

Beginning Windows 7

Lesson 4

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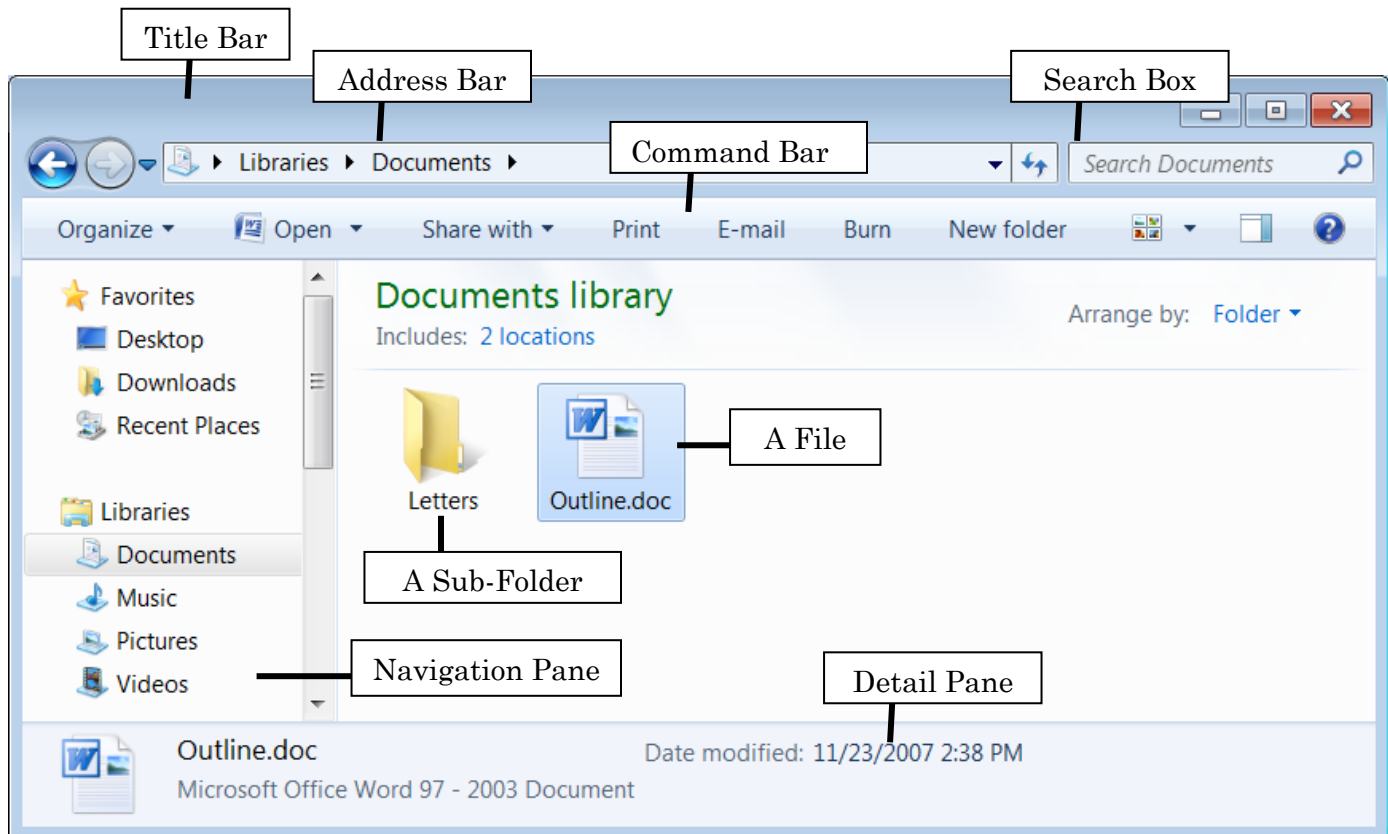
Lesson 4 – Windows Explorer

Your computer stores all information and programs in *files* on your hard disk, thumb drive or other storage medium. The hard disk contains literally tens of thousands of files that are needed to operate the computer. Most of these are hidden from view because the user has no need to access them. As with any filing system, Windows 7 uses a scheme for organizing files — not only the hidden “system files,” but also all files that you create and store on the computer such as copies of letters, emails, pictures, financial information, name and address lists, etc. Files are organized within file *folders*, in a manner very similar to that commonly used in offices or the home for paper documents. Folders are given names, and folders can be arranged in hierarchies, i.e. there can be folders within folders within folders. For example, Windows 7 comes with a folder named “Documents” set up for your use on the computer. Clicking on the “Documents” icon on the desktop¹ opens this folder and displays its contents which may be a list of individual files and/or more folders. Clicking on a folder opens a new window that displays that folder’s contents. Clicking on the “Back” arrow on the toolbar returns you to the previous folder.

