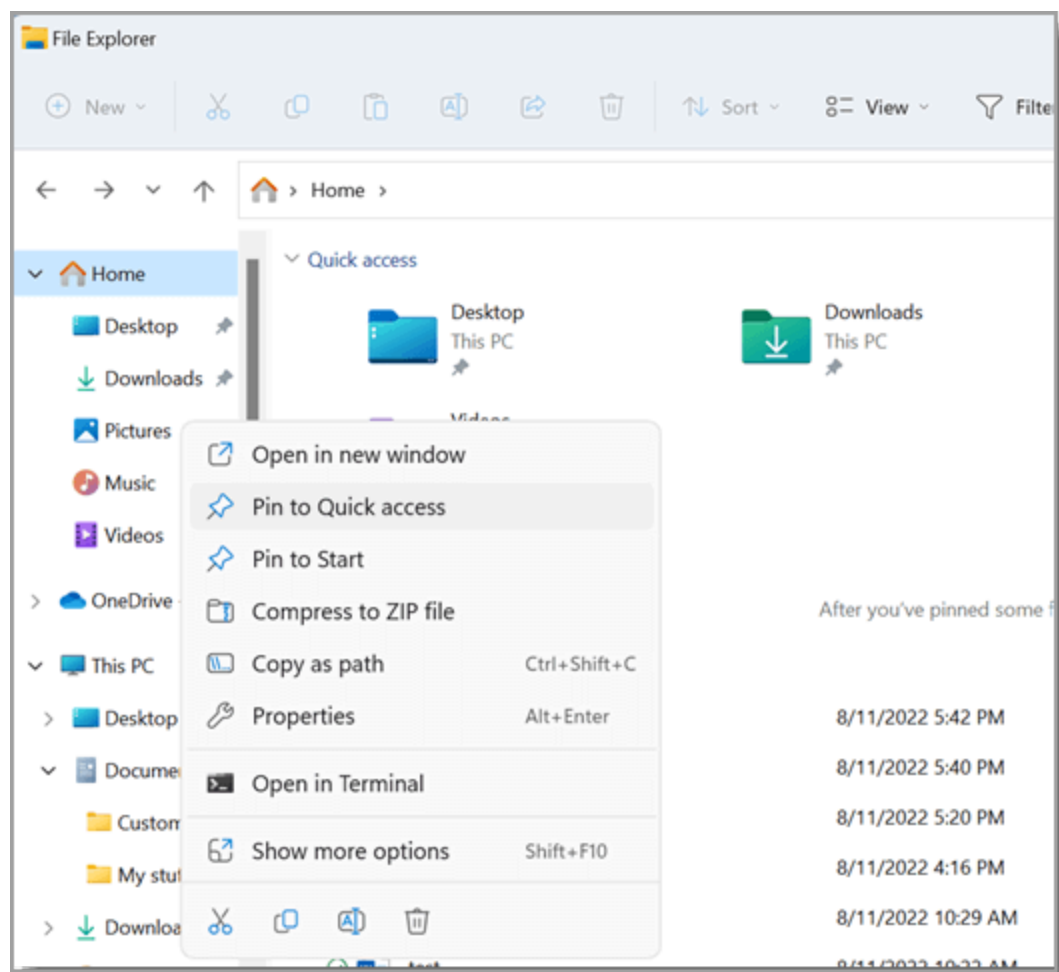File Explorer in Windows 11 helps you get the files you need quickly and easily.

To check it out in Windows 11, select it on the taskbar or the Start menu, or press the **Windows logo key** + **E** on your keyboard.

How to use File Explorer:

- To pin a folder to **Quick access**, right-click (or press and hold) the folder and select **Pin to Quick access**.

- To share a file, select it, then select **Share** on the ribbon.

- To move the location of a file or folder, select it and then select **Cut** on the ribbon. Navigate to the new location, then select **Paste** .

