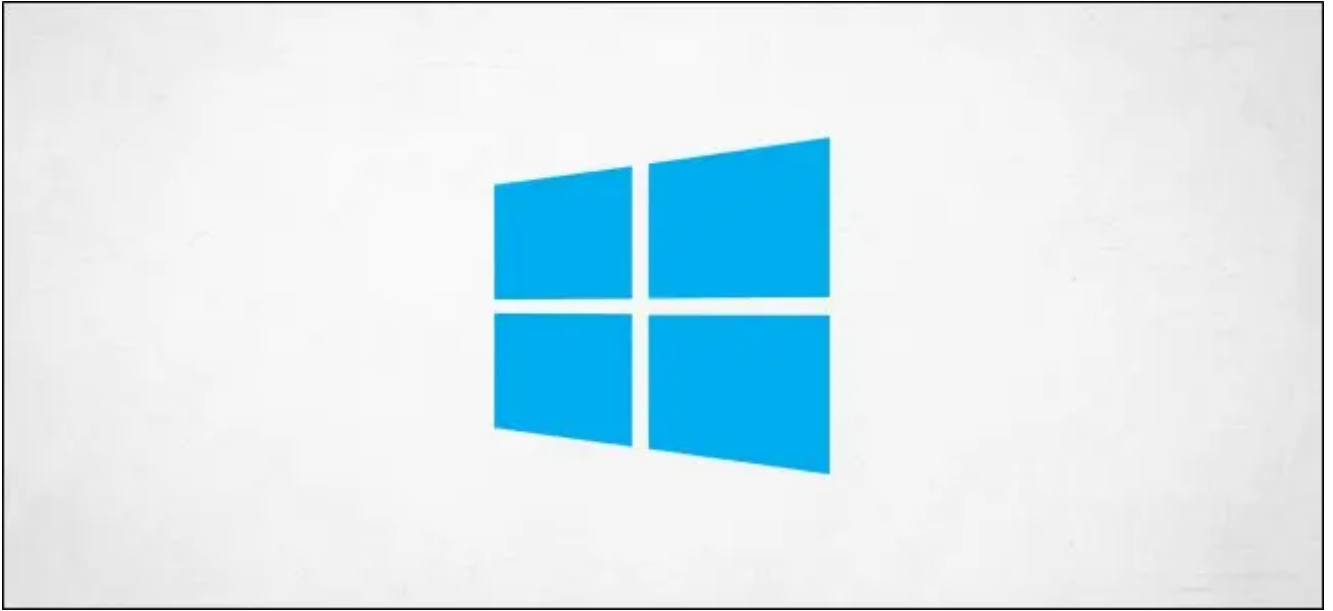
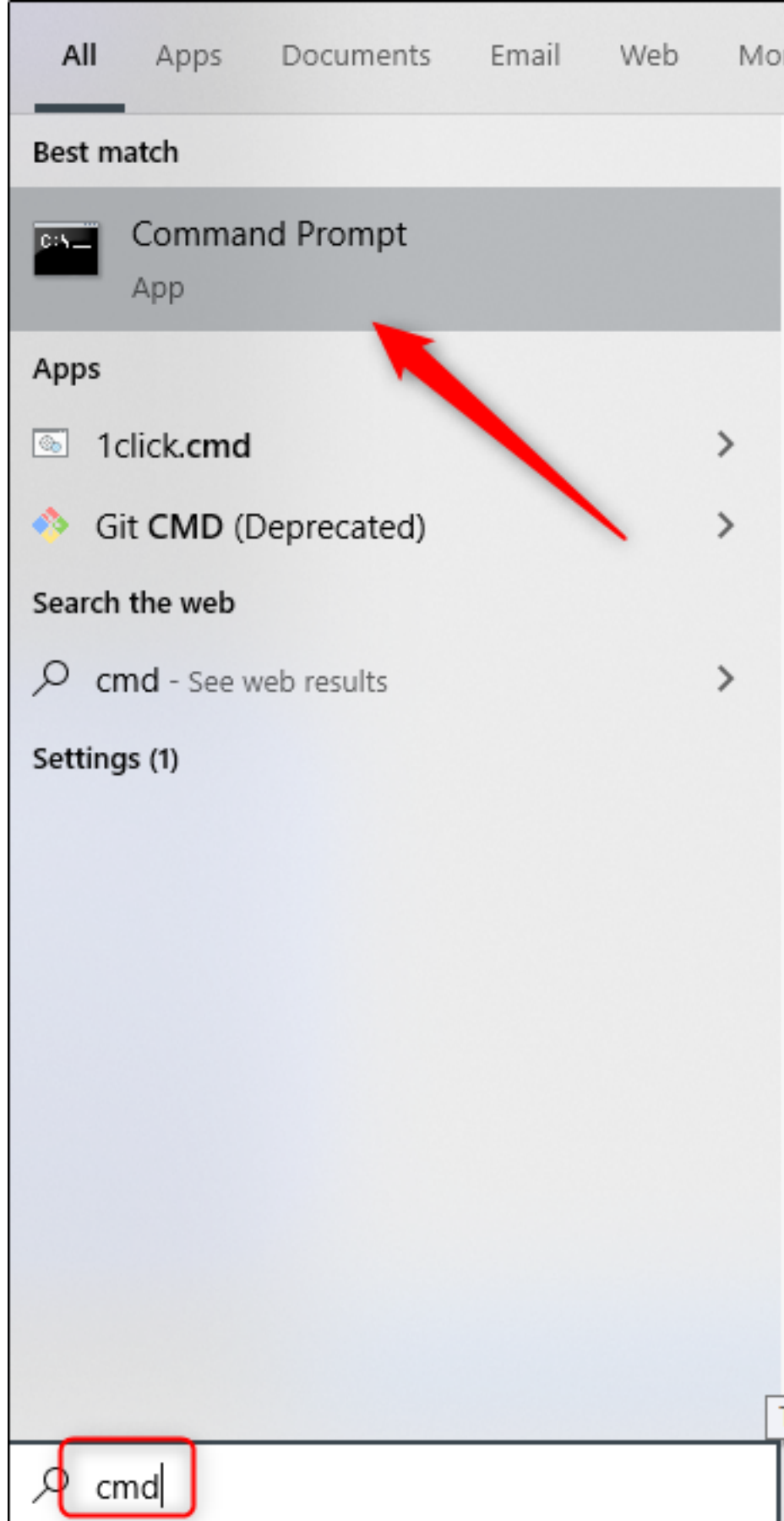