¹ If the Documents folder is missing on your desktop, click on Start and then on Documents in the list along the right side of the Start menu.

Typical Folder Window

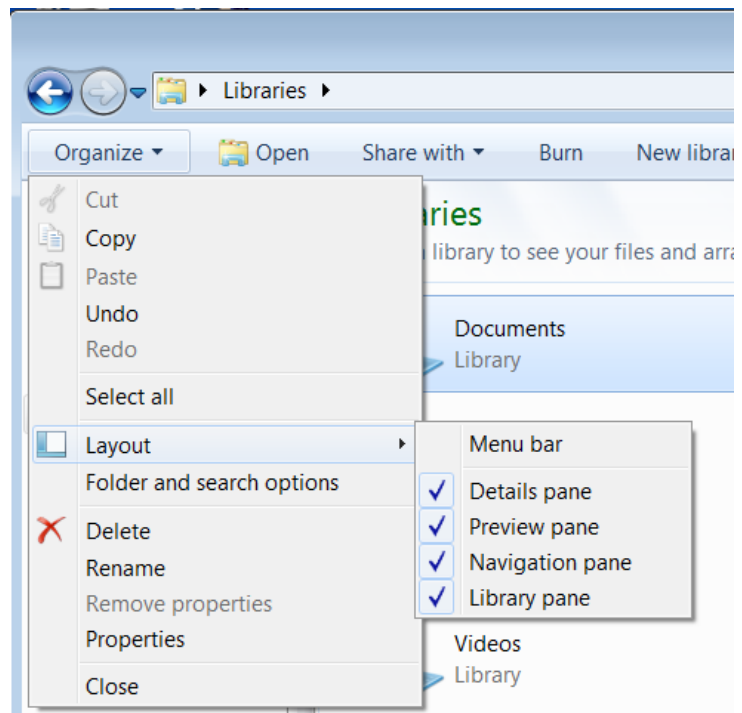
Clicking on the Documents folder will open Windows Explorer and permit you to examine its contents. This and similar windows have the following typical characteristics.



- The usual **Title Bar** across the top – in this case without any title -- but with the familiar three buttons at the right side.
- An **Address Bar** Showing the location of the folder (Libraries) and the folder name (Documents).
- A **Search Box** to facilitate locating items in the folder. Typing all or part of a file or folder name and pressing the Enter key will locate the item.
- A **Command Bar** containing action buttons (some with drop-down menus as indicated by the small down-arrows).
- A **Navigation Pane** along the left side of the window containing quick links to various other common locations.

- A large area to the right of the Navigation Pane that displays the folder's contents. Notice that its contents may include sub-folders (e.g. "Letters") and/or files (e.g. Outline").
- A **Details Pane** at the bottom that provides a list of properties of the currently selected item (Outline.doc) in the main pane. If no item had been selected the Preview Pane would simply note that there are two items in the folder.
- A **Preview Pane** (not shown here) may, or may not appear along the right edge of the window. If present, it will display a preview of any document selected in the main pane.

Several features of the Explorer window may be turned on or off. In this illustration the Organize button has been clicked and the Layout option selected. Notice that a small menu appears at the right of Layout indicating which features have been turned on (checked). If, for example, you don't want the Preview pane, then click to uncheck it. In this way you can configure the Explorer window to suite your purposes.



In this lesson we will concern ourselves primarily with the main contents area and how it is displayed. Other features such as the Address Bar, Navigation Pane, Search etc. are covered elsewhere.

The "Views" Menu

The Windows Explorer display lets you select several ways to view the folder's contents. You can change the display from various size icons to a simple list (very useful for windows with a large number of files or folders) or even a detailed list that not only shows you the file names but their type, size, and date last modified. This is controlled by clicking on the icon just to the right of

