

Command Prompt: 11 basic commands you should know (cd, dir, mkdir, etc.)

TUTORIAL by Codrut Neagu

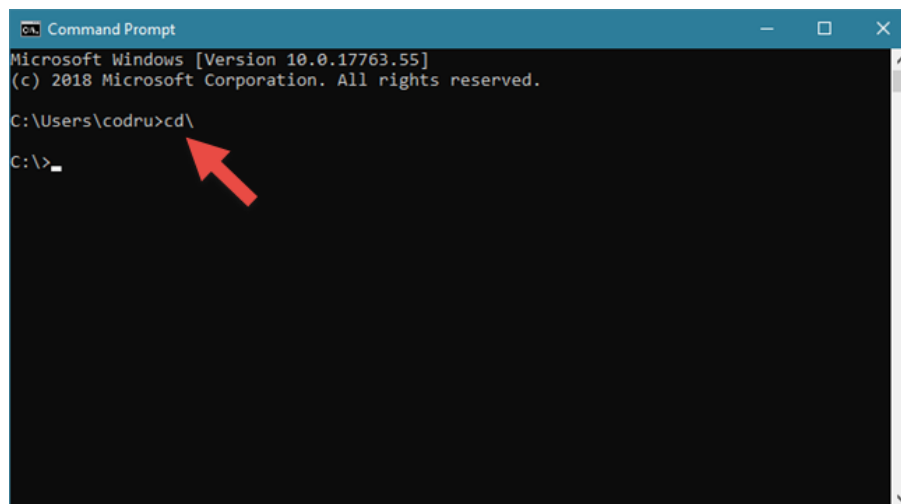
[<https://www.digitalcitizen.life/users/codrut-neagu>] published on 10/18/2018

Geeks and experts love the *Command Prompt* because of the advanced commands it can run. Fortunately, *Command Prompt* is not built only on advanced commands, but also on simple ones, designed to perform basic operations. In this article, we show you how to execute commands such as changing the current directory, switching to another drive, viewing the contents of a directory, creating and renaming folders, copying, deleting files and folders, and launching applications from the *Command Prompt*. We are also going to show you how to get help when using this app for Windows. Let's get started:

NOTE: The information shared in this tutorial applies to Windows 10, Windows 8.1 and Windows 7. Note that, for simplicity, we are using screenshots taken only in Windows 10.

1. How to change the directory (folder) in Command Prompt (CMD)

The first command from the list is *CD (Change Directory)*. This command enables you to change the current directory or, in other words, to navigate to another folder from your PC. For instance, the command *CD* takes you to the top of the directory tree. To see how it works, after you open the *Command Prompt*, type *cd* and press *Enter* on your keyboard. You should see how the *CD* command takes you to the top of the directory tree. In this case, to the "C:" drive.

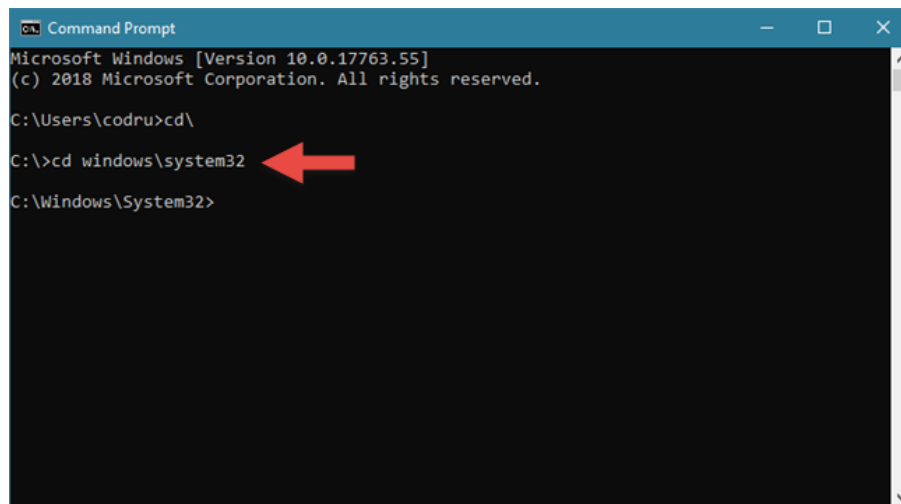


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Going back to the "*CD*" command, now you are working on the root of the "*C:*" drive. If you need to go to a specific folder from this drive run the command "*CD Folder:*" The subfolders must be separated by a backslash character: "**." For instance, when you need to access the *System32* folder located in "*C:\Windows*," type "*cd windows\system32*" as shown below, and then press *Enter* on your keyboard.