How to Change Directories in Command Prompt on Windows 10



One of the first things you'll need to learn as you become more familiar with [Command Prompt](#) on Windows 10 is how to change directories in the operating system's file system. There are a few ways you can do this, so we'll walk you through them.

First, type "cmd" in the Windows Search bar to [open Command Prompt](#), and then select "Command Prompt" from the search results.

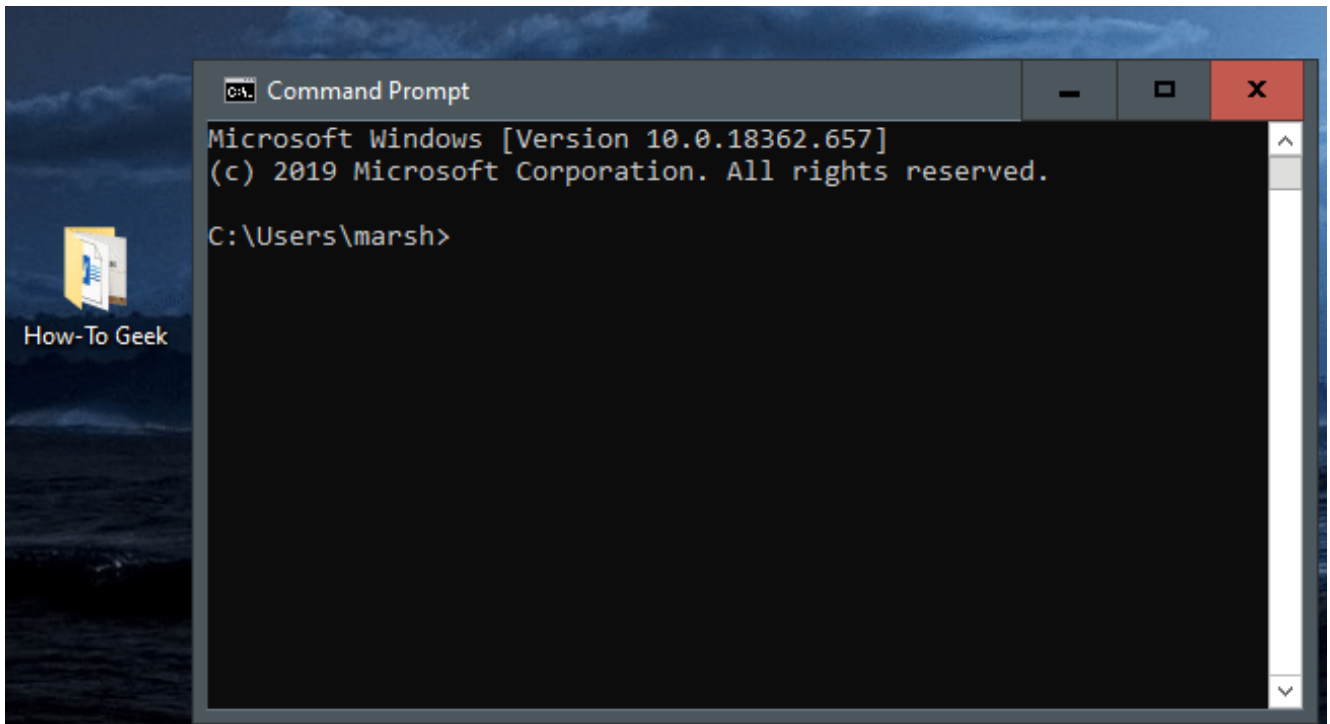


With Command Prompt opened, you're ready to change directories.

