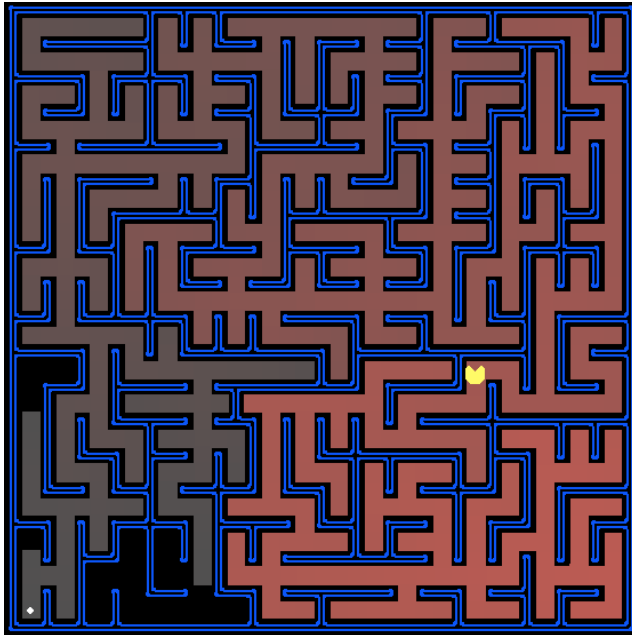


## Project – Phase 1

**Description:** This document contains details and requirement of Phase 1 of your project which is **due Friday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, at 11:59pm**.

Late submissions will be subject to grade penalty. You can work in a group of maximum two – same group for all project phases. Make sure to fill in your name or your group names in the shared Excel file on OneDrive by Monday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, at 11:59pm.



## Introduction

In this project, your Pacman agent will find paths through his maze world, both to reach a particular location and to collect food efficiently. You will build general search algorithms and apply them to Pacman scenarios.

The code for this project involves several Python files, some of which you will need to read and understand in order to complete the assignment, and some of which you can ignore. You can download all the code and supporting files from Blackboard.

**Files you'll edit:**

search.py	Where all of your search algorithms will reside.
searchAgents.py	Where all of your search-based agents will reside.

### Files you might want to look at:

pacman.py	The main file that runs Pacman games. This file describes a Pacman GameState type, which you use in this project.
game.py	The logic behind how the Pacman world works. This file describes several supporting types like AgentState, Agent, Direction, and Grid.
util.py	Useful data structures for implementing search algorithms.

### Supporting files you can ignore:

graphicsDisplay.py	Graphics for Pacman
graphicsUtils.py	Support for Pacman graphics
textDisplay.py	ASCII graphics for Pacman
ghostAgents.py	Agents to control ghosts
keyboardAgents.py	Keyboard interfaces to control Pacman
layout.py	Code for reading layout files and storing their contents

**Files to Edit and Submit:** Fill in portions of search.py and searchAgents.py during the assignment. Once you have completed the assignment, **submit the modified search.zip on Blackboard**. Please do not change the other files in this distribution or submit any of our original files other than these files.

**Academic Dishonesty:** We will be checking your code against other submissions for logical redundancy. If you copy someone else's code and submit it with minor changes, we will know, and that will immediately get you a zero on this project.

**Getting Help:** You are not alone! If you find yourself stuck on something, you can contact the course graduate assistants, Simon Abi Younes and Elissa Lichaa El Khoury, for help. You can reach them at [simon.abiyounes@lau.edu](mailto:simon.abiyounes@lau.edu) and [elissa.lichaaelkhoury@lau.edu](mailto:elissa.lichaaelkhoury@lau.edu). However, note that they are here for technical support and not to solve the project on your behalf.

**Discussion:** You are encouraged to discuss phases of the project with your colleagues but be careful not to give away your solution!

# Pacman

After downloading the code, unzipping it, and changing to the directory, you should be able to play a game of Pacman by typing the following at the command line:

```
python pacman.py
```

Pacman lives in a shiny blue world of twisting corridors and tasty round treats. Navigating this world efficiently will be Pacman's first step in mastering his domain.

