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PROGRAMMING» PYTHON

How to Use Windows Command Prompt to Run a Python File

Written by Jack Lloyd

Last Updated: July 14, 2020

 Tested

This wikiHow teaches you how to open a Python file with your Windows computer's built-in Command Prompt program. In most cases, you can do this without any trouble as long as you have Python installed. If you installed an old version of Python or you used a custom installation which didn't add the "python" command to your computer's list of "Path" variables, you'll need to add Python to the "Path" variables list before you can run a Python file via Command Prompt.

**PARTS**

- 1 [Finding the Python File Path](#)
- 2 [Running a Python File](#)
- 3 [Adding Python to the PATH List](#)

OTHER SECTIONS

- [Questions & Answers](#)
[Related Articles](#)

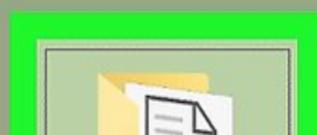
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1

Finding the Python File Path





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Part
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Finding the Python File Path

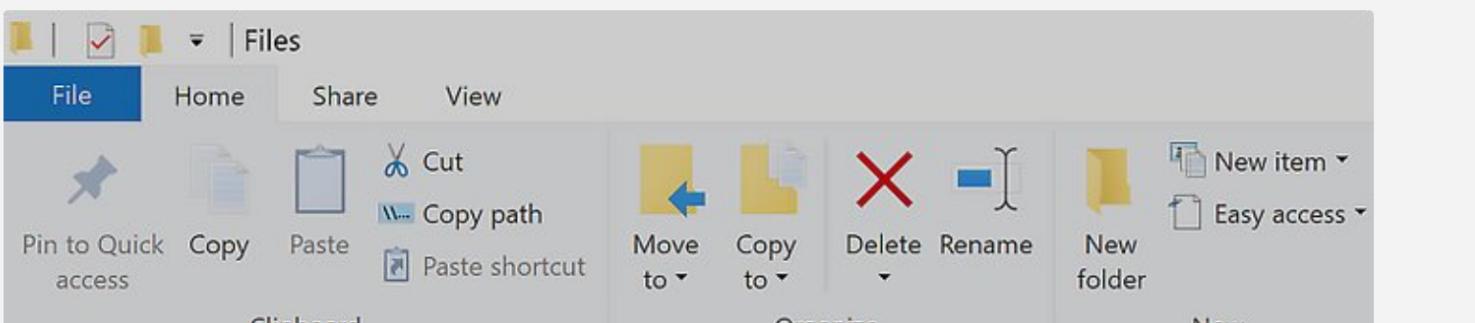


wikiHow to Use Windows Command Prompt to Run a Python File

1 Go to the Python file's location. Find the Python file that you want to open in Command Prompt.

- If you already know the folder path to the Python file you want to open, skip ahead to [opening the file in Command Prompt](#).

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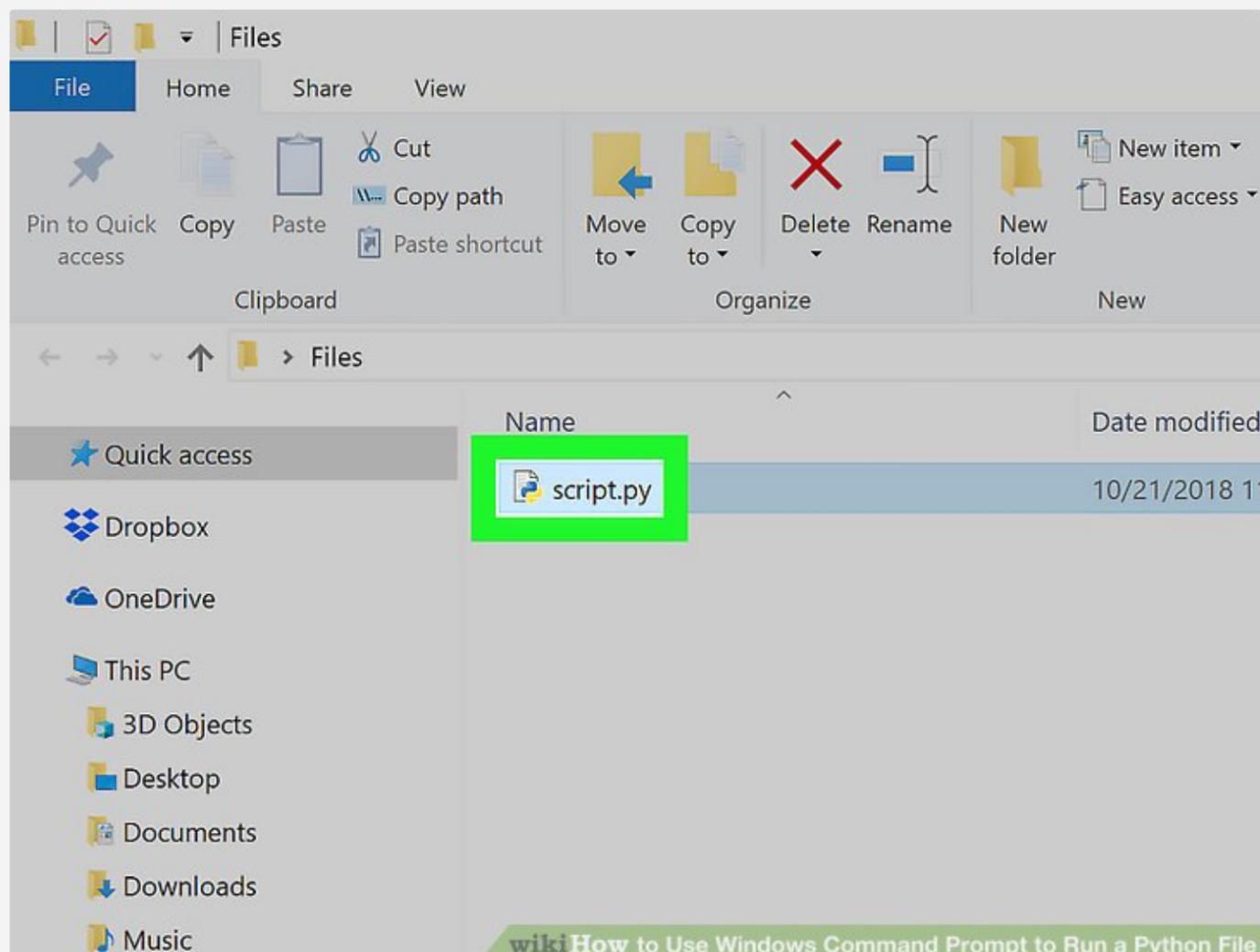
Part
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Finding the Python File Path

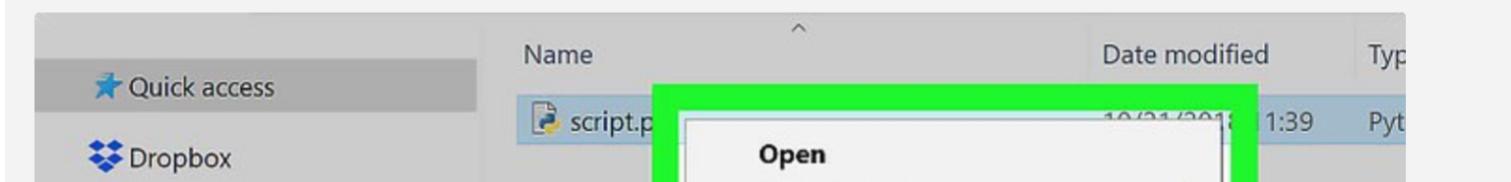
1 Go to the Python file's location. Find the Python file that you want to open in Command Prompt.

- If you already know the folder path to the Python file you want to open, skip ahead to [opening the file in Command Prompt](#).

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2 Select the Python file. Click once the Python file for which you want to see the folder path.



