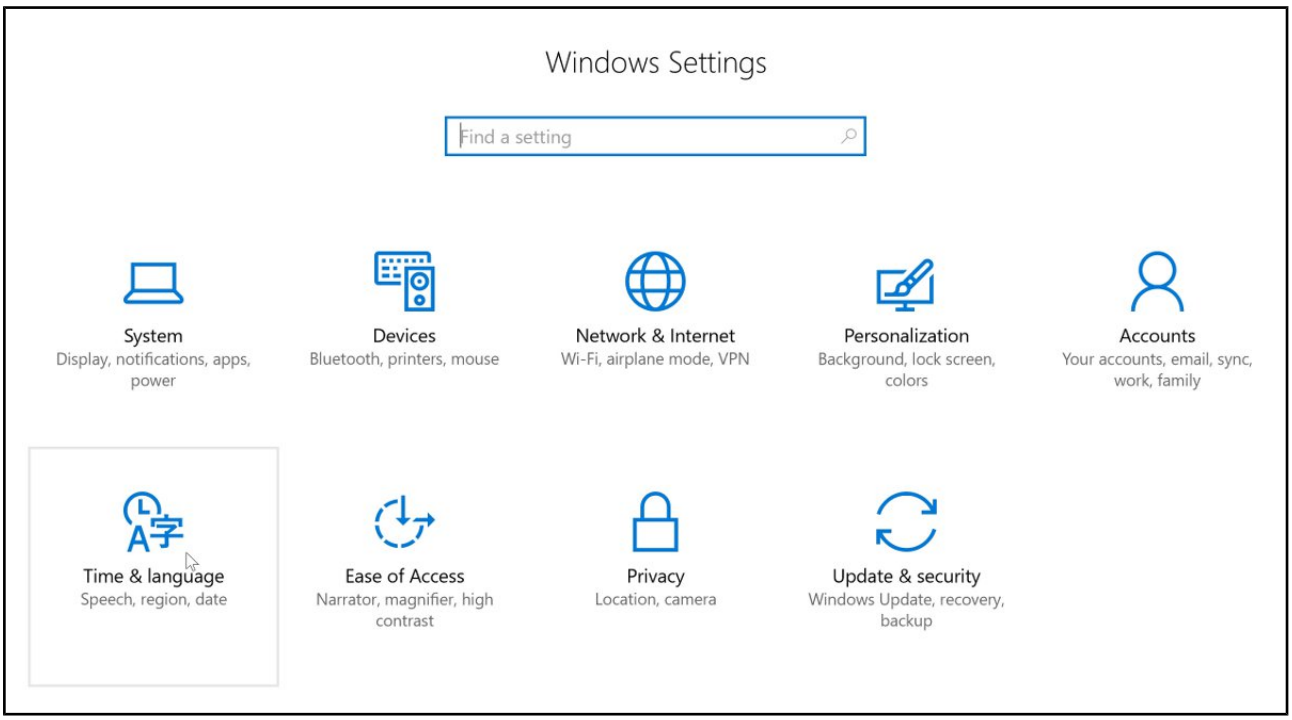
Change keyboard language

This allows you to change the input from your typing, even if you don't own a keyboard with those specific inputs. It would be trickier to type with an actual keyboard of that language, given all the keys will type different things than what's shown on each key. However, it's still very useful if you want to type in different languages and don't mind the mild confusion.

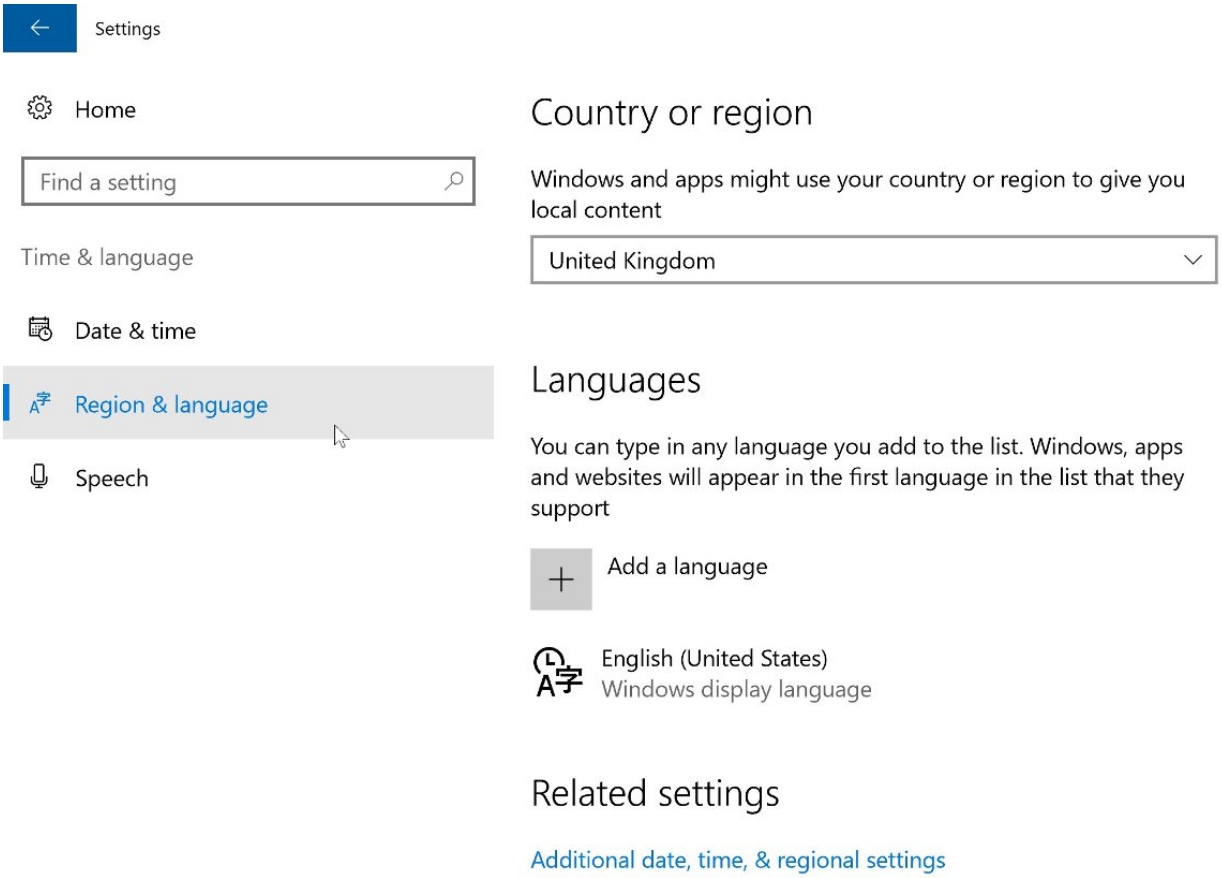
To do this, click the Start button, then the Settings cog on the left.



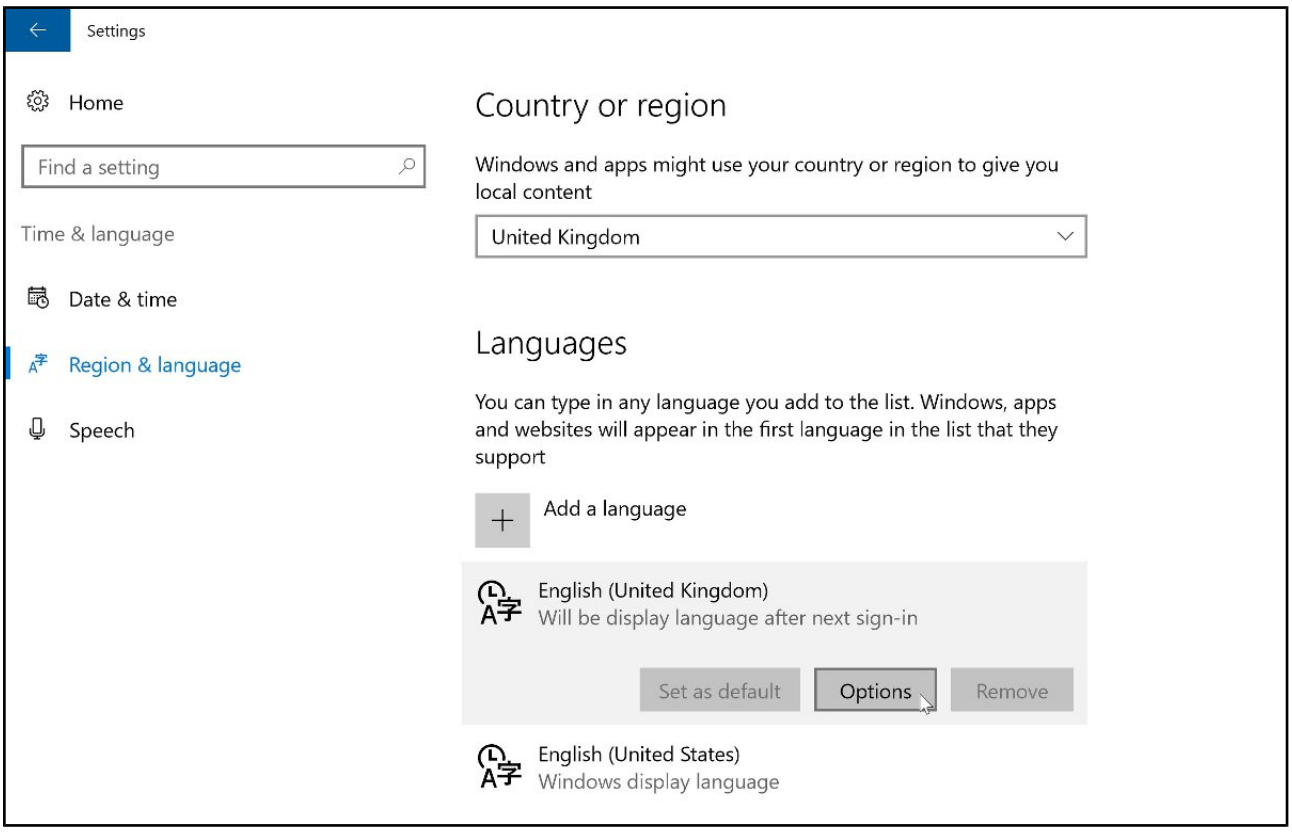
Click Time & Language.



After that click Region & Language.

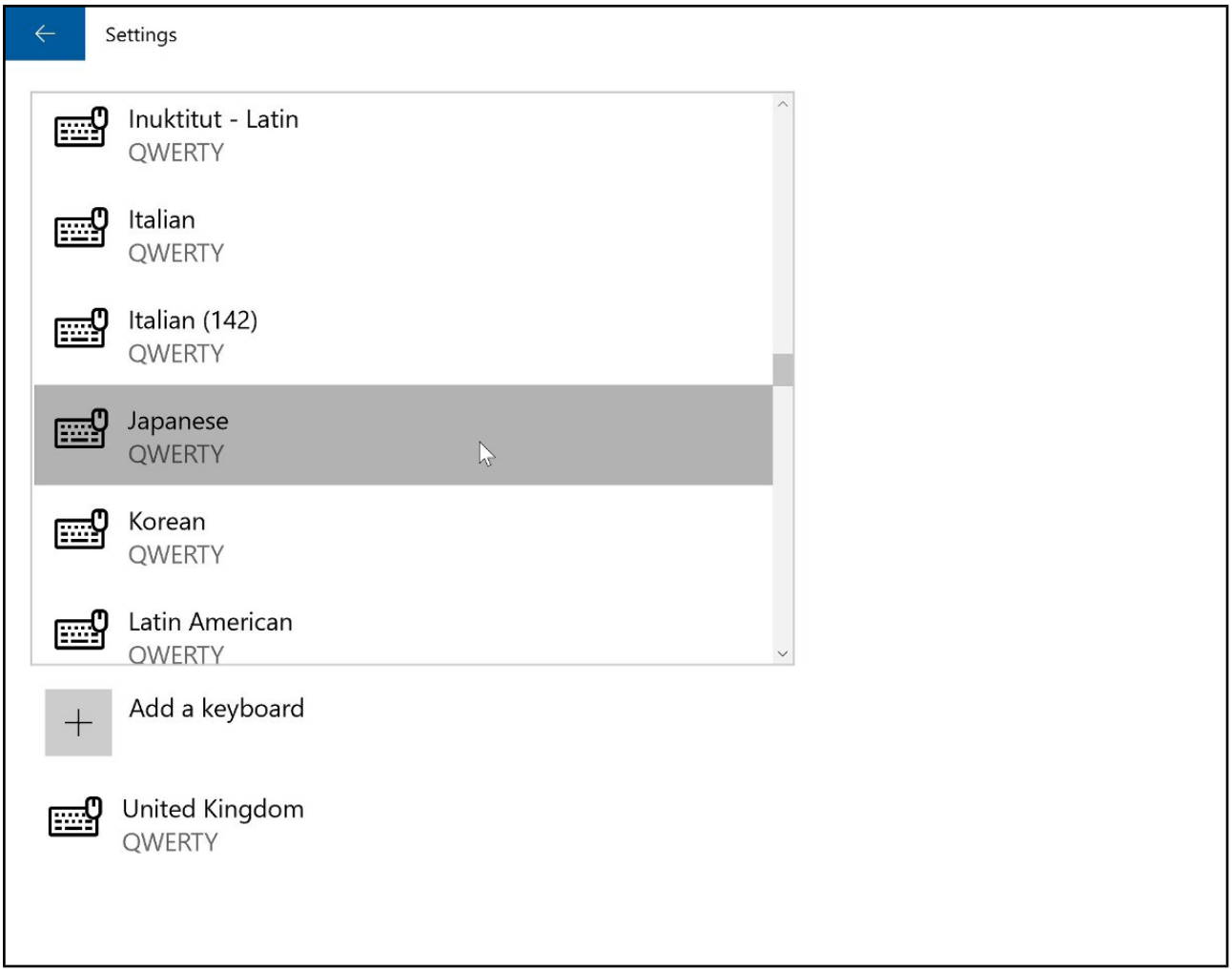


Select the language you're currently using on the right, then select Options.



Click the button that says “Add a keyboard”.

Select the keyboard layout you want to add from the list.

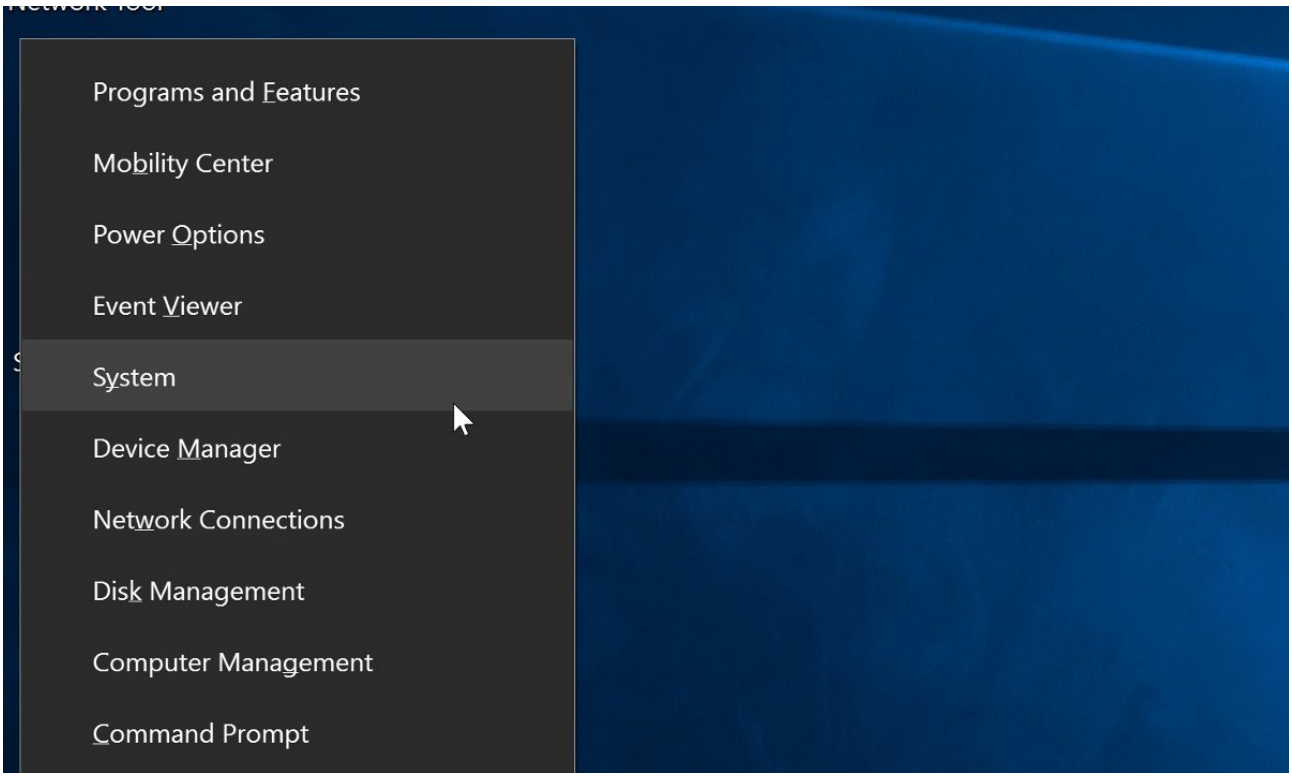


Once a keyboard has been added, you can change your keyboard layout by holding down the Windows key and pressing the Spacebar. This will bring up the keyboard selection window. You can keep pressing the Spacebar to change the keyboard selection, then release the Windows key once you've selected the keyboard you want.

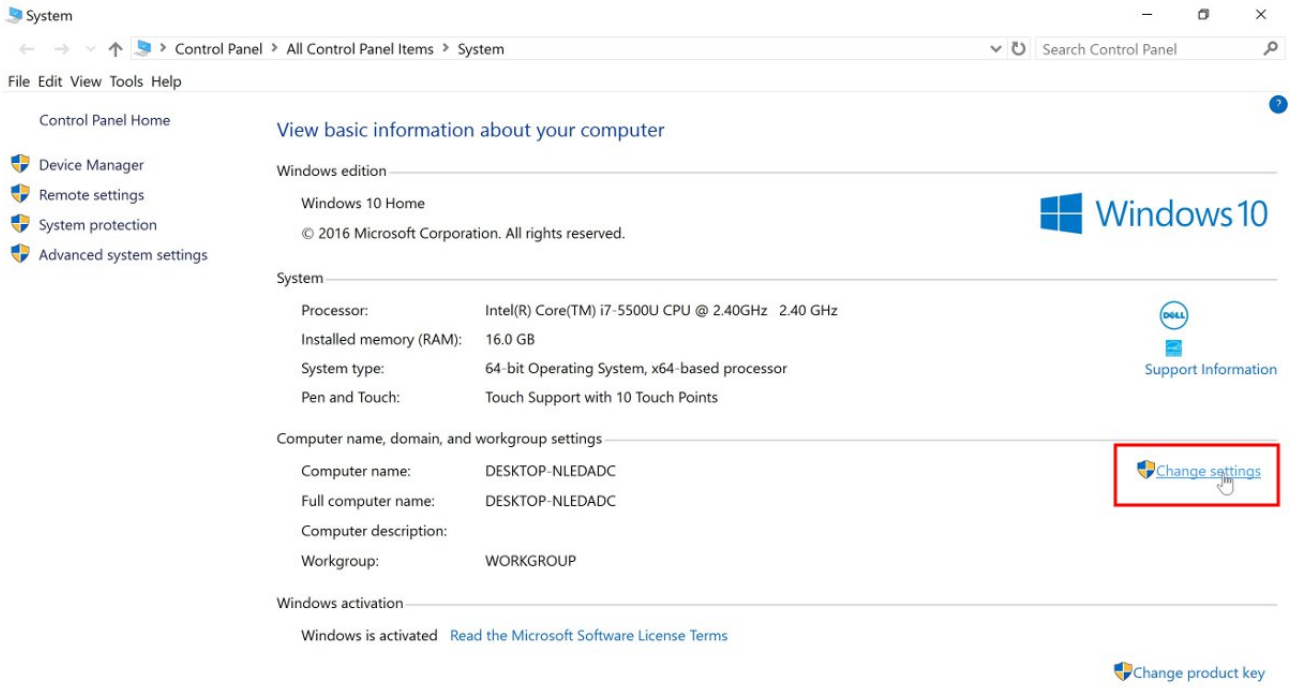
Change Computer Name

If you want, you can change the name of your computer so that it displays a more identifiable name on networks. Usually computers come with quite generic names, so calling your computer something like “Kitchen PC” or “John’s Laptop” can help distinguish computers from one another on the network. Some networking devices, such as routers, may even log connections using the computer name, making it easier to identify who is who.