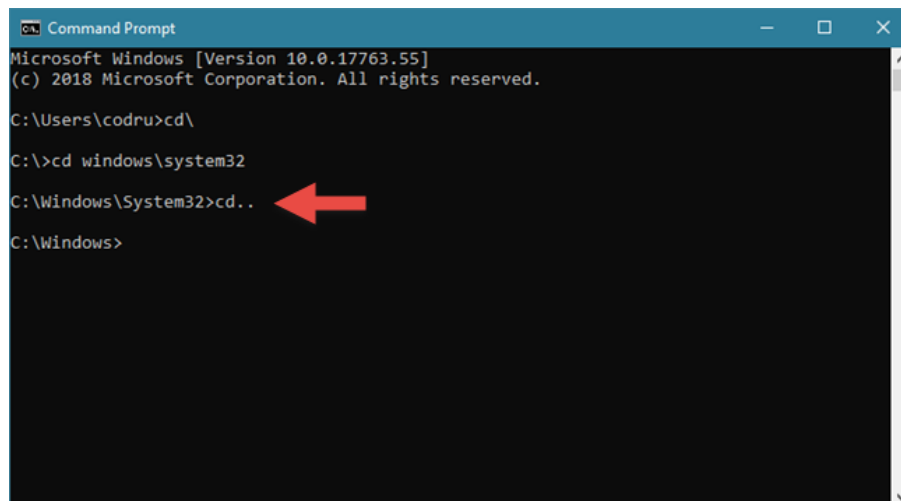
```
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.17763.55]
(c) 2018 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\codru>cd\

C:\>cd windows\system32
C:\Windows\System32>
```

Running the CD command to change the directory to a specific folder

When you need to go one folder up, use the "*cd..*" command. Let's assume that you want to go back to the *Windows* folder. Type "*cd..*" and press *Enter* on your keyboard.



```
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.17763.55]
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C:\Users\codru>cd\

C:\>cd windows\system32

C:\Windows\System32>cd..
C:\Windows>
```

Running the CD.. command to go up one level in the directory tree

The effect is that your current directory changes to "*C:\Windows*."

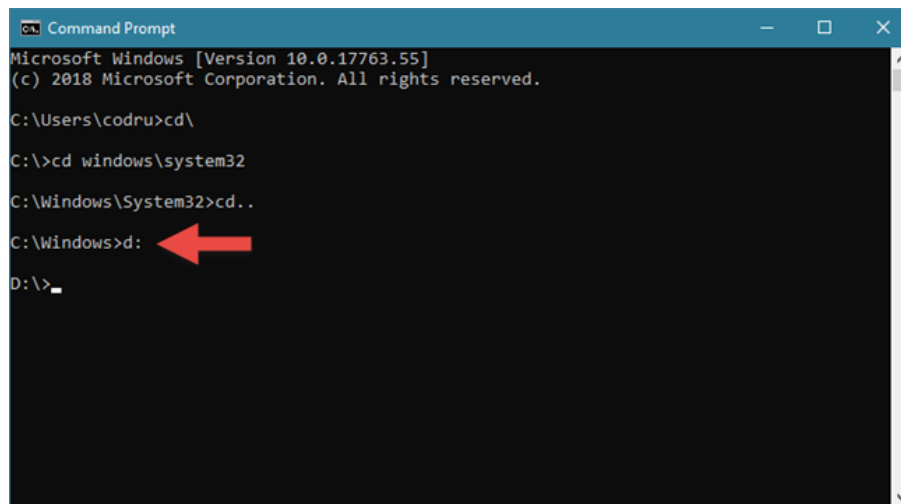
2. How to change the drive in Command Prompt (CMD)

To access another drive, type the drive's letter, followed by ":\". For instance, if you wanted to change the drive from "*C:*" to "*D:*", you should type "*d:*" and then press *Enter* on your keyboard.

