# Using the Microsoft Windows Operating System

*by Sophia*

### ☰ WHAT'S COVERED

Microsoft Windows provides users with a Graphic User Interface (GUI) to simplify the process of working with files and software applications. This organizes how users interact with the computer, and how data is processed and transferred between application software. Windows also makes the process of accessing information on the Internet easy for its users. In this tutorial, we will present an introductory tour of the Windows interface by performing several general tasks.

Our discussion will break down as follows:

**1. Starting MS Windows**
**2. Running Applications**
**3. Shutting Down MS Windows**
**4. File Explorer**

# 1. Starting MS Windows

Starting Windows begins with pressing the power button on your computer's system unit to initialize the computer's **boot process**. The boot process describes the process for powering on a computer and loading the operating system. During the boot process, the computer will run a self diagnostic, and load the necessary information and software to help the computer and hardware devices to communicate from the computer's read-only memory (ROM). As your computer is booting up, a black screen with the MS Windows logo, progress bar, copyright information, and the word Microsoft will appear on the monitor. Users will then be presented with the Microsoft Windows **welcome screen**. The welcome screen will invite the user to authenticate a user account on the computer. At this point, the MS Windows OS is loaded and ready to be used. Using the mouse to click on a user name starts the process of logging onto the computer. **Logging on** to the computer opens the user account, and makes the computer ready to be used.

### 🖹 TERMS TO KNOW

**Boot Process**

Process for powering on a computer and loading the operating system.

**Welcome Screen**

Presents a list of the names of all user accounts on the computer.

**Logging On**

Opens the user account and makes the computer ready to be used.
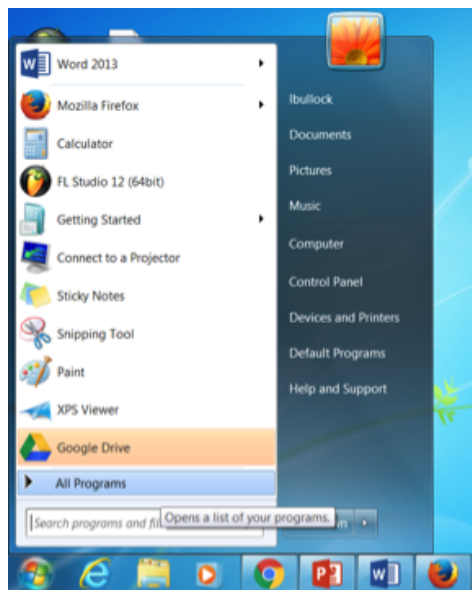
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# 2. Running Applications

One of the most basic tasks that you will complete on a computer is starting an application program. There are several ways in which to start an application using the Windows OS; however, the most common way to start an application is by using the Start Menu. For example, the following steps start Microsoft Word using the Start Menu.
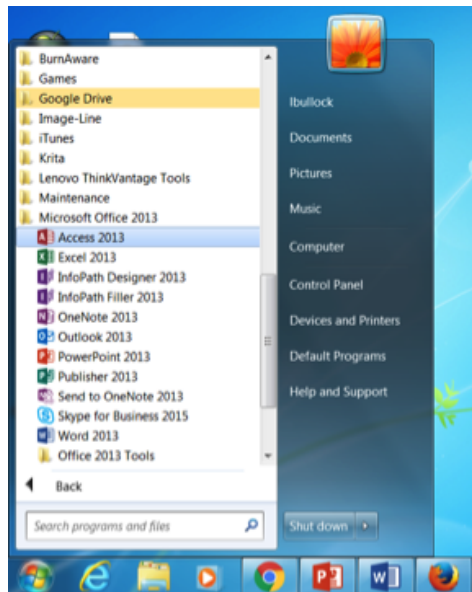
📦 STEP BY STEP

**Step One:** Display the Start Menu by clicking on the Windows icon in the lower left corner of the taskbar.
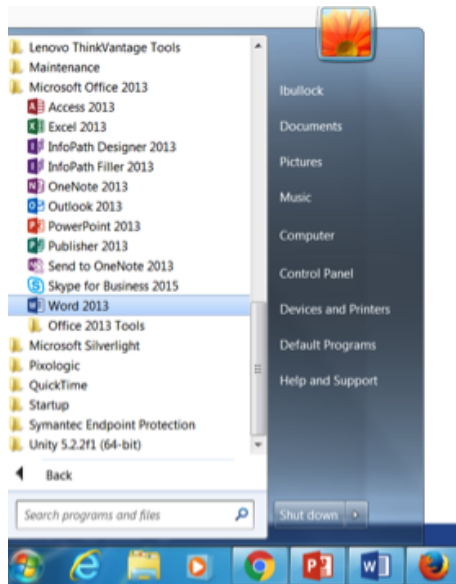


**Step Two:** Select All Programs from the menu list.

**Step Three:** Click on the MS Office Folder to view all MS Office applications.



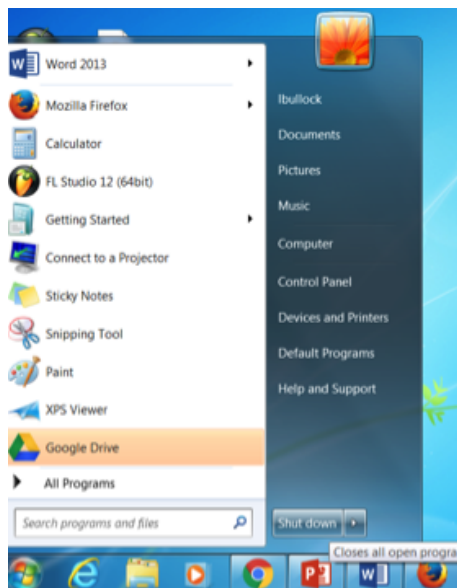**Step Four:** Click on MS Word to open the program.