The simplest agent in `searchAgents.py` is called the `GoWestAgent`, which always goes West (a trivial reflex agent). This agent can occasionally win:

```
python pacman.py --layout testMaze --pacman GoWestAgent
```

But, things get ugly for this agent when turning is required:

```
python pacman.py --layout tinyMaze --pacman GoWestAgent
```

If Pacman gets stuck, you can exit the game by typing CTRL-c into your terminal.

Soon, your agent will solve not only `tinyMaze`, but any maze you want.

Note that `pacman.py` supports a number of options that can each be expressed in a long way (e.g., `--layout`) or a short way (e.g., `-l`). You can see the list of all options and their default values via:

```
python pacman.py -h
```

Also, all of the commands that appear in this project also appear in `commands.txt`, for easy copying and pasting. In UNIX/Mac OS X, you can even run all these commands in order with bash `commands.txt`.

## (Possibly New) Syntax

You may not have seen this syntax before:

```
def my_function(a: int, b: Tuple[int, int], c: List[List], d: Any, e: float=1.0):
```

This is annotating the type of the arguments that Python should expect for this function. In the example below, `a` should be an `int` – integer, `b` should be a `tuple` of 2 `ints`, `c` should be a `List` of `Lists` of anything – therefore a 2D array of anything, `d` is essentially the same as not annotated and can be anything, and `e` should be a `float`. `e` is also set to 1.0 if nothing is passed in for it, i.e.:

```
my_function(1, (2, 3), [['a', 'b'], [None, my_class], [[]]], ('h', 1))
```

The above call fits the type annotations, and doesn't pass anything in for `e`. Type annotations are meant to be an addition to the docstrings to help you know what the functions are

working with. Python itself doesn't enforce these. When writing your own functions, it is up to you if you want to annotate your types; they may be helpful to keep organized or not something you want to spend time on.

## Q1: Finding Fixed Food Dot using Depth First Search (12pts)

In `searchAgents.py`, you'll find a fully implemented `SearchAgent`, which plans out a path through Pacman's world and then executes that path step-by-step. The search algorithms for formulating a plan are not implemented – that's your job.

First, test that the `SearchAgent` is working correctly by running:

```
python pacman.py -l tinyMaze -p SearchAgent -a fn=tinyMazeSearch
```

The command above tells the `SearchAgent` to use `tinyMazeSearch` as its search algorithm, which is implemented in `search.py`. Pacman should navigate the maze successfully.

Now it's time to write full-fledged generic search functions to help Pacman plan routes! Pseudocode for the search algorithms you'll write can be found in the lecture slides. Remember that a search node must contain not only a state but also the information necessary to reconstruct the path (plan) which gets to that state.

**Important note:** All of your search functions need to return a list of actions that will lead the agent from the start to the goal. These actions all have to be legal moves (valid directions, no moving through walls).

**Important note:** Make sure to use the `Stack`, `Queue` and `PriorityQueue` data structures provided to you in `util.py`! These data structure implementations have particular properties which are required for compatibility that we will be using to grade your work.

**Hint:** Each algorithm is very similar. Algorithms for DFS, BFS, UCS, and A\* differ only in the details of how the fringe is managed. So, concentrate on getting DFS right and the rest should be relatively straightforward. Indeed, one possible implementation requires only a single generic search method which is configured with an algorithm-specific queuing strategy. (Your implementation need not be of this form to receive full credit).

Implement the depth-first search (DFS) algorithm in the `depthFirstSearch` function in `search.py`. To make your algorithm complete, write the graph search version of DFS, which avoids expanding any already visited states.

Your code should quickly find a solution for:

```
python pacman.py -l tinyMaze -p SearchAgent
python pacman.py -l mediumMaze -p SearchAgent
python pacman.py -l bigMaze -z .5 -p SearchAgent
```

The Pacman board will show an overlay of the states explored, and the order in which they were explored (brighter red means earlier exploration). Is the exploration order what you

would have expected? Does Pacman actually go to all the explored squares on his way to the goal?