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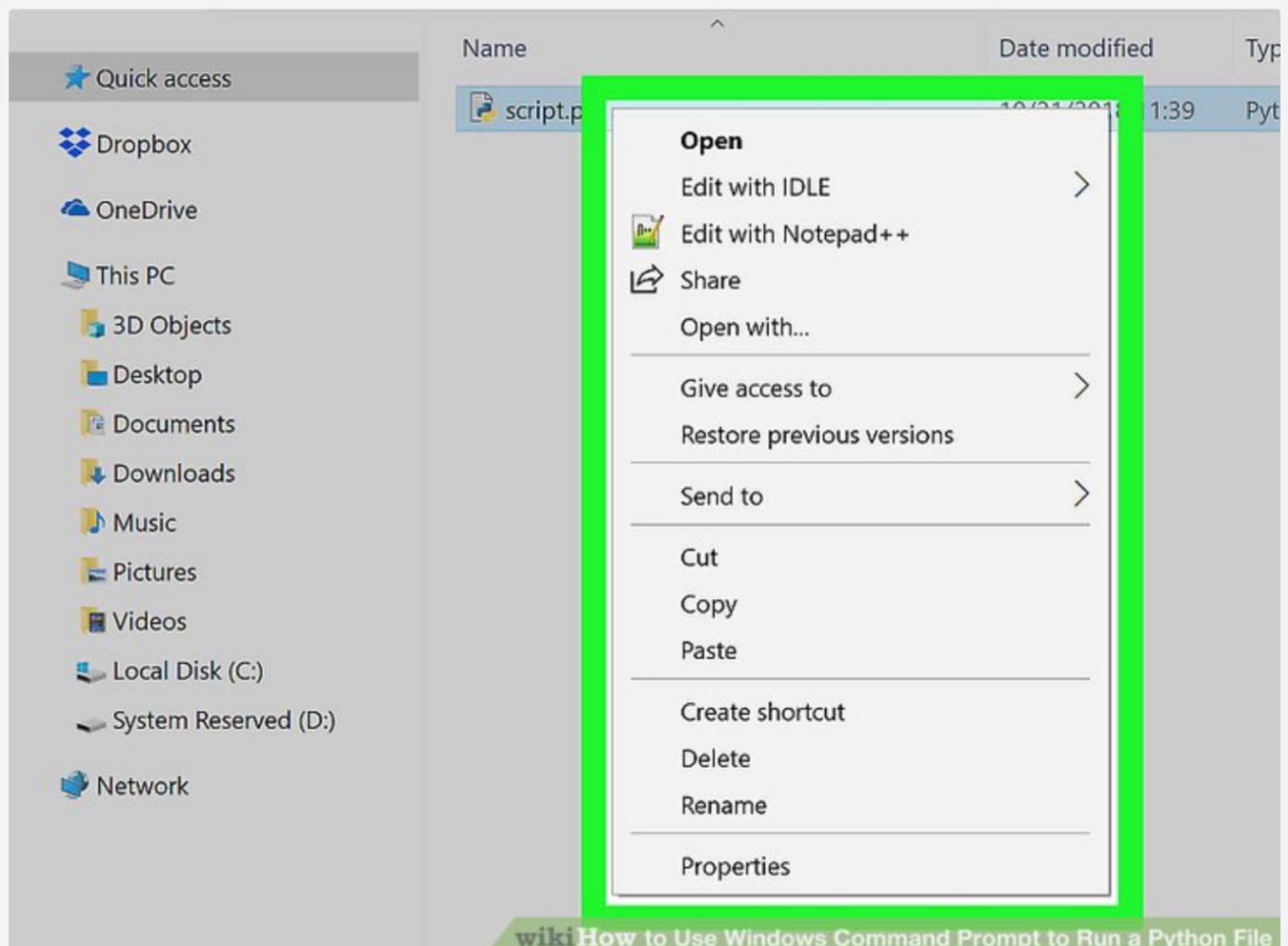
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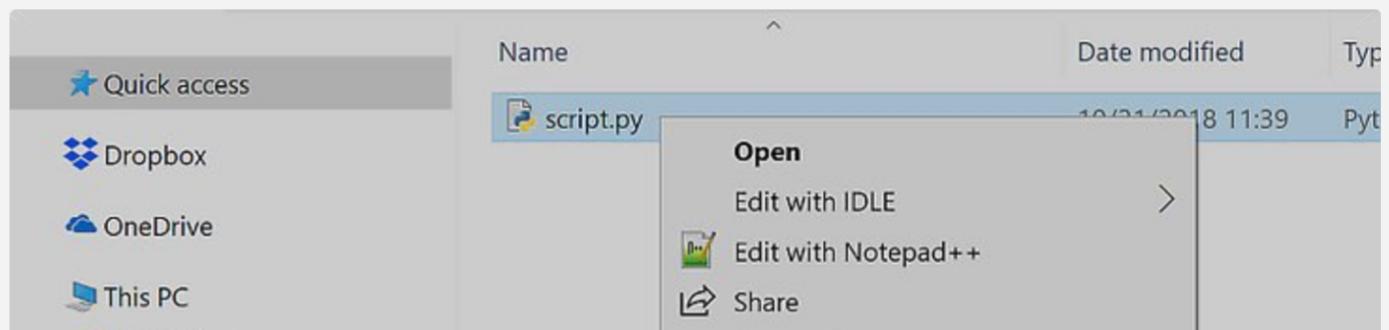
Part
1

Finding the Python File Path

- 2** Select the Python file. Click once the Python file for which you want to see the folder path.



- 3** Right-click the Python file. Doing so prompts a drop-down menu to appear.





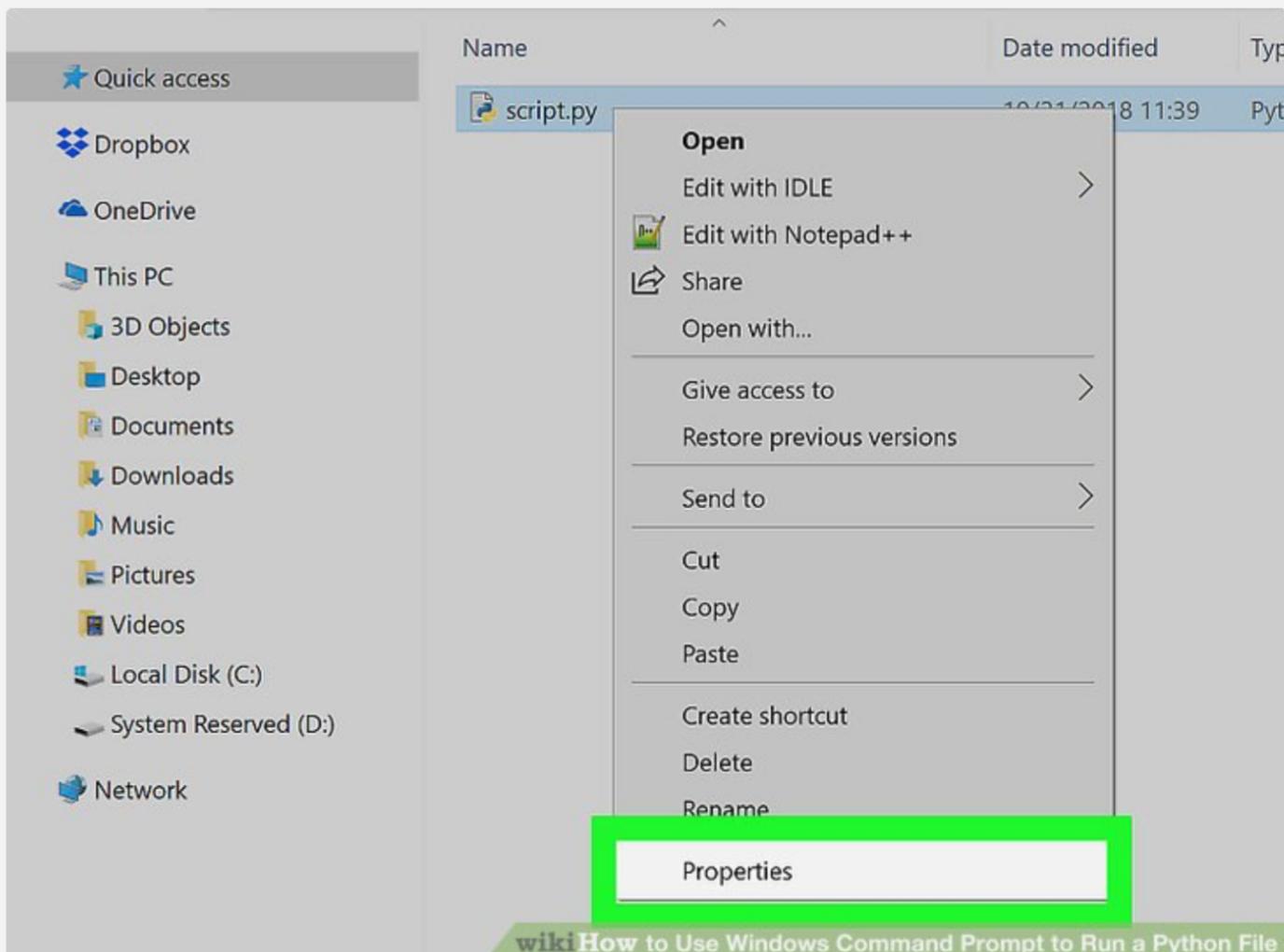
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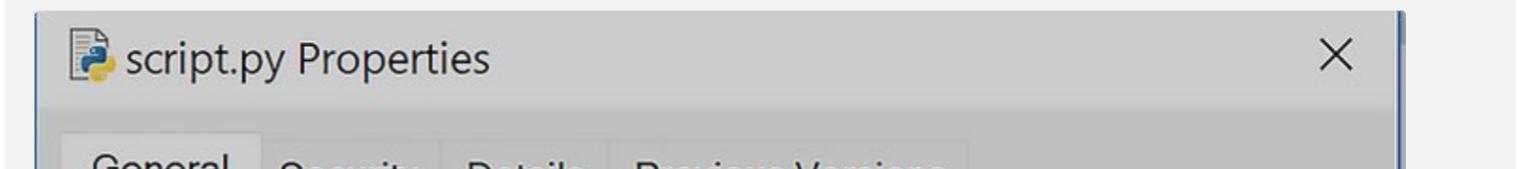
Finding the Python File Path

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- 3** Right-click the Python file. Doing so prompts a drop-down menu to appear.



