

# How to: Create and use custom drive letters for directories in Windows 10.

The subst command on Windows can be used to make a virtual drive that leads to a specific folder - for example, a Z: drive that leads to your documents folder. This is a very good way to partition important parts of your computer for organization and convenience, especially for terminal users.

This guide is for Windows 10 but should work on most other versions of Windows, as the subst command has been a part of Windows for decades and isn't going away any time soon.

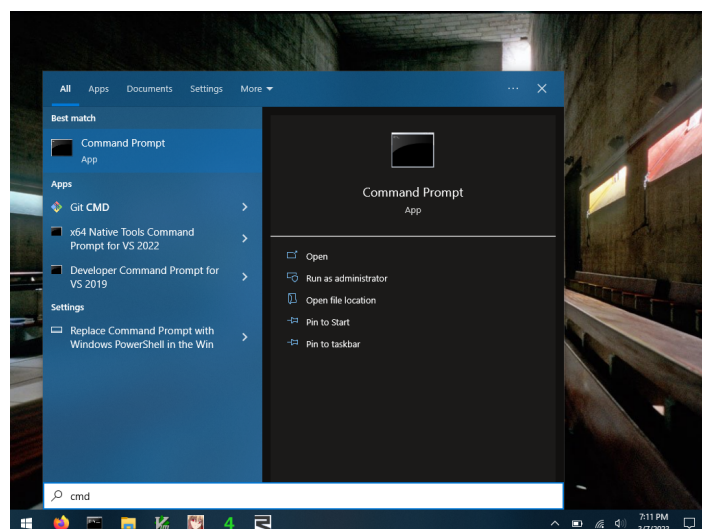
## 1. Run subst command in cmd

### 1.1. Open the terminal

Open the Start Menu either by pressing the Windows Key on your keyboard or by clicking the Windows Button in the left of the taskbar.

Type "cmd" into the search bar.

Press "Enter".



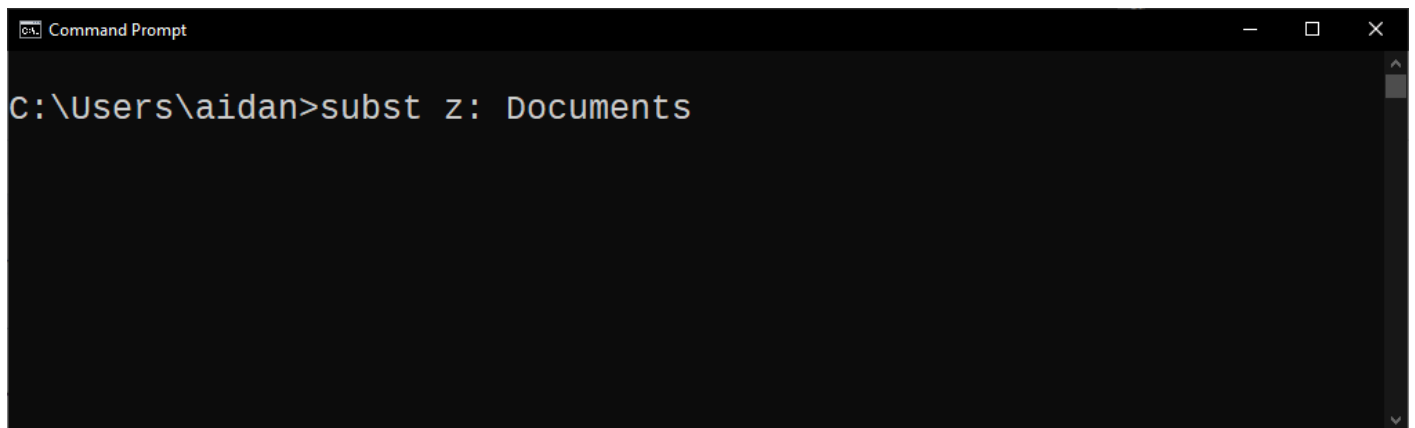
## 1.2. Enter the command

In the terminal:

**Type** "subst [drive letter]: [path]"

[drive letter] can be any letter from A-Z; case doesn't matter. Some letters such as C, however, will already be used.

[path] is the directory you are using the drive name to point to. Cmd opens in your home folder by default, so the path is relative to that.

A screenshot of a Windows Command Prompt window. The title bar at the top says "Command Prompt" with standard window controls. The command prompt shows the current directory as "C:\Users\aidan" and the command "subst z: Documents" has been entered. The cursor is at the end of the command line.