**Hint:** If you use a Stack as your data structure, the solution found by your DFS algorithm for mediumMaze should have a length of 130 (provided you push successors onto the fringe in the order provided by getSuccessors; you might get 246 if you push them in the reverse order). Is this a least cost solution? If not, think about what depth-first search is doing wrong.

## Q2: Breadth First Search (12pts)

Implement the breadth-first search (BFS) algorithm in the breadthFirstSearch function in search.py. Again, write a graph search algorithm that avoids expanding any already visited states. Test your code the same way you did for depth-first search.

```
python pacman.py -l mediumMaze -p SearchAgent -a fn=bfs
python pacman.py -l bigMaze -p SearchAgent -a fn=bfs -z .5
```

Does BFS find a least cost solution? If not, check your implementation.

**Hint:** If Pacman moves too slowly for you, try the option `-frameTime 0`.

*Note:* If you've written your search code generically, your code should work equally well for the eight-puzzle search problem without any changes.

```
python eightpuzzle.py
```

## Q3: Varying the Cost Function (12pts)

While BFS will find a fewest-actions path to the goal, we might want to find paths that are “best” in other senses. Consider mediumDottedMaze and mediumScaryMaze.

By changing the cost function, we can encourage Pacman to find different paths. For example, we can charge more for dangerous steps in ghost-ridden areas or less for steps in food-rich areas, and a rational Pacman agent should adjust its behavior in response.

Implement the uniform-cost graph search algorithm in the uniformCostSearch function in search.py. We encourage you to look through util.py for some data structures that may be useful in your implementation. You should now observe successful behavior in all three of the following layouts, where the agents below are all UCS agents that differ only in the cost function they use (the agents and cost functions are written for you):

```
python pacman.py -l mediumMaze -p SearchAgent -a fn=ucs
python pacman.py -l mediumDottedMaze -p StayEastSearchAgent
python pacman.py -l mediumScaryMaze -p StayWestSearchAgent
```

*Note:* You should get very low and very high path costs for the StayEastSearchAgent and StayWestSearchAgent respectively, due to their exponential cost functions (see searchAgents.py for details).

---

## Q4: A\* search (12pts)

Implement A\* graph search in the empty function `aStarSearch` in `search.py`. A\* takes a heuristic function as an argument. Heuristics take two arguments: a state in the search problem (the main argument), and the problem itself (for reference information). The `nullHeuristic` heuristic function in `search.py` is a trivial example.

You can test your A\* implementation on the original problem of finding a path through a maze to a fixed position using the Manhattan distance heuristic (implemented already as `manhattanHeuristic` in `searchAgents.py`).

```
python pacman.py -l bigMaze -z .5 -p SearchAgent -a fn=astar,heuristic=manhattanHeuristic
```

You should see that A\* finds the optimal solution slightly faster than uniform cost search (about 549 vs. 620 search nodes expanded in our implementation, but ties in priority may make your numbers differ slightly). What happens on `openMaze` for the various search strategies?

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## Q5: Finding All the Corners (12pts)

The real power of A\* will only be apparent with a more challenging search problem. Now, it's time to formulate a new problem and design a heuristic for it.

In corner mazes, there are four dots, one in each corner. Our new search problem is to find the shortest path through the maze that touches all four corners (whether the maze actually has food there or not). Note that for some mazes like `tinyCorners`, the shortest path does not always go to the closest food first! Hint: the shortest path through `tinyCorners` takes 28 steps.

*Note:* Make sure to complete Question 2 before working on Question 5, because Question 5 builds upon your answer for Question 2.

Implement the `CornersProblem` search problem in `searchAgents.py`. You will need to choose a state representation that encodes all the information necessary to detect whether all four corners have been reached. Now, your search agent should solve:

```
python pacman.py -l tinyCorners -p SearchAgent -a fn=bfs,prob=CornersProblem
python pacman.py -l mediumCorners -p SearchAgent -a fn=bfs,prob=CornersProblem
```

To receive full credit, you need to define an abstract state representation that does not encode irrelevant information (like the position of ghosts, where extra food is, etc.). In particular, do not use a `Pacman GameState` as a search state. Your code will be very, very slow if you do (and also wrong).