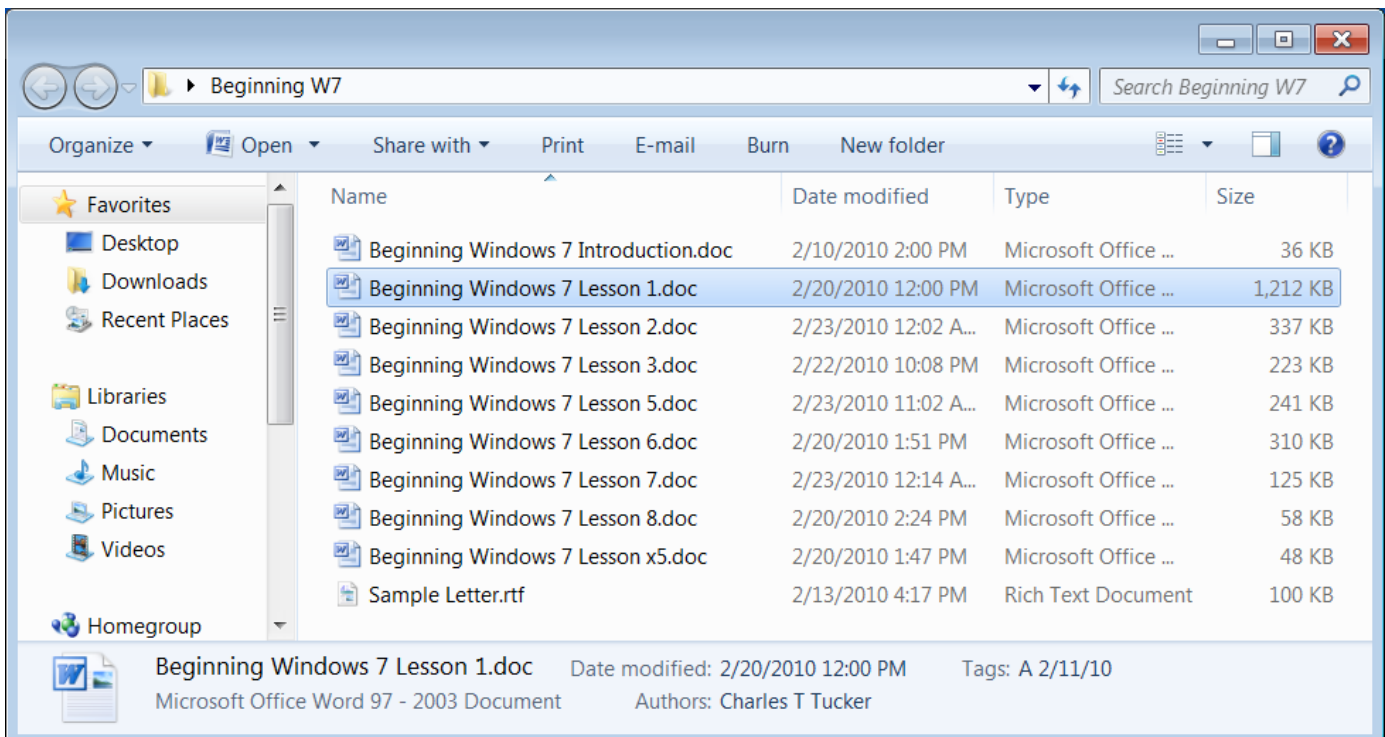
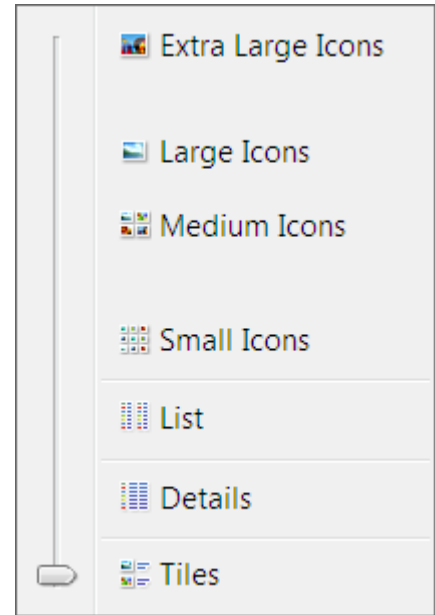
“New Folder” on the Command Bar to bring up the Views menu. Each click will change the way the window’s contents are displayed.

If you click the down-arrow next to the views icon a slider appears along the left edge of the views menu as can be seen here. Use the “drag and drop” technique to move the slider up and down and change the display.

The important thing to remember is that changing the view does not change the contents of the window. It simply changes the way the items are displayed. It’s your choice.

If you open the Beginning W7 folder on your desktop and change to the Details View you will see a window looking very much like the following illustration. In this case the “Beginning Windows 7 Lesson 1” file has been “selected” or “highlighted” (it has a blue background), and therefore the properties of the selected file are displayed in the Details Pane.