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```
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.17763.55]
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C:\Users\codru>cd\

C:\>cd windows\system32

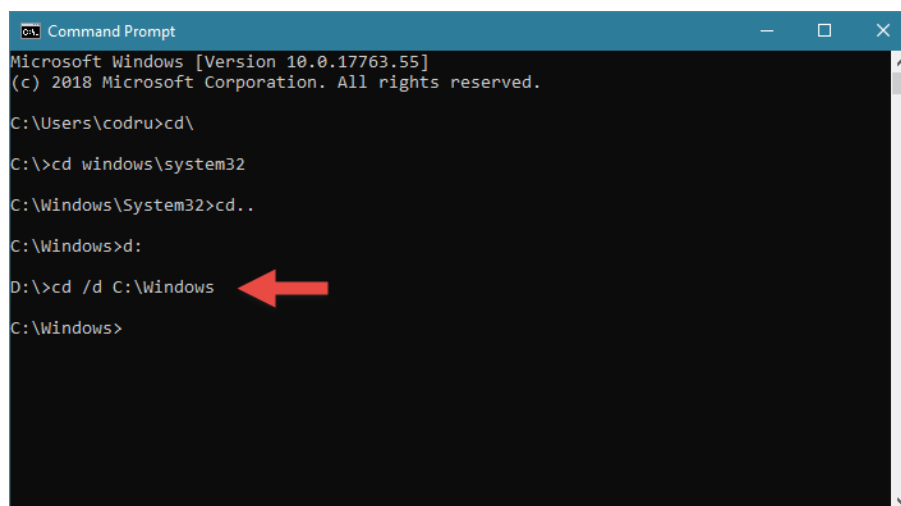
C:\Windows\System32>cd..

C:\Windows>d:
D:\>
```

Changing the drive in Command Prompt

To change the drive and the directory at the same time, use the `cd` command, followed by the `/d` switch. The `/d` parameter is used to change the current drive to a specific folder from another disk volume.

For instance, if you are now on the "D:" drive and you want to go back to the *Windows* folder from the "C:" drive, you should type `cd /d C:\Windows` and press *Enter* on your keyboard, like in the following screenshot.



```
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.17763.55]
(c) 2018 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\codru>cd\

C:\>cd windows\system32

C:\Windows\System32>cd..

C:\Windows>d:
D:\>cd /d C:\Windows
C:\Windows>
```

Changing the drive and directory in Command Prompt

NOTE: By typing only the drive letter you automatically move to your most recent location on that drive. For instance, if you are on "D:" drive and type `cd c:\windows` nothing seems to happen. However, if you type `c:` then the working folder changes to `c:\windows`, assuming that it was the last folder you worked with on your "C:" drive.

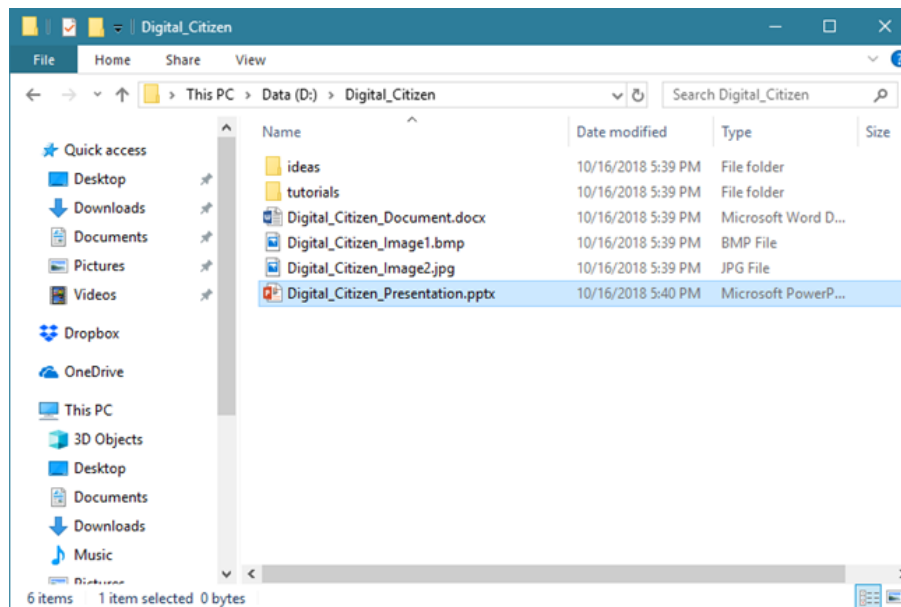
3. How to view the contents of a directory in Command Prompt (CMD)

You can view the contents of a folder by using a command called *DIR*. To test it, we have created a folder named *Digital Citizen* on the D: drive, with several

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A folder found in the root of the D drive

The last time, our working folder was "C:\Windows." To navigate to the folder mentioned above, we have to use the command "`cd /d D:\Digital_Citizen`." To view the contents of the folder, type `DIR`, and press `Enter`. The list of the files and folders contained by it is displayed, together with some details about each of them (the size and the date and time when they were last modified).