*Hint 1:* The only parts of the game state you need to reference in your implementation are the starting Pacman position and the location of the four corners.

*Hint 2:* When coding up `getSuccessors`, make sure to add children to your successors list with a cost of 1.

Our implementation of `breadthFirstSearch` expands just under 2000 search nodes on `mediumCorners`. However, heuristics (used with A\* search) can reduce the amount of searching required.

## Q6: Corners Problem: Heuristic (12pts)

*Note:* Make sure to complete Question 4 before working on Question 6, because Question 6 builds upon your answer for Question 4.

Implement a non-trivial, consistent heuristic for the `CornersProblem` in `cornersHeuristic`.

```
python pacman.py -l mediumCorners -p AStarCornersAgent -z 0.5
```

Note: `AStarCornersAgent` is a shortcut for

```
-p SearchAgent -a fn=aStarSearch,prob=CornersProblem,heuristic=cornersHeuristic
```

**Admissibility vs. Consistency:** Remember, heuristics are just functions that take search states and return numbers that estimate the cost to a nearest goal. More effective heuristics will return values closer to the actual goal costs. To be *admissible*, the heuristic values must be lower bounds on the actual shortest path cost to the nearest goal (and non-negative). To be *consistent*, it must additionally hold that if an action has cost  $c$ , then taking that action can only cause a drop in heuristic of at most  $c$ .

Remember that admissibility isn't enough to guarantee correctness in graph search – you need the stronger condition of consistency. However, admissible heuristics are usually also consistent, especially if they are derived from problem relaxations. Therefore it is usually easiest to start out by brainstorming admissible heuristics. Once you have an admissible heuristic that works well, you can check whether it is indeed consistent, too. The only way to guarantee consistency is with a proof. However, inconsistency can often be detected by verifying that for each node you expand, its successor nodes are equal or higher in  $f$ -value. Moreover, if UCS and A\* ever return paths of different lengths, your heuristic is inconsistent. This stuff is tricky!

**Non-Trivial Heuristics:** The trivial heuristics are the ones that return zero everywhere (UCS) and the heuristic which computes the true completion cost. The former won't save you any time, while the latter will timeout the autograder. You want a heuristic which reduces total compute time, though for this assignment the autograder that we will be using to grade your work will only check node counts (aside from enforcing a reasonable time limit).



**Grading:** Your heuristic must be a non-trivial non-negative consistent heuristic to receive any points. Make sure that your heuristic returns 0 at every goal state and never returns a negative value. Depending on how few nodes your heuristic expands, you'll be graded:

Number of nodes expanded	Grade
more than 2000	0/12
at most 2000	4/12
at most 1600	8/12
at most 1200	12/12

Remember: If your heuristic is inconsistent, you will receive no credit, so be careful!

## Q7: Eating All The Dots (16pts)

Now we'll solve a hard search problem: eating all the Pacman food in as few steps as possible. For this, we'll need a new search problem definition which formalizes the food-clearing problem: `FoodSearchProblem` in `searchAgents.py` (implemented for you). A solution is defined to be a path that collects all of the food in the Pacman world. For the present project, solutions do not take into account any ghosts or power pellets; solutions only depend on the placement of walls, regular food and Pacman. (Of course ghosts can ruin the execution of a solution! We'll get to that in the next project.) If you have written your general search methods correctly, A\* with a null heuristic (equivalent to uniform-cost search) should quickly find an optimal solution to `testSearch` with no code change on your part (total cost of 7).

```
python pacman.py -l testSearch -p AStarFoodSearchAgent
```

Note: `AStarFoodSearchAgent` is a shortcut for

```
-p SearchAgent -a fn=astar,prob=FoodSearchProblem,heuristic=foodHeuristic
```

You should find that UCS starts to slow down even for the seemingly simple `tinySearch`. As a reference, our implementation takes 2.5 seconds to find a path of length 27 after expanding 5057 search nodes.