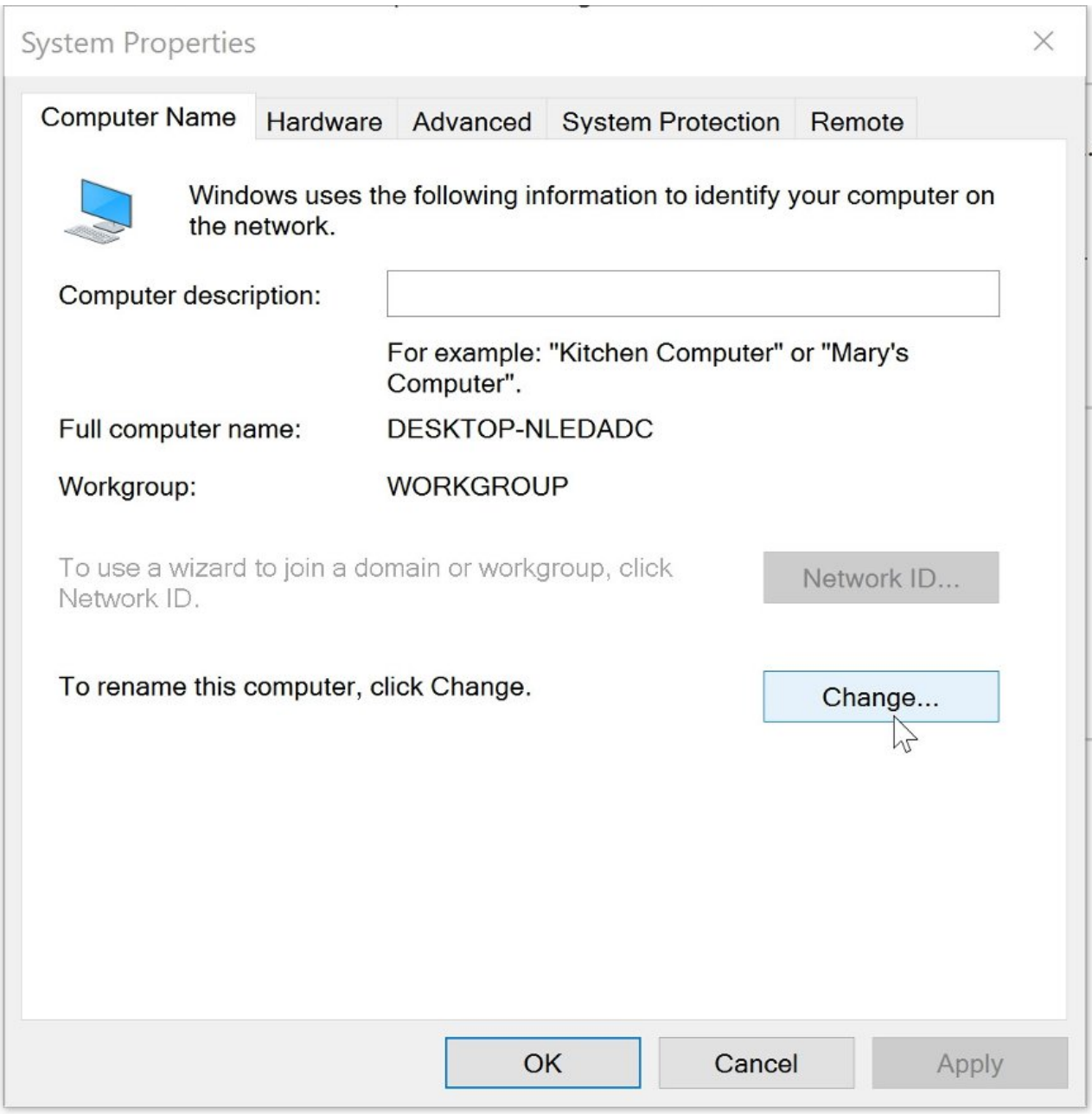
To set your computer’s name, right-click the Start button and click System.



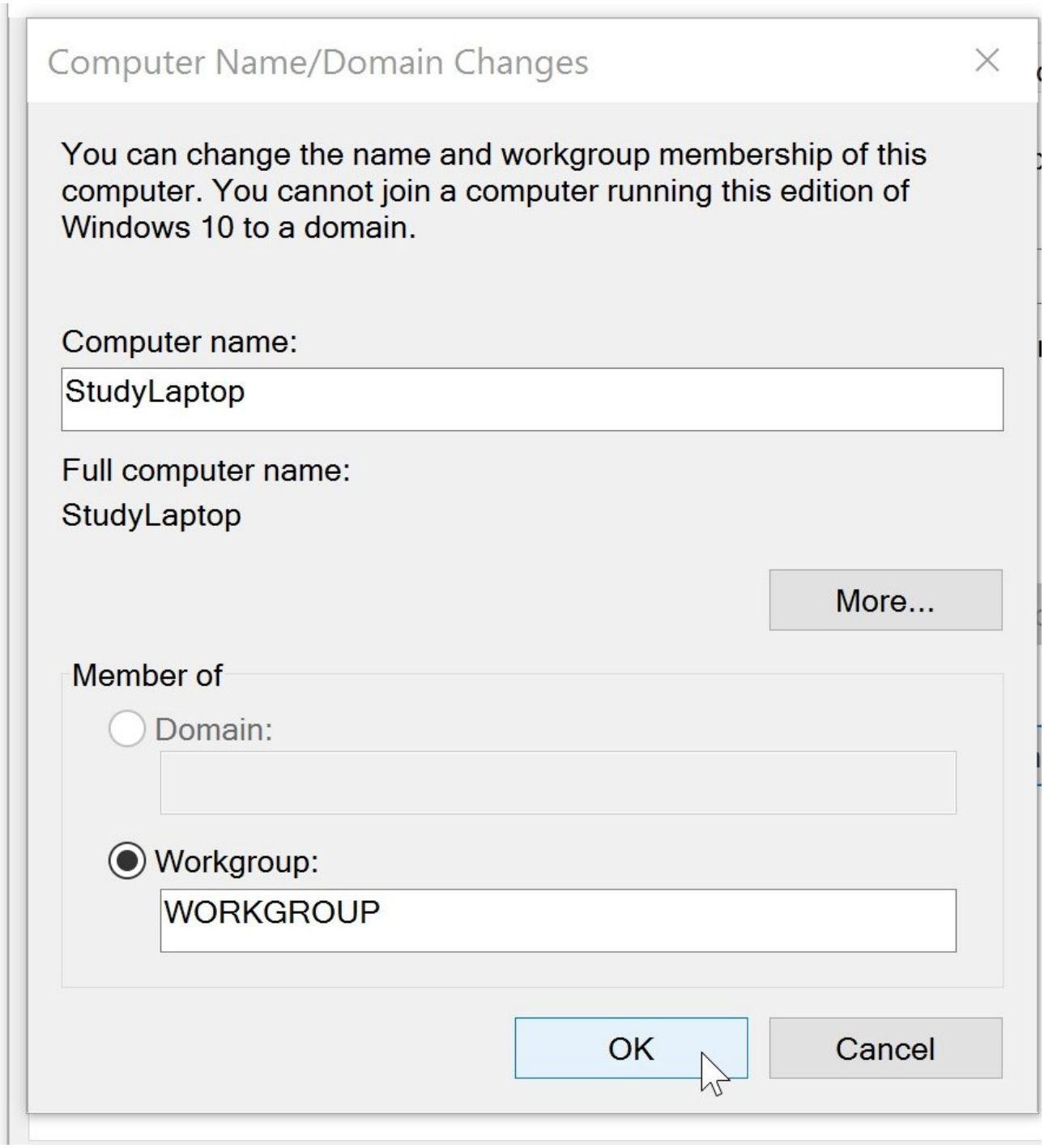
You’ll see a window containing some complicated system details. Don’t worry about these; find and click “Change settings” on the far right.



A new window will appear with the Computer Name tab already selected. All you have to do here is click the Change button.



Enter the name you'd like to give to your computer, then click OK. Make sure it doesn't contain special symbols or spaces, as Windows won't accept the name otherwise

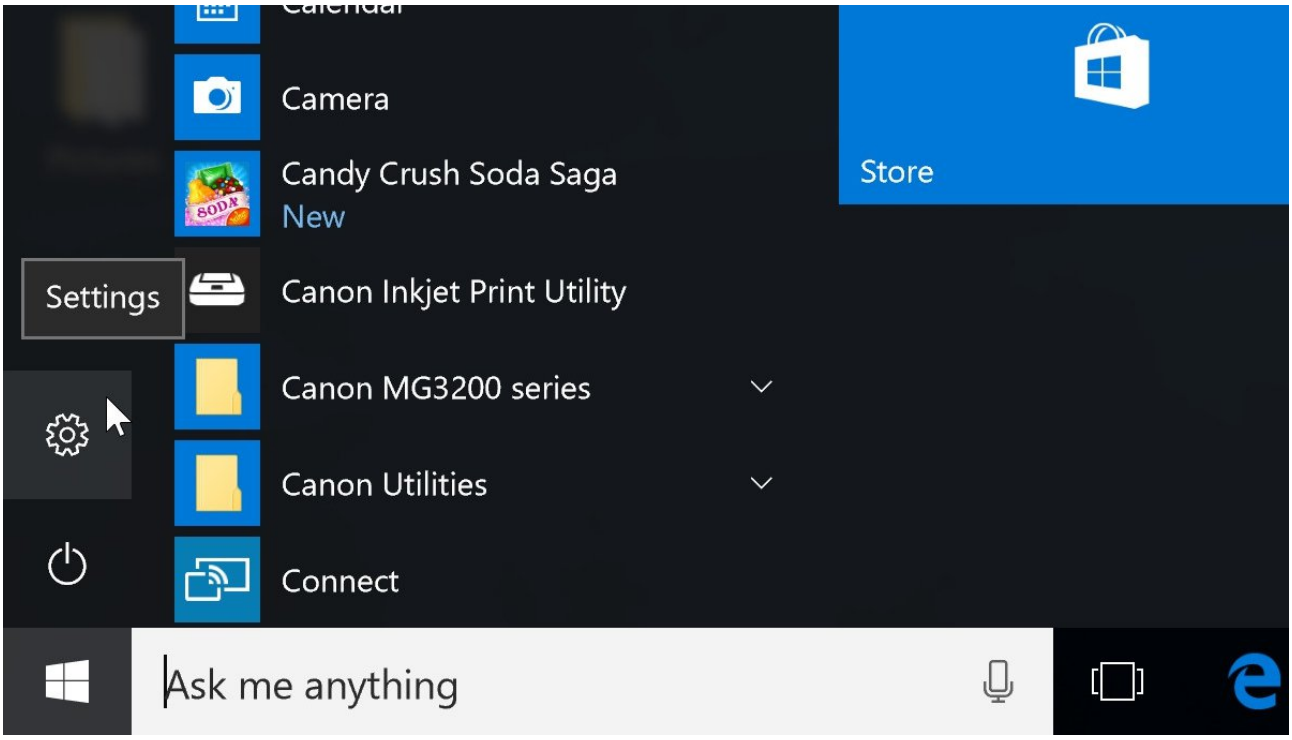

Computer Name/Domain Changes
You can change the name and workgroup membership of this computer. You cannot join a computer running this edition of Windows 10 to a domain.
Computer name:
StudyLaptop
Full computer name:
StudyLaptop
More...
Member of
Domain:
Workgroup:
WORKGROUP
OK
Cancel

Chapter 10: Privacy

Accessing the Privacy Settings

All of the following instructions require opening the Privacy window to modify settings. In order to access this window, follow these instructions.

First, click Start, then the Settings cog on the left.



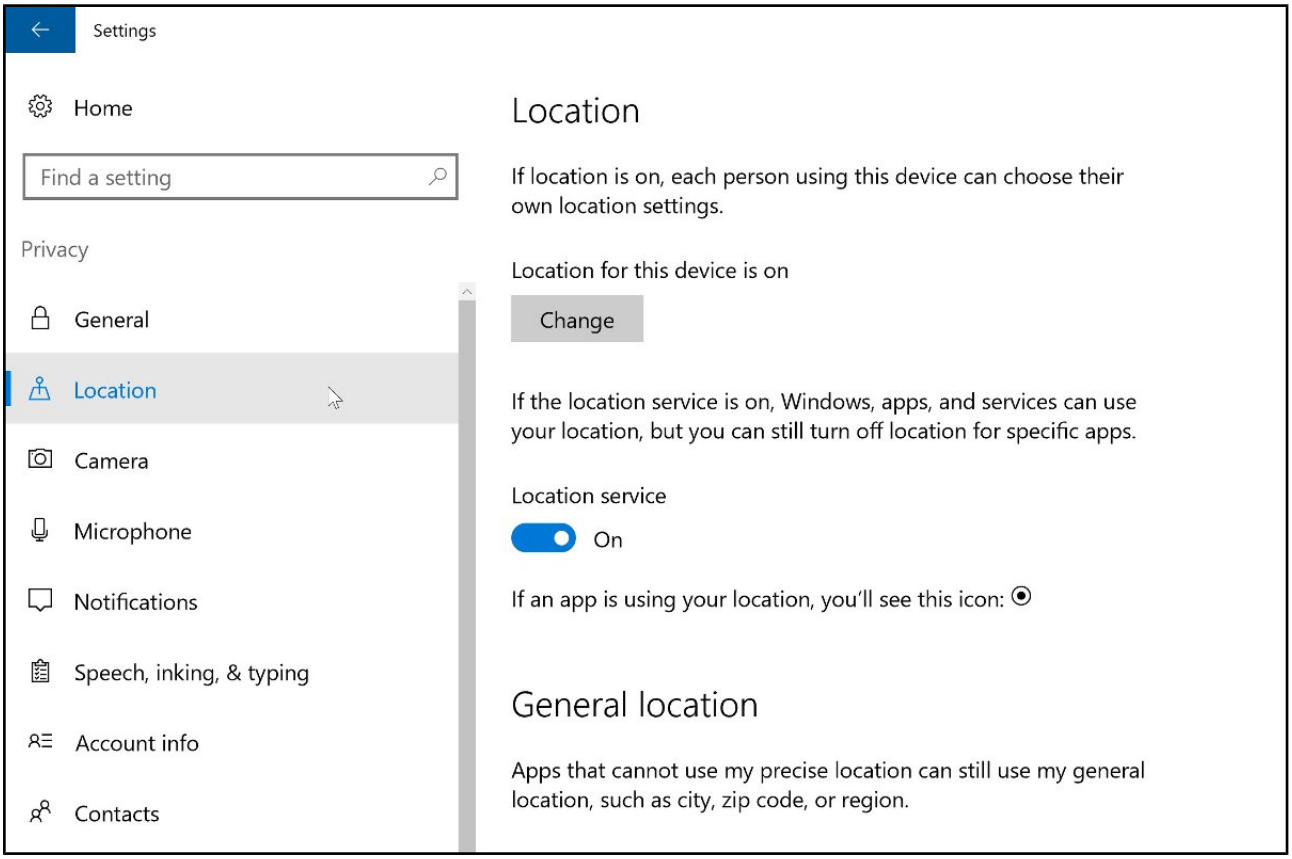
Click on the Privacy category.

This will bring up the Privacy settings that you'll need for the following chapters.

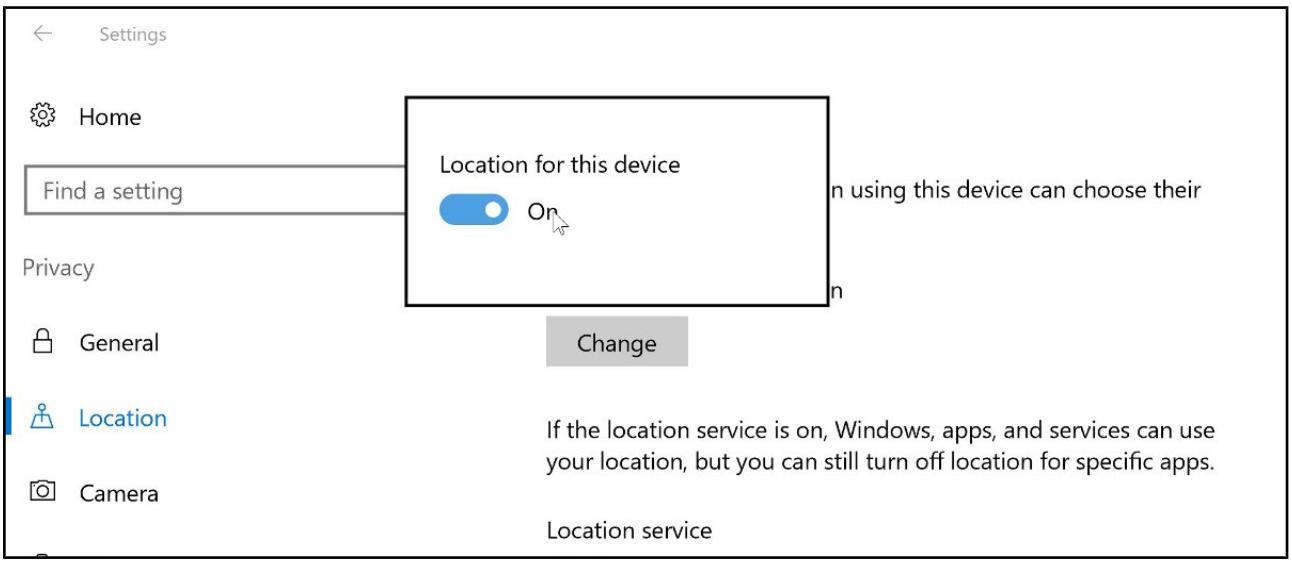
Allow/Forbid Location Services

When apps use your computer, sometimes they want to know your location. This may be because they want to place you on a map or know your general location so they can give you information on your local area. Some people find these services very useful, but others don't like the thought of their computer transmitting their location to apps.

If you want to turn this on or off, follow the steps dictated in Chapter 10.1. When in the Privacy settings window, click Location.



You can click this Change button to bring up an option. This is the general switch for allowing your computer to transmit your location details to apps. If you want apps to be able to use your location to further enhance your services, set it to On. If you prefer to keep your location hidden from apps so they can't discover your location, set it to Off.