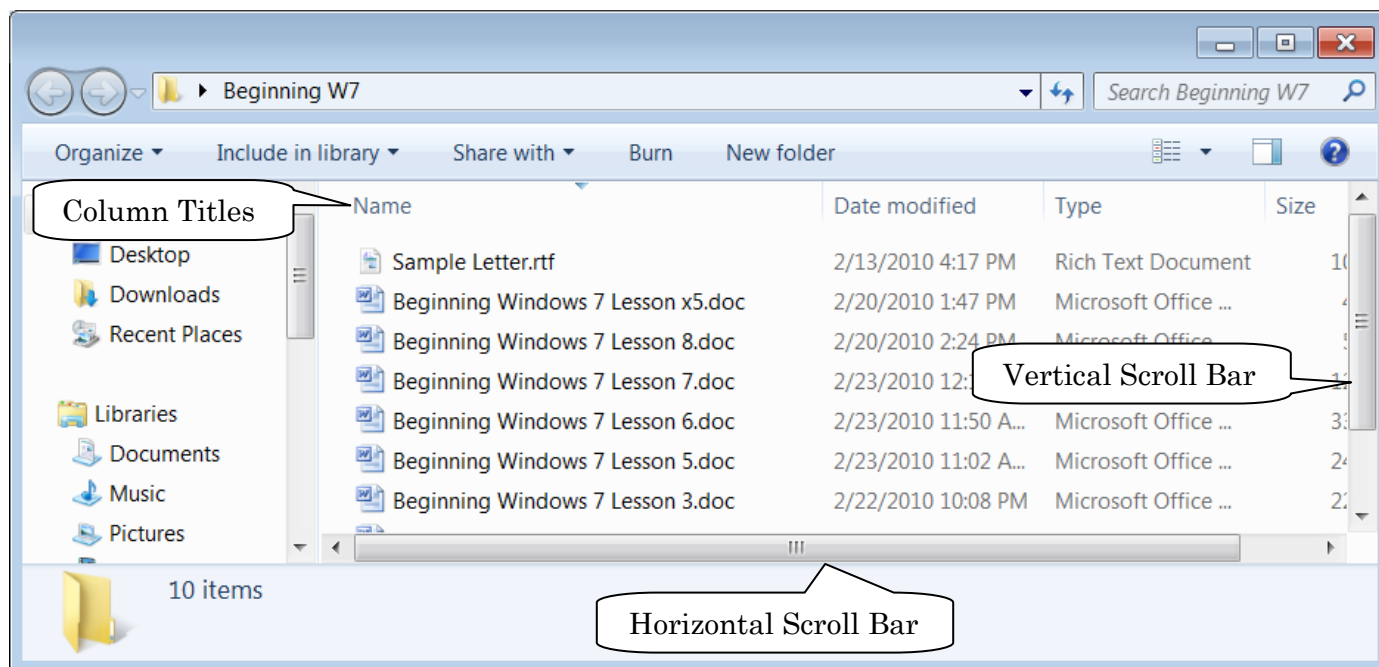
As you already know, double clicking on one of the lessons in the list will open a window that displays the lesson contents. If there were picture files in the folder, then double clicking on one would open a window that displays the picture.



Scroll Bars

A **scroll bar** appears along the right edge (or the bottom or both) of a window when it is too small to display all the information that is present. The Beginning W7 window shown above doesn't have a scroll bar(s) because all the information fits on the screen. In the following illustration the window size has been reduced to the point that it cannot display all the data either vertically or horizontally. Thus, both vertical and horizontal scroll bars are present.

Refer to the following illustration. The Vertical scroll bar appears along the right edge of the window. It has a grey "**slider**" bar whose height indicates how much of the document is being displayed. Small up/down arrows appear at each end of the scroll bar. A similar horizontal scroll bar appears along the bottom of



the window. There are several methods for scrolling, but first you must make sure that you have "focus" in the scrolling area. If, for example you have clicked inside the Address Bar, then the contents area of the window won't scroll. To change the "focus" you simply click anywhere inside the main contents area and then scroll using one of the methods in the following exercise.

Exercise 4 — Views and Scrolling

Views

1. Open the “Beginning W7” folder. Go to the Command bar, click on the View down-arrow and note the menu.
2. Experiment with (click on) the several views. Observe the way the window’s contents are displayed in each view. Notice that the same items are shown in each view, they are just shown in different ways. Use the slider to select views. You get to choose the view that suits you best. For now leave it set to the Details view.
3. While in the Details view, try clicking on the different column titles (NOT the down-arrows next to the titles), Click on Name and observe that the list is sorted by name (probably in reverse or descending alphabetical order). Click on Name again to sort in the ascending order. Try the same with Date Modified, Type, and Size. You can sort the files any way you choose.

Scrolling

1. Roll the small wheel between the left and right buttons on the mouse to scroll up and down.
2. Drag the *slider* up and down with the mouse. The slider is the grey segment inside the scroll bar.
3. Click on the white part of the scroll bar above or below the slider to move the window up or down one screen-full at a time. (Or use the PgUp/PgDn keys on the keyboard.)
4. Click on the small arrows at each end of the scroll bar to move the contents up or down one or two lines at a time. Alternatively you can use the up/down arrow keys on the keyboard to move a line at a time.
5. Hold the mouse button down while on one of the small arrows and the screen will scroll continuously, or hold the up/down arrow keys down to scroll.
6. Try the same actions with the horizontal scroll bar. Notice, however, that the mouse wheel only works vertically.

Homework 6

- Review Lesson 6
- Open your Beginning W7 folder and explore the various views available. Experiment with other options that appear when you click on the various down-arrows next to a column title.
- Read through Lesson 7.