*Note:* Make sure to complete Question 4 before working on Question 7, because Question 7 builds upon your answer for Question 4.

Fill in `foodHeuristic` in `searchAgents.py` with a *consistent* heuristic for the `FoodSearchProblem`. Try your agent on the `trickySearch` board:

```
python pacman.py -l trickySearch -p AStarFoodSearchAgent
```

Our UCS agent finds the optimal solution in about 13 seconds, exploring over 16,000 nodes.



Any non-trivial non-negative consistent heuristic will receive 1 point. Make sure that your heuristic returns 0 at every goal state and never returns a negative value. Depending on how few nodes your heuristic expands, you'll get additional points:

Number of nodes expanded	Grade
more than 15000	4/16
at most 15000	8/16
at most 12000	12/16
at most 9000	16/16 (full credit; medium)
at most 7000	18/16 (optional extra credit; hard)

Remember: If your heuristic is inconsistent, you will receive no credit, so be careful! Can you solve `mediumSearch` in a short time? If so, we're either very, very impressed, or your heuristic is inconsistent.

## Q8: Suboptimal Search (12 pts)

Sometimes, even with A\* and a good heuristic, finding the optimal path through all the dots is hard. In these cases, we'd still like to find a reasonably good path, quickly. In this section, you'll write an agent that always greedily eats the closest dot. `ClosestDotSearchAgent` is implemented for you in `searchAgents.py`, but it's missing a key function that finds a path to the closest dot.

Implement the function `findPathToClosestDot` in `searchAgents.py`. Our agent solves this maze (suboptimally!) in under a second with a path cost of 350:

```
python pacman.py -l bigSearch -p ClosestDotSearchAgent -z .5
```

*Hint:* The quickest way to complete `findPathToClosestDot` is to fill in the `AnyFoodSearchProblem`, which is missing its goal test. Then, solve that problem with an appropriate search function. The solution should be very short!

Your `ClosestDotSearchAgent` won't always find the shortest possible path through the maze. Make sure you understand why and try to come up with a small example where repeatedly going to the closest dot does not result in finding the shortest path for eating all the dots.

## Submission

**Submit the modified `search.zip` file to Project Phase 1 on Blackboard. Make sure to properly comment your code. Also, submit a report in which you explain your solution for every question.**

# Technical Instructions

Given the instructions above, you will only need to work on the search.py and searchAgent.py files. If you're using Jupyter Notebook, you can use the search.ipynb and searchAgent.ipynb files instead. However, upon the completion of their exercises, kindly convert them back into py files. To do so, there are two techniques:

