Getting started with a work or school Account

Power Automate Desktop enables users to automate repetitive desktop tasks through a collection of prebuilt drag-and-drop actions.

Using the available actions and built-in recorders, you can automate any business procedure, such as filling forms, retrieving data from web or desktop applications, and sending standardized emails.

Combining these features allows the creation of powerful flows that disengage humans from repetitive, unproductive procedures. Tasks like copying data across different systems are common in business environments, and Power Automate Desktop can entirely handle them.

Apart from third-party applications, Power Automate Desktop allows the automation of integrated Windows applications and features. Creating backups of critical files and running diagnostics or custom scripts can be performed effectively through desktop flows.

Using Power Automate Desktop with a work or school account is available at no additional cost. To unlock additional RPA features, such as running flows automatically, premium cloud connectors and flow sharing and monitoring, start a trial or upgrade to an Organization Premium account.

To start a trial, select **Go Premium** on the Power Automate Desktop console.

Flow example

To become familiar with the available features of Power Automate Desktop, follow the steps below to create a flow.
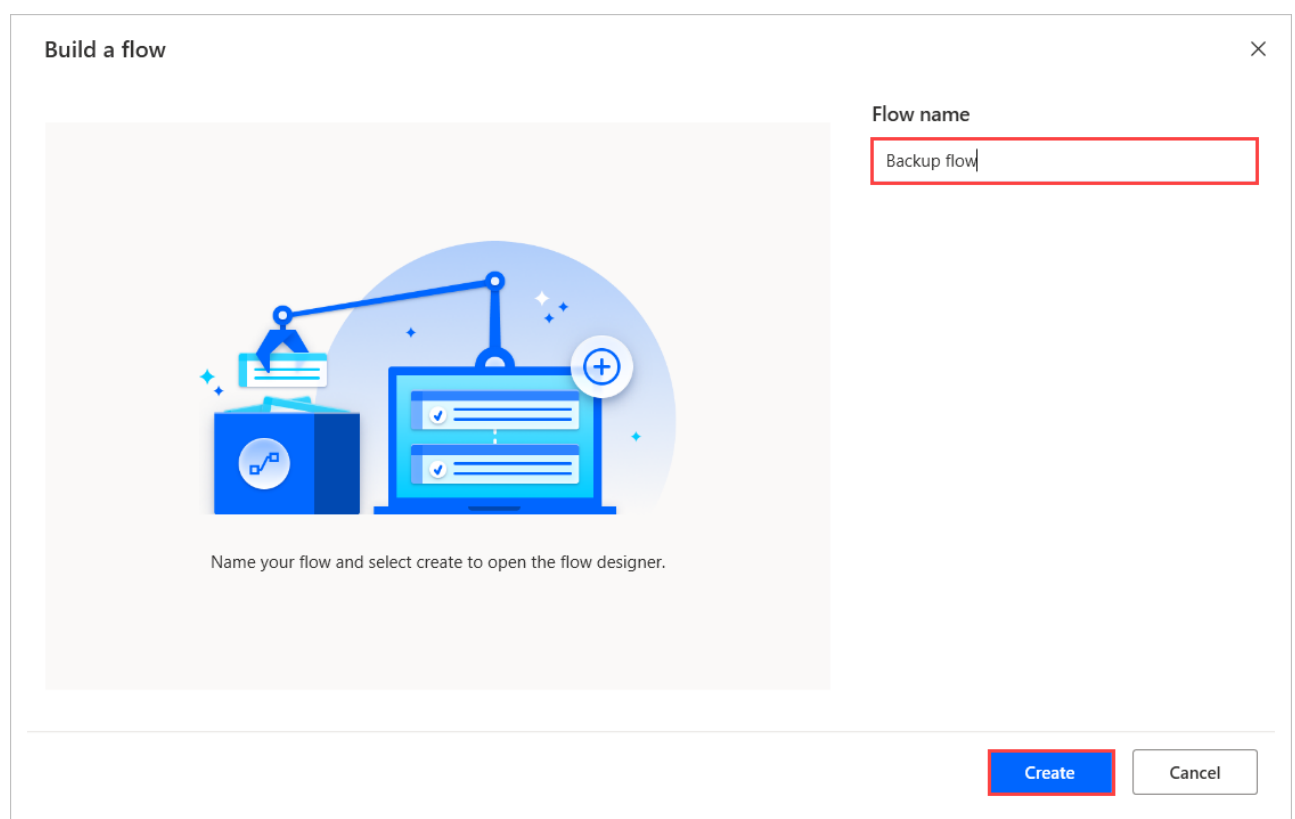
The presented flow creates a backup for all the files in your Documents folder and updates a log file containing their original location.