Change Directories Using the Drag-

and-Drop Method

If the folder you want to open in Command Prompt is on your desktop or already open in [File Explorer](#), you can quickly change to that directory. Type `cd` followed by a space, drag and drop the folder into the window, and then press Enter.



The directory you switched to will be reflected in the command line.

Change Directories Within Command Prompt

It's not always convenient to open File Explorer and drag and drop. That's why it's cool that you can also type a command to change directories right in Command Prompt.

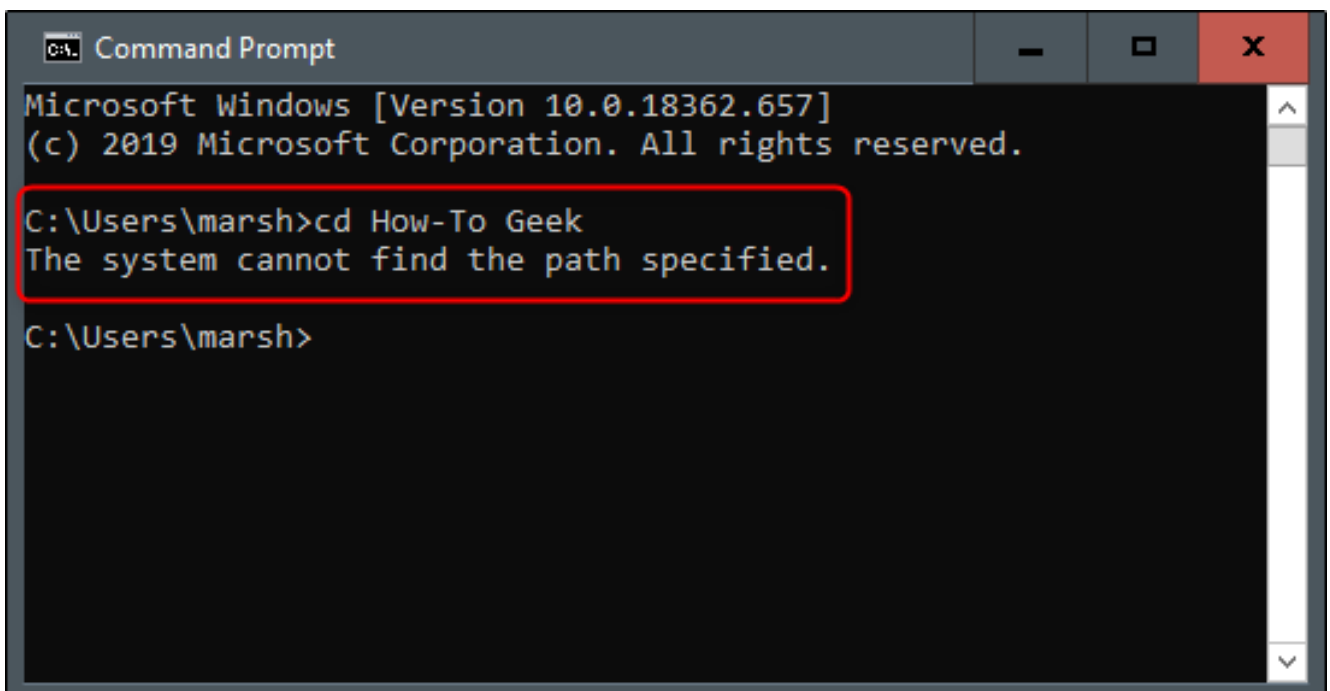
RELATED: [10 Useful Windows Commands You Should](#)

Say, for example, you're in your user folder, and there's a "Documents" directory in the next file path. You can type the following command in Command Prompt to switch to that directory:

```
cd Documents
```

Note that this only works if you're in the immediate file structure. In our case, that would be (user folder) > Documents. In our current directory, we wouldn't be able to use this method to jump to a directory nested two levels down.

So, let's say we're currently in the user folder and want to go to the "How-To Geek" folder, which is nested in "Documents." If we try to jump straight to "How-To Geek" without first going to "Documents," we get the error shown in the image below.