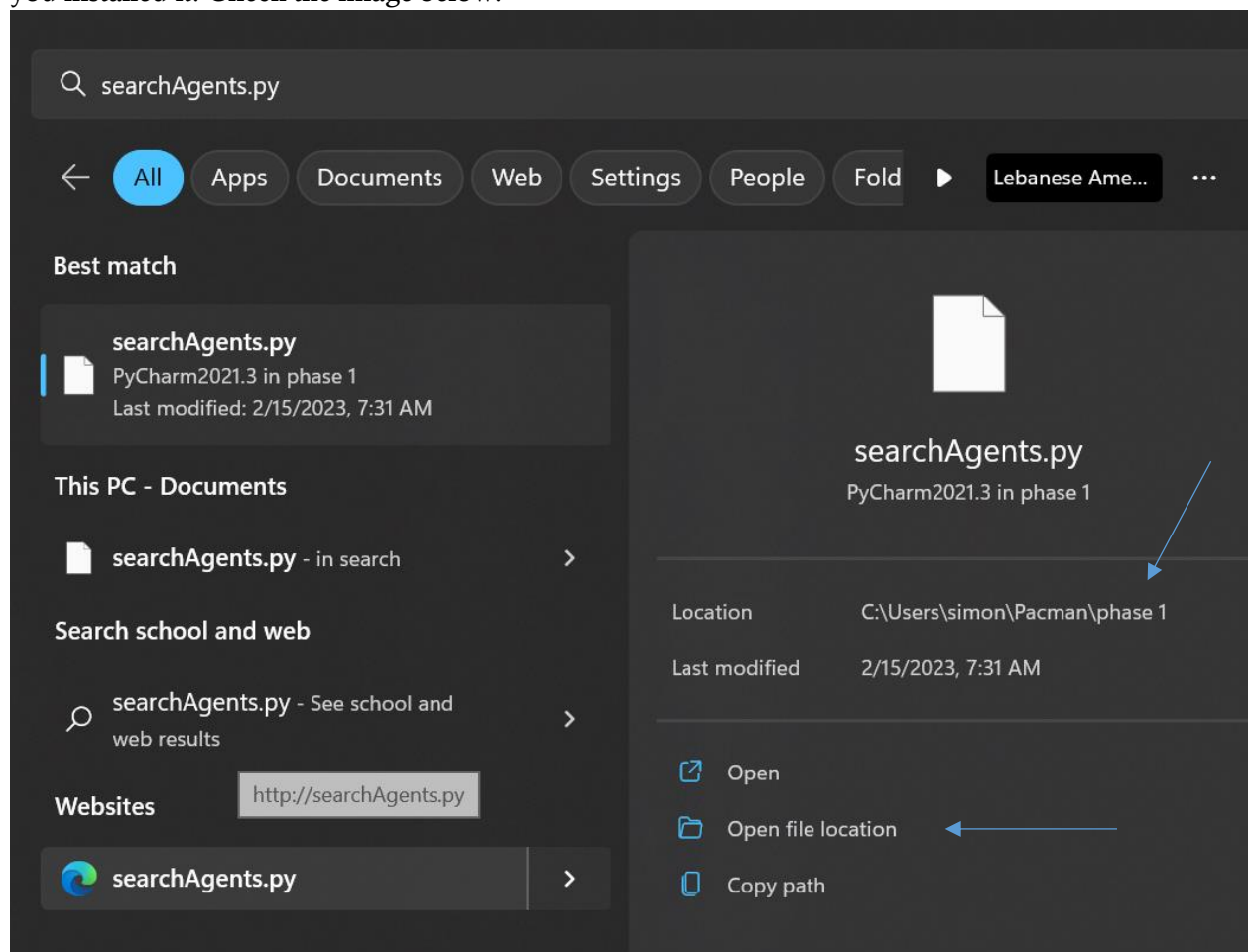
1. Download the notebook as a py file and then reupload it to its rightful search directory folder.
2. Modify the currently existing search.py and searchAgent.py files by copy-pasting your answers found in the notebook to the aforementioned files. Make sure you save the modifications and restart the kernel so you can have your test runs with the updated version.

Kindly preserve all the remaining documents as py files. Any modification made will cause your application to fail on running.