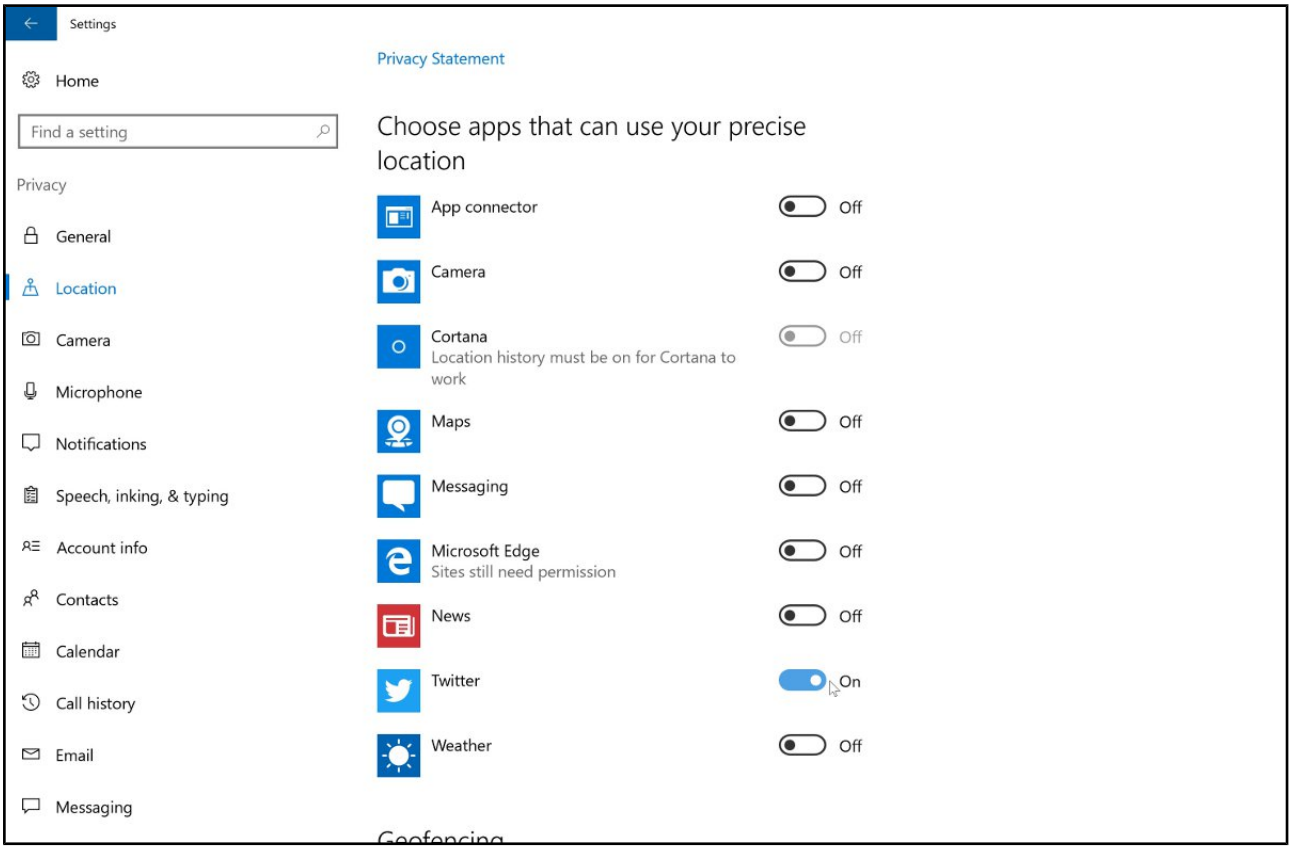

Settings
Home
Find a setting
Privacy
General
Location
Camera
Location for this device
On
n using this device can choose their
n
Change
If the location service is on, Windows, apps, and services can use your location, but you can still turn off location for specific apps.
Location service

Allow/Forbid Specific Apps from Knowing Your Location

The above chapter discussed how to turn all location services off so that no apps can learn where you are. However, if you want only some apps to stop learning your location, you can also tell Windows 10 to deny them specifically from your location. This allows you to have control over what apps get to know where you are, so you can allow trusted apps and deny apps you may be hesitant to give location data to.

To do this, access the general Privacy options as described in Chapter 10.1. On this window ,click the Location category.

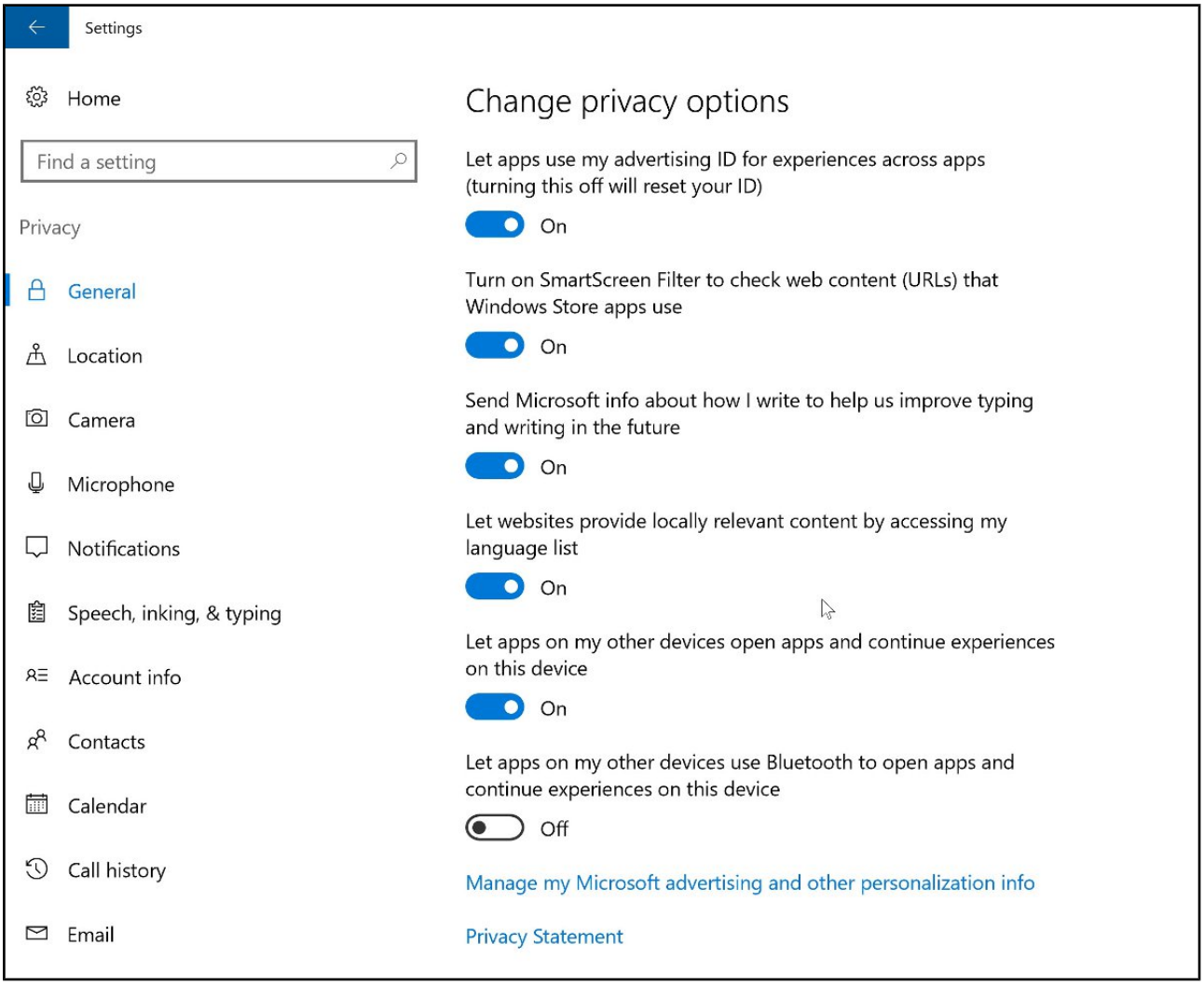
Scroll down on this new window. You'll see a list of apps, each with their own individual switch. These switches control whether the app is able to use your location information in their service. If there's an app you particularly don't want to access your location information, simply change the switch so that it's off. It will no longer learn your location.



Set General Privacy Options

Windows 10 comes with some settings you can toggle that relate to your privacy. If you're especially worried about how your data is being used by your computer and the apps installed on it, it's worth having a look at the settings to ensure everything is okay.

To do this, first access the Privacy settings as stated in Chapter 10.1. Once this is done, make sure that you're on the General category on the left. If you're not, click General to go there.



You'll see a few options at the top of this window. They're a little confusing as to what each one does, so let's explore each one in turn.

- **Let apps use my advertising ID for experiences across apps**: This will control Windows telling apps what kind of ads you'd like to see. An advertising ID is a general idea Windows gets of you and your habits so it can show you advertisements tailored to your tastes.
- **Turn on SmartScreen Filter to check web content (URLs) that Windows Store**

apps use: When you use apps on the Windows Store, the SmartScreen Filter built into Windows will check if the URL is malicious or not. It does this by sending the URL you're trying to access to Microsoft for checking. If you don't want this to happen, turn this off. **Be warned**, though; this removes a layer of protection from harmful URLs in Windows Store apps.

- **Send Microsoft info about how I write to help us improve typing and writing in the future**: This means that Microsoft will learn about how you type so that it can better improve its services such as autocomplete. If this makes you feel uneasy, turn it off.
- **Let websites provide locally relevant content by accessing my language list**: This allows websites you visit to check what language you've set your computer to (see Chapter 9.3 about changing this). This means that websites will be able to tailor its content and ads toward your language and country preferences.

Chapter 11: Getting the Creator's Update

Hopefully by the time you read this, your computer has already updated itself to the Creator's Update. The Creator's Update is a free update given out by Microsoft to add additional features to their operating system. You will notice, or may have already noticed, that a few features in this guide are introduced as "from the Creator's Update." If you do not have this update, the features marked as such won't be on your system.

Thankfully, if you like the sound of these additional features, the Creator's Update is totally free to download. It's also available regardless of if you're using 32- or 64-bit Windows, or what edition you're using (Home, Business, Pro, etc.). Microsoft is doing its best to ensure everyone gets the update, including putting it up on Windows Update for people to download.

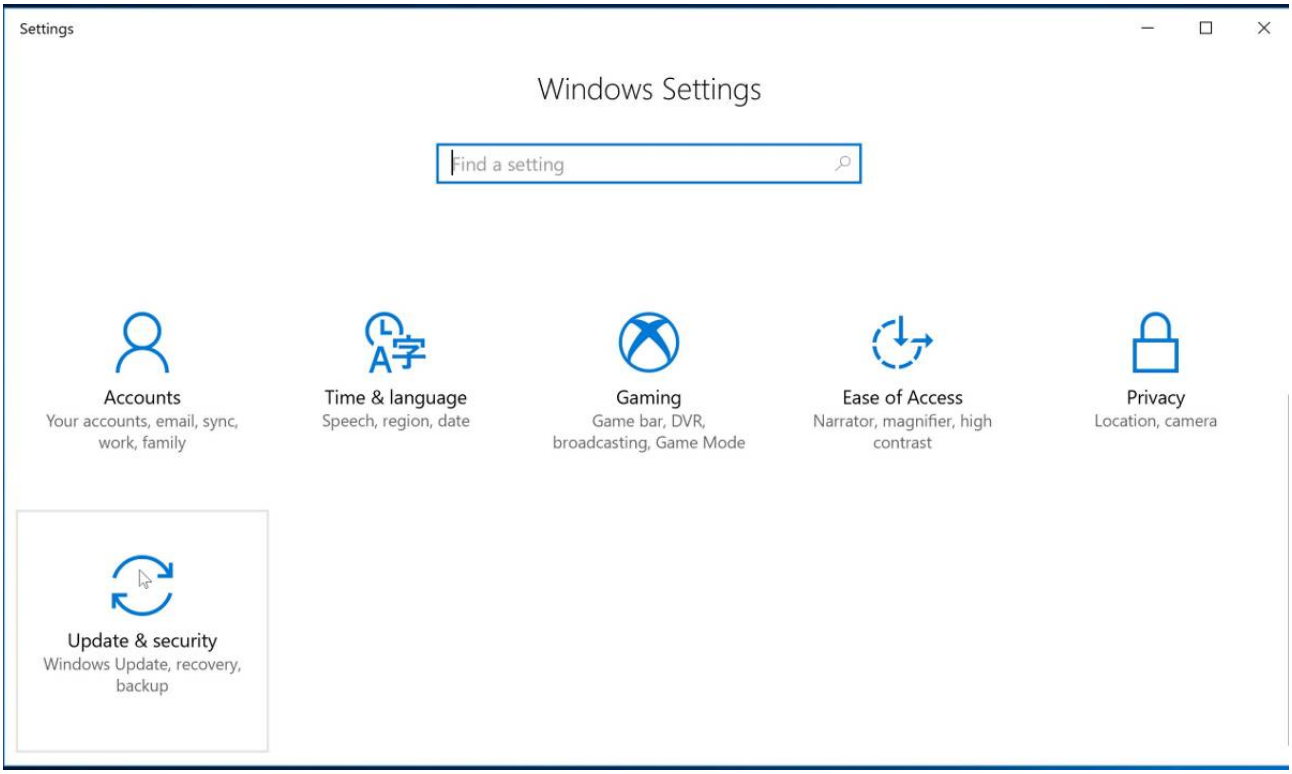
If you're missing the update and would like to install it, there are a few ways you can get it from Microsoft.

Through Windows Update

There's a chance that the update is already waiting for you to download, but you just need to tell your computer to check for Windows Updates first. You can do this by going to the Windows Update section of Windows 10 and telling it to download.

To do this, click the Start button, then the Settings cog.

Click Update and Security.



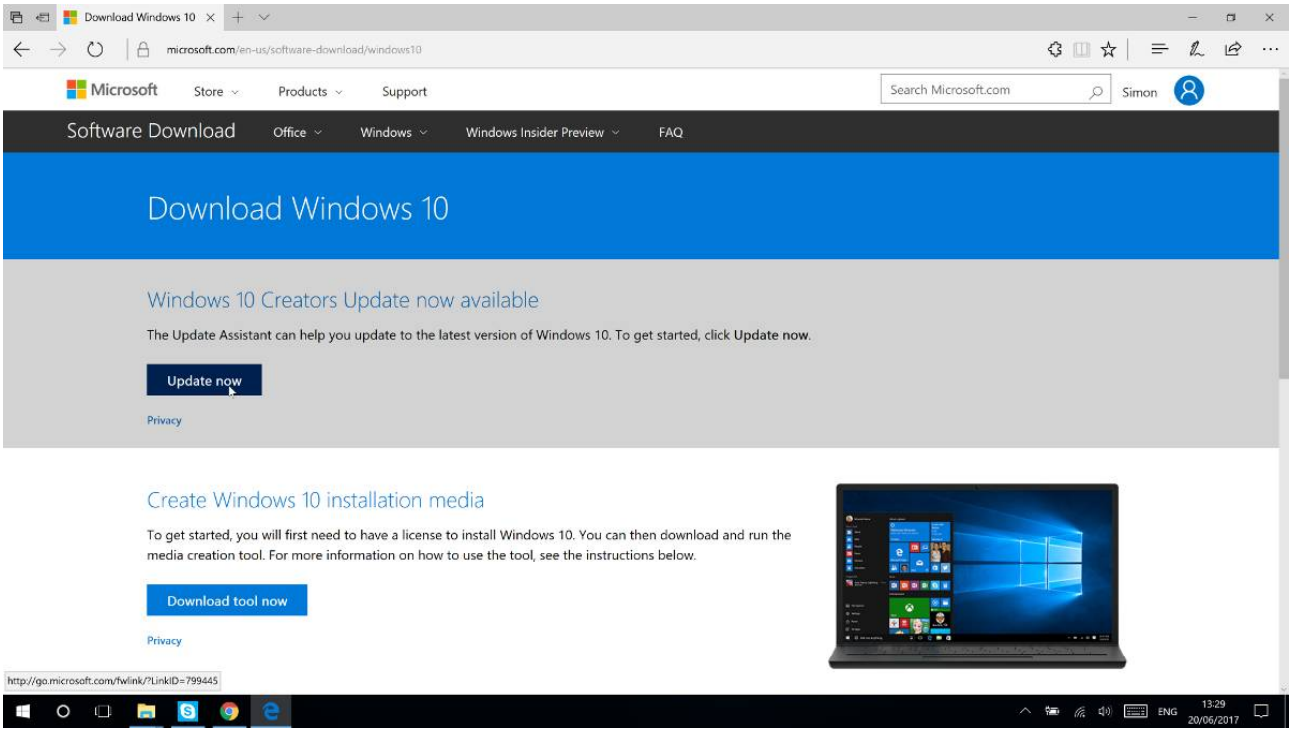
Under “Windows Update” click Check for Updates.

If your PC has located the Creator’s Update, it will allow you to download and install it automatically through Windows Update.

Manually Download the Update

Even if Windows Updates doesn’t pick up the Creator’s Update for you to download, you don’t have to admit defeat just yet. You can manually download the update from Microsoft’s website, thus circumventing the need to wait for Microsoft to give it to you.

To do this, visit this website: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/software-download/windows10. If you visit it on an operating system that’s not Windows 10, you’ll only see the option to make a media creation tool to perform fresh installations of Windows 10 with. However, if you’re using Windows 10, you’ll see an additional button at the top of the page announcing the Creator’s Update and an “Update Now” button.



If you click this, you'll automatically initiate a download for a file that will update your version of Windows 10 to the Creators Update. Run this file and go through the steps to get the update without having to wait for Windows to give it to you!

Chapter 12: Game Bar

New to Windows 10 in recent updates, the Game Bar is designed to help people create videos and media based on video games. Let's Plays, game streams, and mod creation are all big niches in this current age, and Microsoft is arming its users with the tools they need in order to hop into the world of gaming.

Previously, gamers had to download several third-party tools to perform different tasks: one for taking screenshots quicker and easier than the Print Screen command, one for recording gameplay, and so on. Microsoft aims to remove the dependency of using third-party software by making these features native to Windows itself, so users can start recording and broadcasting games the moment they fire up Windows for the first time. This is the goal of the Game Bar, which is a highly convenient tool for the modern gamer.

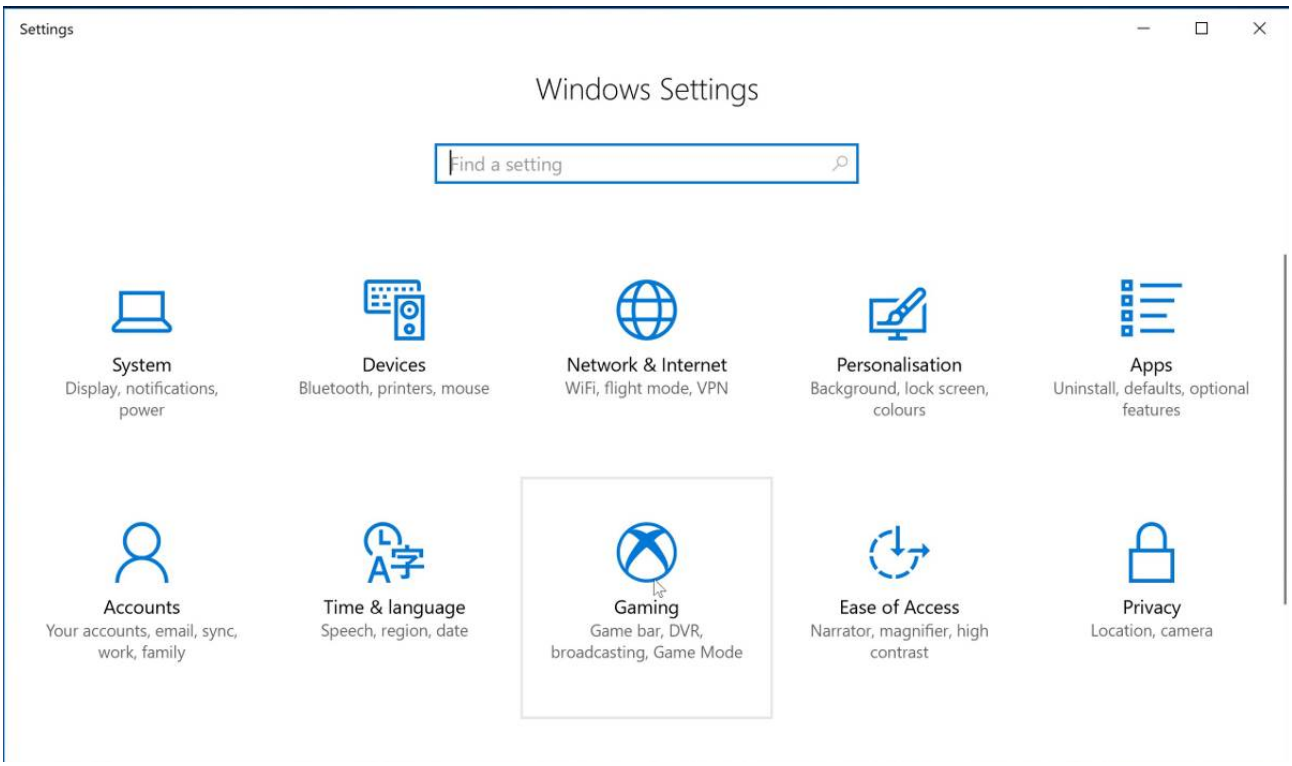
The Game Bar is a hub for different tools you can use to get the most of your games. It comes with a native screenshot and movie recording tool, so you can share moments and gameplay with your friends. It can even capture video retroactively, so you'll never miss another great play again.