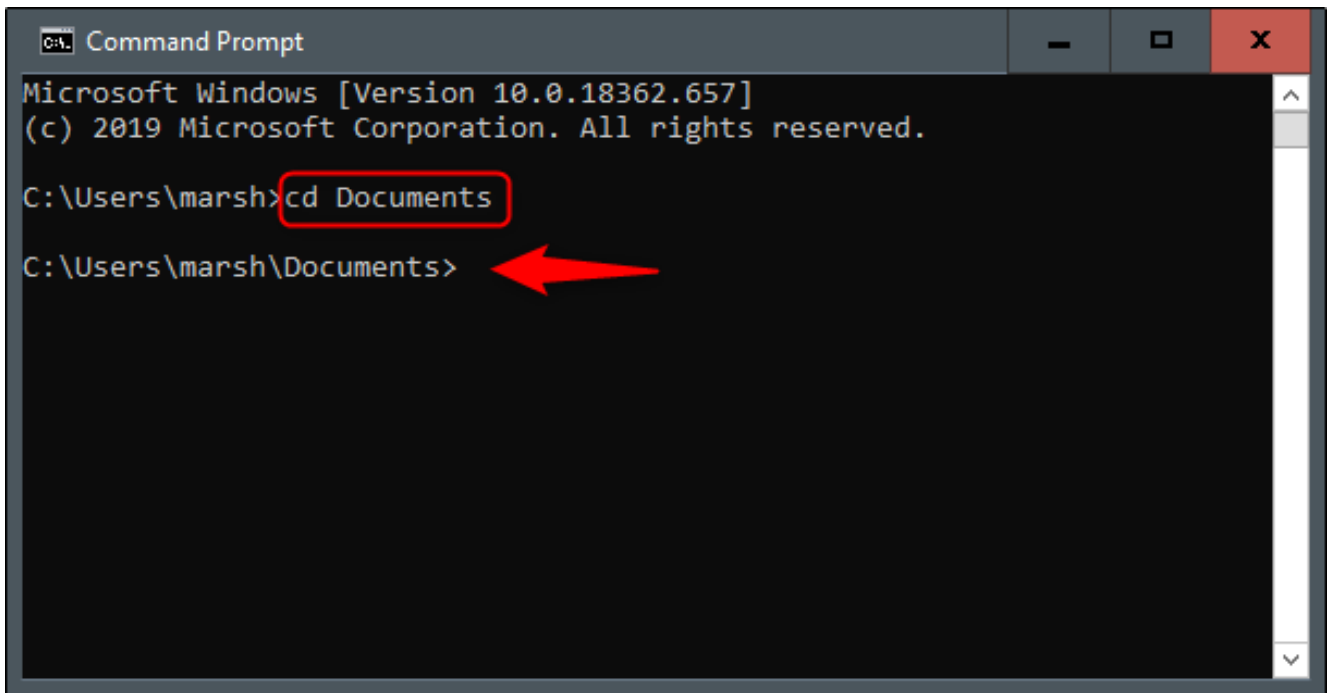
A screenshot of a Windows Command Prompt window. The title bar reads "Command Prompt". The window content shows the following text: "Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.18362.657]" followed by "(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved." Below this, the command prompt shows the current directory as "C:\Users\marsh>". The user has entered the command "cd How-To Geek". The response from the system is "The system cannot find the path specified.", which is highlighted by a red rectangular box. The prompt then returns to "C:\Users\marsh>".

```
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.18362.657]
(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\marsh>cd How-To Geek
The system cannot find the path specified.

C:\Users\marsh>
```

Let's take things one directory at a time, for now. As we mentioned previously, we're currently in our user folder. We type `cd Documents` in Command Prompt to visit "Documents."