## Q&A

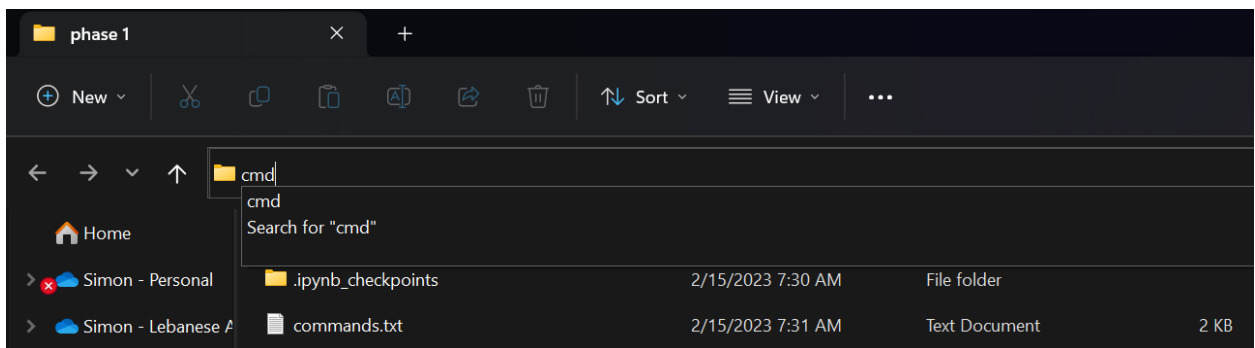
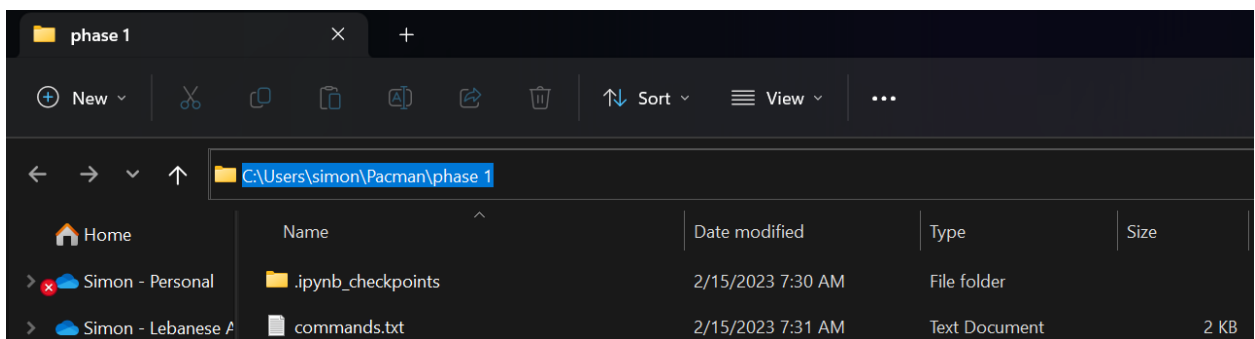
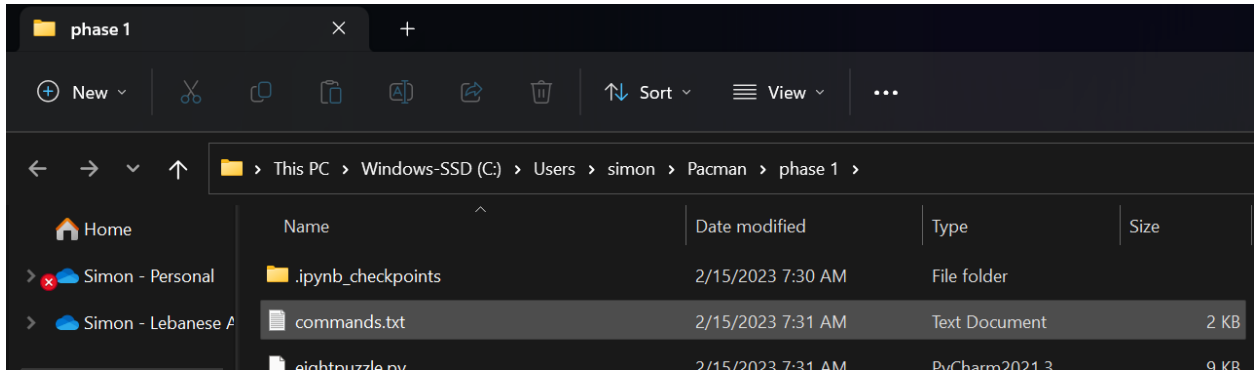
1. How do I reach to the directory of my py files when uploaded to my IDE/Text editor?