Enabling Game Bar

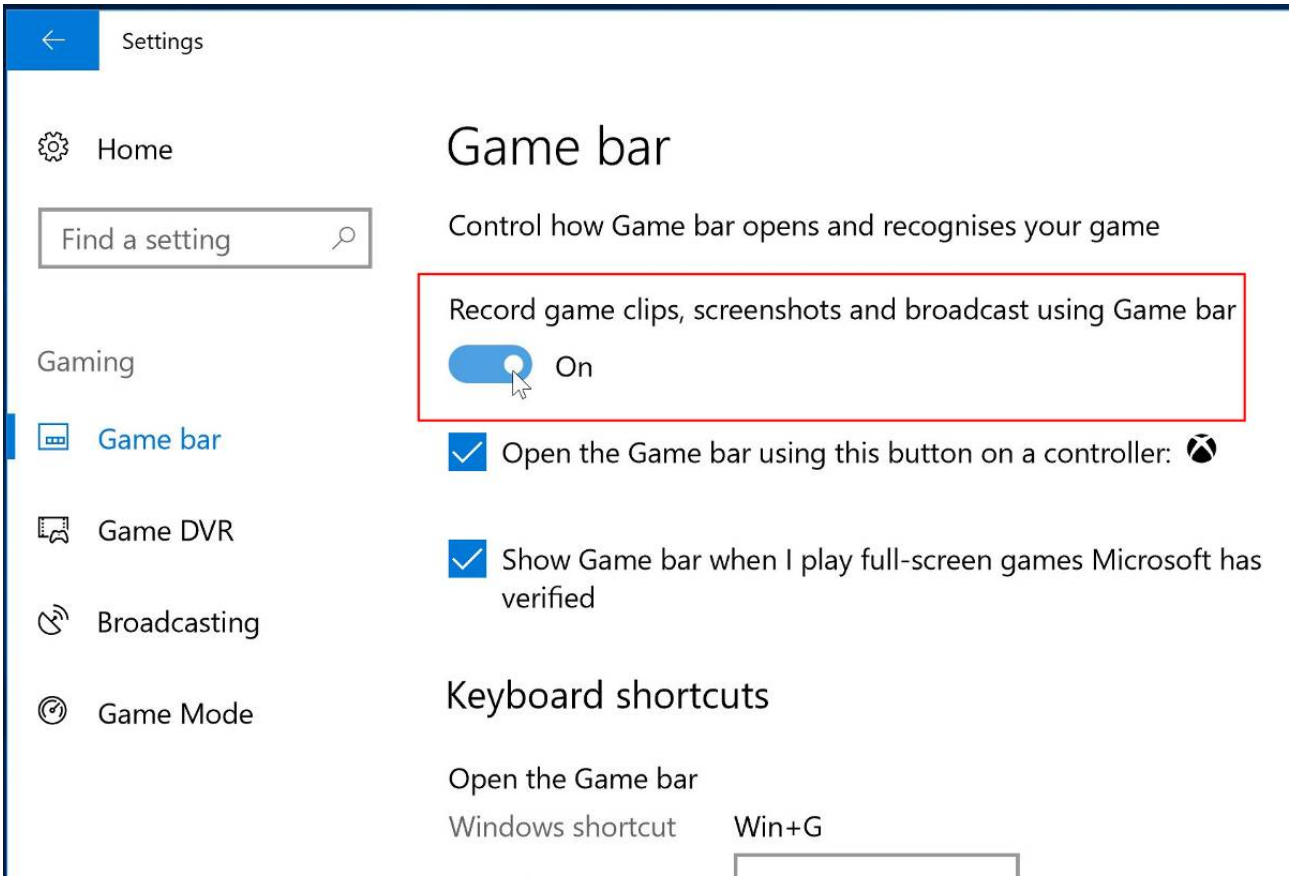
Before we get into what the Game Bar can do, we should make sure it's enabled first! To do this we're going to need to make use of the new "Gaming" settings that came with the Creator's Update.

To start, click the Start button, then the Settings cog.

Click Gaming.



On the left side click Game Bar. Find the option near the top, Record game clips, screenshots, and broadcast using Game Bar, and toggle this option on.



This will now allow you to use Game Bar in Windows 10. If you look near the bottom of this

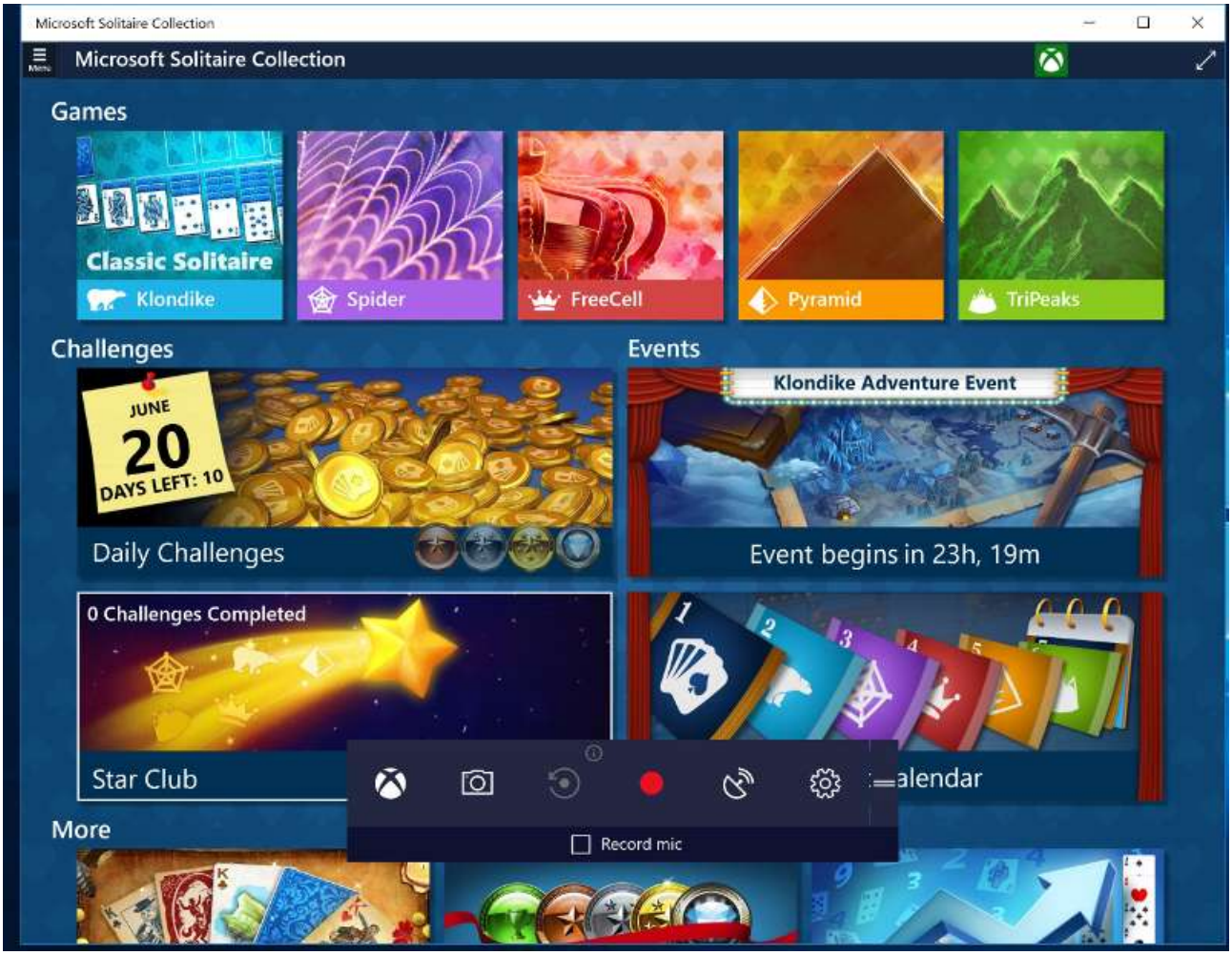
window, you'll see that there are various hotkeys already set up to support Game Bar. You'll see that to open Game Bar, you can do so by pressing the Windows Key + G.

You can change this and other hotkeys if you'd like, but for the sake of this guide, it'll be assumed all hotkeys are set to their default options, so be careful if you do!

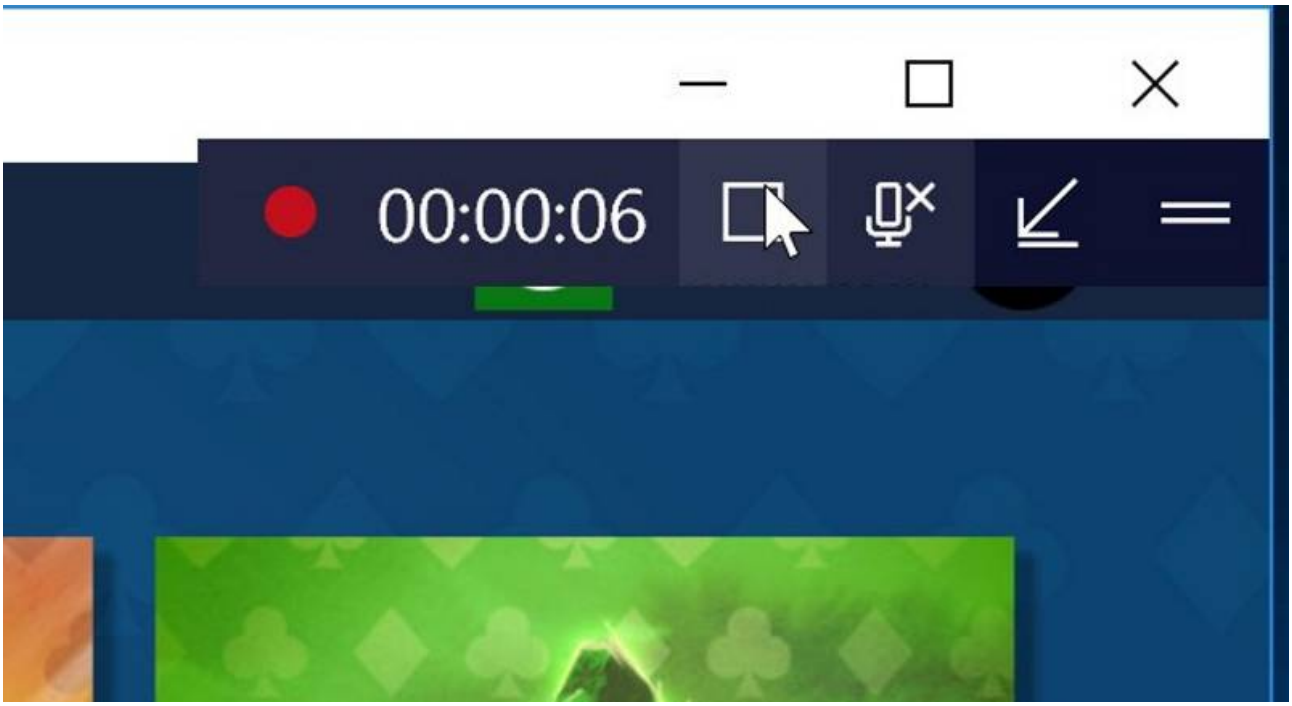
Recording with Game Bar

Using the Game Bar you can record footage of your gameplay whenever you need to. This saves the file in an .mp4 format which you can then upload directly to YouTube or import into a video editing suite to make additional tweaks and changes before publishing it to the Internet.

In order to start recording with Game Bar, first ensure that it's active. You can do this by booting up the game you want to record and then pressing the Game Bar hotkey (Win Key + G) on your keyboard. This should cause the Game Bar to come out of hiding. If it doesn't, the game you're running may not support the Game Bar. It may also be that you haven't enabled Game Bar yet, at which point you need to consult chapter 12.1 and ensure that it's enabled.



Once you're sure the Game Bar is up and running, begin playing the game until you come to the part you want to record. You can press Win + Alt + T to show the recording timer if you want to see how long you'll be recording for. Otherwise, press Win + Alt + R to start recording. You'll know it has started because a recording bar appears at the top right. This will have a button to stop the recording or mute/unmute your microphone and will also tell you how long you've been recording for.



Once done, press Win + Alt + R or the Stop button on the recording bar to stop recording again.

While Game Bar is active, you can record in-game events that have just occurred, even if you weren't actively recording the game. This comes in handy if you want to record key plays and moments in your games, but you don't want to record every single game you play.

Once you've performed a play that you want to record, pressing Win + Alt + G will activate "Record That" which records a chunk of your past playtime. You can then open the video file and see your play, even though you weren't actively recording at the time it occurred.

Whichever method you choose, you can access your saved video files by either opening the Xbox app or going to *C:\Users\[Your Username]\Videos\Captures*.

Taking Screenshots with Game Bar

If you don't want to record a video but still want to share what's on the screen, you can perform a screenshot instead. Screenshots are snapshots of a moment in a game, which is useful if you want to share a high score, character build, or latest in-game project with your friends.

To do this, first ensure Game Bar is enabled by pressing Win Key + G. If the Game Bar appears, you're ready to take screenshots within your game. Now, simply play the game to the point where you want to capture a moment. Then, press Win + Alt + Print Screen to take a screenshot via Game Bar.

Once you're done taking screenshots and want to share them, you can get to your image files by going to *C:\Users\[Your Username]\Videos\Captures*. Despite the fact you've captured an image, Game Bar still saves them alongside the videos that Game Bar has recorded. You can find all the screenshots you took in this location in a .png format ready to be shared with the world or edited in an image manipulation program for further tweaking.

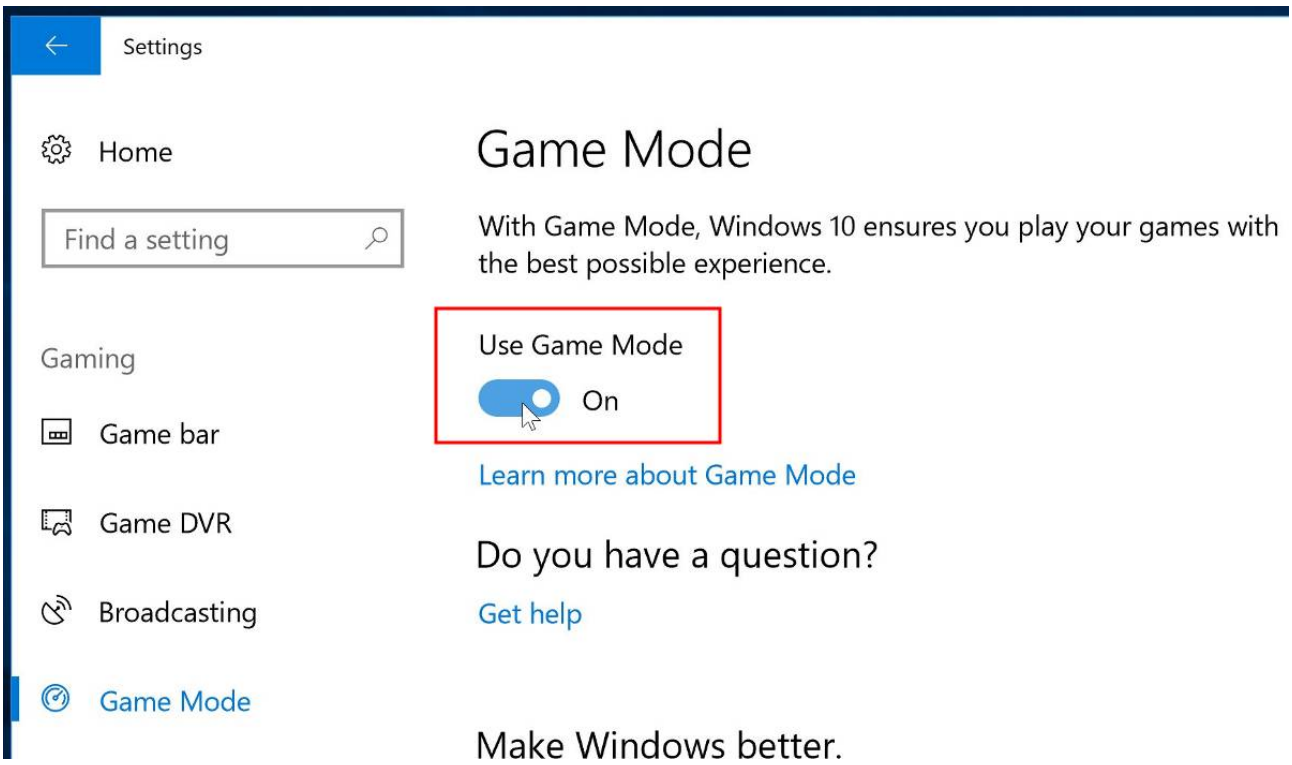
Using Game Mode

New with Windows 10 Creator's Update is the Game Mode. Game Mode aims to squeeze as much performance as it can out of your computer by stopping other processes and applications from hogging resources while you play a game. By doing this it frees up processing power which can then be used by the game in question.

Game Mode can allow games to render with better framerates, as well as cut down on loading times. If your computer struggles to keep a steady framerate with a game, it's worth giving Game Mode a try to see if it can fix your issues.

To activate Game Mode, first ensure that Game Bar is enabled. If you're not sure, follow the instructions in 12.1 to make sure. Then, click Start, followed by the Settings cog. Click Gaming.

On the left side of the window that appears, click Game Mode, then Use Game Mode on the right.



Click OK out of all windows. Boot the game you want to enable Game Mode in. See if you can enable Game Bar in said game by pressing Win Key + G. If you can, you'll be able to activate Game Mode. With Game Bar active, press the Settings button on the Game Bar.

Click Use Game Mode for this game.

This will activate Game Mode. If your current game is supported by Game Mode, it should bring your framerates up to a more manageable level. If it doesn't or it causes more problems that it solves, you can turn it off by repeating the instructions above.

Chapter 13: Night Light

Due to the fact that the light a monitor outputs tricks your brain into thinking it's still daylight, people using computers into the late hours of the night may find it’s difficult to sleep after signing off of the computer. This is because your mind is still in “daytime mode” after seeing the “false sunlight” and isn’t ready for sleeping yet. If you’ve ever used a program such as f.lux, you’ll know of software that dims the brightness of your monitor as night approaches to help avoid this problem.