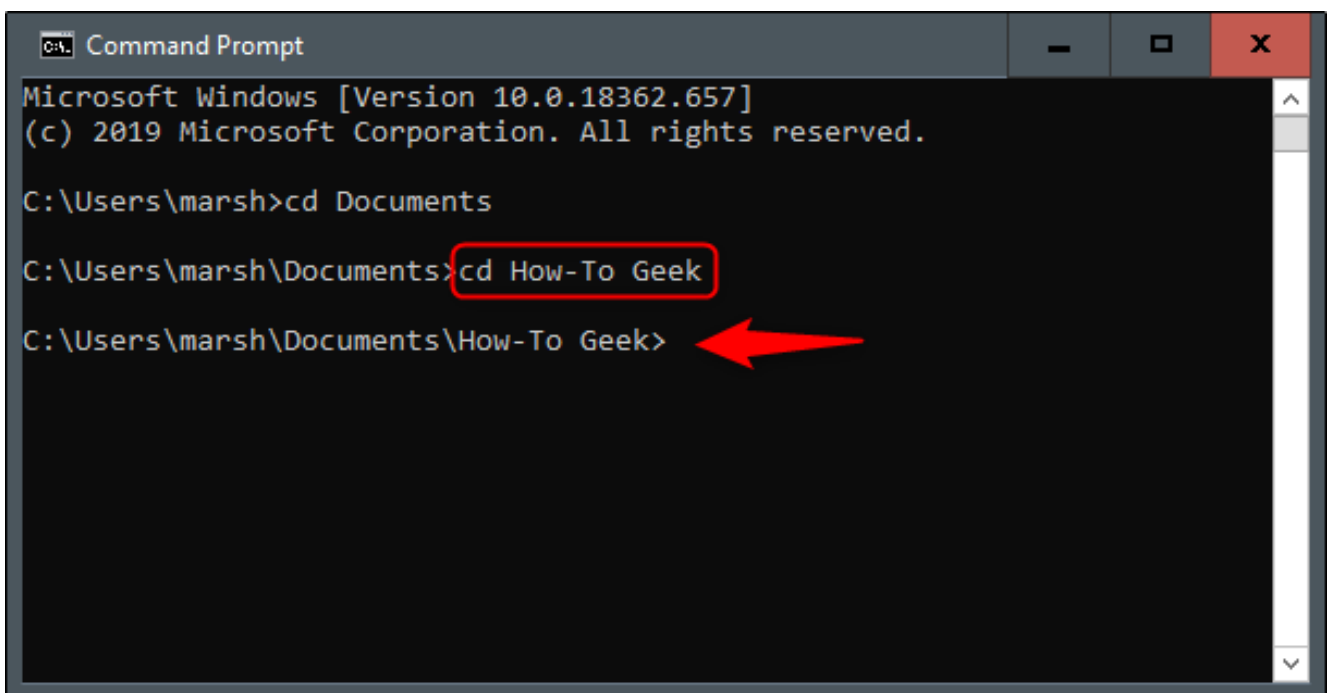


```
Command Prompt
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.18362.657]
(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\marsh>cd Documents
C:\Users\marsh\Documents>
```

A screenshot of a Windows Command Prompt window. The title bar says "Command Prompt". The text inside shows the Windows version and copyright information. The user is at the prompt `C:\Users\marsh>` and has typed `cd Documents`, which is highlighted with a red rectangle. The prompt has moved to `C:\Users\marsh\Documents>`, indicated by a red arrow.

We're now in the "Documents" folder. To move down another level, we type `cd` on the command line followed by the name of that directory.



```
Command Prompt
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.18362.657]
(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\marsh>cd Documents
C:\Users\marsh\Documents>cd How-To Geek
C:\Users\marsh\Documents\How-To Geek>
```

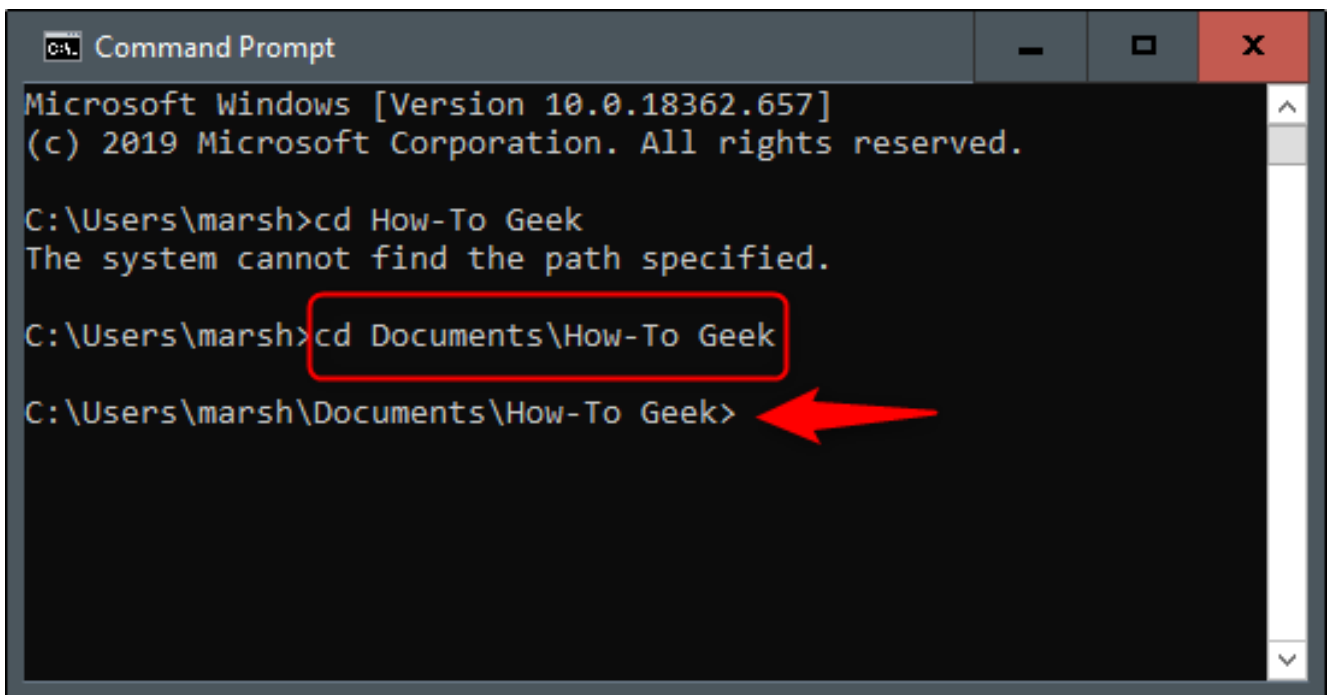
A screenshot of a Windows Command Prompt window. The title bar says "Command Prompt". The text inside shows the Windows version and copyright information. The user is at the prompt `C:\Users\marsh\Documents>` and has typed `cd How-To Geek`, which is highlighted with a red rectangle. The prompt has moved to `C:\Users\marsh\Documents\How-To Geek>`, indicated by a red arrow.