```

D:\>cd /d C:\Windows
C:\Windows>cd /d D:\Digital_Citizen
D:\Digital_Citizen>dir
Volume in drive D is Data
Volume Serial Number is BC92-9461

Directory of D:\Digital_Citizen

10/16/2018  05:40 PM  <DIR>          .
10/16/2018  05:40 PM  <DIR>          ..
10/16/2018  05:39 PM                0 Digital_Citizen_Document.docx
10/16/2018  05:39 PM                0 Digital_Citizen_Image1.bmp
10/16/2018  05:39 PM                0 Digital_Citizen_Image2.jpg
10/16/2018  05:40 PM                0 Digital_Citizen_Presentation.pptx
10/16/2018  05:39 PM  <DIR>          ideas
10/16/2018  05:39 PM  <DIR>          tutorials
                  4 File(s)                0 bytes
                  4 Dir(s)  28,134,957,056 bytes free

D:\Digital_Citizen>
  
```

Using the DIR command to see the contents of a directory

4. How to create a new directory with Command Prompt (CMD)

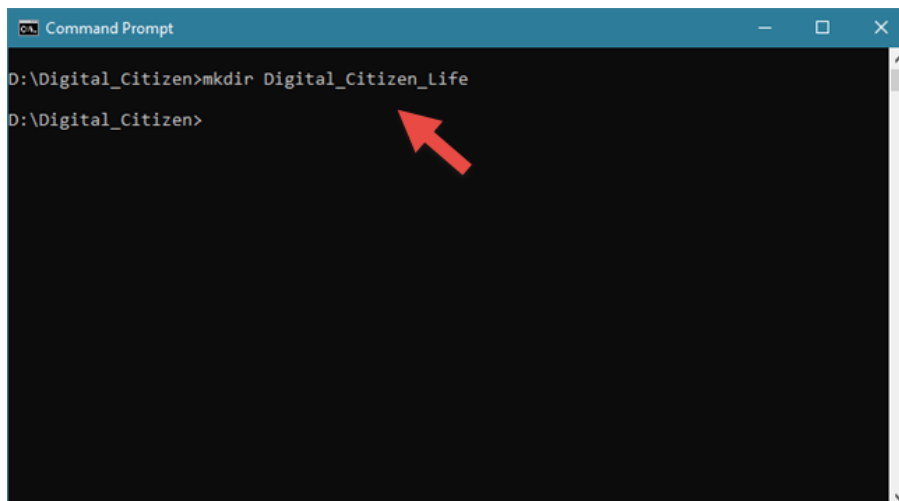
You can make a new folder using the `MKDIR` (*Make Directory*) or the `MD` command. The syntax of these commands is "`MKDIR Folder`" or "`MD Folder`."

Let's say we need to create a new folder called `Digital_Citizen_Life` that is going to be placed in the "`D:\Digital_Citizen`" folder. To do that, we need to type "`mkdir Digital_Citizen_Life`" and then press `Enter`, as shown below.

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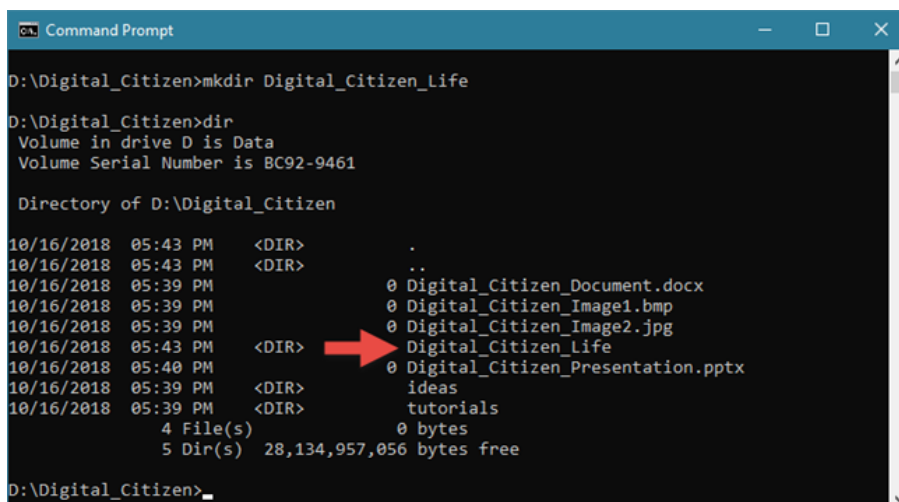