To create the flow:

  1. Launch Power Automate Desktop and select the **New flow** button in the **Console**.
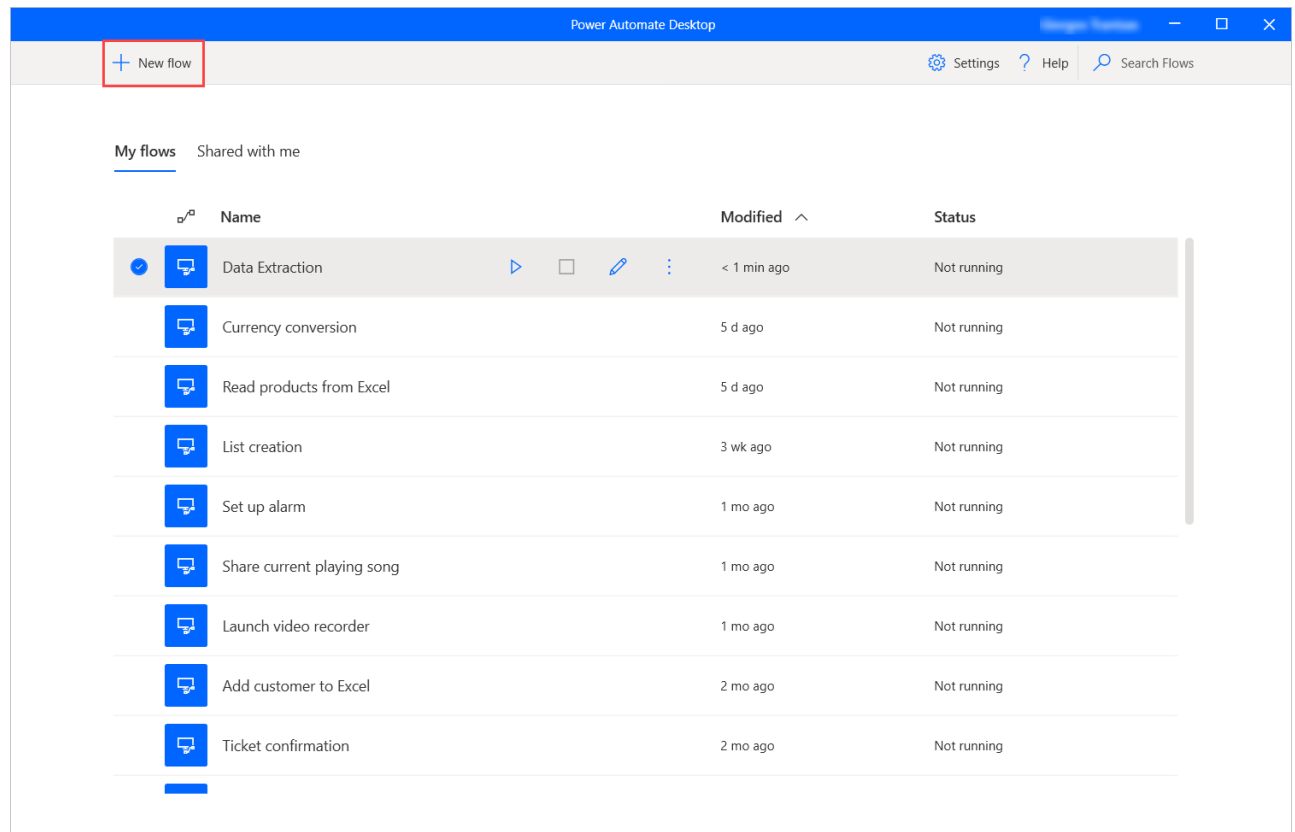
2. Populate a name for the flow and then select the **Create** button. In this example, the flow is named **Backup flow**.

3. When the **Flow designer** is launched, add a **Get special folder** action in the workspace and retrieve the Documents folder's path.

Get special folder   ✕

⭐ Retrieve the path of a Windows' special folder (such as Desktop, My Pictures, Internet Cache, etc.)
    More info

Select parameters

Special folder name: | Desktop   ⌄ | ⓘ

Special folder path: | C:\Users\▮▮▮▮▮▮\Desktop | ⓘ

> Variables produced   SpecialFolderPath

                                                        Save   Cancel

4. Add a **Get files in folder** action to retrieve all the files located in the previously retrieved Documents
   folder. Optionally, set the action to retrieve the files located in subfolders of the selected folder.