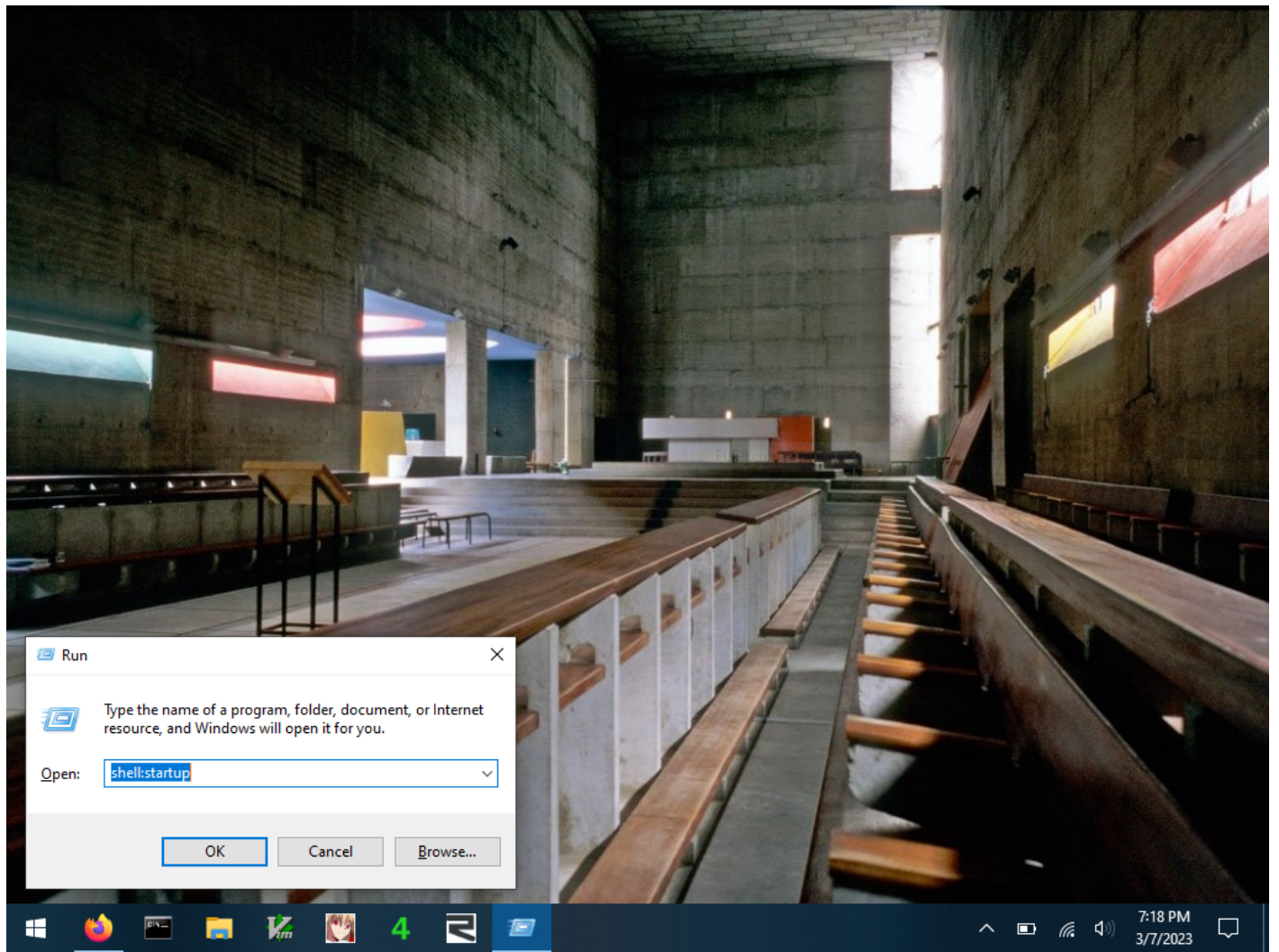
```
C:\Users\aidan>subst z: Documents
```

## 2. Put the command in a startup script

The result of the subst command doesn't stay around after restarting - let's fix that.