```
Command Prompt
D:\Digital_Citizen>mkdir Digital_Citizen_Life
D:\Digital_Citizen>
```

A red arrow points to the newly created folder 'Digital_Citizen_Life' in the directory listing.

The MKDIR command, in Command Prompt

To test if it worked, use the *DIR* command again. The newly created folder appears in the list.



```
Command Prompt
D:\Digital_Citizen>mkdir Digital_Citizen_Life
D:\Digital_Citizen>dir
Volume in drive D is Data
Volume Serial Number is BC92-9461

Directory of D:\Digital_Citizen

10/16/2018  05:43 PM  <DIR>          .
10/16/2018  05:43 PM  <DIR>          ..
10/16/2018  05:39 PM                0 Digital_Citizen_Document.docx
10/16/2018  05:39 PM                0 Digital_Citizen_Image1.bmp
10/16/2018  05:39 PM                0 Digital_Citizen_Image2.jpg
10/16/2018  05:43 PM  <DIR>          Digital_Citizen_Life
10/16/2018  05:40 PM                0 Digital_Citizen_Presentation.pptx
10/16/2018  05:39 PM  <DIR>          ideas
10/16/2018  05:39 PM  <DIR>          tutorials
                    4 File(s)              0 bytes
                    5 Dir(s)  28,134,957,056 bytes free