Now, let's say we're back in our user folder and want to

skip that extra step and jump two directories down. In our case, this would be our "How-To Geek" folder. We type the following command:

```
cd Documents\How-To Geek
```

This allows us to move two directory levels with one command.

A screenshot of a Windows Command Prompt window. The title bar says "Command Prompt". The text inside shows the following sequence of commands and output:
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.18362.657]
(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
C:\Users\marsh>cd How-To Geek
The system cannot find the path specified.
C:\Users\marsh>cd Documents\How-To Geek
C:\Users\marsh\Documents\How-To Geek>
The command "cd Documents\How-To Geek" is highlighted with a red rectangle, and a red arrow points to the prompt "C:\Users\marsh\Documents\How-To Geek>".

```
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.18362.657]
(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

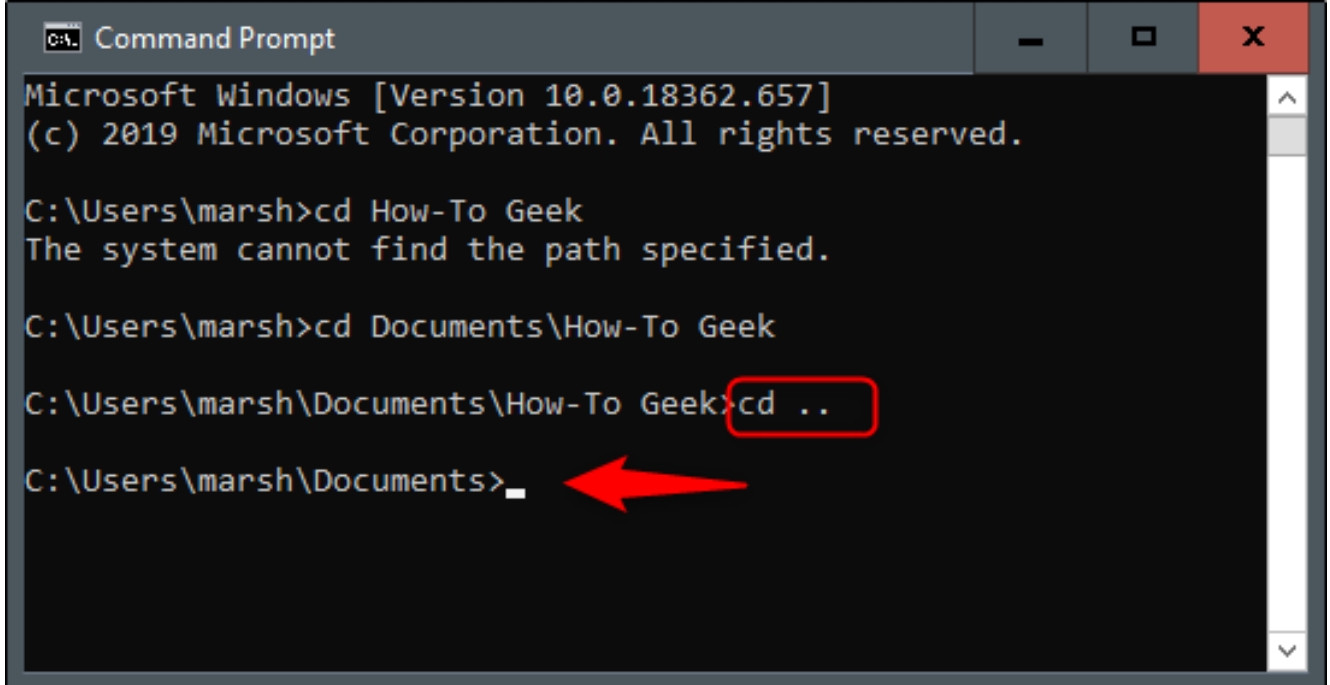
C:\Users\marsh>cd How-To Geek
The system cannot find the path specified.

C:\Users\marsh>cd Documents\How-To Geek
C:\Users\marsh\Documents\How-To Geek>
```