    > **Note:** For files and folders in Quick access, you'll need to right-click (or press and hold) and select **Open** before you can cut and paste.
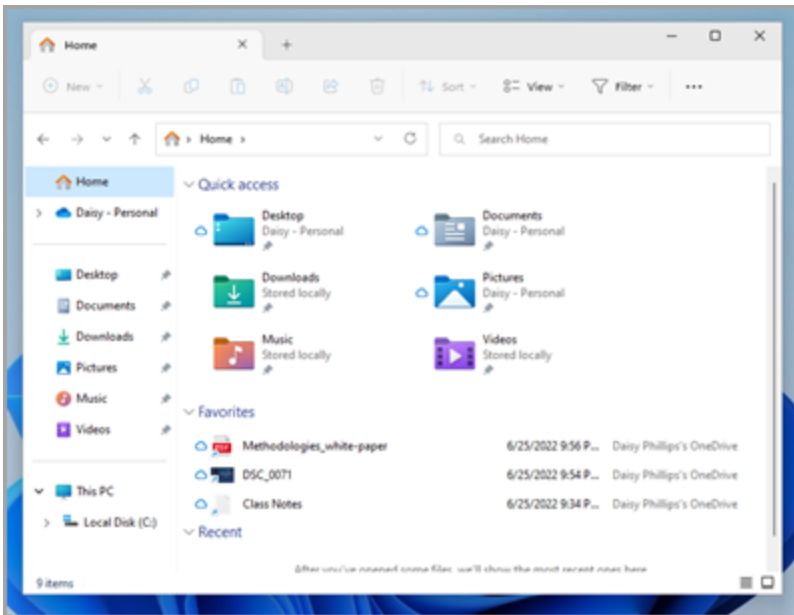
- To change how your items appear in File Explorer, select **View** on the ribbon and choose between showing icons, lists, details, and more.

- To reduce the space between files, select **View** > **Compact view**.

- To find relevant files from your PC and the cloud, search from File Explorer Home.

    > **Note:** Sign in to your cloud account(s) from **Start** > **Settings** > **Accounts** to enable cloud search.

Quick access

Starting with Windows 11, version 22H2, the known Windows folders—
Desktop, **Documents**, **Downloads**, **Pictures**, **Music**, and **Videos**—are available by default as pinned folders in Quick access in both File Explorer Home and the left navigation pane. These default folders are no longer displayed under This PC to keep the view focused on your PC's drives and network locations.

You can set any folder to show up in Quick access so it'll be easy to find. Just right-click (or long-press) it and select **Pin to Quick access.** Unpin it when you don't need it there anymore by right-clicking (or long-pressing) it and selecting **Unpin from Quick access**.

Restore known folders if you have unpinned them

If you unpin these known Windows folders and decide to restore them later, here is an easy way to restore them in Quick access under Home and in the navigation pane:

1. Select **Start** > **File Explorer** , or select the **File Explorer** icon in the taskbar.

2. Select **Home** in the left navigation pane.

3. Select the **Up** arrow from the navigation buttons available to the left of the address bar. This view displays all 6 known Windows folders—
   Desktop, **Documents**, **Downloads**, **Pictures**, **Music**, and **Videos**.

4. Select and hold (or right-click) on the folder you wish to restore and select **Pin to Quick access** from the context menu.

The folder will now be available in your navigation pane and in File Explorer Home.

Restore the left navigation pane if you have hidden it

If you have hidden the left navigation pane and would like to make it visible in your File Explorer window, you can show it again using these steps:

1. Select **Start** > **File Explorer** , or select the **File Explorer** icon in the taskbar.

2. Select **View** from the Command Bar.

3. Select **Show**, then select **Navigation Pane**.

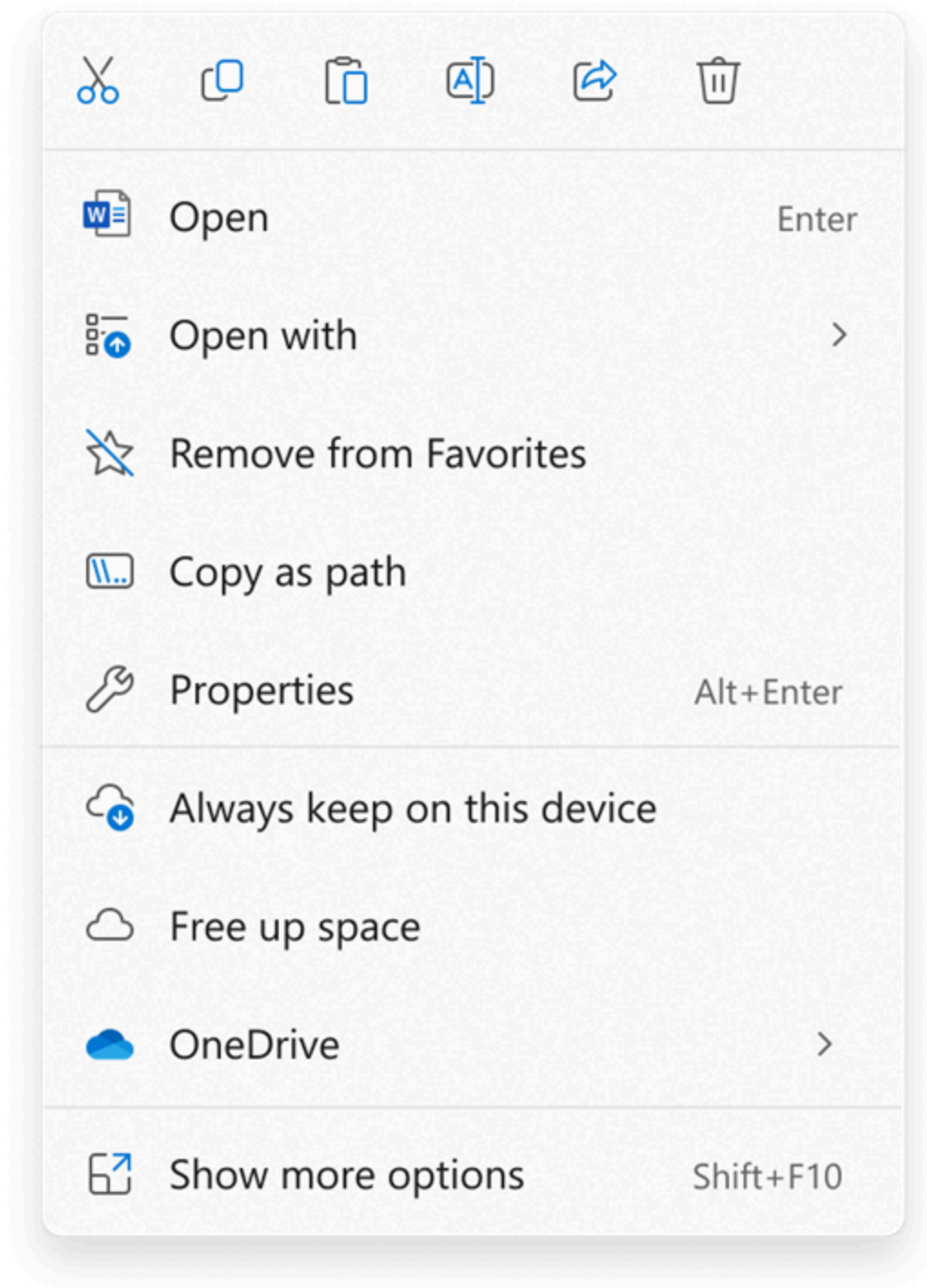The navigation pane should now be visible in your File Explorer window.

Context menu

File Explorer has a new, streamlined context menu, making it easier to get to popular commands. Right-click on a file to access the new context menu.

Find common actions

You can find **Cut** , **Copy** , **Paste** , **Rename** , **Share** , and **Delete** at the top of the context menu. Hover over any icon to see its name.

Find commands from the previous Windows 10 context menu

1. Right-click (or select and hold) on a file or folder to open the context menu.

2. Select **Show more options**.

> **Note:** Not all extensions from Windows 10 will be available in the streamlined
> Windows 11 context menu, but they'll always be available when selecting **Show
> more options**. Some apps will update over time to join the new context menu.
> Check with your app developer about availability and timing for specific apps.

Common File Explorer options

Set File Explorer to open to This PC

By default, File Explorer opens to Quick access, renamed to File Explorer Home in Windows 11, Version 22H2. We recommend Home as your landing page in File Explorer, where you can:

- Access your most recent and favorited Office.com files quickly.

- Search and find your relevant files from your PC and the cloud much faster than with This PC.

If you'd rather have File Explorer open to This PC, on the ribbon, select **See more** > **Options** > **Open File Explorer to,** then select **This PC** > **Apply**.

Show file name extensions

Open **File Explorer** from the taskbar. Select **View** > **Show,** then select **File name extensions** to view file name extensions.

Show hidden files

Open **File Explorer** from the taskbar. Select **View** > **Show,** then select **Hidden items** to view hidden files and folders.

Show item checkboxes

Open **File Explorer** from the taskbar. Select **View** > **Show,** then select **Item check boxes** to view a check box next to files and folders to select them.