### 2.1. Open startup folder

**Press** the Windows Key and R simultaneously. This will open the Windows "run program" prompt



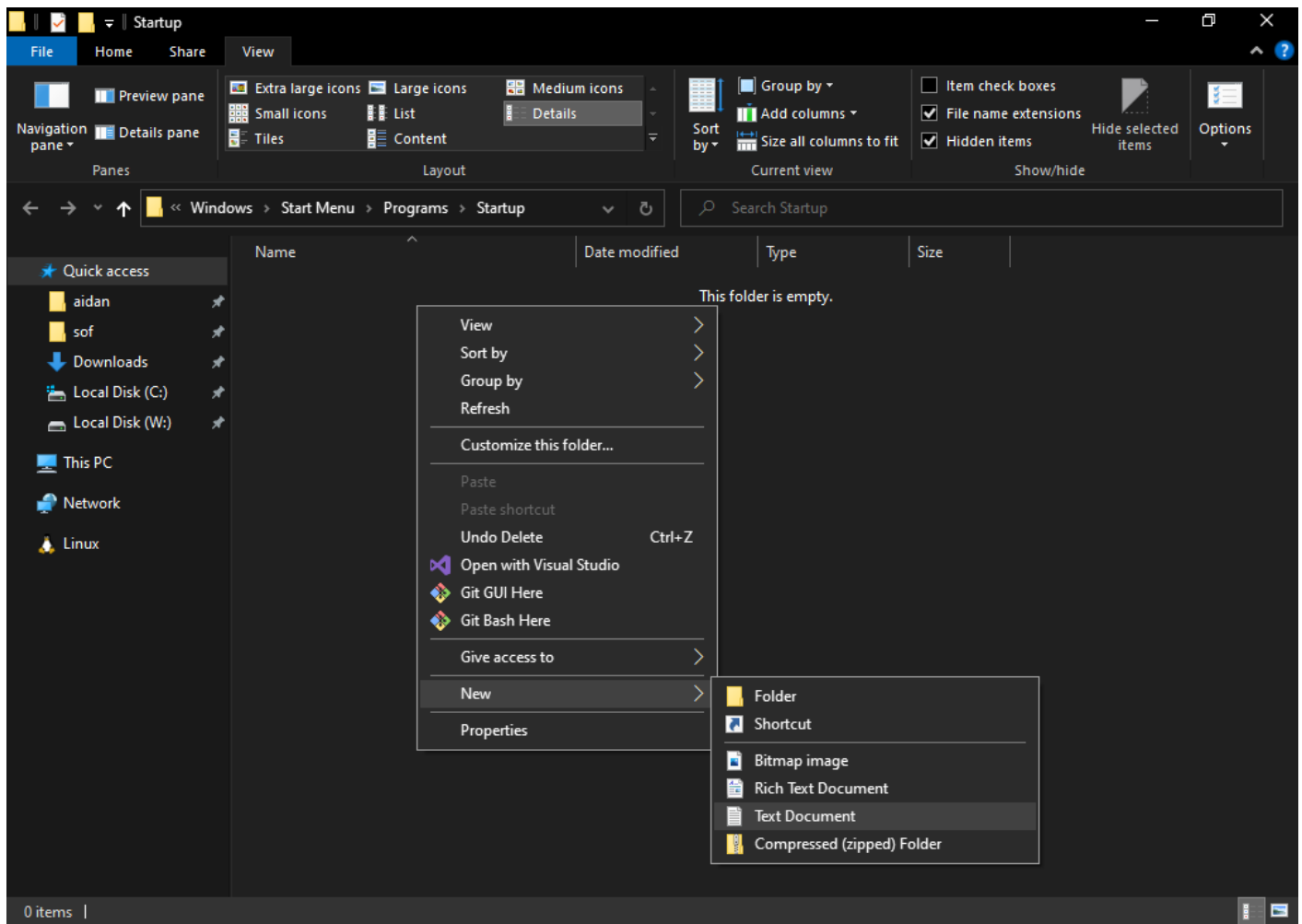
**Type** "shell:startup" in the text prompt and **press** "Enter". This will open the Windows startup folder in the file explorer.