If you ever go to the wrong directory and want to turn back, type the following command:

```
cd . .
```

This allows you to move up a level.



```
Command Prompt
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.18362.657]
(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\marsh>cd How-To Geek
The system cannot find the path specified.

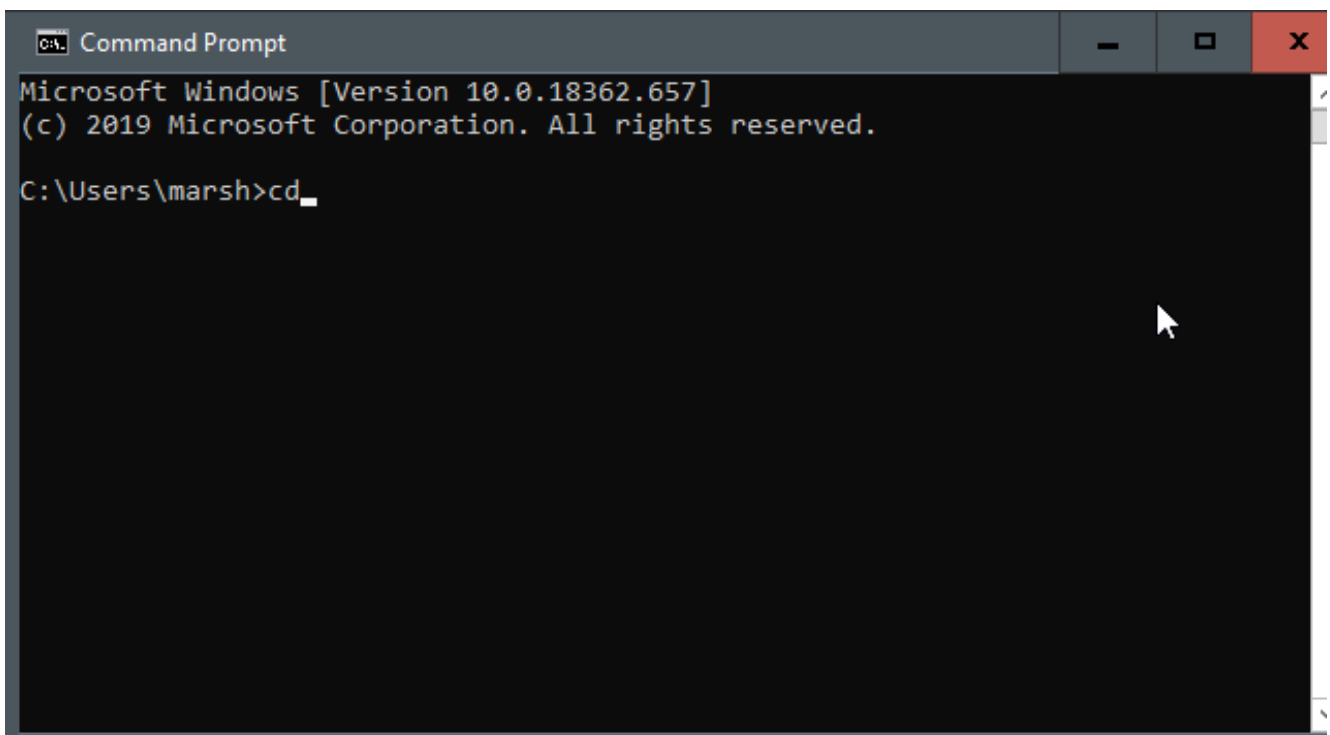
C:\Users\marsh>cd Documents\How-To Geek

C:\Users\marsh\Documents\How-To Geek>cd ..

C:\Users\marsh\Documents>
```

A Navigation Tip

If you want to be a bit more efficient with your directory changes, type `cd` on the command line, followed by the first few letters of the directory you want. Then, press `Tab` to autocomplete the directory name.