- 4** Click **Properties**. It's in the drop-down menu. The properties window will open.





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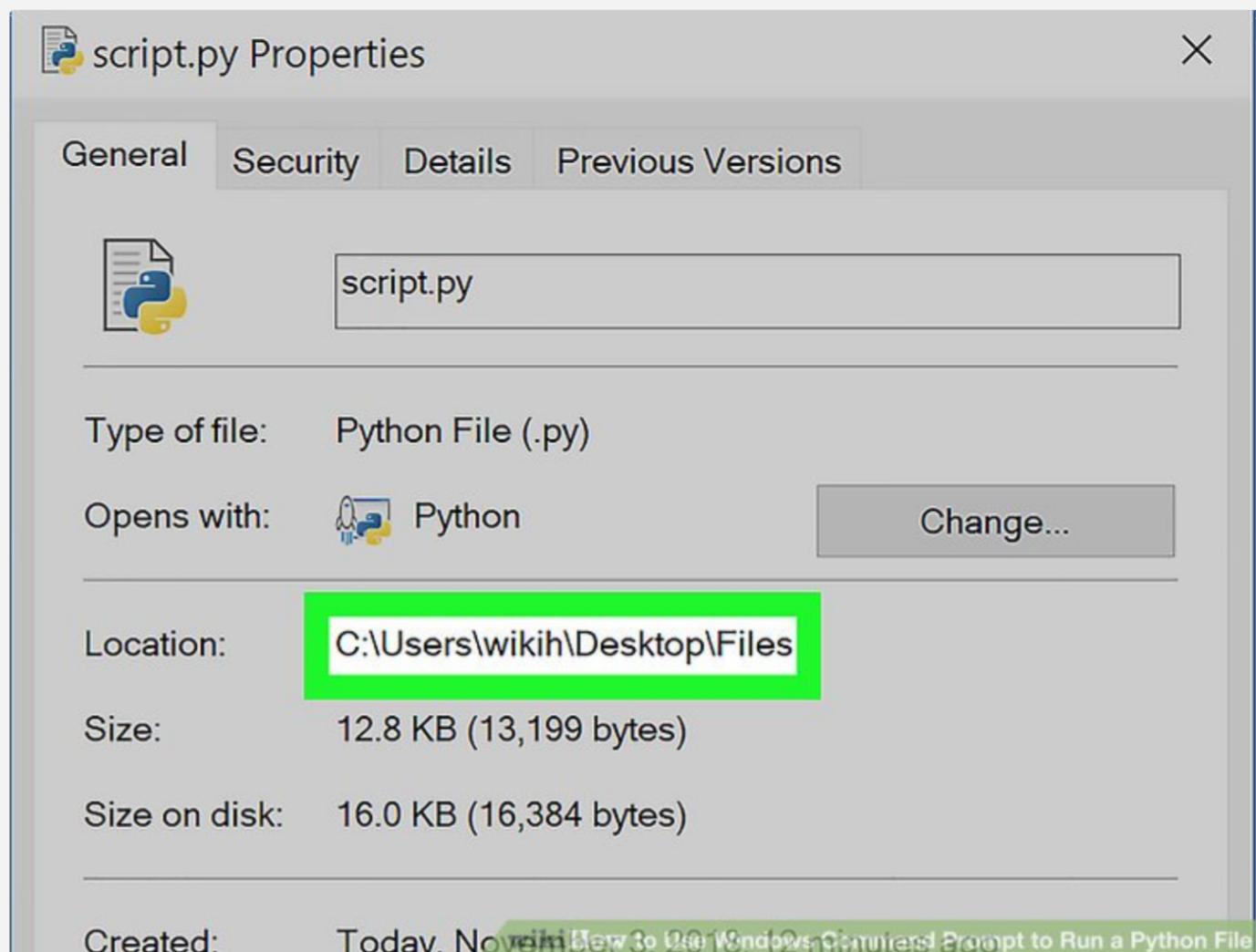
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1

Finding the Python File Path

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- 4** Click **Properties**. It's in the drop-down menu. The properties window will open.



- 5** Note the "Location" value. The folder address (or "path") to the right of the "Location" heading is what you'll need to enter into Command Prompt when switching to the directory in which your Python file is stored.

- You can copy the location by highlighting it (click and drag your mouse across the "Location" value) and then pressing **Ctrl+C**.



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Finding the Python File Path

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Part
2

Running a Python File



Type here to search



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Part
2

Running a Python File



Type here to search

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- 1 Open Start . Click the Windows logo in the bottom-left corner of the screen. The Start menu will pop up.

Part
2

Running a Python File



Type here to search

wikiHow to Use Windows Command Prompt to Run a Python File

- 1 Open Start . Click the Windows logo in the bottom-left corner of the screen. The Start menu will pop up.



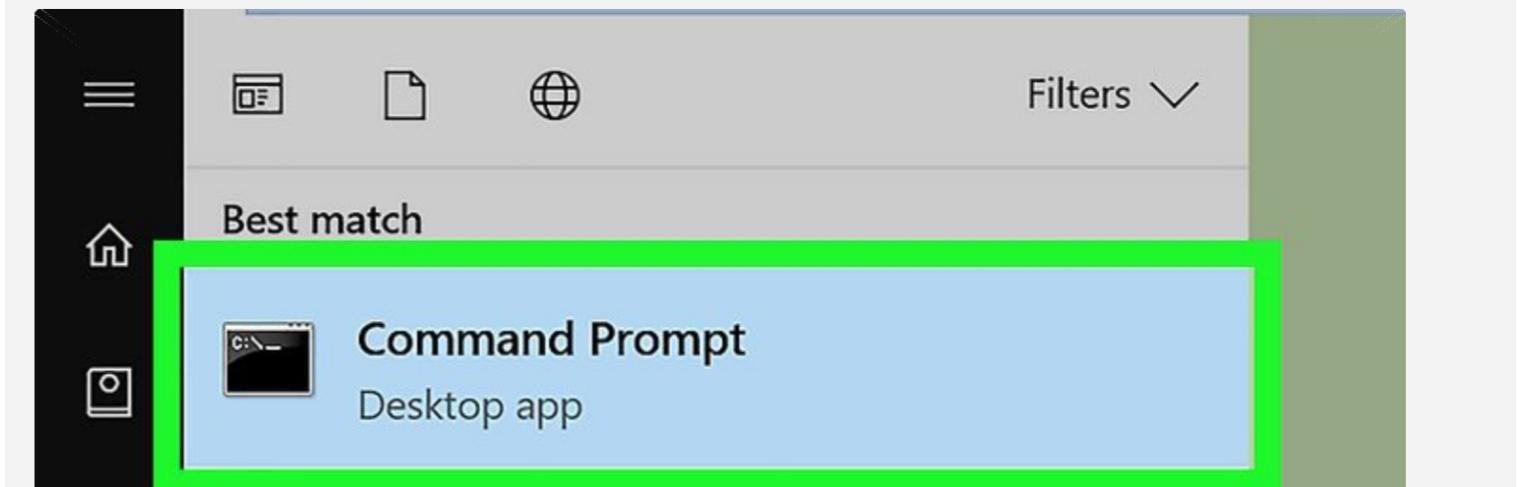
- 2 Search for Command Prompt. Type in cmd to do so.

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Part 2 Running a Python File