**Caution:** Any file you put in the startup folder will be run every time Windows starts.

## 2.2. Put command in a file

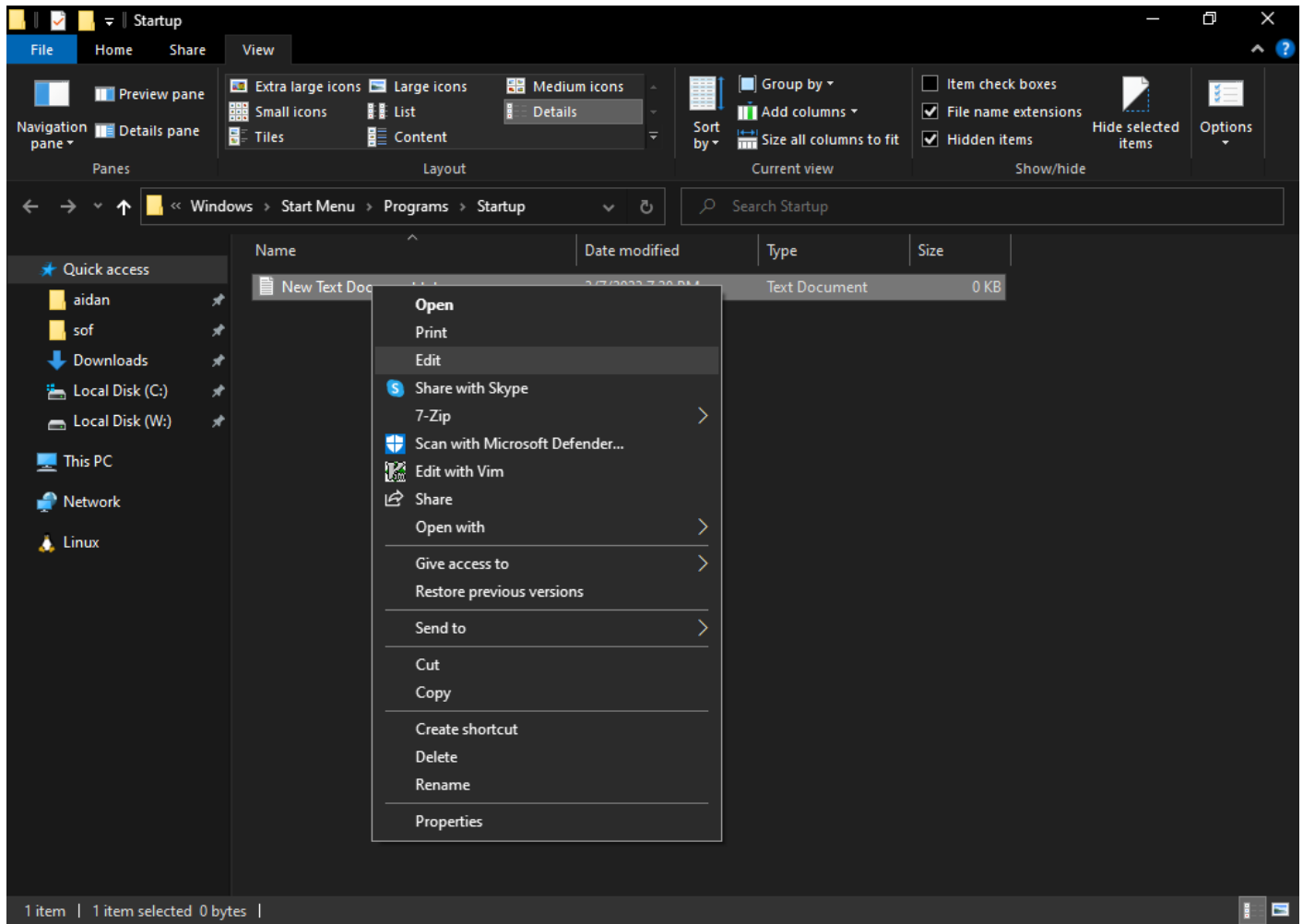
**Make** a new text file in the startup folder.

*Note:* This can be done via the right-click menu. Right-click in an empty area, then select "New" from the menu and then click "Text Document" from the "New" submenu.



**Open** this new file in your text editor.

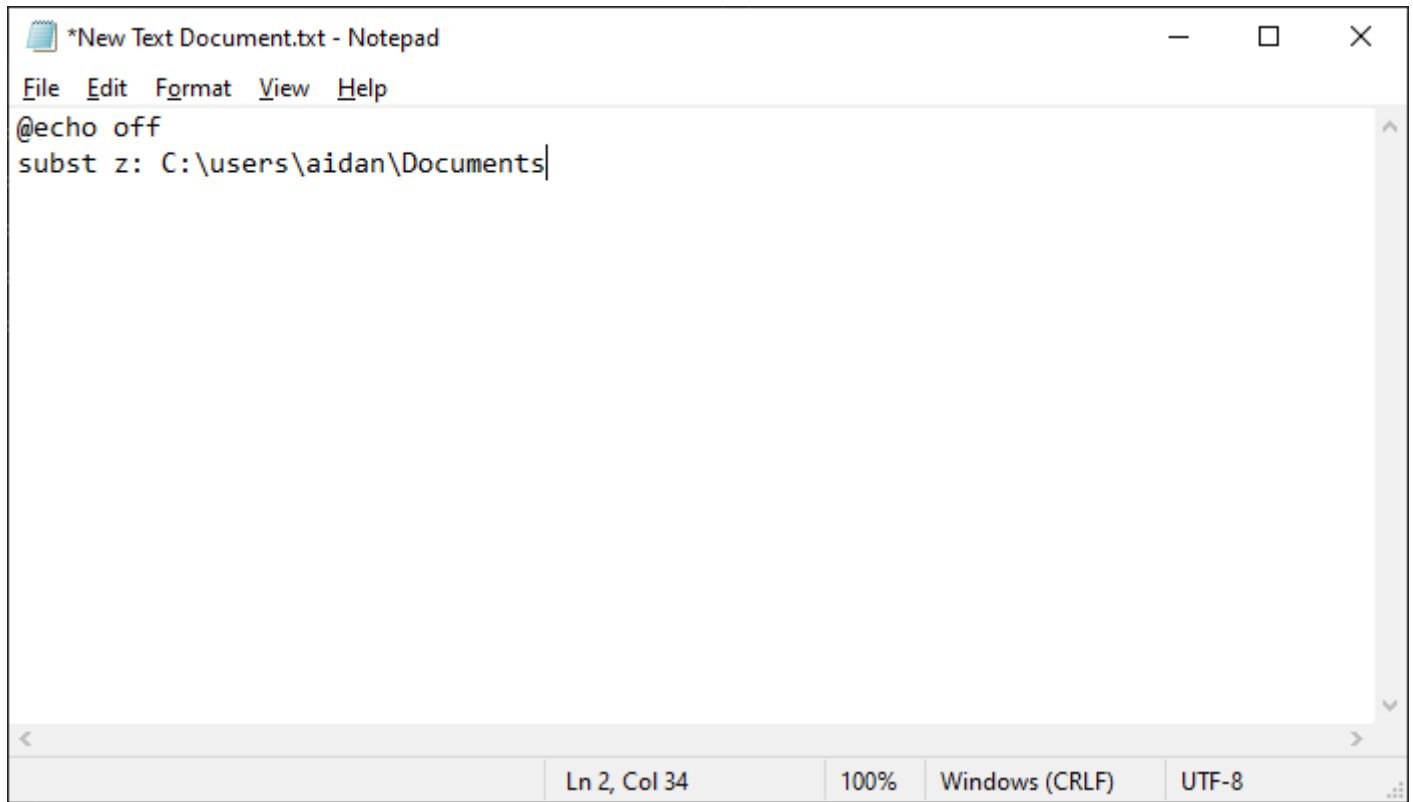
*Note:* This can also be done via the right-click menu. Right-click on the file you just made, then click "Edit."