Get files in folder   ✕

📑 Retrieve the list of files in a folder More info

Select parameters

Folder: | %SpecialFolderPath%   📂 {x} | ⓘ

File filter: | *   {x} | ⓘ

Include subfolders: 🔵⚪   ⓘ

> Advanced

> Variables produced   Files

🛡 On error   **Save**   Cancel

5. Deploy a **For each** action to access and handle each file of the retrieved list independently.

6. Inside the **For each** loop, add a **Get file path part** action to retrieve the path of the currently selected file.

7. Use a **Write text to file** action to append a new registry in the log file. In this example, the file is called **Logs.txt**, and each registry contains the original path of the copied file.

Write text to file

Write or appends text to a file More info

Select parameters

File path:	D:\Backup\Logs.txt
Text to write:	%Directory%\%FileName%
Append new line:	(toggle on)
If file exists:	Append content
Encoding:	Unicode

On error   Save   Cancel

8. Add a **Copy file** action to copy the currently selected file to the desired location. In this example, the destination folder is called **Backup**.

Copy file(s)

Copy one or more files into a destination folder More info

Select parameters

File(s) to copy:	%CurrentItem%
Destination folder:	D:\Backup
If file exists:	Overwrite

> Variables produced   CopiedFiles

On error   Save   Cancel

9. To test if the flow runs as expected, select the **Run** button on the upper part of the **Flow designer**.

10. To check how every single action is implemented, run the flow step-by-step using the **Run next action** button.

11. If the flow runs as expected, select **Save** and close the **Flow designer** window.
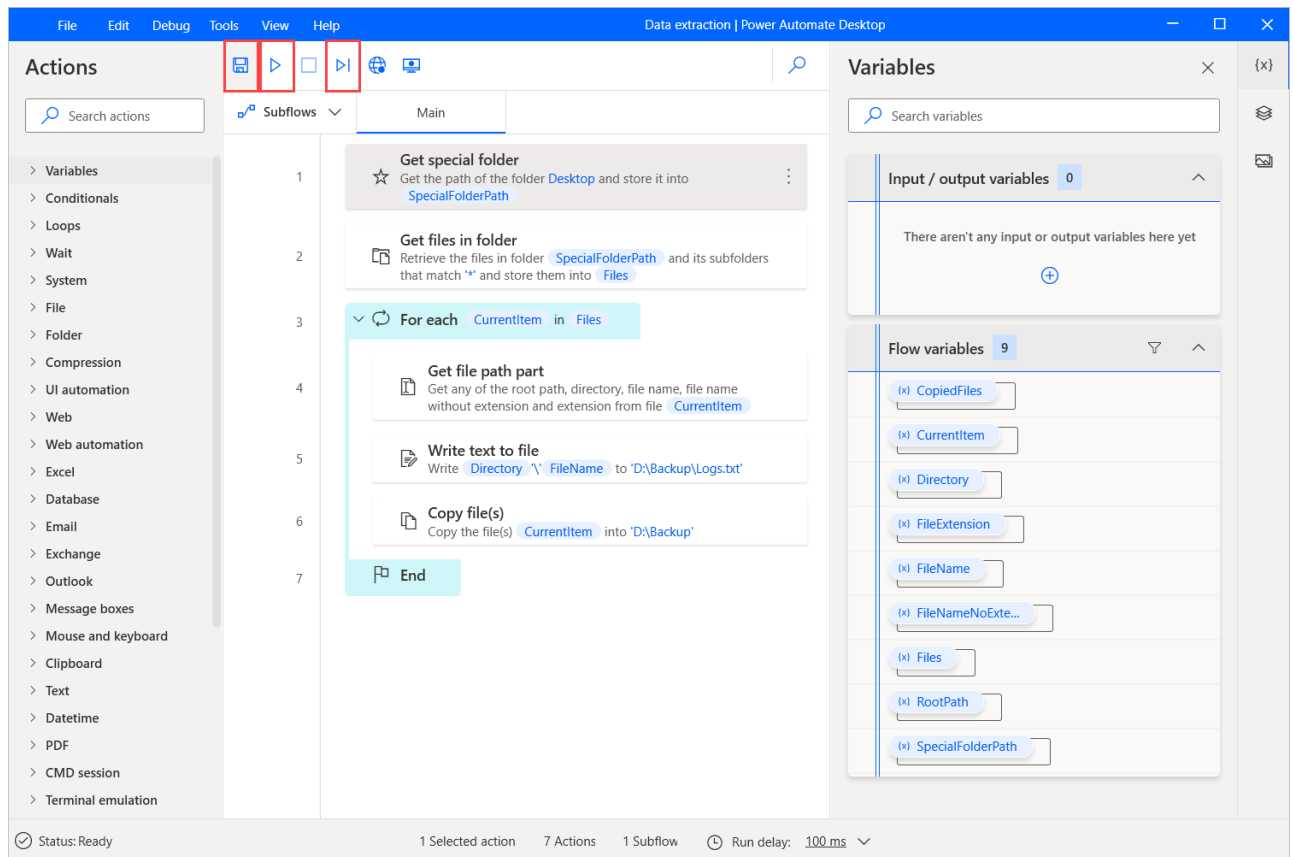
12. Now, you can run your flow directly through the **Run** button in the **Console**. To stop the flow before its completion, select the **Stop** button.
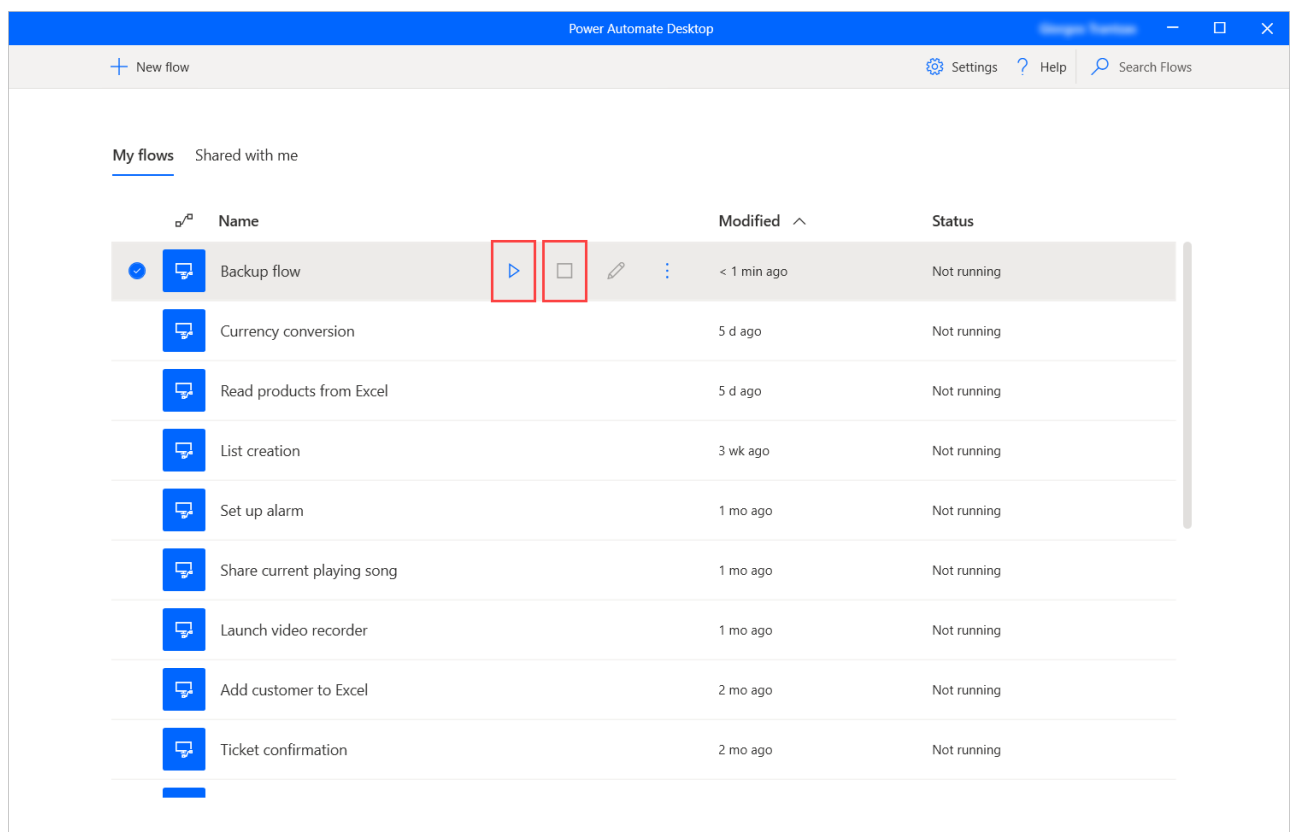
Next Steps

- Learn how to set up Power Automate Desktop.

- Begin your journey in Power Automate Desktop by creating a Power Automate Desktop flow.

- Get familiar with the console and the flow designer, which are part of Power Automate Desktop.

- You'll find the list of actions available in the Actions reference.