2 Search for Command Prompt. Type in cmd to do so.



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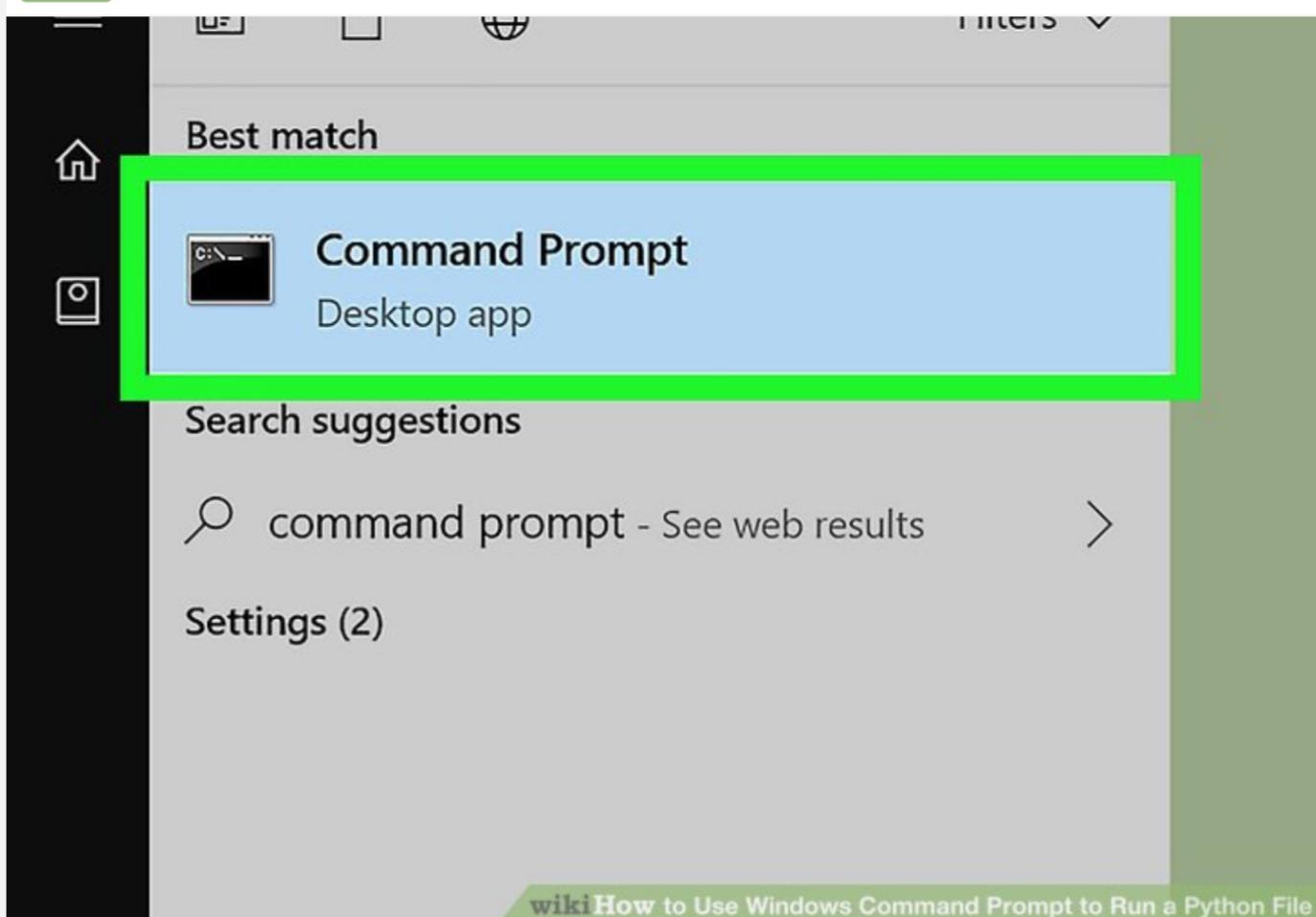
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Part
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Running a Python File



- 3 Click **Command Prompt**. It's at the top of the Start menu. Doing so will open Command Prompt.

```
C:\Users\wikih> cd desktop/Files
```



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Part
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Running a Python File

Command Prompt

Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.17134.345]
(c) 2018 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\wikih>cd desktop/Files

wikiHow to Use Windows Command Prompt to Run a Python File

4 Switch to your Python file's directory. Type `cd` and a space, then type in the "Location" address for your Python file and press `Enter`.

- For example, to open a Python file in a folder named "Files" on your Desktop, you would enter `cd desktop/Files` here.
- If you copied the path to the file, you can type in `cd` and a space and then press `Ctrl+V` to paste in the path.

Command Prompt

Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.17134.345]
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C:\Users\wikih>cd desktop/Files

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Running a Python File

Command Prompt

Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.17134.345]
(c) 2018 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\wikih>cd desktop/Files

C:\Users\wikih\Desktop\Files **python script.py**

wikiHow to Use Windows Command Prompt to Run a Python File

5 Enter the "python" command and your file's name. Type in `python file.py` where *file* is your Python file's name.

- For example, if your Python file is named "script", you would type in `python script.py` here.
- If your Python file has one or more spaces in its name, you'll place quotation marks around the file name and extension (e.g., `python "my script.py"`).

F8

F9

F10

F11

F12

PrtSc

Scr Lk

Pause



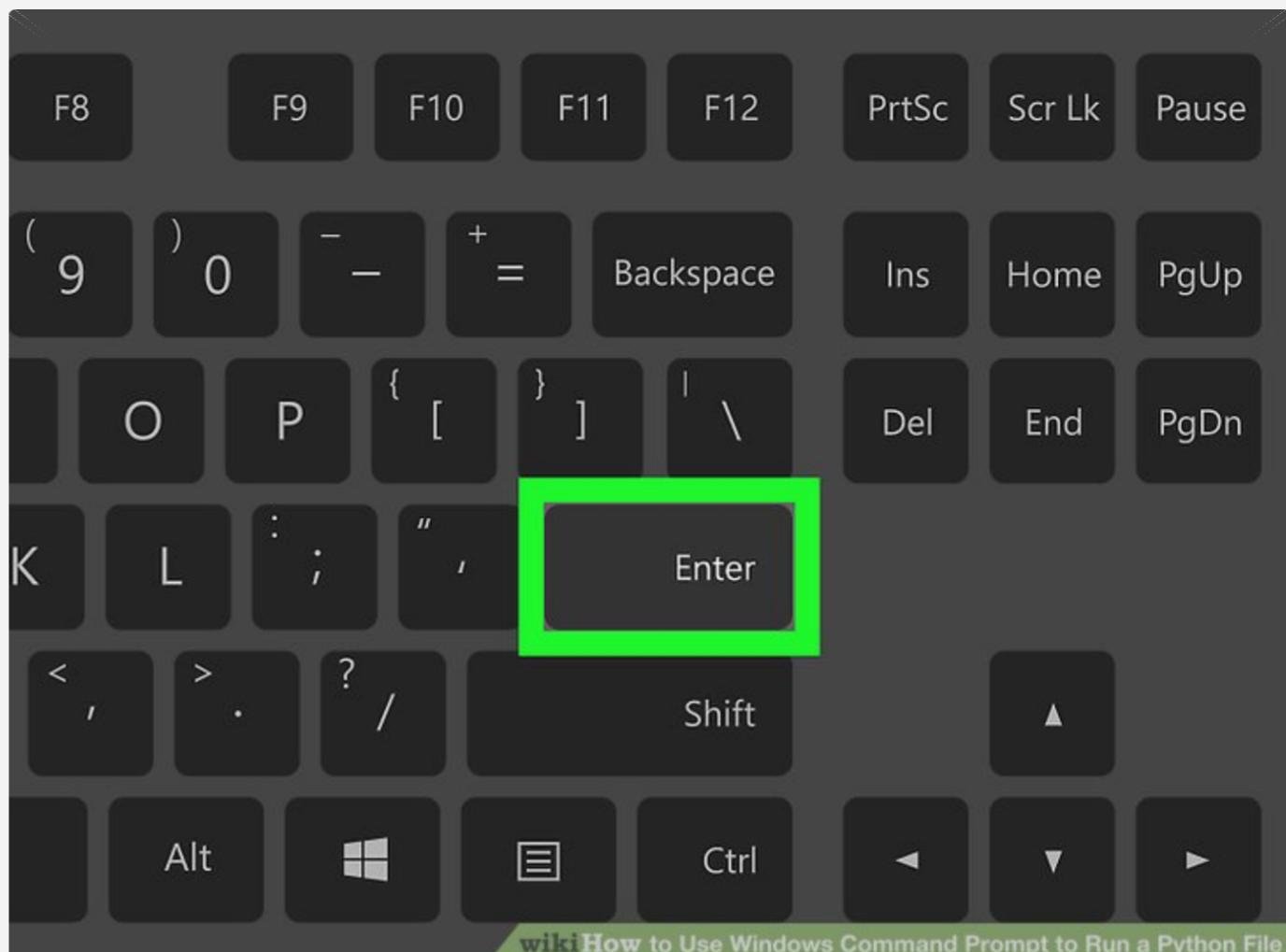
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Running a Python File



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6 Press ↵ Enter. Doing so runs your command and opens your Python file via your computer's installed Python program.

- If you encounter an error that says 'python' is not recognized as an internal or external command after pressing Enter, you'll need to add Python to the PATH list before retrying this part.

