Windows: Formatting A Drive for Mac OS

Last Modified on 11/12/2025 2:00 pm EST
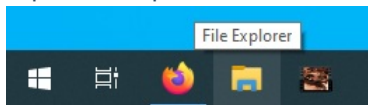
This guide will walk you through how to format a drive for Mac OS on a Windows computer.
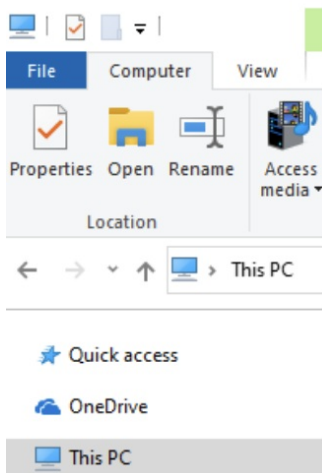
Important Info on Drives

- For stability and performance, most drives need reformatting. New drives often come with unnecessary partitions or bloatware; others are in the wrong format.
- Formatting your drive with a single MacOS Extended partition is the best way to achieve cross-platform compatibility.
  - The PPC recommends using MacDrive to access your Mac-formatted drives on Windows.
- Note that formatting a drive will erase *everything* on the drive. If you have files that you need to preserve, move them to a different drive before proceeding.
- It is recommended to name your drive based on your NetID (e.g. abc123).
  - Only use letters, numbers, and underscores in the name of your drive.
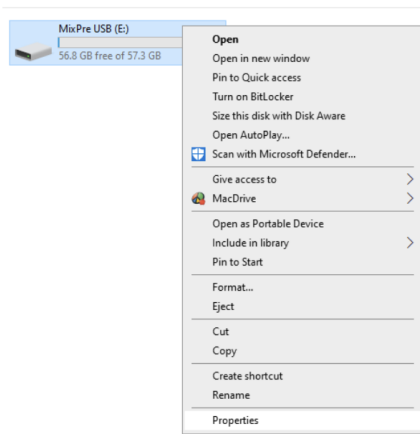
To Check a Drive's Format:
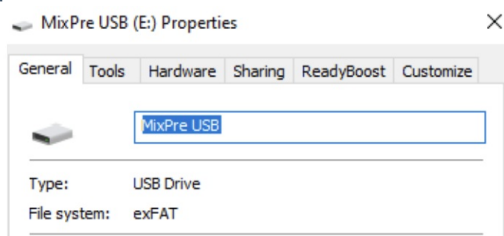
1. Open File Explorer from the taskbar.

2. Navigate to *This PC* on the sidebar (or any view in which you can see your external hard drive).

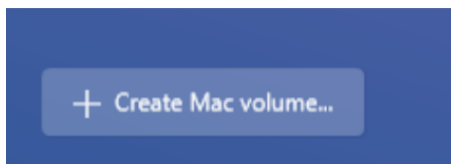3. Right click on your external hard drive and choose *Properties*

4. Look on the *General* tab for *File System* to find the drive format.

   a. **Note:** If you have MacDrive installed and the drive is already formatted for Mac, it will say HFS+ or HFS plus.
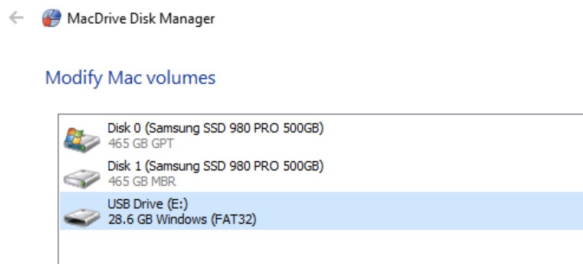

To Format a Drive Using MacDrive:
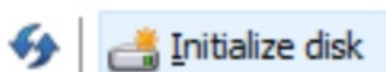
To format a drive for use with macOS:

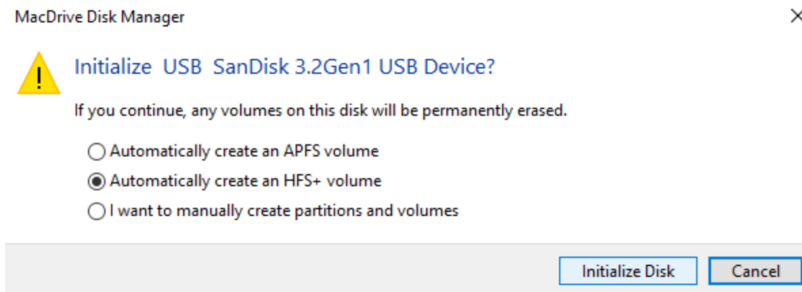1. Launch MacDrive 11 and click the Create Mac volume button.

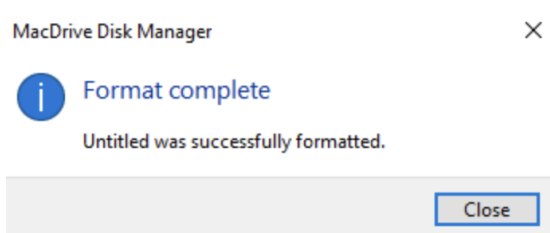2. Click to select your drive from the **Modify Mac volumes** list.

3. Click the *Initialize disk* button.

4. Click *Automatically create an HFS+ volume.* Then click the *Initialize disk* button.
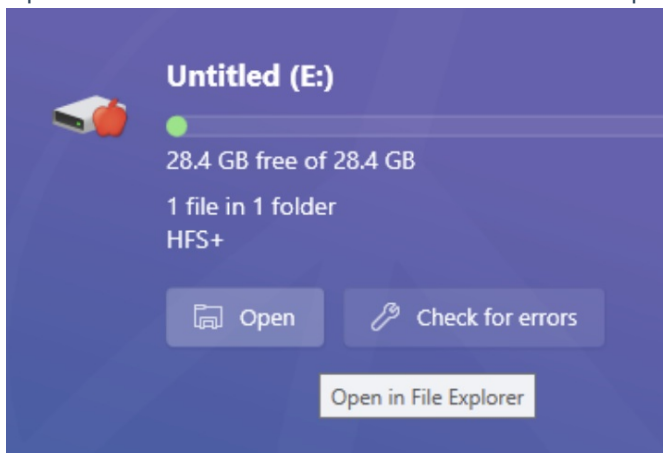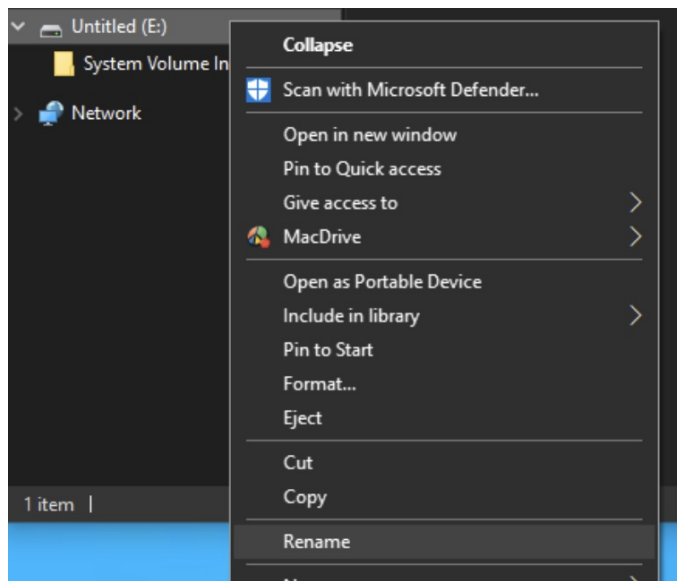

5. In the *Format complete* popup window, click *Close.*

Renaming a Drive

By default, MacDrive will name your newly formatted drive as "Untitled". To correct this:

1. Open MacDrive 11 to see the Untitled Drive. Click the Open button.

2. Right click the drive in the sidebar of and choose *Rename.*

3. Type your desired drive name in the text field and hit the *Enter key* on the keyboard.