**Type** "@echo off", **press** "Enter" to make a new line, and then **type** "subst [drive letter] [path]"

*Note:* You can use the same value for [drive letter] as in part 1. For the [path], however, it will have to be an absolute path, since the directory you want to mount isn't in the startup folder.

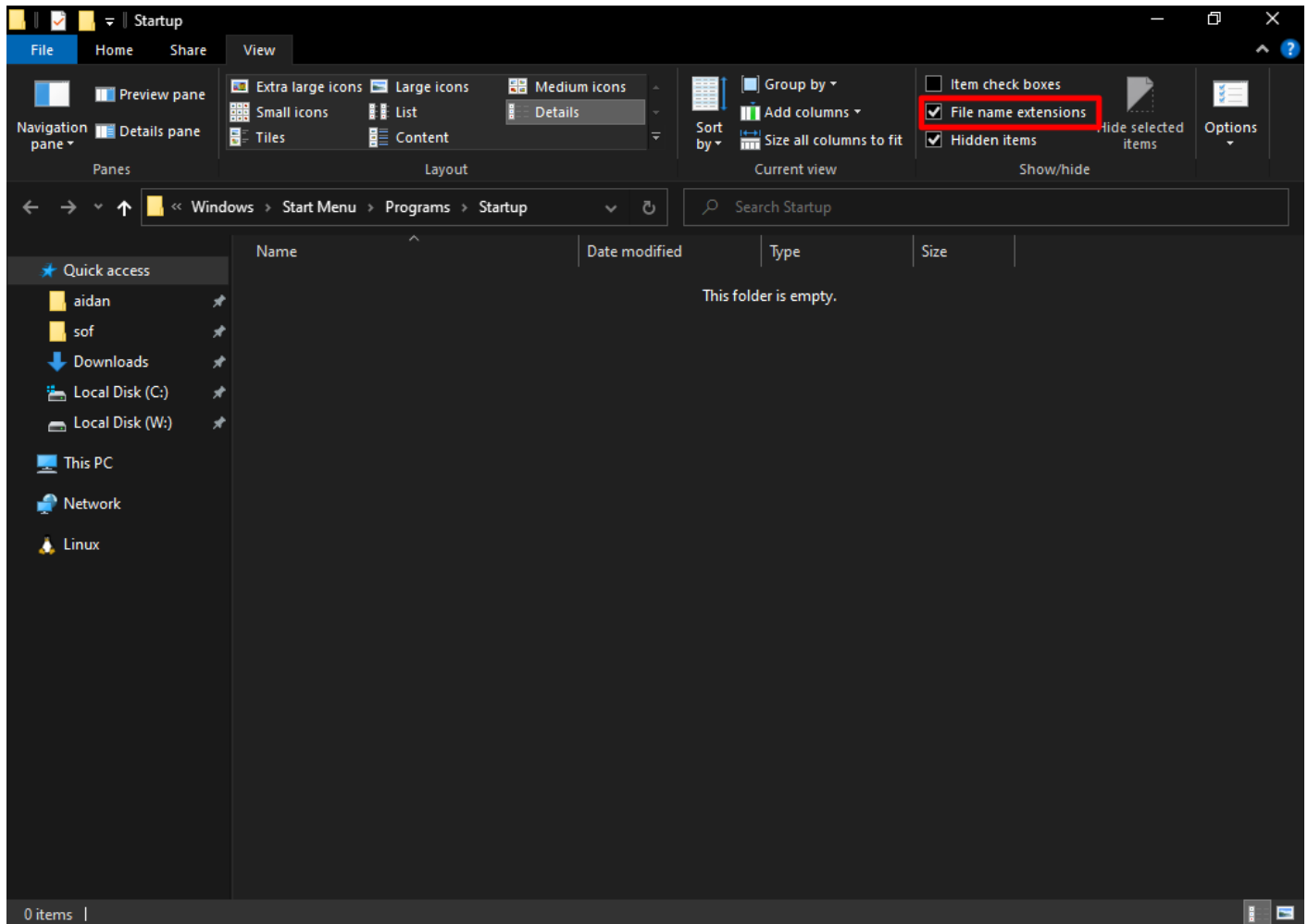
An absolute path is just the path starting from the base of the filesystem, which is probably "C:". So for example, instead of "Documents", you will have to use "C:\Users[Username]\Documents", [Username] being your computer username.