Part
3

Adding Python to the PATH List



Group by ▾

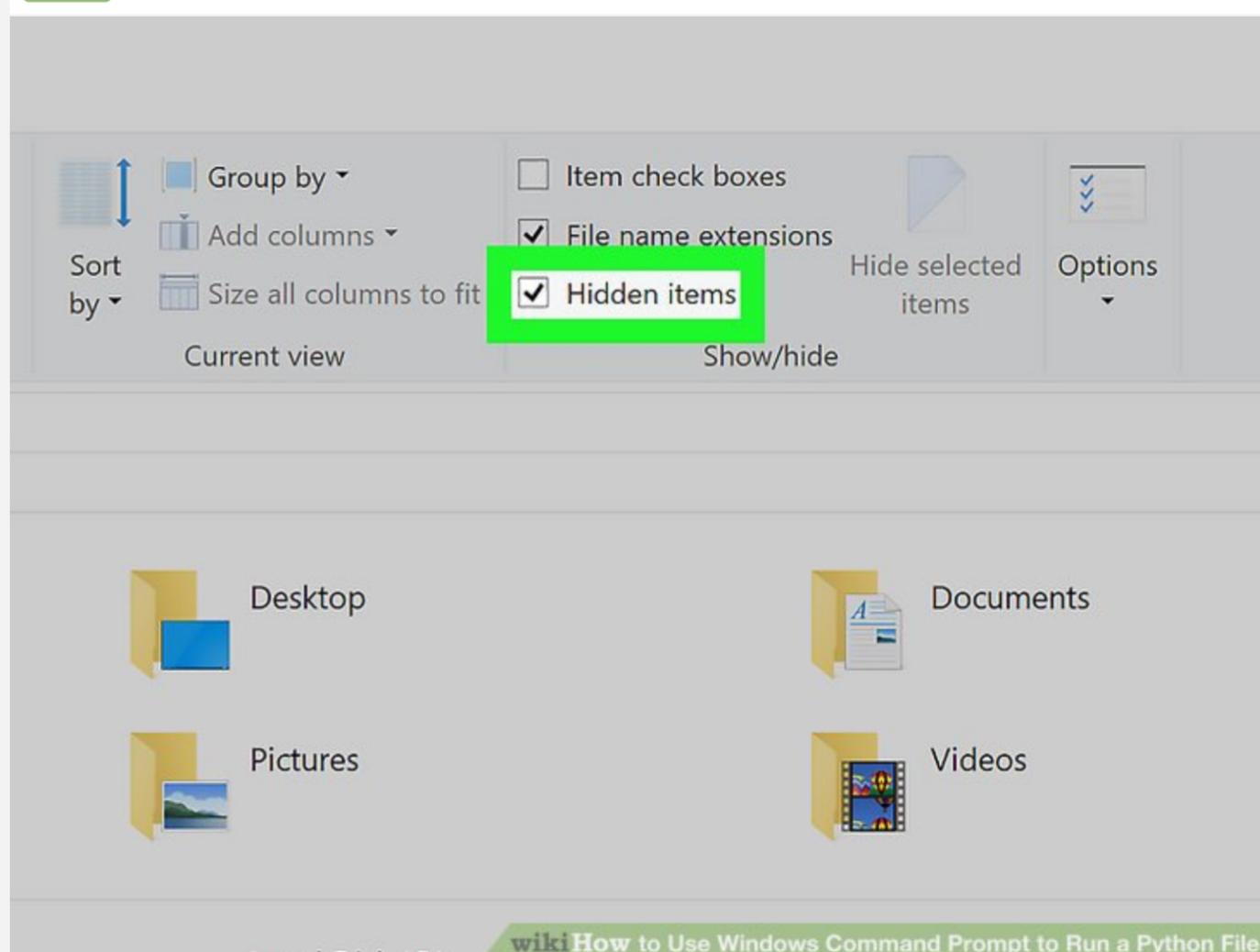


Item check boxes



Part
3

Adding Python to the PATH List



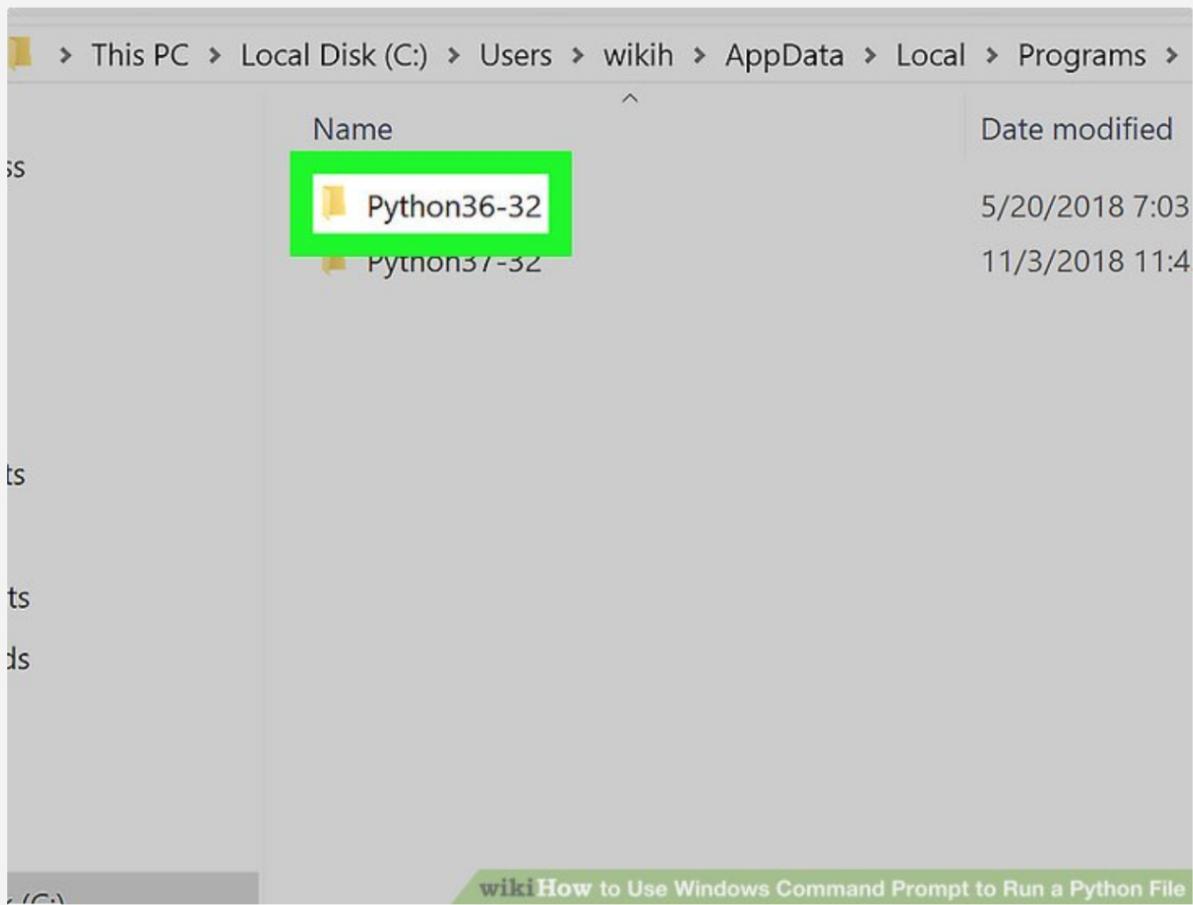
1 **Enable viewing for hidden folders.** Since one of the folders that contains your Python installation folder is most likely hidden, you'll have to unhide it before proceeding:

- Open File Explorer
- Click the **View** tab.
- Check the "Hidden items" box.

This PC > Local Disk (C:) > Users > wikih > AppData > Local > Programs >		
	Name	Date modified
ss	Python36-32	5/20/2018 7:03
	11/2/2018 11:4	