D:\Digital_Citizen>
```

A red arrow points to the 'Digital_Citizen_Life' directory in the list.

Using DIR to see the contents of the directory, in Command Prompt

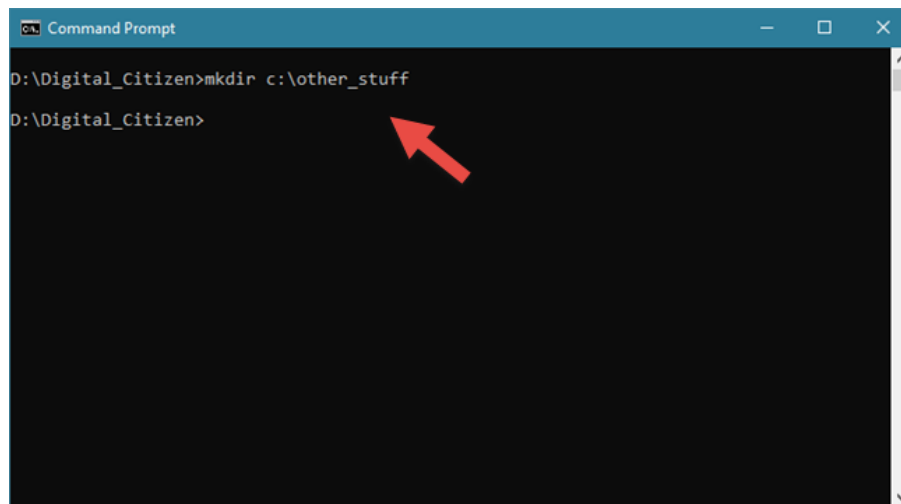
NOTE: Do not forget that all these commands depend on the current location in the *Command Prompt*. For instance, if you are on the "C:" drive and type "*MKDIR test*," the new folder is created in the root of the "C:" drive.

Another way to create a folder that does not involve being in the desired folder is to type the complete path of the new folder. For example, if you are working on the "D:" drive and you want to create a new folder in "C:," called *other_stuff*, type "*mkdir c:\other_stuff*" and then press *Enter*.

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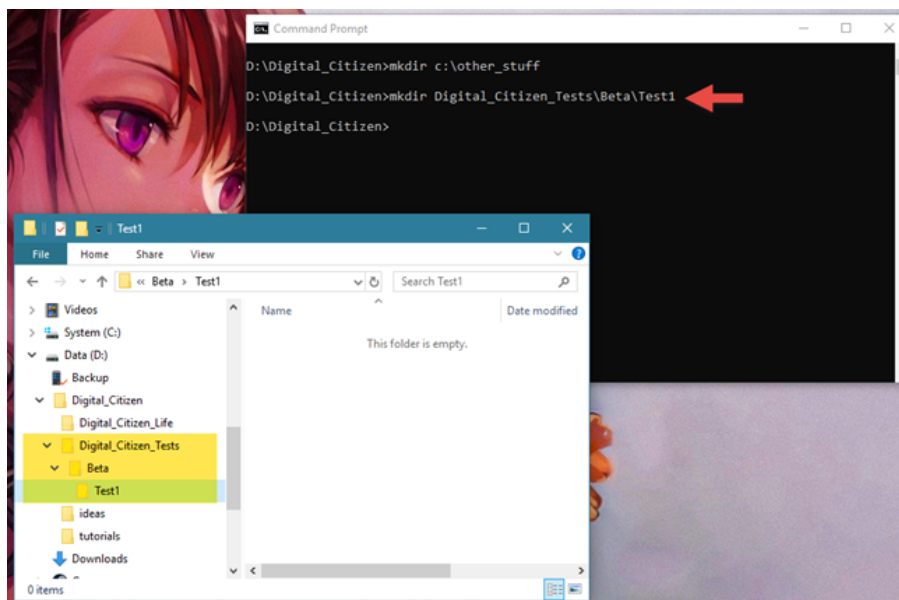
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Using MKDIR to create a new directory, with a full path

When you need to create a folder with subfolders at the same time, you can use the "MKDIR Folder\Subfolder" command. For instance, if we type "mkdir Digital_Citizen_Tests\Beta\Test1" three folders are created: Digital_Citizen_Tests, Beta and Test1, in a tree-like structure.



Creating a folder with subfolders, using MKDIR in Command Prompt

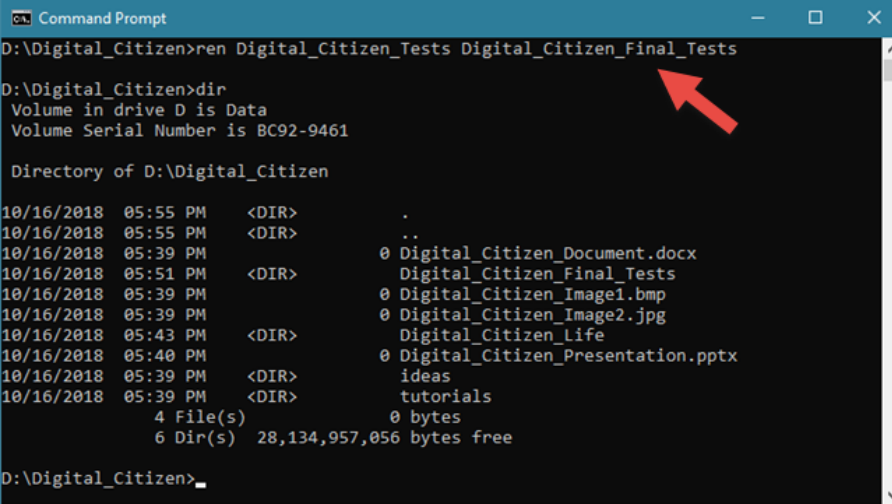
5. How to rename files and folders with Command Prompt (CMD)

To rename files and folders, you need to use the *REN* (*Rename*) command. To rename folders, type "ren Folder NewFolderName." For example, if we wanted to rename the *Digital_Citizen_Tests* folder to *Digital_Citizen_Final_Tests*, we should run "ren Digital_Citizen_Tests Digital_Citizen_Final_Tests" and press *Enter*.

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```

D:\Digital_Citizen>ren Digital_Citizen_Tests Digital_Citizen_Final_Tests

D:\Digital_Citizen>dir
Volume in drive D is Data
Volume Serial Number is BC92-9461

Directory of D:\Digital_Citizen

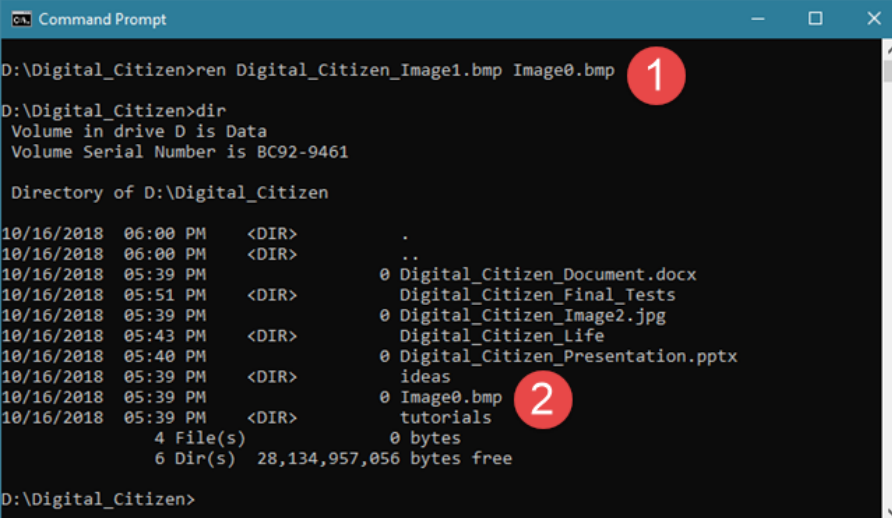
10/16/2018  05:55 PM  <DIR>          .
10/16/2018  05:55 PM  <DIR>          ..
10/16/2018  05:39 PM               0 Digital_Citizen_Document.docx
10/16/2018  05:51 PM  <DIR>          Digital_Citizen_Final_Tests
10/16/2018  05:39 PM               0 Digital_Citizen_Image1.bmp
10/16/2018  05:39 PM               0 Digital_Citizen_Image2.jpg
10/16/2018  05:43 PM  <DIR>          Digital_Citizen_Life
10/16/2018  05:40 PM               0 Digital_Citizen_Presentation.pptx
10/16/2018  05:39 PM  <DIR>          ideas
10/16/2018  05:39 PM  <DIR>          tutorials
                    4 File(s)              0 bytes
                    6 Dir(s)  28,134,957,056 bytes free

D:\Digital_Citizen>