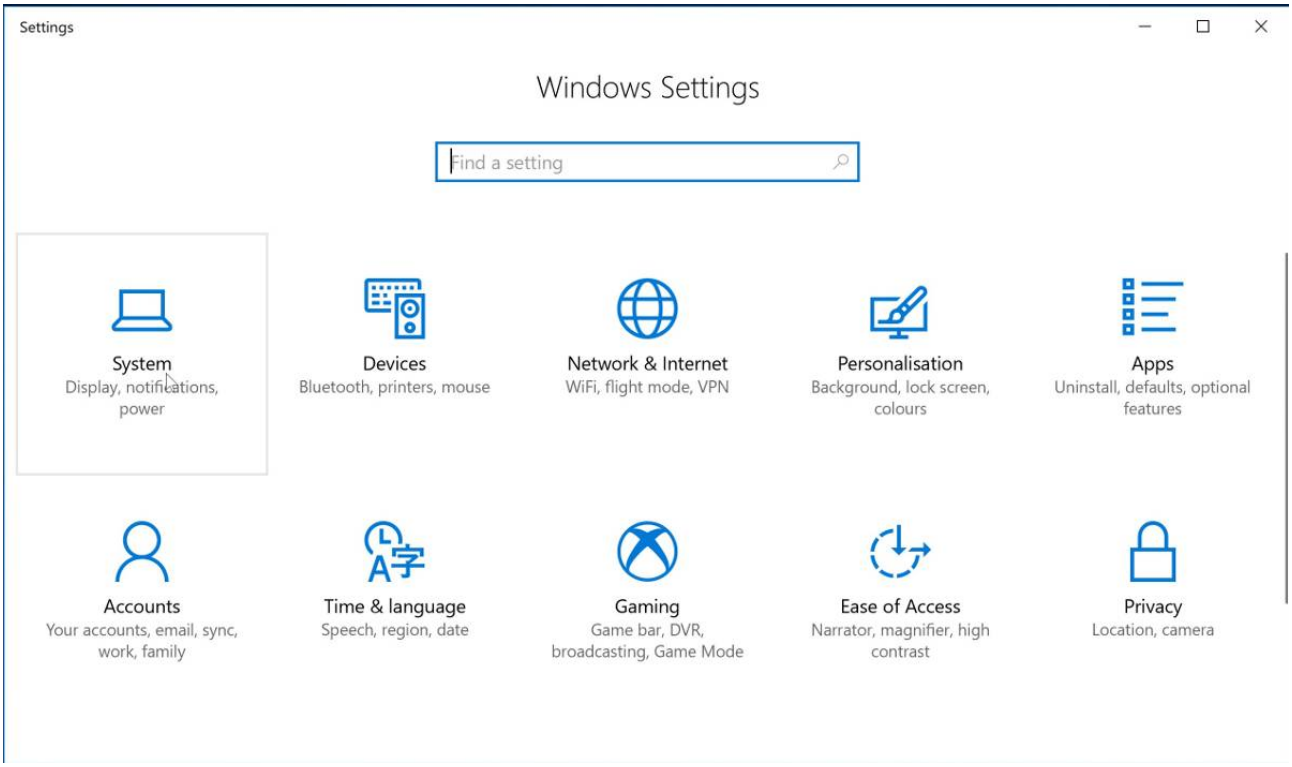
New to Windows 10 through the Creator’s Update is the Night Light. It takes the monitor-dimming software developed by third party companies and adds it into Windows 10 as a native feature. If you find yourself using your computer into the late hours of the night, and you suspect the monitor’s ambient light is keeping you from sleeping properly, Night Light may help you get a better night’s rest.

Activating Night Light

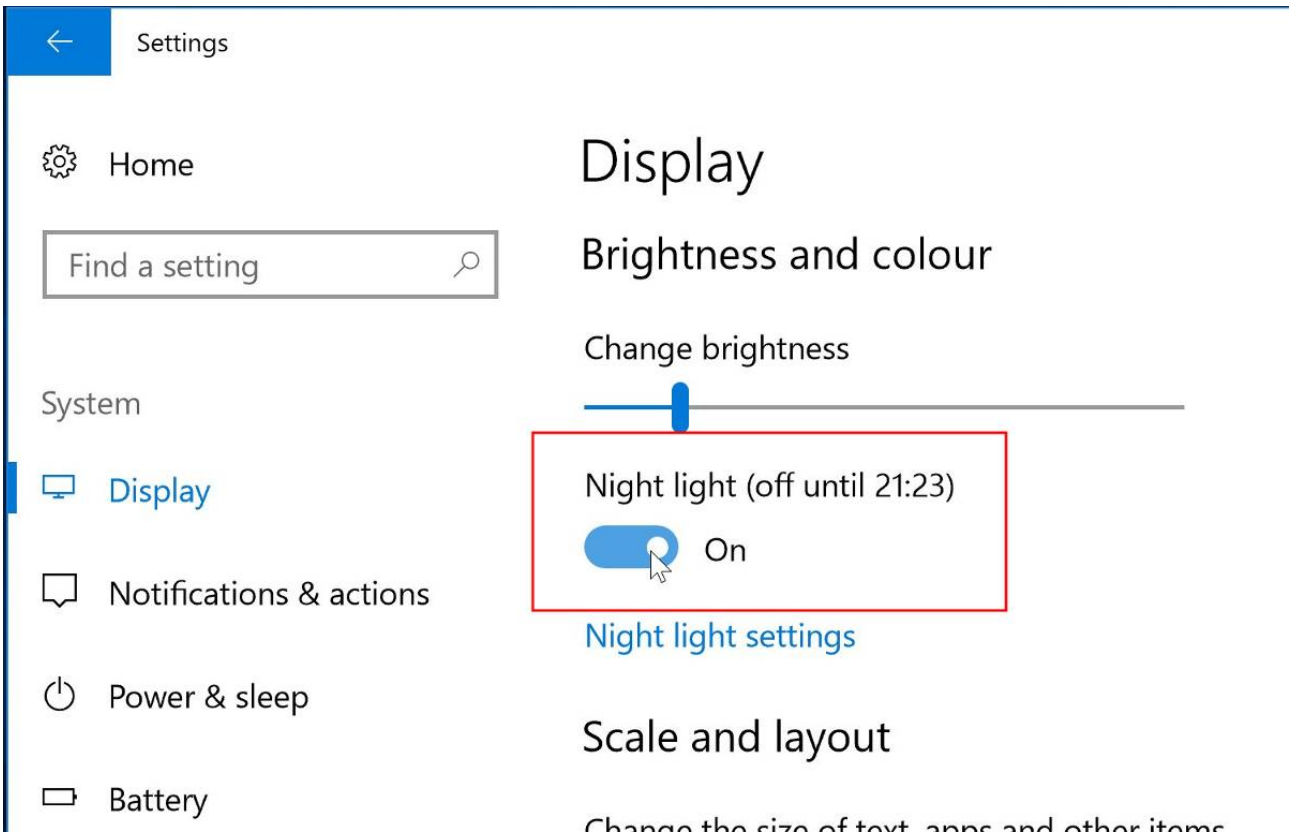
To turn Night Light on, do the following:

First, click the Start button, then the Settings cog.

In the menu that appears, click System.



When you arrive in the System window, you should automatically be on the Display category. If not, click it to go there. Once in Display, a list of options will appear on the left. Find the Night Light option and click it to turn it on.



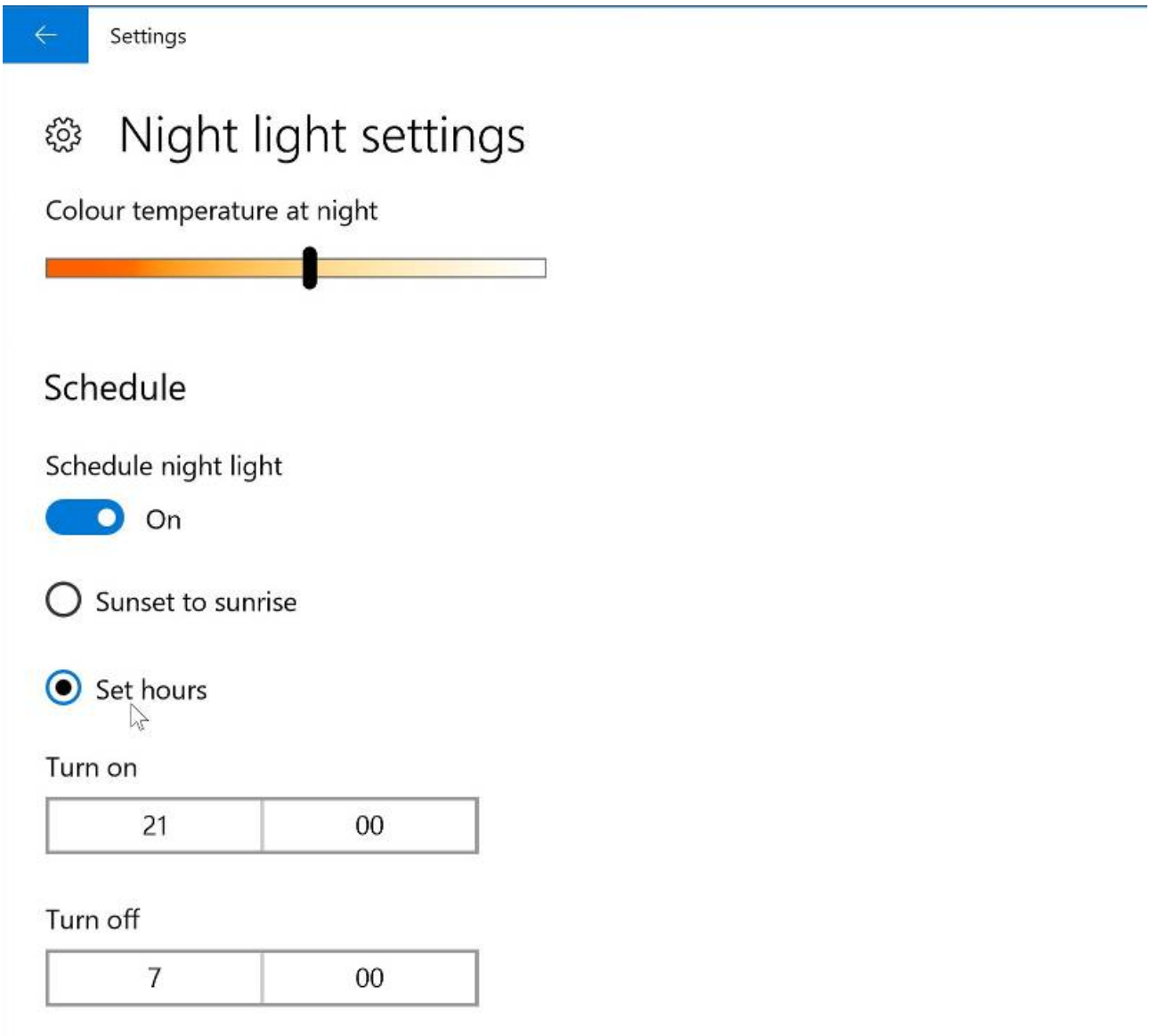
Now when you use the computer during the later hours, you should notice that the screen gradually shifts toward a warmer colour. Due to the fact this influences the colours you see on the screen, make sure that you disable this option if you want to perform colour-sensitive actions on your computer such as digital painting or graphics design.

Setting The Night Light's Schedule

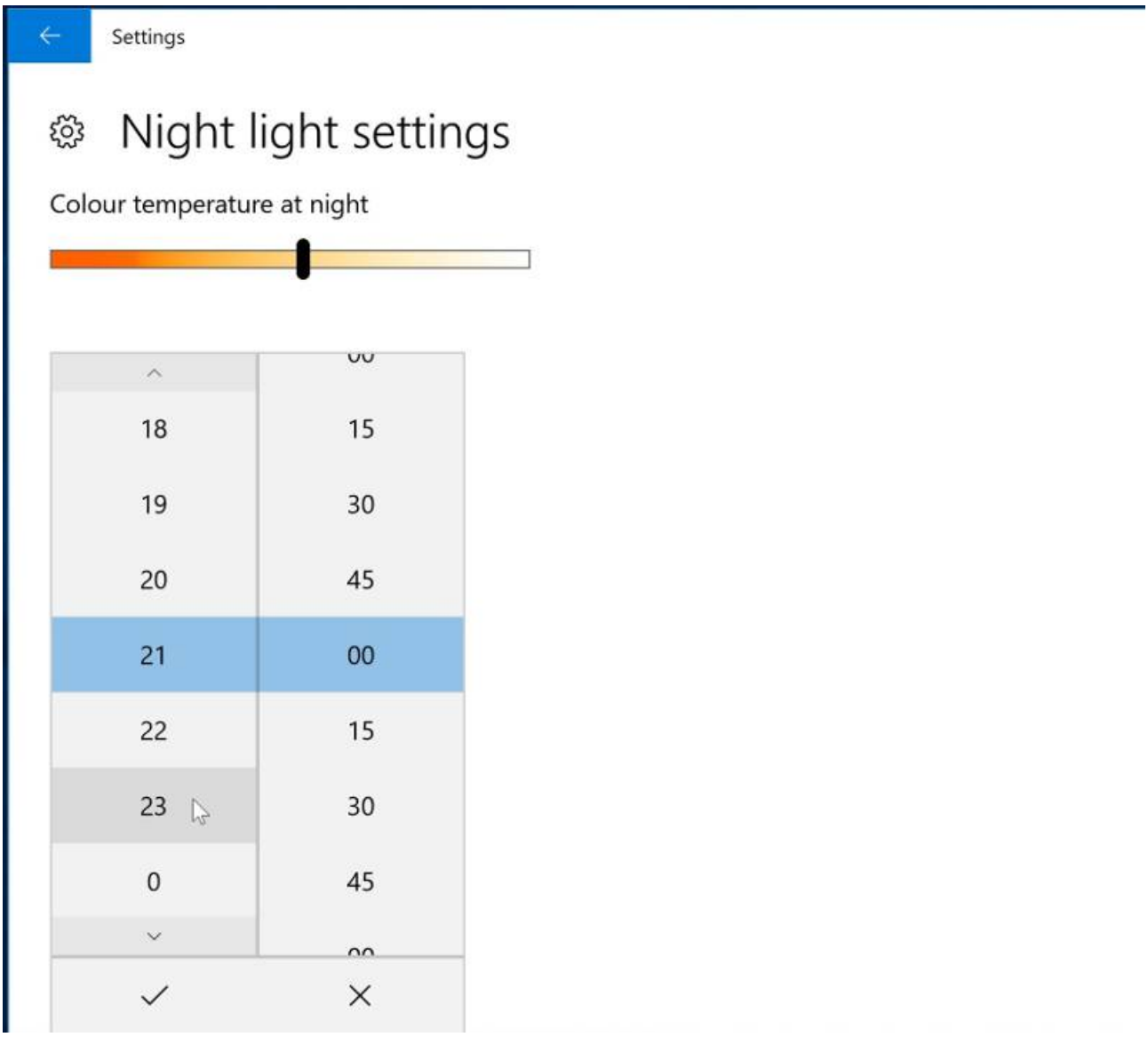
While a night light is a very useful tool to have, it may need a bit of tweaking on your end to get the most out of it. For instance, if you go to bed later than normal or you work a night shift, you may be interested in setting the night light so it doesn't begin to brighten up before you go to bed. You'll want it to be at its darkest right when you shut off the PC, else it will defeat the purpose of a night light entirely!

To solve this, let's set the schedule at which the night light engages and disengages so it better suits the time at which you go to bed. Click the "Night light Settings" option under the night light switch.

You'll be taken to a new screen. Scroll down to Schedule to see all the options available to you. Make sure the schedule night light option is turned on. Once turned on, you'll see that you have two options: you can have the night light engage from sunset to sunrise, or you can enter your own options with "set hours." Click the latter.



Set the time you want the night light to engage and disengage. Night light will now work on your terms so you can better suit it around your sleeping and computer usage schedules.



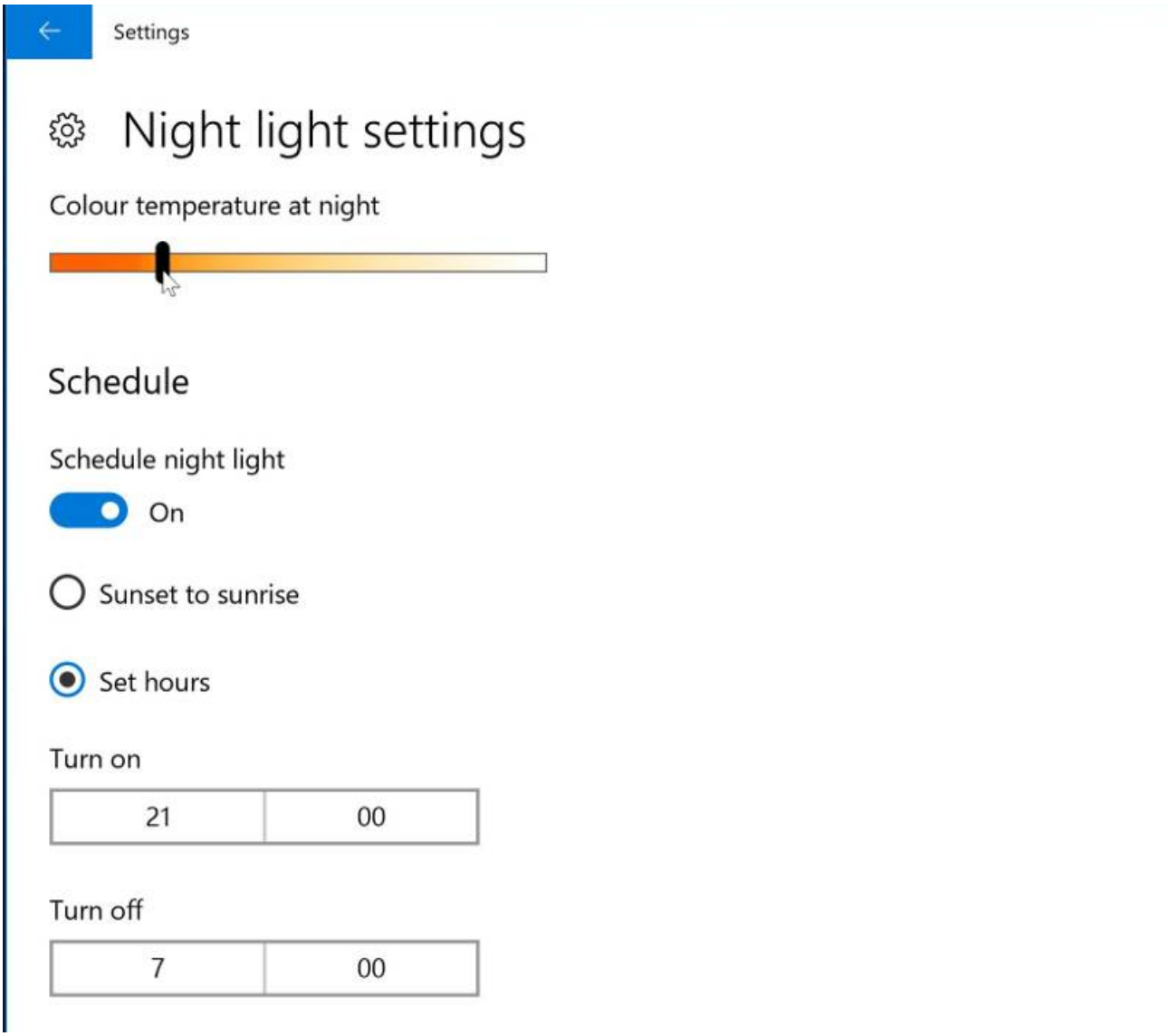
Setting the Temperature

Much like the schedule, you can also adjust the “temperature” the night light works with. This refers to the amount of dimming the night light performs during its active hours. You may want to play with this setting to get a feel for a good-looking night light. Ideally, you want a temperature that strikes a balance between being bright enough to still be able to read what's on the screen while dark enough to save your eyes from strain and help you sleep at night.

To set the temperature of the night light, first click the night light settings option under the night light toggle, if you have not already done so.

You’ll find a bar which you can use to change the tone of the night light. The far left indicates a heavily dimmed screen, while the far right has no effect at all. Try different tones, and Windows 10 will show you what the tone looks like as you play with it. Once you’ve found the ideal tone, simply leave the bar alone, and it’ll use your setting the next

time the night light turns on.