Adding Python to the PATH List

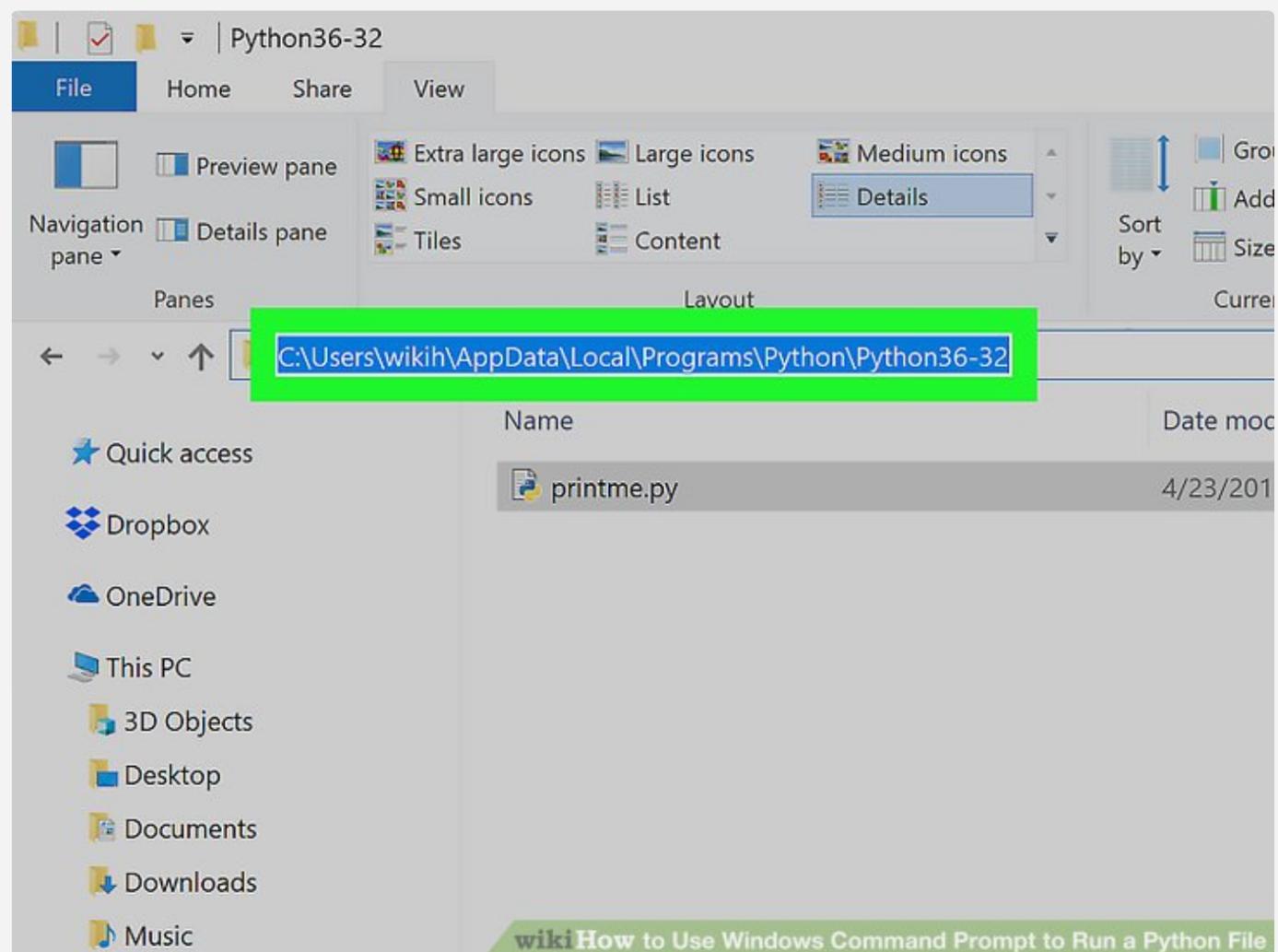


2 **Navigate to your Python folder.** In some cases, the Python path is "C:\Python27"; however, if you've installed the most recent version of Python using the default settings, it's tucked away in a hidden folder. You can copy the proper file path by doing the following:

- Click **This PC** on the left side of the File Explorer.
- Double-click your hard drive in the "Devices and drives" section.
- Scroll down and double-click the "Users" folder.
- Double-click the folder with your username on it.
- Scroll down and double-click "AppData".
- Double-click "Local".
- Scroll down and double-click "Programs".
- Double-click the "Python" folder.
- Double-click the Python folder with your preferred version number (e.g., "Python36").

Part
3

Adding Python to the PATH List



- 3** Copy the path to the Python folder. Click once the address bar at the top of the File Explorer to highlight its contents, then press `Ctrl+C` to copy the highlighted address.

Part
3

Adding Python to the PATH List



4 Open the Power User menu. Right-click the Start  icon to do so. You should see a pop-up menu appear.

- You can also press  +  to open the Power User pop-up menu.

Apps and Features

Power Options



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Adding Python to the PATH List

Apps and Features

Power Options

Event Viewer

System

Device Manager

Network Connections

Disk Management

Computer Management

Windows PowerShell

Windows PowerShell (Admin)

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5

Click **System**. It's in the pop-up menu. A new window will open.

Related settings

System info

Part
3

Adding Python to the PATH List

Related settings

System info

Have a question?

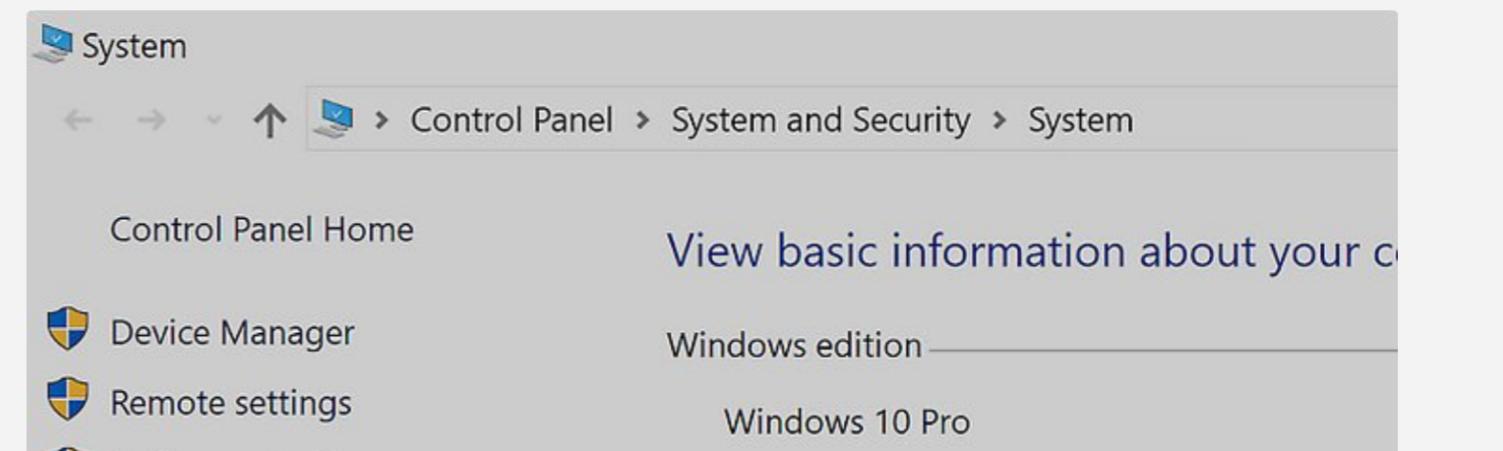
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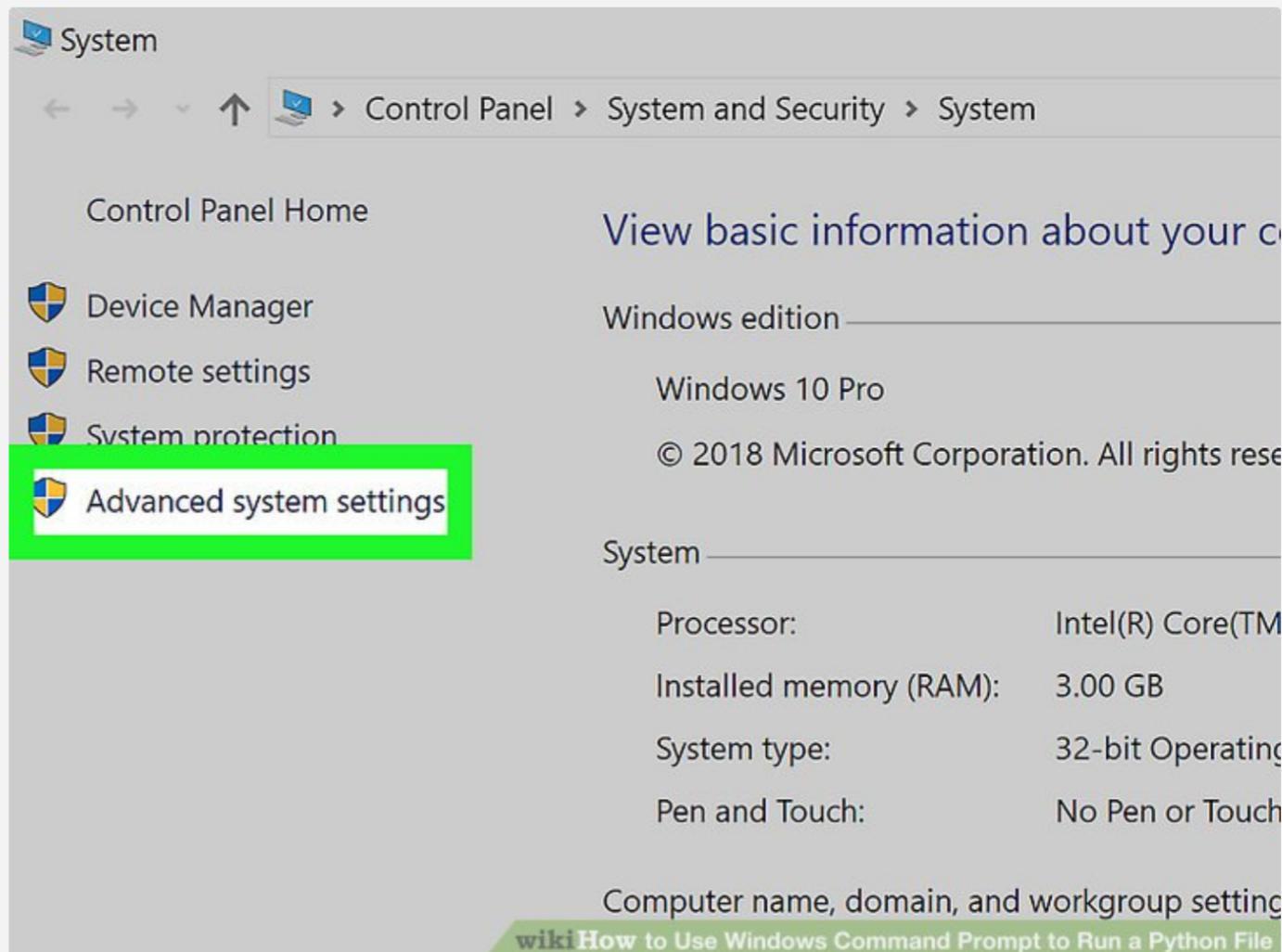
- 6** Click **System info**. This is a link in the upper-right corner of the window. Doing so opens the System Information window.