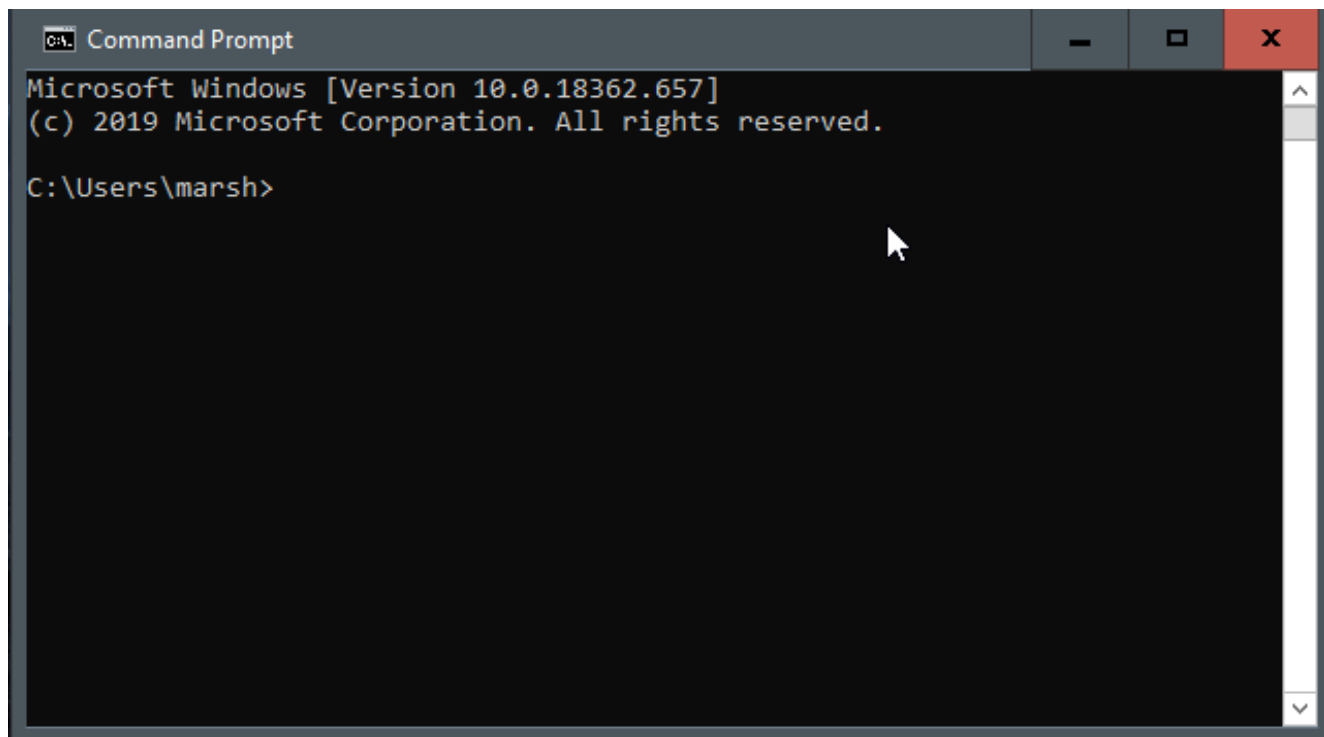


```
Command Prompt
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.18362.657]
(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\marsh>cd
```

Alternatively, you can type `cd`, followed by the first letter of the directory, and then press `Tab` multiple times until the

correct directory appears.

A screenshot of a Windows Command Prompt window. The title bar at the top reads "C:\ Command Prompt" and includes standard window controls (minimize, maximize, close). The main area of the window has a black background with white text. The text displayed is: "Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.18362.657]" followed by "(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved." on the next line. Below this, the current directory path "C:\Users\marsh>" is shown. A white mouse cursor is visible in the center of the window.

```
C:\ Command Prompt
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.18362.657]
(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.
C:\Users\marsh>
```

See Directory Contents

If you're ever lost and not sure where to go next, you can view the contents of your current directory by typing `dir` on the command line.


```
Command Prompt
(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\marsh>cd Documents

C:\Users\marsh\Documents>dir
Volume in drive C is OS
Volume Serial Number

Directory of C:\Users\marsh\Documents

02/12/2020  09:57 PM    <DIR>          .
02/12/2020  09:57 PM    <DIR>          ..
05/27/2019  11:03 PM    <DIR>          Background check docs
10/22/2019  11:00 PM    <DIR>          Custom Office Templates
11/09/2019  05:46 PM    <DIR>          Downloads
02/26/2018  04:04 PM    <DIR>          Emulators
12/15/2019  08:31 PM    <DIR>          GIT local
02/24/2020  07:16 PM    <DIR>          How-To Geek
06/26/2019  10:01 AM    <DIR>          Important Documents
05/11/2019  11:19 PM    <DIR>          Invoices
11/26/2019  09:51 PM    <DIR>          ITEnterpriser
```

This will give you a hint as to which directory to navigate to next.

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