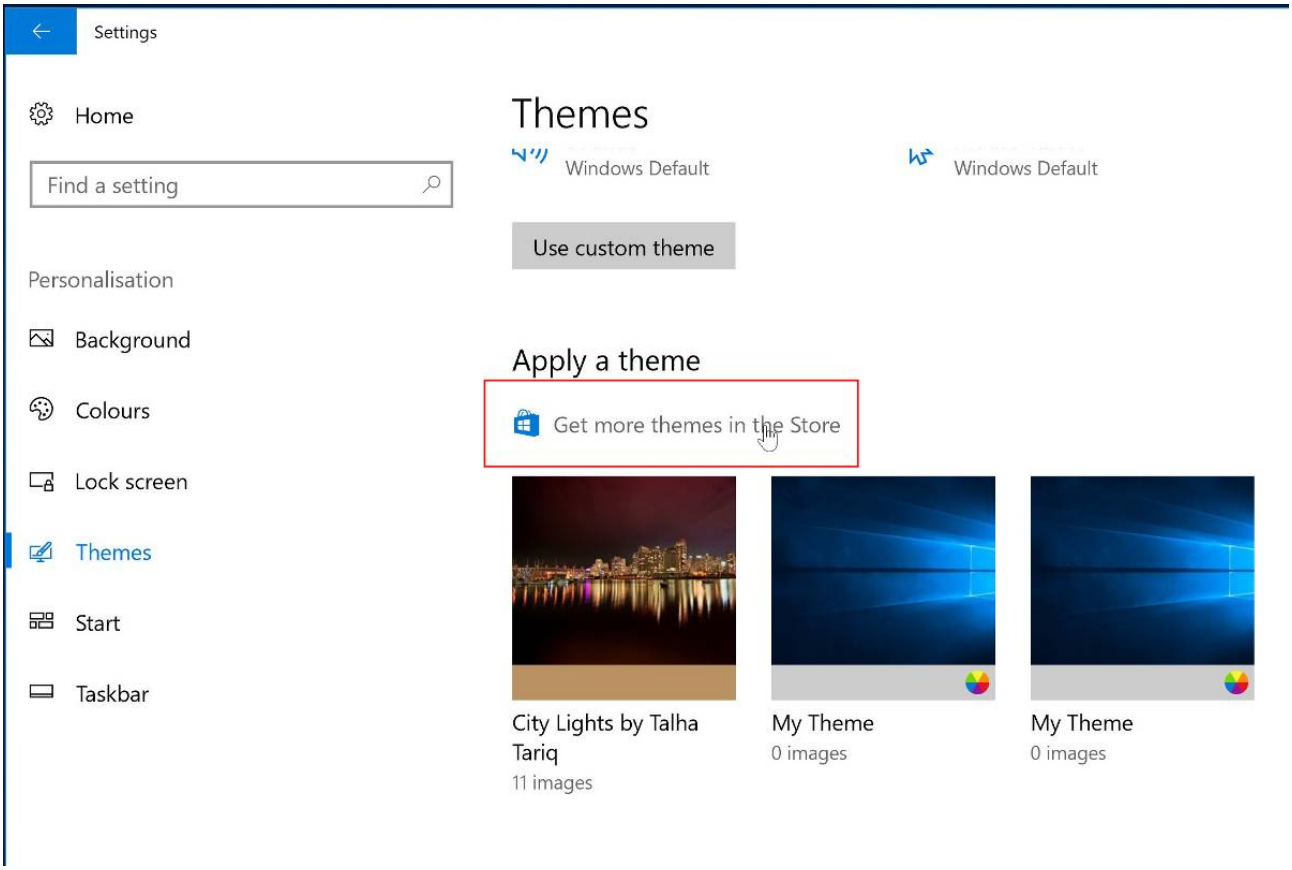
Chapter 14: Premade Themes

Search for Premade Themes

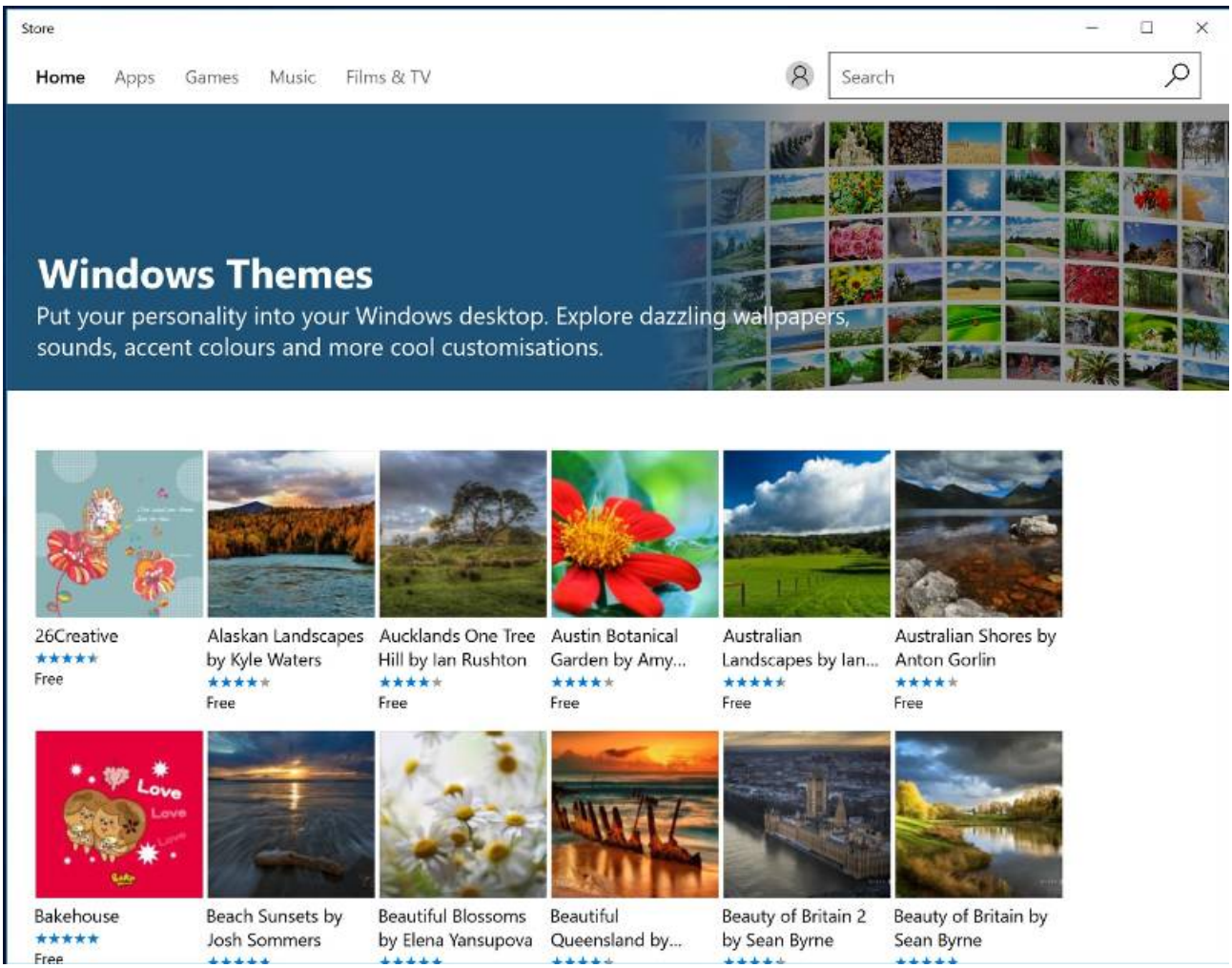
Customizing your computer before the Creator's Update meant one of two routes: finding and downloading a theme from a safe website on the internet or making it yourself using images, sounds, and manually setting UI colours. With the Creator's Update, however, Microsoft has added the ability for users to browse and purchase premade themes on the Windows Store. This makes it very easy to personalise your computer without all the hassle.

If you're interested in getting a premade theme, you can browse the Store to find one. To do that, click the Start button, then the Settings cog. Click on Personalization.

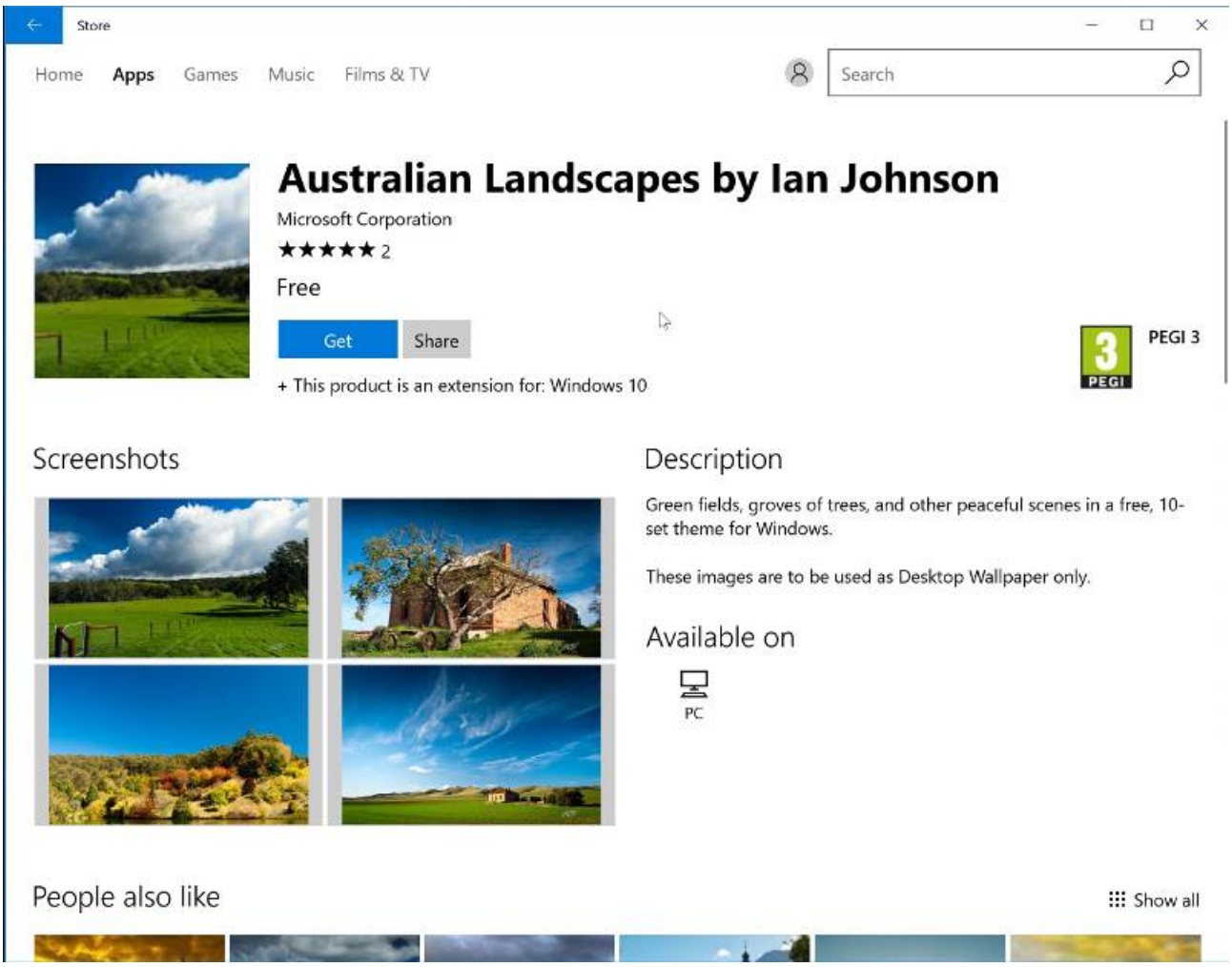
Click on Themes on the left, then scroll down a little and find the link for "Get more themes" in the Store.



You'll find a long list of themes that you can download.

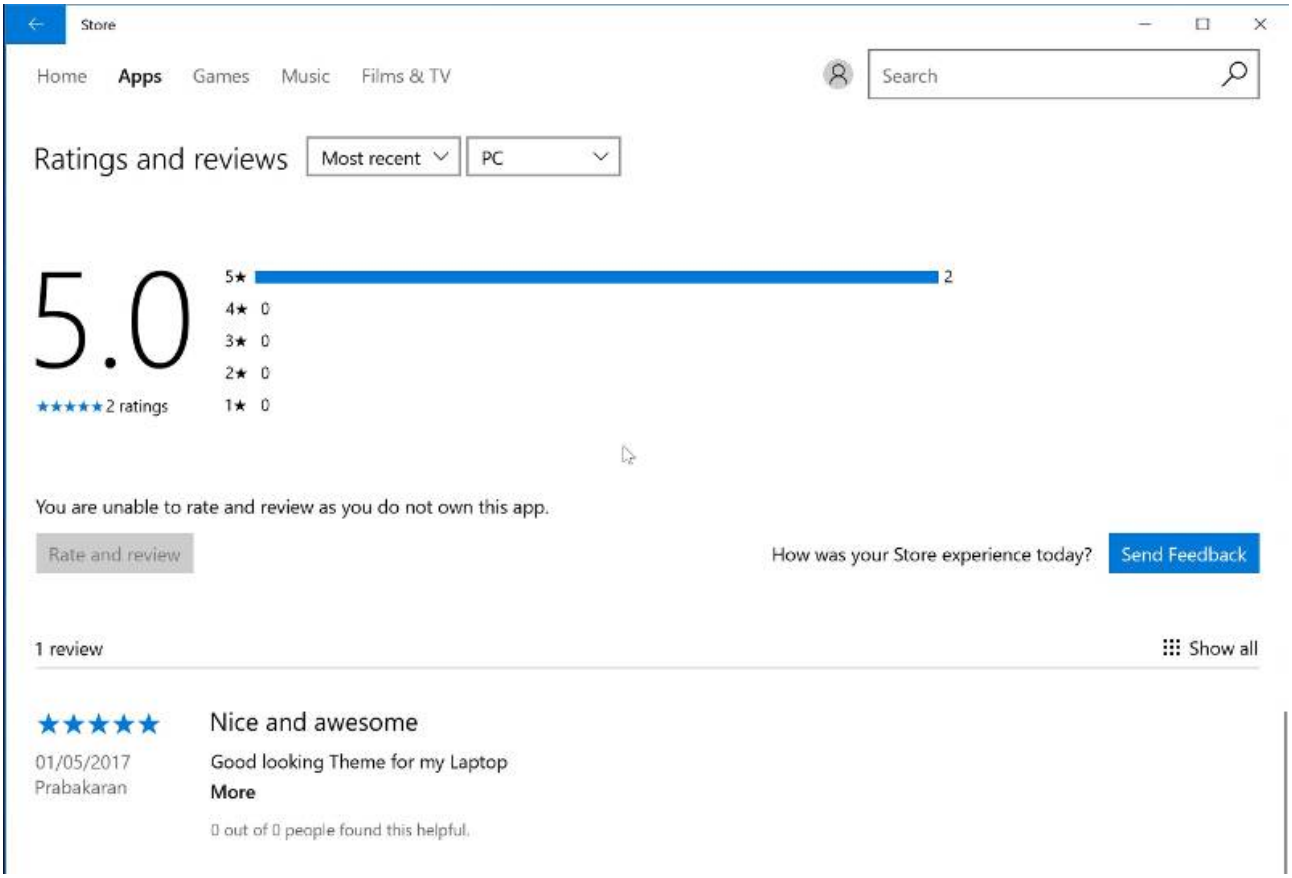


Scroll through them and click on one that catches your interest. You can read about what the theme has within it as well as view screenshots of the theme in question.



Before deciding on a theme (especially if the theme comes with a price tag), make sure you read all the details of the theme in question. Some will come with a wide array of features such as sounds, a desktop image, and toolbar colours. Some will come with just the background image. Make sure you know what you're getting should you decide to put money down for a theme.

You can also scroll to the bottom of the page and read reviews left by users who had downloaded this theme, so you can save yourself some time (and potentially money) before you try a theme.



Buying and Using Premade Themes

Once you've found a theme you want to use, it's time to acquire it. First, note if the theme you'd like to install comes with a price tag. If it does, you'll need to go through the purchase process to give Microsoft a payment option if one isn't set up already. Once done, you can purchase the theme and download it to your computer.

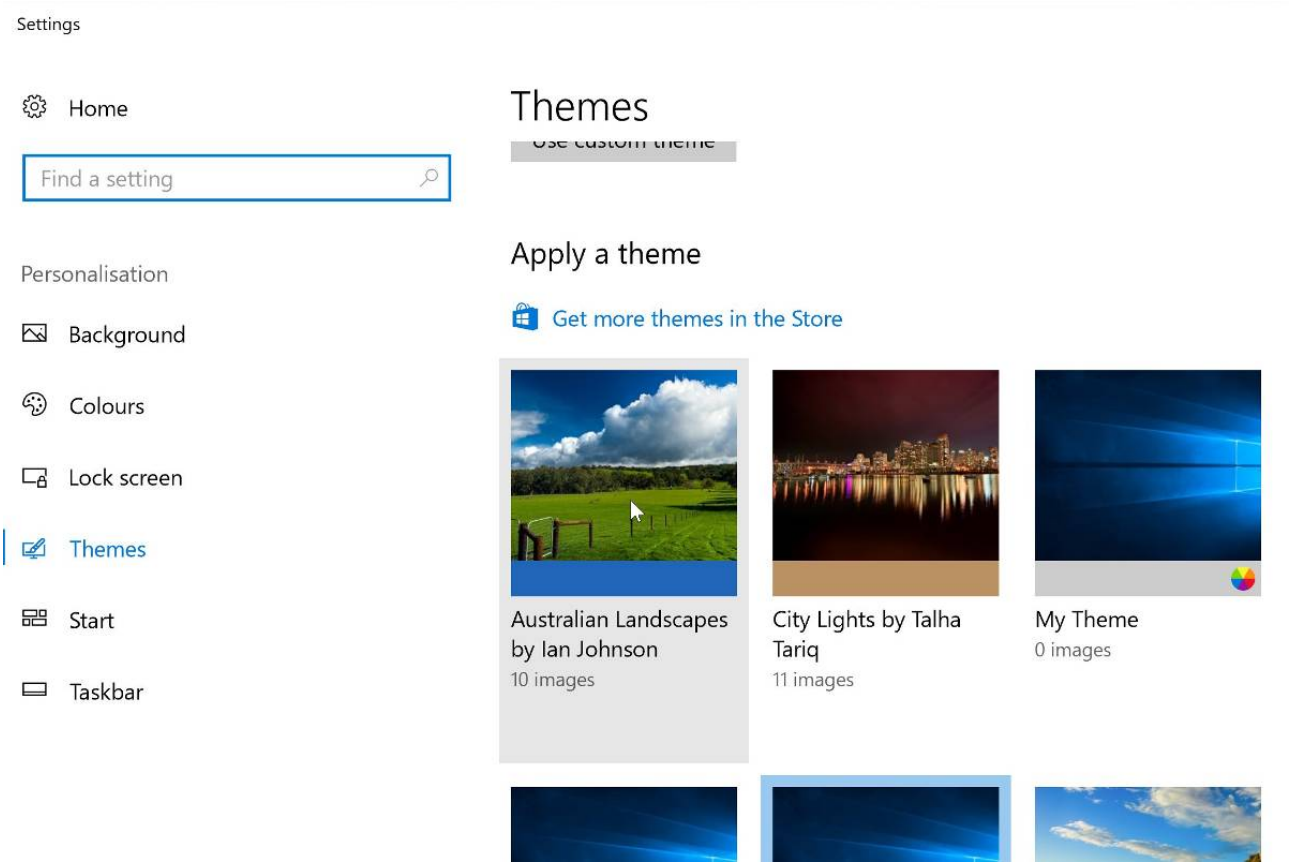
Not all themes will come with a price tag, however. If you've fallen in love with a theme that is listed as free, you can download it right away to your computer at no additional cost to you. In this instance there will be a button that says Get. Simply click this button to acquire the theme.

Regardless of whether you pay for your theme or get it for free, once you've successfully acquired a theme, Windows will download it for you.

Once it's finished downloading, you may notice that your computer hasn't updated itself to the new theme you've just acquired. This is because you have to tell Windows to use the theme you just downloaded.

Remember the theme window we opened to get to the Store? Return to this screen either by manually going back or by clicking the Launch button on the theme's store page after it has finished downloading.

Once back in the theme screen, you'll see your theme has appeared under Apply a theme.



If you want to save your current theme before you change, make sure to click the “Save Theme” button before you change. Once ready, click the theme you’ve downloaded, and your computer will automatically change to it.

You can download as many themes as you like and Windows will keep track of all of them on this screen. Whenever you feel like a change of scenery, simply come back to this screen and click the theme you want, or go back into the store and find new ones.