```

Renaming folders with the REN command, in Command Prompt

To rename a file, use the same command, like this: "*ren filename.extension newname.extension*". For instance, to rename the *Digital_Citizen_Picture1.bmp* file to *Image0.bmp*, we have to run the command "*ren Digital_Citizen_Image1.bmp Image0.bmp*" command.



```

D:\Digital_Citizen>ren Digital_Citizen_Image1.bmp Image0.bmp

D:\Digital_Citizen>dir
Volume in drive D is Data
Volume Serial Number is BC92-9461

Directory of D:\Digital_Citizen

10/16/2018  06:00 PM  <DIR>          .
10/16/2018  06:00 PM  <DIR>          ..
10/16/2018  05:39 PM               0 Digital_Citizen_Document.docx
10/16/2018  05:51 PM  <DIR>          Digital_Citizen_Final_Tests
10/16/2018  05:39 PM               0 Digital_Citizen_Image2.jpg
10/16/2018  05:43 PM  <DIR>          Digital_Citizen_Life
10/16/2018  05:40 PM               0 Digital_Citizen_Presentation.pptx
10/16/2018  05:39 PM  <DIR>          ideas
10/16/2018  05:39 PM               0 Image0.bmp
10/16/2018  05:39 PM  <DIR>          tutorials
                    4 File(s)              0 bytes
                    6 Dir(s)  28,134,957,056 bytes free

D:\Digital_Citizen>

```

Renaming files with the REN command, in Command Prompt

Read the second page of this tutorial if you want to learn how to copy files and folders, delete files and folders, start an application and get help when using the Command Prompt.

1 2 NEXT >

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