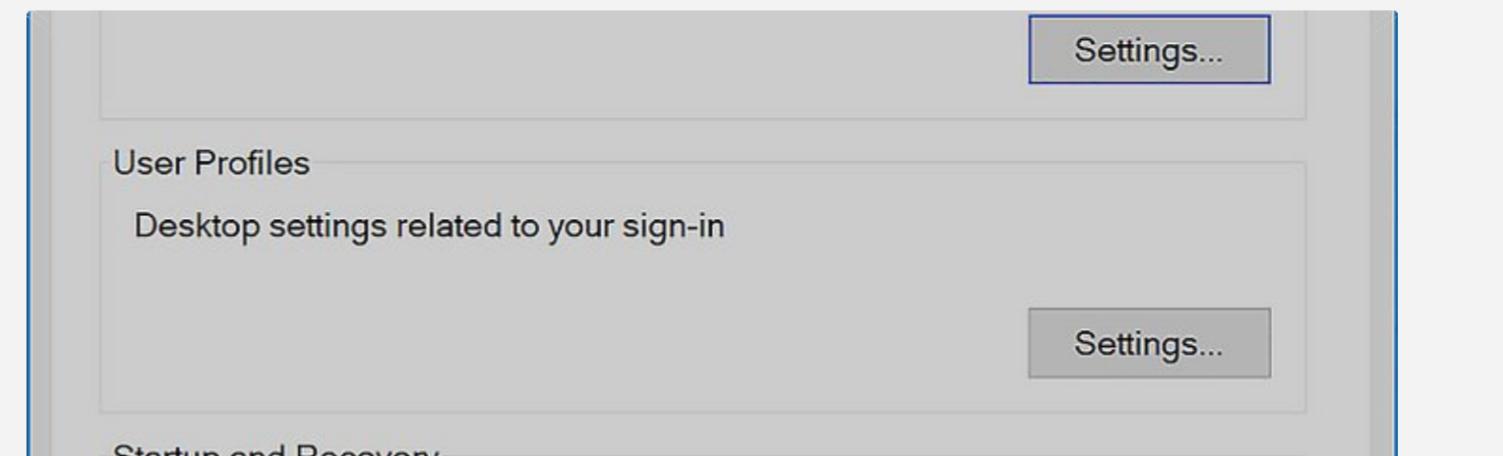
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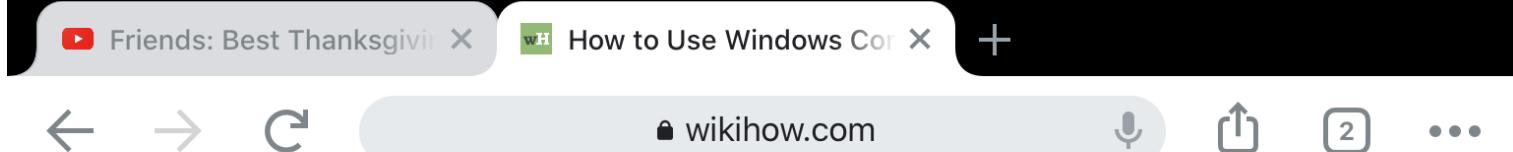
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Adding Python to the PATH List



- 7 Click the **Advanced system settings** link. You'll see this in the upper-left side of the System Information window. Yet another window will pop up.





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Part 3 Adding Python to the PATH List

User Profiles

Desktop settings related to your sign-in

Settings...

Startup and Recovery

System startup, system failure, and debugging information

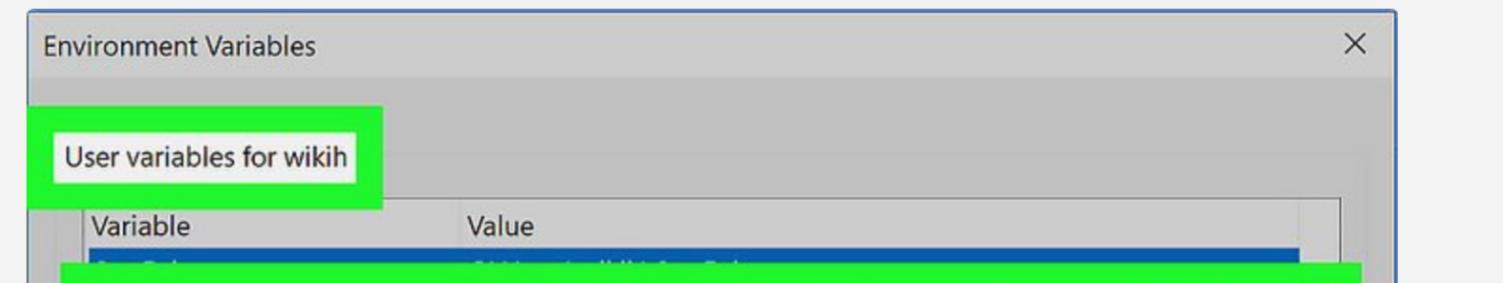
Settings...

Environment Variables...

OK Cancel Apply

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- 8 Click Environment Variables.... It's in the bottom-right corner of the pop-up window.



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Part 3 Adding Python to the PATH List

Environment Variables 

User variables for wikih

Variable	Value
Path	C:\Users\wikih\AppData\Local\Programs\Python\Python37-32\Sc...
TMP	C:\Users\wikih\AppData\Local\Temp

New... Edit... Delete

System variables

Variable	Value
asl.log	Destination=file
ComSpec	C:\WINDOWS\system32\cmd.exe
DriverData	C:\Windows\System32\Drivers\DriverData
NUMBER_OF_PROCESSORS	2

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- 9 Find the "Path" heading in the "User variables" pane. This window is at the top of the Environment Variables window.
- You may have to scroll up or down with your mouse cursor hovering over the "User variables" pane to find the "Path" variable.

Environment Variables 

User variables for wikih

Variable	Value
OneDrive	C:\Users\wikih\OneDrive
Path	C:\Users\wikih\AppData\Local\Programs\Python\Python37-32\Sc... C:\Users\wikih\AppData\Local\Temp

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Adding Python to the PATH List

Environment Variables

X

User variables for wikih

Variable	Value
OneDrive	C:\Users\wikih\OneDrive
Path	C:\Users\wikih\AppData\Local\Programs\Python\Python37-32\Sc...
TEMP	C:\Users\wikih\AppData\Local\Temp
TMP	C:\Users\wikih\AppData\Local\Temp

New...

Edit...

Delete

System variables

Variable	Value
asl.log	Destination=file
ComSpec	C:\WINDOWS\system32\cmd.exe
DriverData	C:\Windows\System32\Drivers\DriverData
NUMBER OF PROCESSORS	2

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10

Double-click the "Path" heading. Doing so opens a pop-up window.

Edit environment variable

X

C:\Users\wikih\AppData\Local\Programs\Python\Python37-32\Scripts
C:\Users\wikih\AppData\Local\Programs\Python\Python37-32\
%USERPROFILE%\AppData\Local\Microsoft\WindowsApps
C:\Users\wikih\AppData\Roaming\npm

New

Edit

Browse...



Edit environment variable

A small gray 'X' button located in the top right corner of the window.

C:\Users\wikih\AppData\Local\Programs\Python\Python37-32\Scripts
C:\Users\wikih\AppData\Local\Programs\Python\Python37-32\
%USERPROFILE%\AppData\Local\Microsoft\WindowsApps
C:\Users\wikih\AppData\Roaming\npm

A rectangular button labeled 'New' with a black border, highlighted with a green rectangular overlay.

A rectangular button labeled 'Edit' with a black border.

A rectangular button labeled 'Browse...' with a black border.

A rectangular button labeled 'Delete' with a black border.

A rectangular button labeled 'Move Up' with a black border.

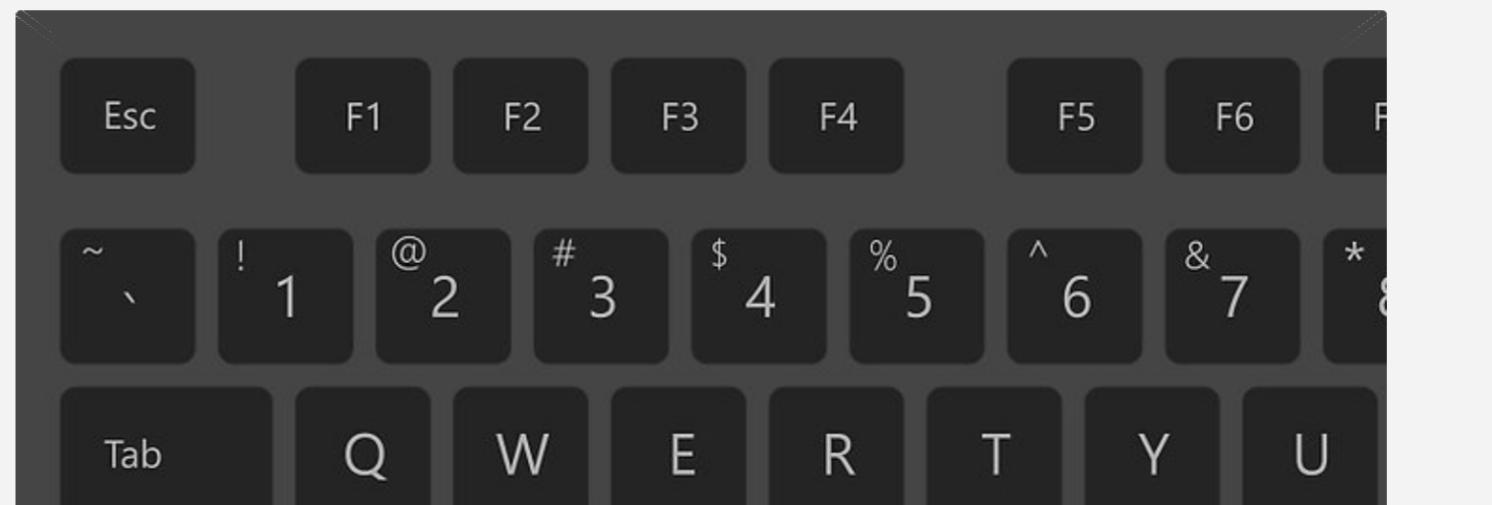
A rectangular button labeled 'Move Down' with a black border.