Chapter 15: Windows Updates

Defer Updates Before Installing

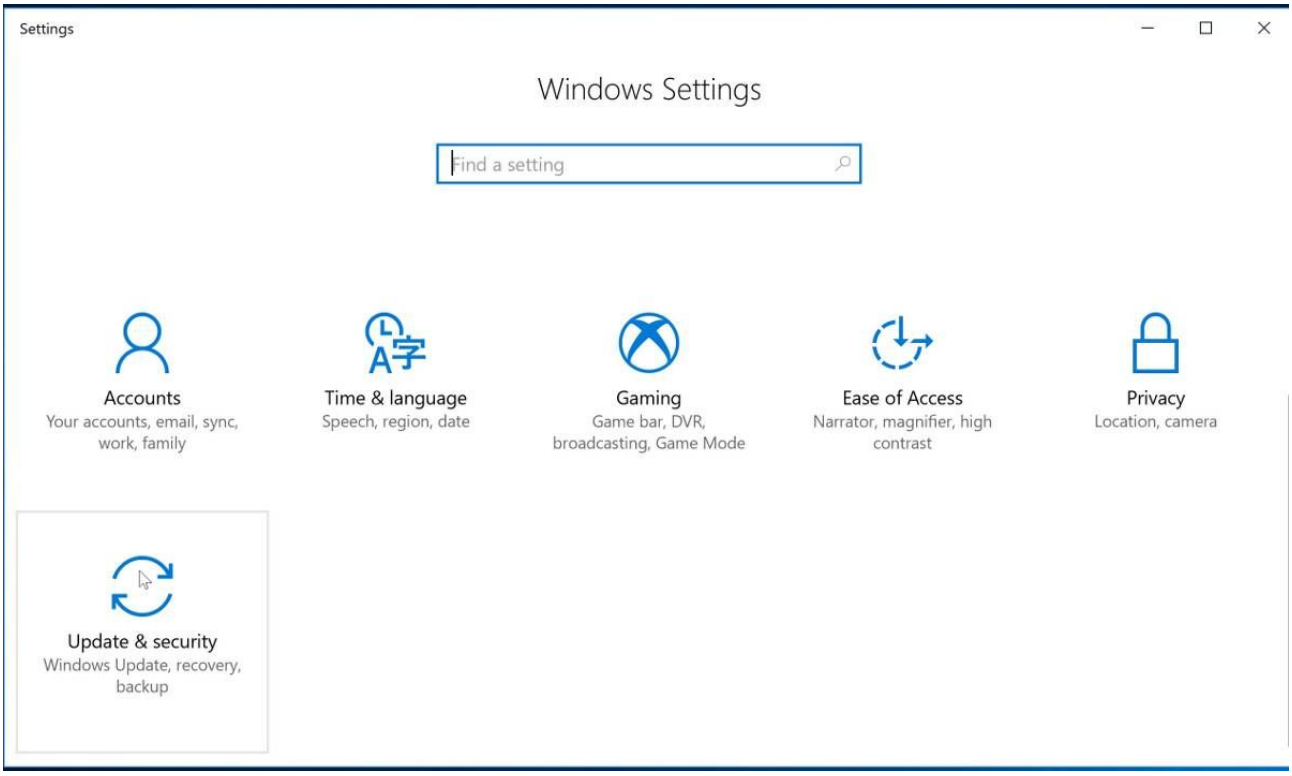
Before the Creator's Update, Microsoft was quite tough on how people get their Windows Updates. Unlike in earlier versions where people could defer, or even totally ignore, Windows Updates as they saw fit, Microsoft took a firmer stance with Windows 10 by having updates as mandatory rather than something you can opt out of. You could defer updates, but usually only for a few days before it installed itself on your computer.

Users expressed their disappointment over this addition in Windows 10, as not everyone wants to install updates so quickly. Updates can interfere with vital software and can even cause computer problems in specific models. As such, users wanted to be able to delay updates further and ensure the changes wouldn't damage the PC before they allowed it to install. Windows Creator's Update has changed this so you can defer updates, allowing you better control over what gets installed onto your PC.

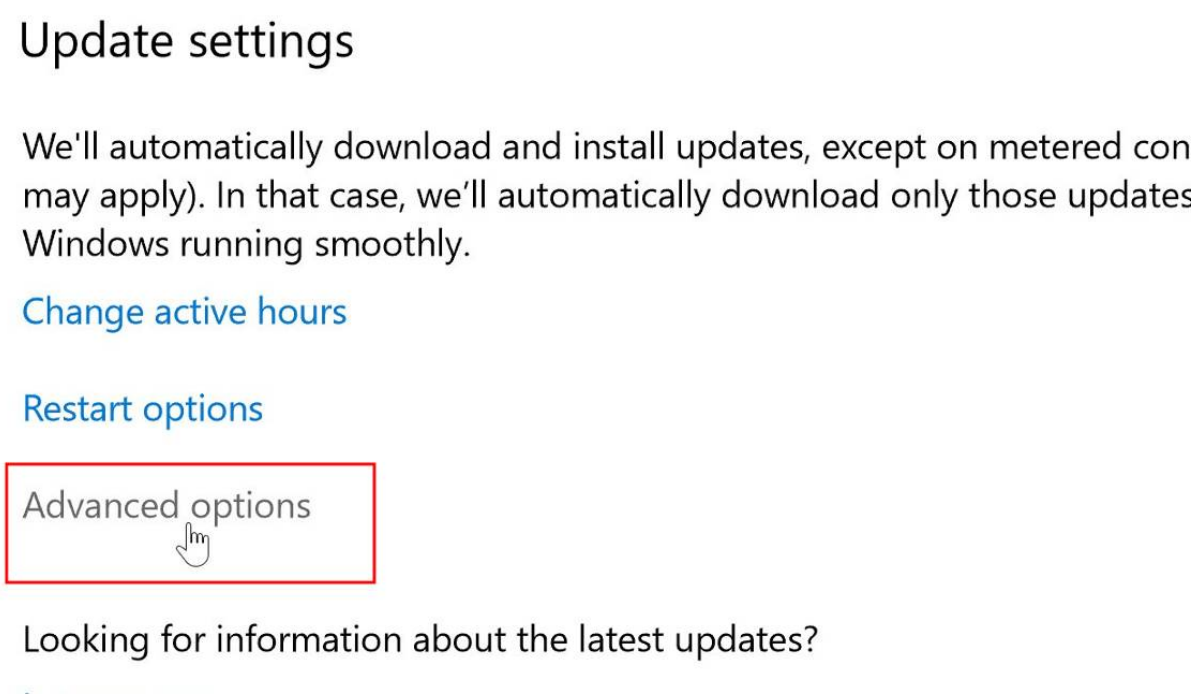
Before we get started, first note that this feature is not available in Windows 10 Home Edition. Other editions, such as Business and Professional, should have this feature. If you can't find the options to defer Windows Update, make sure you have the Creator's Update and that you're not running the Home Edition.

To defer updates, click the Start button, then the Settings cog.

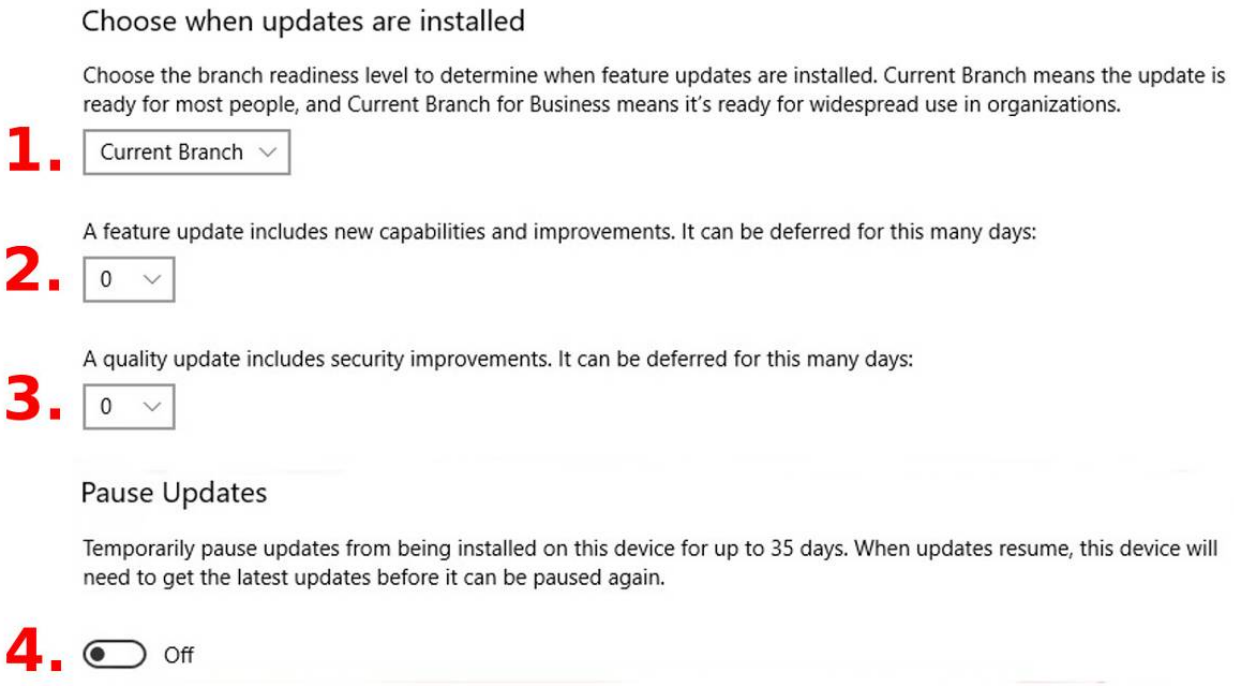
Go to Update & Security.



On the Windows Update category, in the main window, find Advanced Options and click it.



Scroll down to where it says Choose when updates are installed. The settings here are quite complicated, so let's break them down one by one:



1. The top option is for setting the update branch of the computer. Current Branch will update the system as soon as updates are available, while other options such as Current Branch for Business will delay the updates for four months to allow businesses to adapt to new updates without them breaking software compatibility. If you're not sure what to pick, stick with Current Branch.

2. The feature update drop-down allows you to set how long feature updates are delayed. Feature updates typically add new features to Windows 10 and are non-essential for the security of the computer. You can delay these updates for up to 365 days.

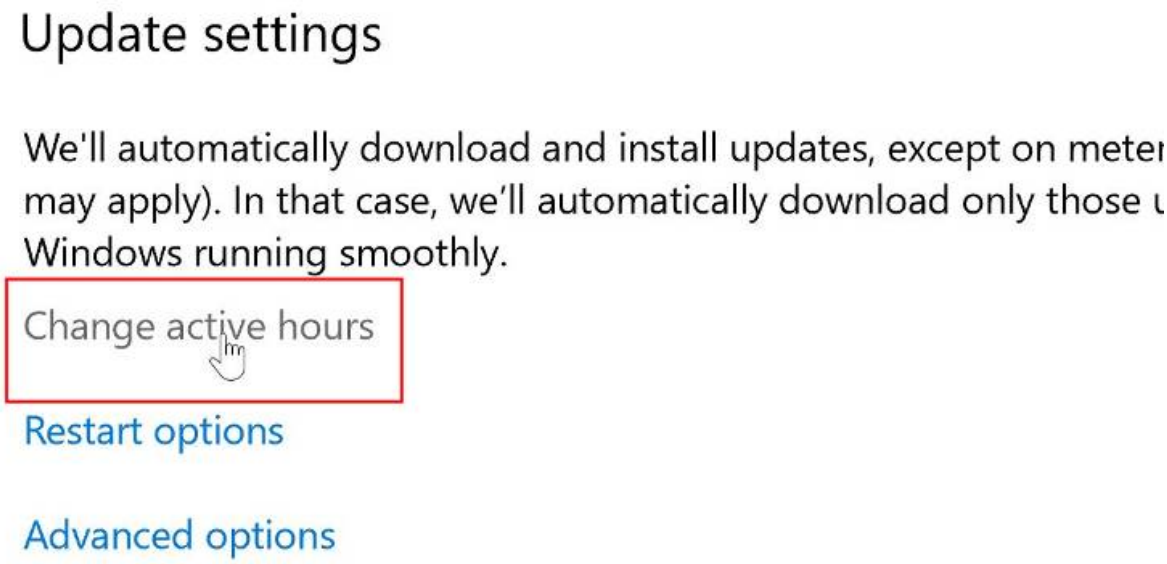
3. The quality update drop-down works the same way as the feature update drop-down. Unlike feature updates, quality updates deal with keeping the system's performance and security at a high. Because they're so vital for the system's use, you can only delay quality updates for 30 days.

4. At the bottom is the Pause Updates switch. Once turned on, you won't receive any updates for 35 days. After the 35 days are up, however, Windows will go back to installing updates automatically.

Set Active Hours

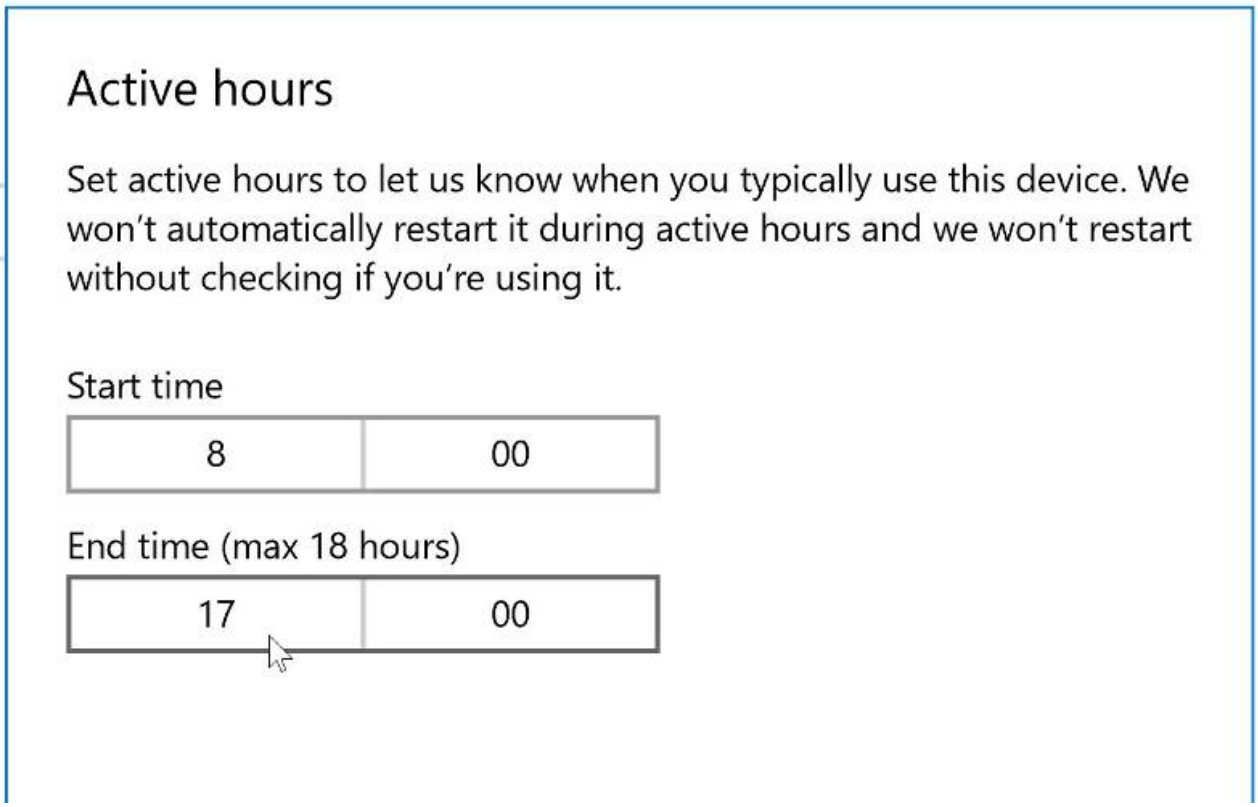
One early complaint of Windows 10 was how it unexpectedly restarted itself to install updates. Coupled with the fact you couldn't stop updates from occurring, and it results in a frustrating problem where Windows 10 might download updates, install them, and automatically restart the PC should you leave it alone for only a few minutes. Active Hours tells Windows not to restart the PC or install updates during specific times, so you never have to worry about an auto-restart.

To set your active hours, access the Windows Update window as in chapter 15.1. Then, click on the link that says "Change Active Hours".



Here you can set the times where you do not want Windows 10 to restart the computer. Set this for when you're doing important tasks such as work or gaming. Windows 10 will

now defer the restart of the computer until after the active hours are over.



Chapter 16: Touchpad Settings

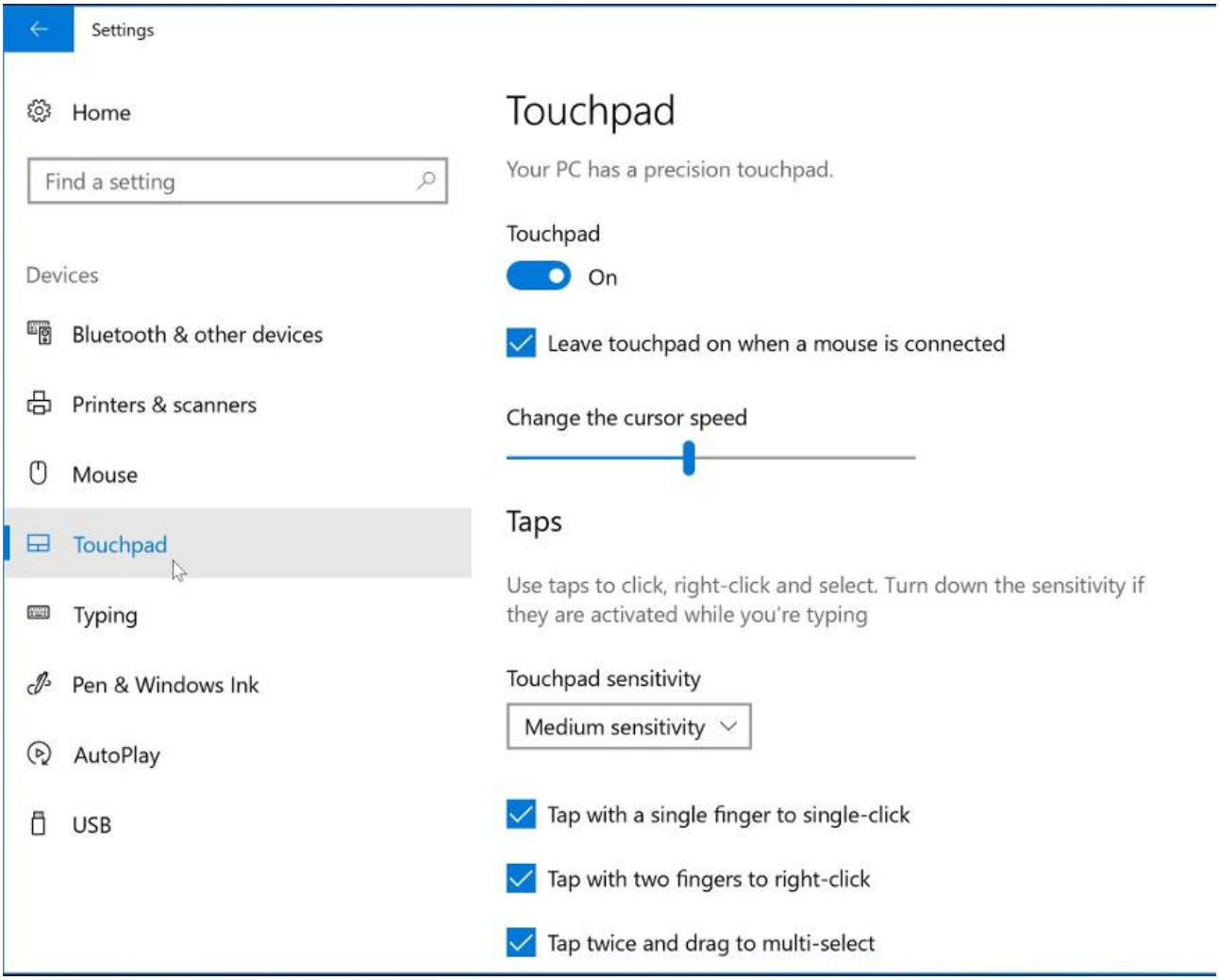
Edit Touchpad Settings

If you're using a laptop, there's a good chance that you also have a trackpad. This allows you to move the cursor using a pad built into the laptop itself. Your laptop may even come with pre-set "gestures" where you move your fingers across the pad in specific ways to activate or use features.