Save and close the file. In notepad, saving is done by pressing "Control" and "S" simultaneously.

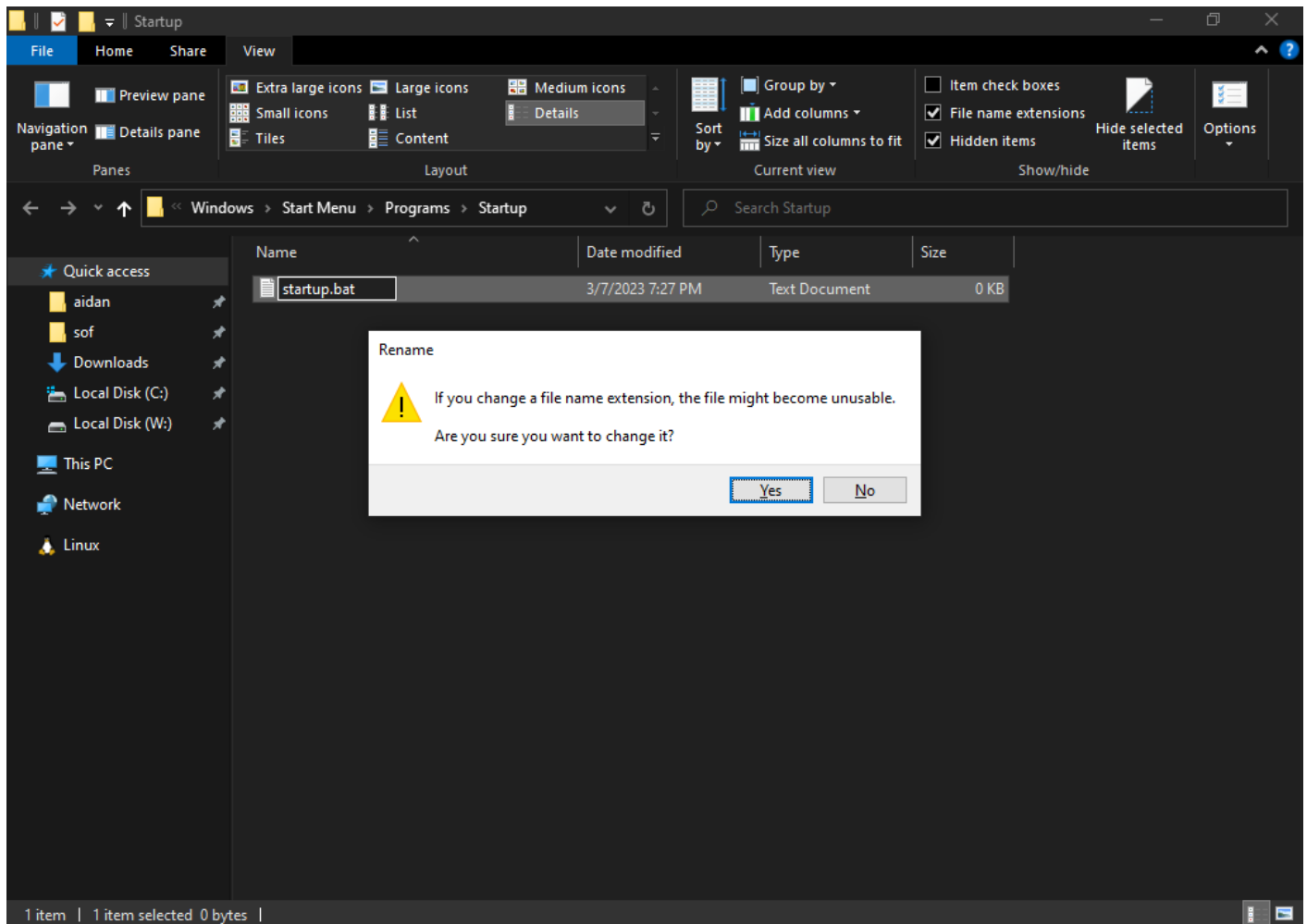
## 2.3. Change the file into a batch file