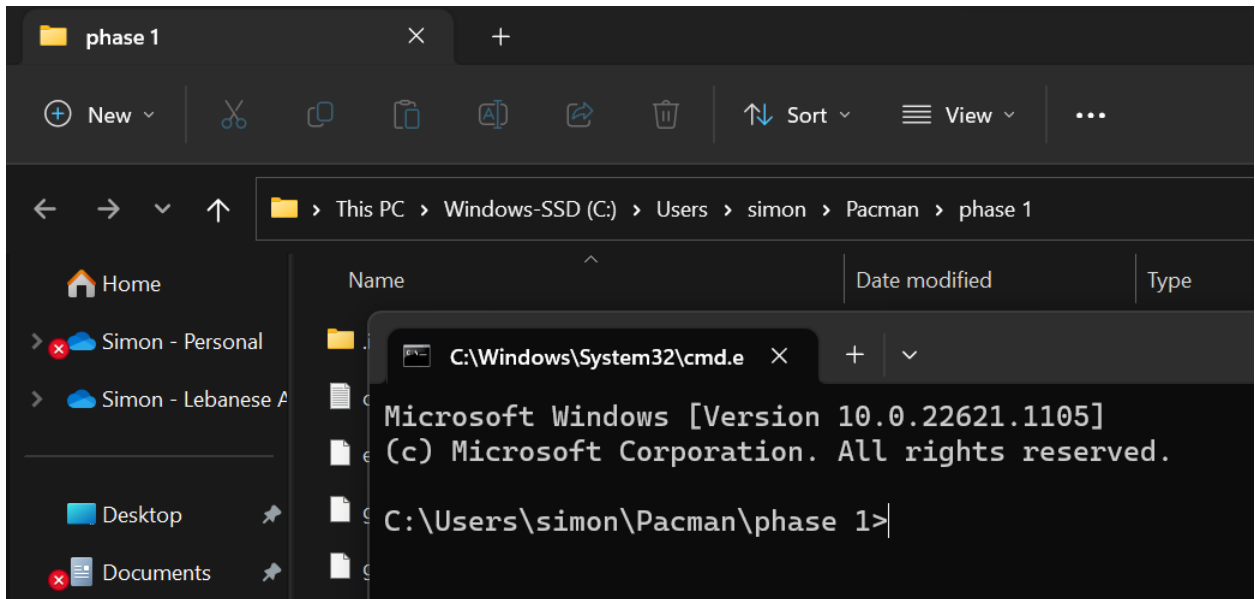
Simply, have your OS search for any of the files and it will give you the directory where you uploaded the files. Usually, you will find them in the Program Files; it really depends on how you installed it. Check the image below.



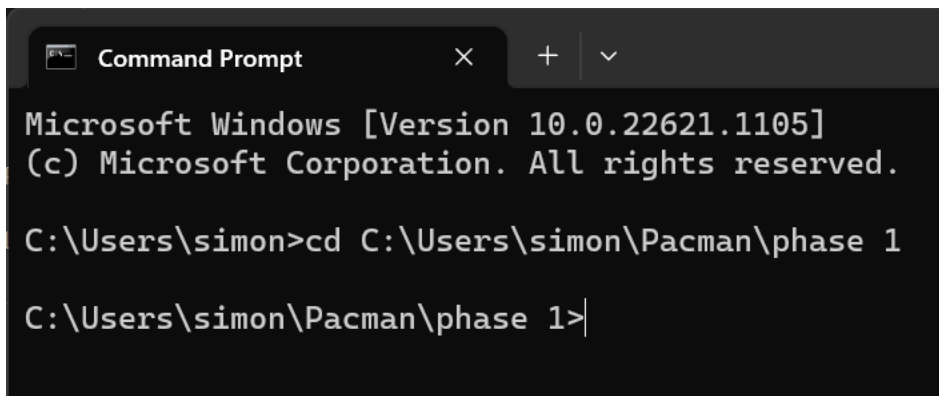
2. How do I reach to the directory over the command prompt.

Method 1: Browse to your designated folder and type cmd + Enter on the path above.





Method 2: Open command prompt and redirect to the folder using the cd command then white space then copy paste the folder's path onto the command.



3. What if I am using Anaconda to do all of this and python commands on the cmd are not working?

You will need to use the anaconda prompt and use conda instead of python in the command line. Some modifications will be needed depending on the command.