A rectangular button labeled 'Edit text...' with a black border.

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A large number '11' indicating the step number.

Click 'New'. It's on the right side of the window. A text field will open in the middle of the window.



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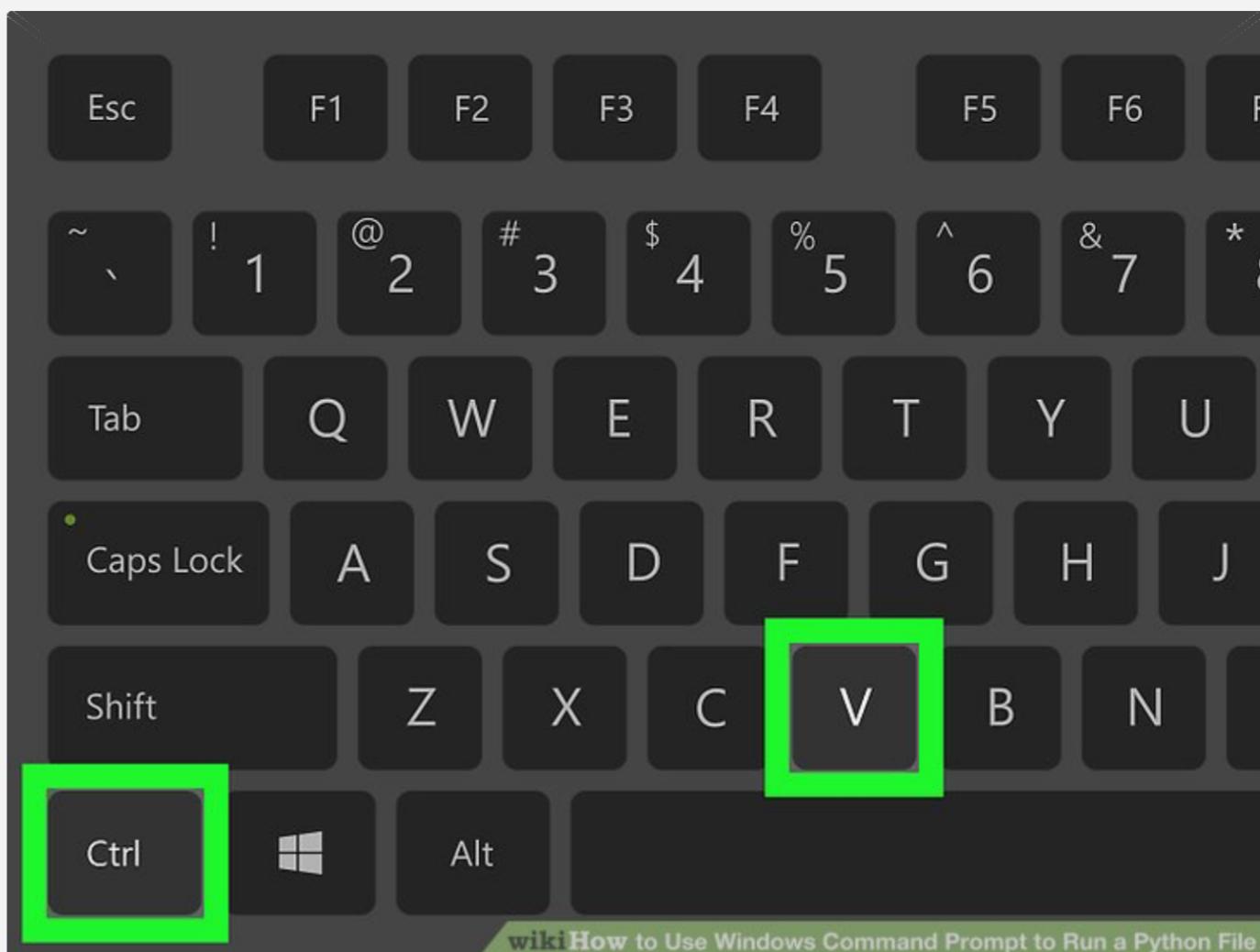
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- 12** Paste in your copied path. Press **Ctrl + V** to do so. Your copied path will appear in the text field in the middle of the window.



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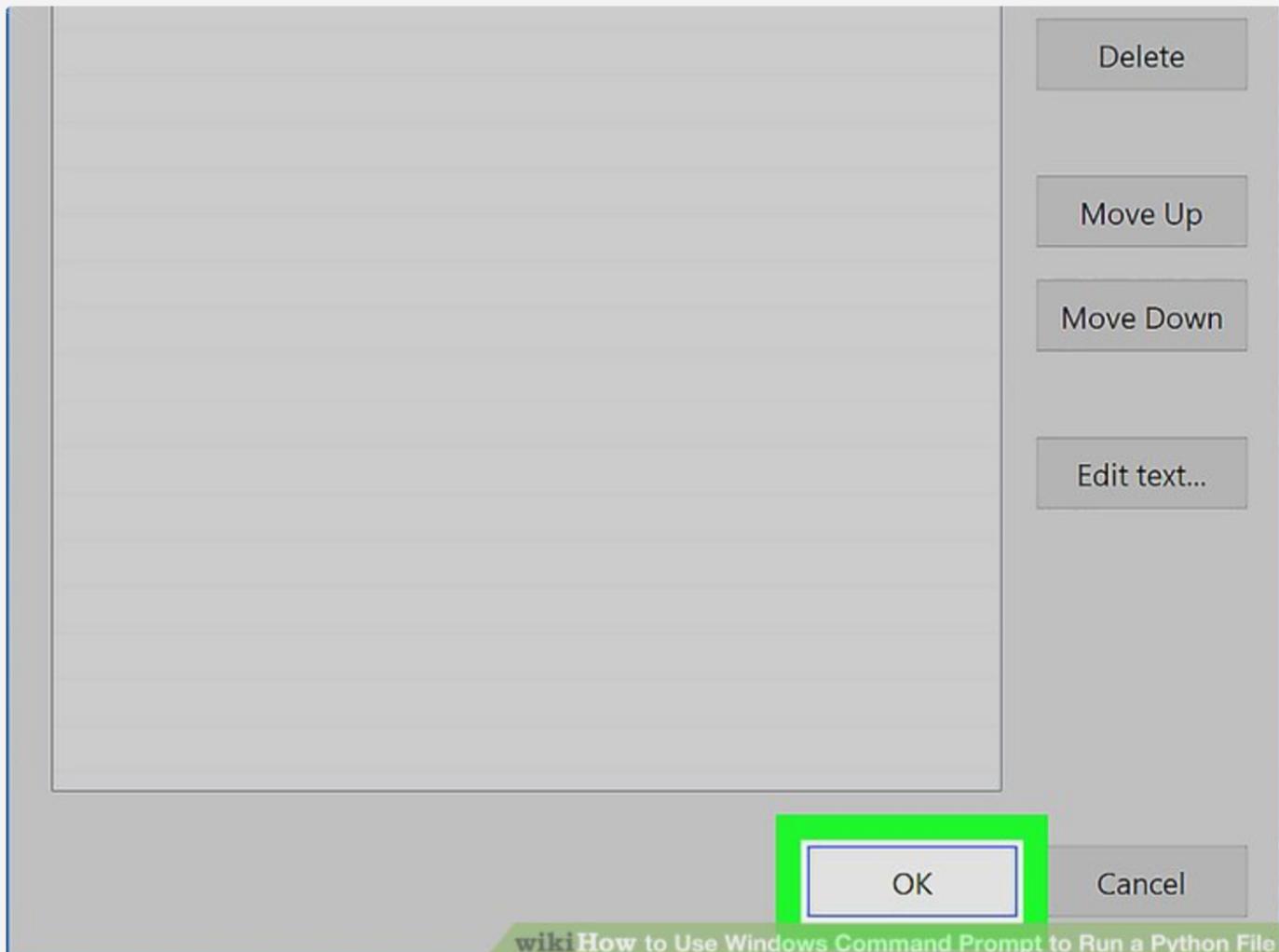
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Adding Python to the PATH List



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- 13** Click **OK** on the three open windows. This will save your changes and close the "Path" window, the "Environmental Variables" window, and the "System Properties" window.



Community Q&A

Question