**Enable** filename extensions in the "File" menu of the file explorer.



**Rename** the file to "startup.bat" or something similar - the only necessary change is the ".bat" part.

You will get a warning saying the file might become unusable if you rename it. Batch files are text-based so this will not be a problem - just click "Yes"

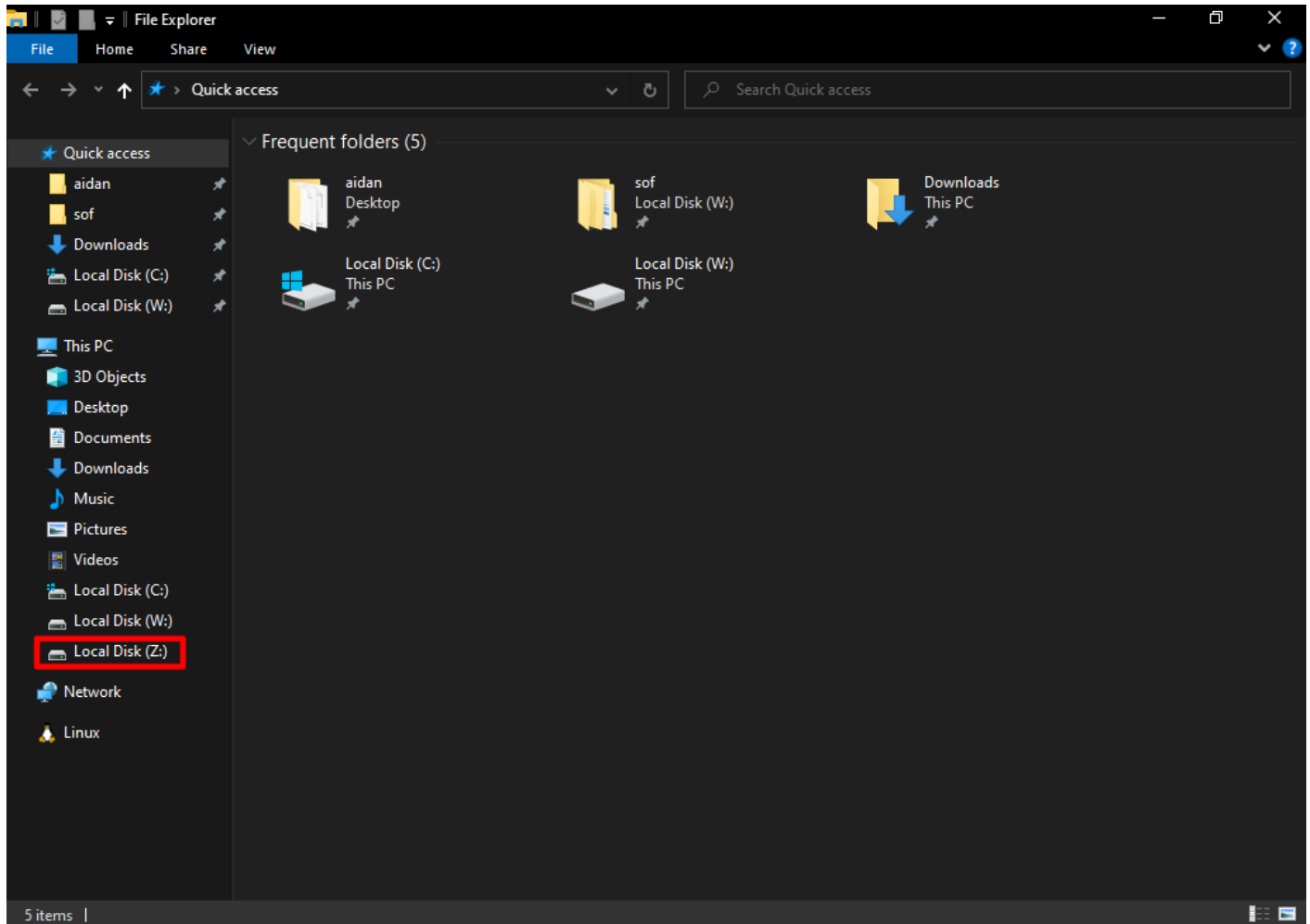




# 3. Accessing the drive

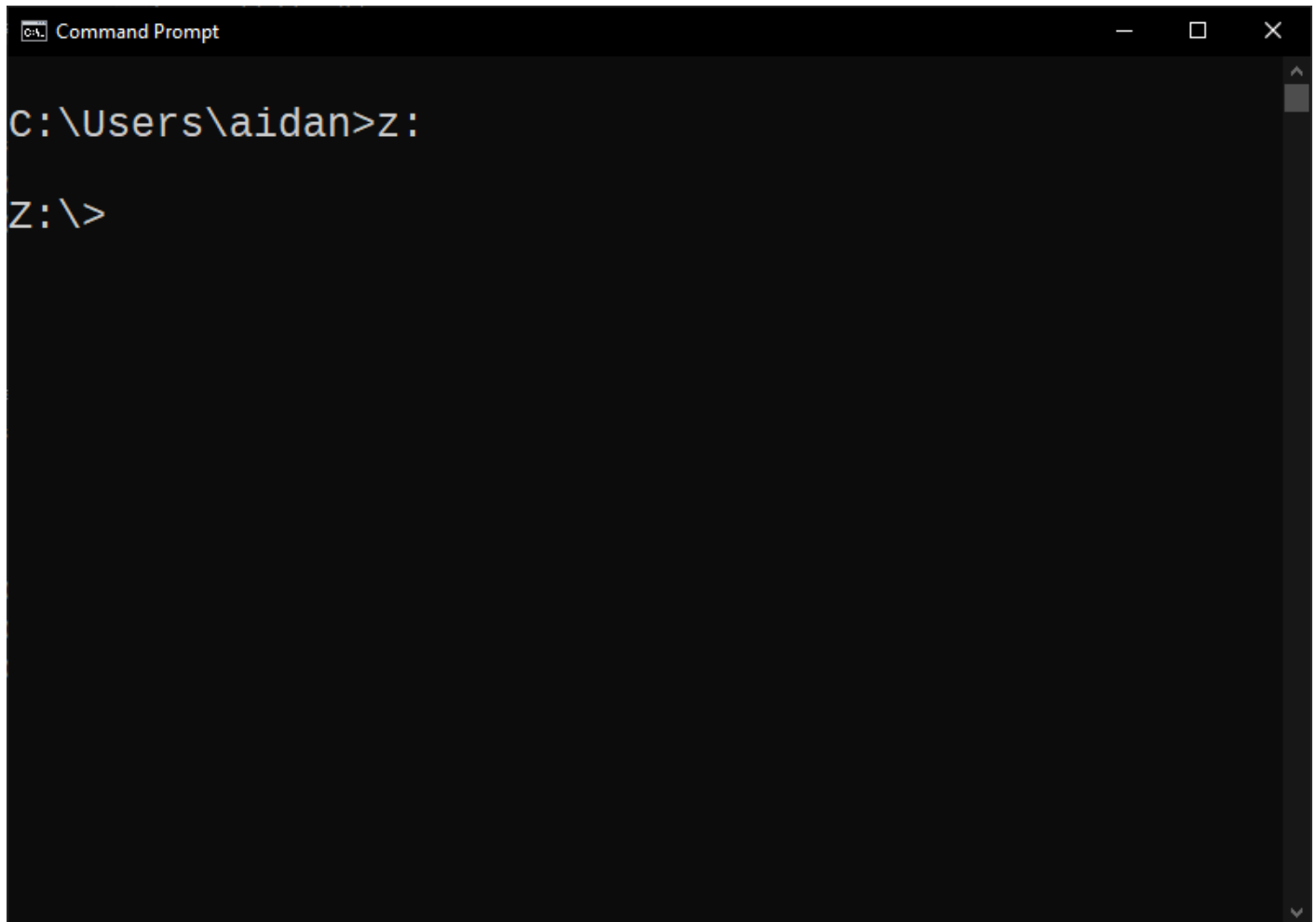
## 3.1. In file explorer

The new drive will be in the left-hand menu in the submenu for "This PC"



### 3.2. In cmd

Just type the drive letter with a colon (i.e. "Z:") to go to the drive. You can't use the cd command with it, so no "cd Z:\Folder\Subfolder".

A screenshot of a Windows Command Prompt window. The title bar at the top says "Command Prompt" with standard window controls. The command prompt shows the current directory as "C:\Users\aidan" and the user has entered the command "z:". The prompt then changes to "Z:\>", indicating that the drive has been successfully mapped. The background is black, and the text is white.

```
C:\Users\aidan>z:
Z:\>
```

And that's all you need to setup a virtual drive pointing to a directory on your Windows computer, for whatever purpose you choose to use it for. You can set up as many of them as there are letters, so 24 minus 1 for your default C: drive, though you should leave a few open as Windows uses letter drives for external storage like flash drives.