While useful to have on the move, it's definitely not to everyone's tastes. For instance, some people who use their laptops for gaming will want to disable the touchpad so they don't accidentally move the mouse while playing games. Perhaps you find yourself accidentally clicking things as you're using the laptop's keyboard.

If you want to change how the touchpad works, click on the Start button, then the Settings cog. Click Devices.

On the left side click Touchpad.



You'll see some basic options at the very top of this window. The top toggle disables and

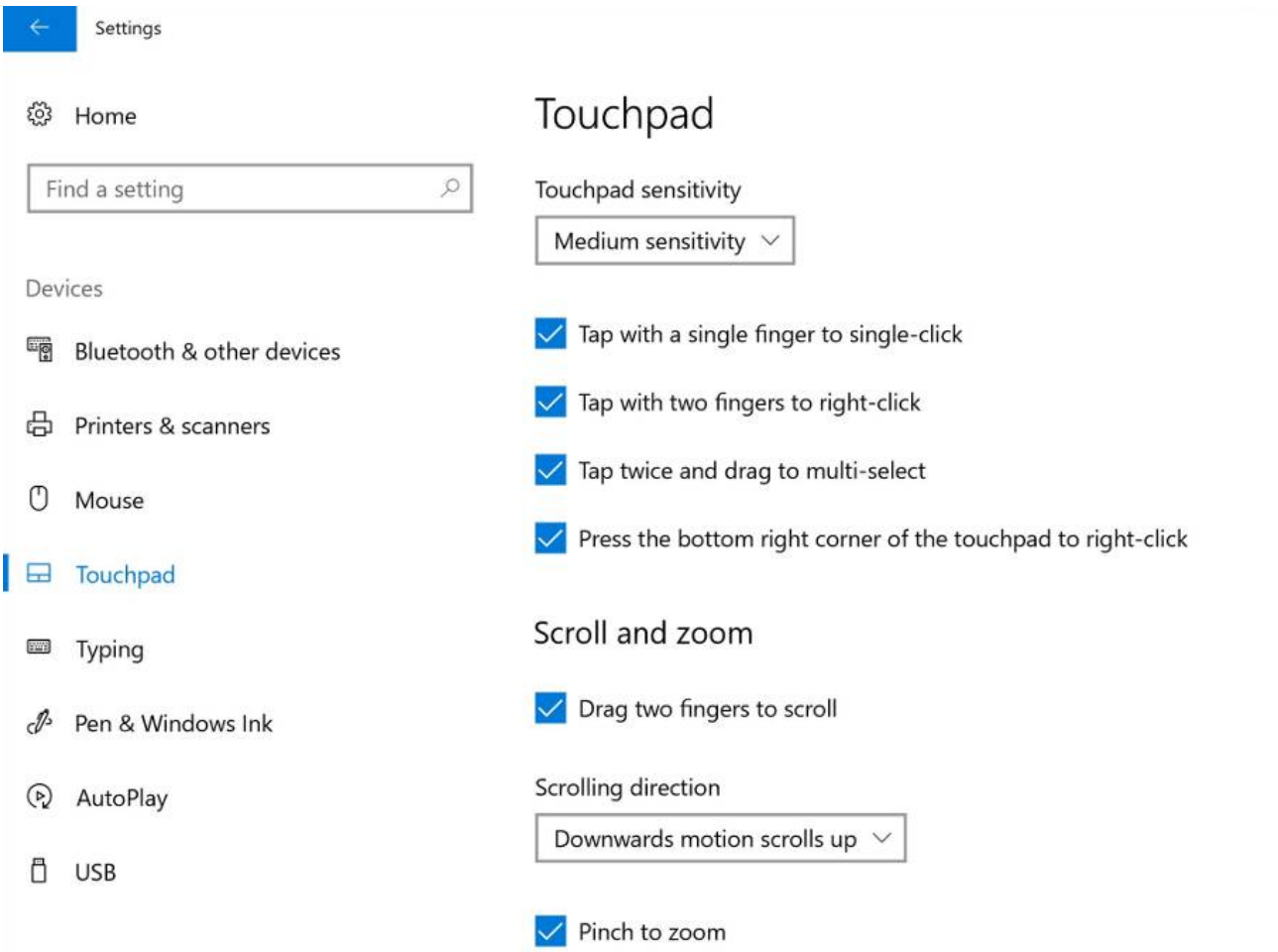
enables the touchpad entirely, so be careful with this option if the touchpad is your only means of input!

If you use a mouse, you can tell Windows to disable the touchpad when it detects a mouse. Alternatively, if you still use the touchpad while the mouse is in, you can tell Windows to keep it on so you can use both. If you find the cursor is too slow or fast depending on how far you move your finger on the touchpad, you can edit the sensitivity here, too.

Edit Gestures

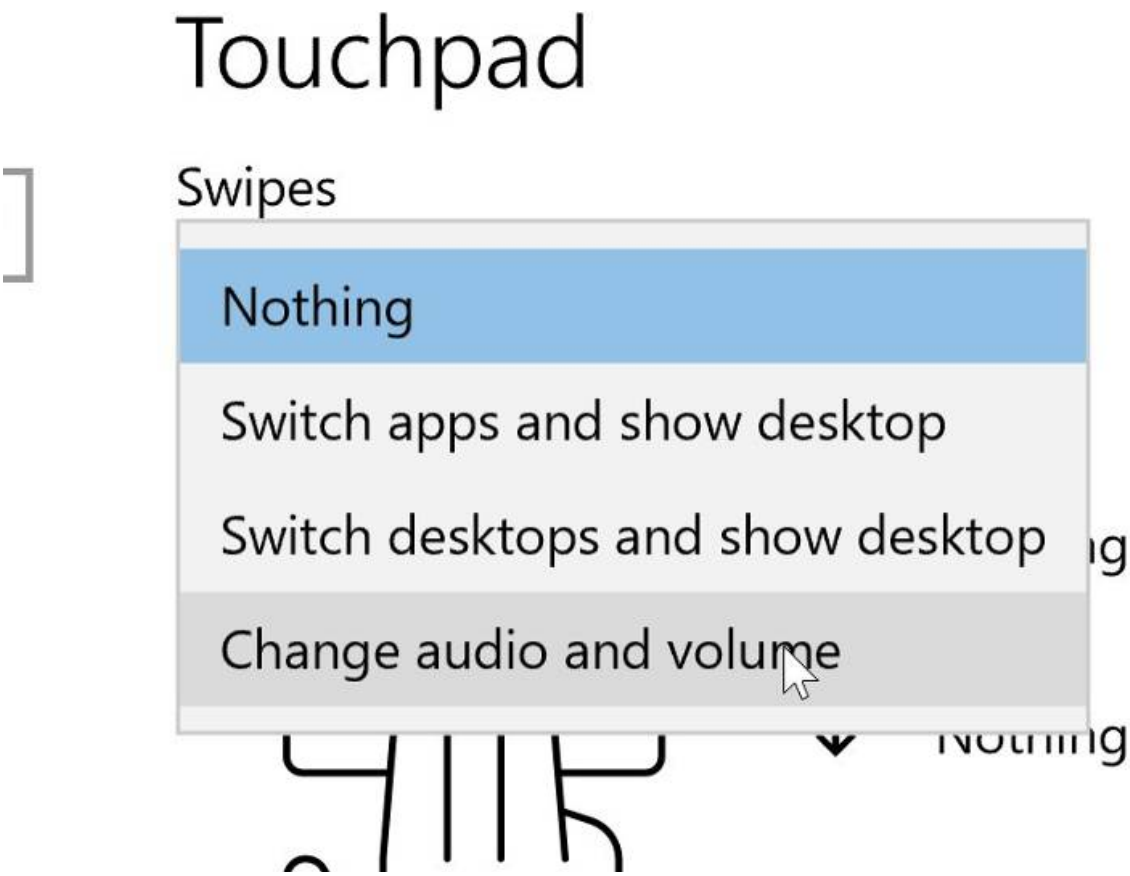
If you own a precision touchpad, you'll also see a wealth of advanced options has opened itself up to you underneath the basic settings. If you're unsure whether or not you have a precision touchpad, Windows 10 will tell you at the top of the touchpad window under the "Touchpad" title.

If you have one, scroll down the window to see all the options available to you. A lot of them are simple on-off switches for pre-set gestures such as tapping the touchpad with two fingers to represent a right click. They're self-explanatory, so familiarise yourself with each one and enable or disable them as you see fit.

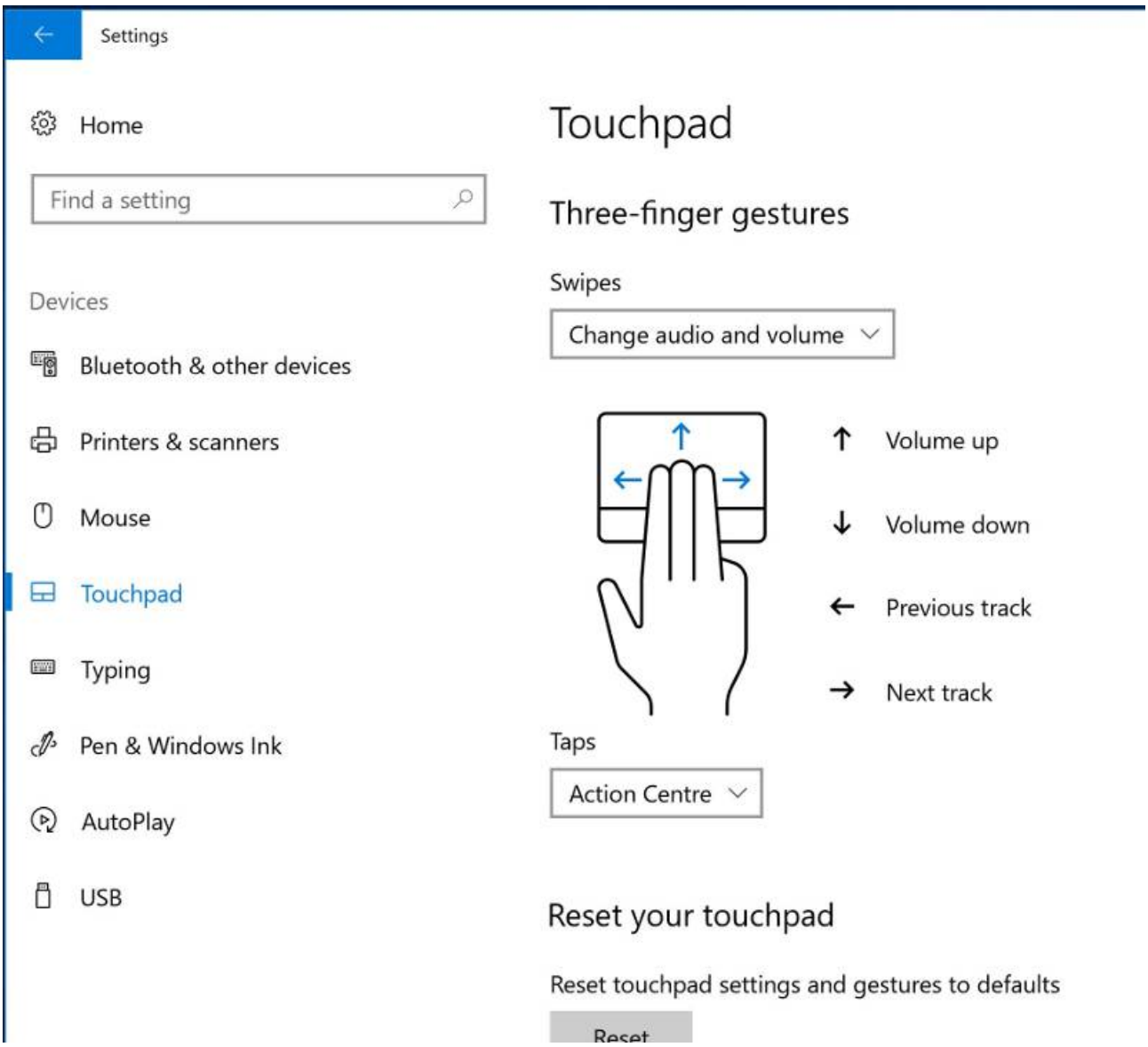


Near the very bottom of this window is an interesting feature: three-touch gestures. The idea behind them is that you place three of your fingers on the touchpad – normally the index, middle, and ring finger. You can then swipe them up, down, left, right, or tap on the touchpad to activate pre-set functions.

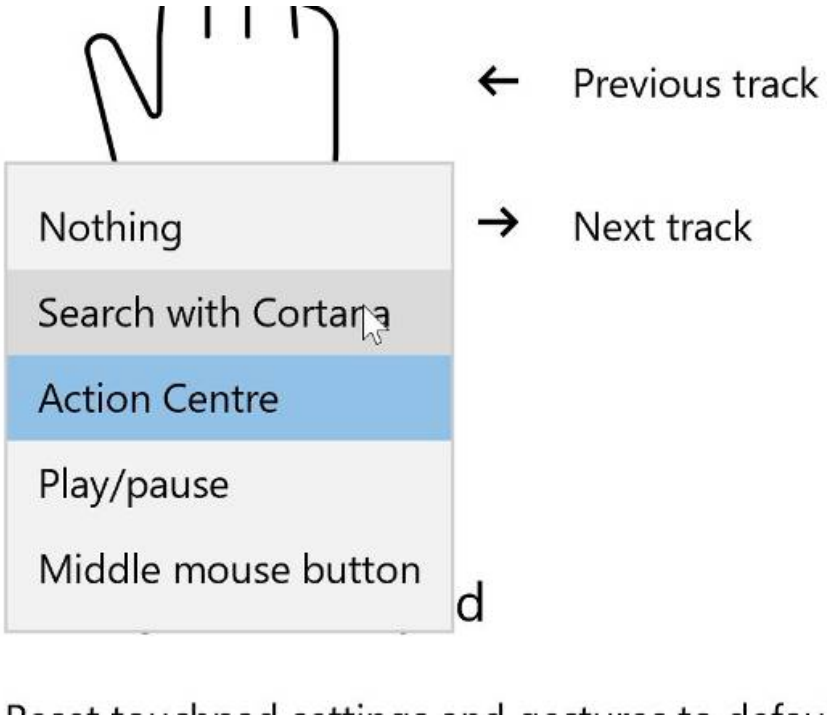
If you want to use three-finger gestures, you can browse the pre-set gestures under the Swipes dropdown.



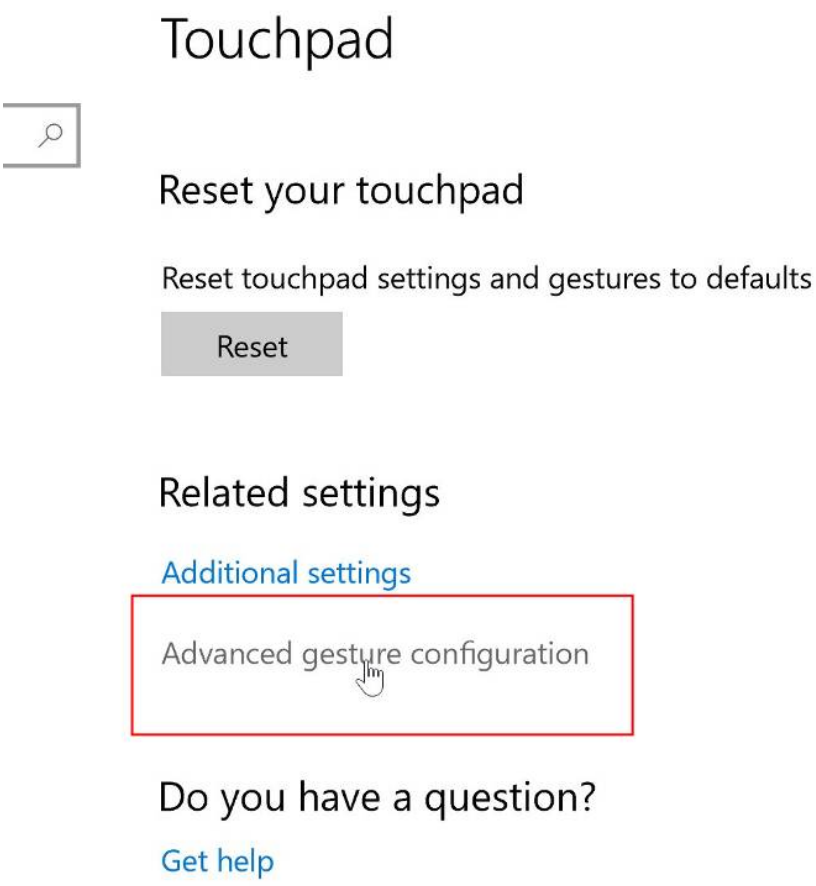
This will then give you a set of four gestures which you can use for different functions.



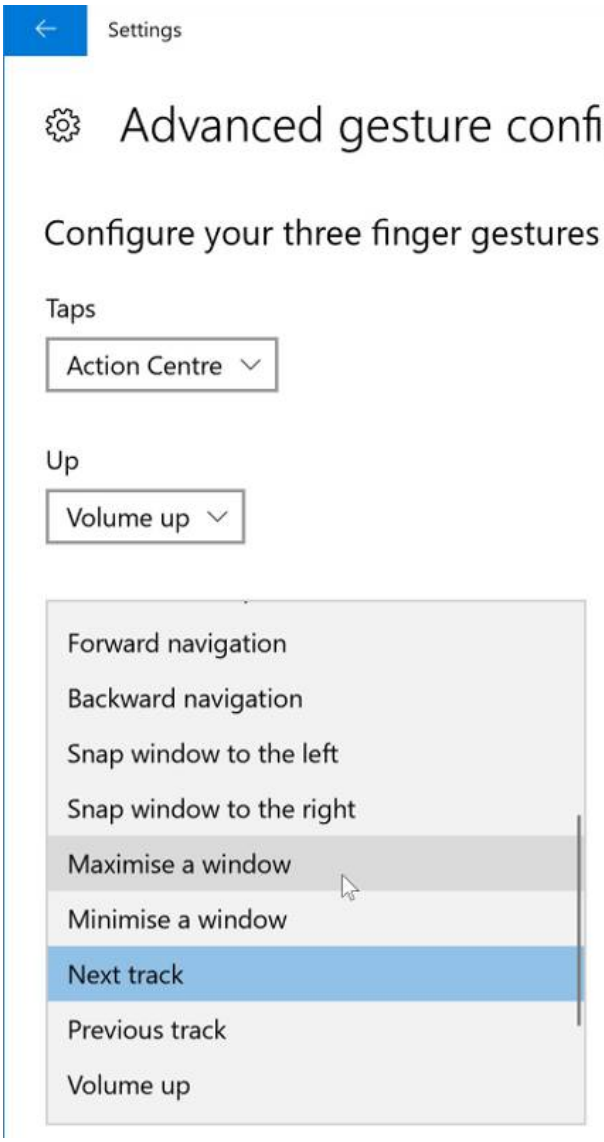
You can also set what happens when you tap three fingers against the touchpad.



If you want more freedom over what each gesture does, scroll down to the very bottom of the window and click “Advanced gesture configuration”.



You can choose which preset function you want on each gesture, including nothing happening. Browse through them and set the gestures so you have your most-used functions tied to a simple swipe.



Conclusion

As you've read, Windows 10 comes packed with a lot of features. From changing the background image on your desktop to changing the level of privacy you want Cortana to use, making the operating system your own. There are many options for you to experiment with to better suit your needs.

Now that you know the ins and outs of the operating system, you can now go forth and customize your Windows 10 experience to your heart's content. Happy customizing!