# 3. Shutting Down MS Windows

Another one of the most basic tasks you will complete on a computer is shutting down the operating system. Many new computer users often fail to follow the proper process for shutting down their computer. Failing to properly shut down Windows can cause data to be lost and could create operating system issues. These issues could ultimately require complete system recovery. The most common way to shut down the computer's operating system is by using the Start Menu. The following steps shut down MS Windows using the Start Menu.

⬢ STEP BY STEP

**Step One:** Display the Start Menu by clicking on the Windows icon in the lower left corner of the taskbar.



**Step Two:** Click on the Shut down button.

# 4. File Explorer

Microsoft's File Explorer is a program that comes prepackaged with the Windows OS. It gives users the opportunity to view all of the files on a computer. When open, the program shows the hard disk as a hierarchy of drives, folders, and the files in each folder. Users can edit the hierarchy to organize files and folders.
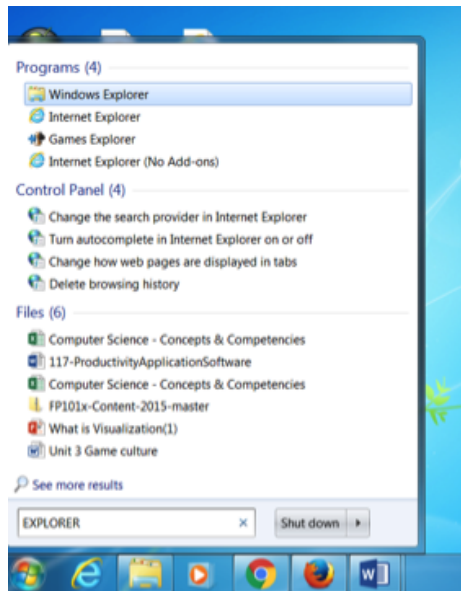
The following steps start the File Explorer (formerly Windows Explorer) program.
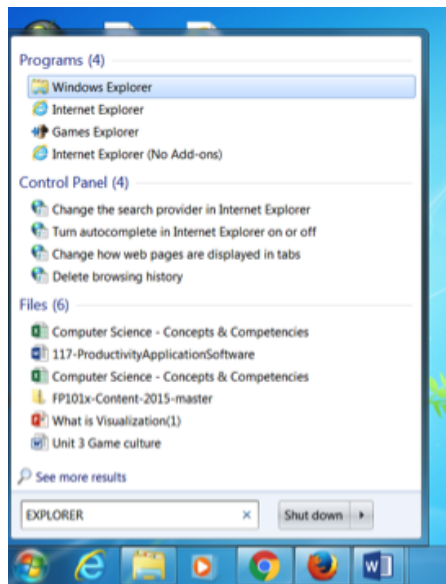
⬢ STEP BY STEP

**Step One:** Display the Start Menu by clicking on the Windows icon in the lower left corner of the taskbar.

**Step Two:** In the Windows Search box, type "Explorer."



**Step Three:** Select File Explorer from the list of programs. The Explorer window will open and you should be able to manage all files on the computer.
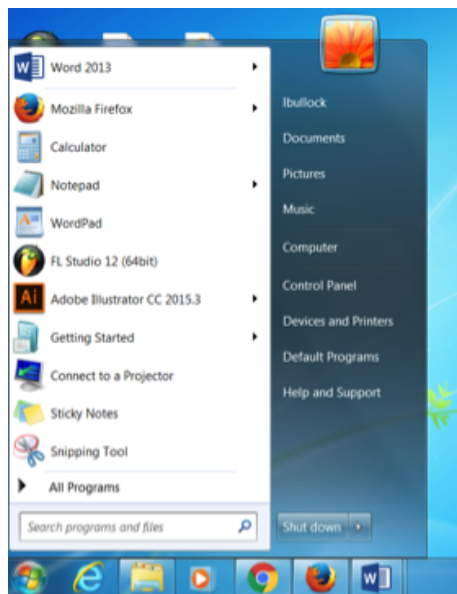


Use the following steps to create a keyboard shortcut.
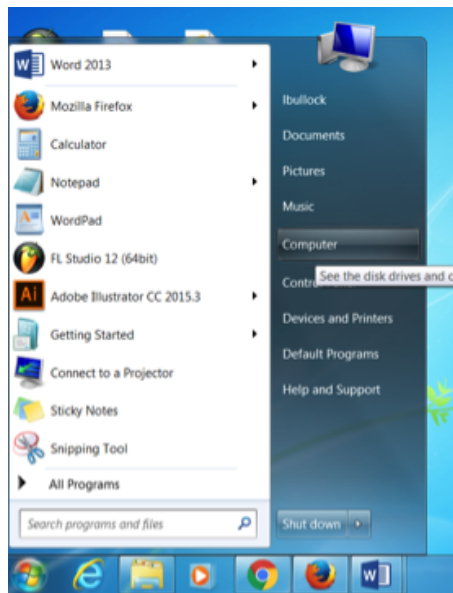
🧩 **STEP BY STEP**

**Step One:** Press the windows key + E simultaneously. The File Explorer screen will open and you will be able to manage all files on the computer.

OR

Display the Start Menu by clicking on the Windows icon in the lower left corner of the taskbar.

**Step Two:** Click on the Computer button to display the File Explorer program. The File Explorer screen will open and you will be able to manage all files on the computer.



<table>
<tr><td>✓</td><td>SUMMARY</td></tr>
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In this tutorial, we covered some of the basic tasks that users of the **MS Windows OS** are required to perform to secure basic **operation of a Windows-based computer**. Some of these required tasks include starting up and **shutting down MS Windows** by using the start menu, as well as running software applications. We also covered how to view the computer's hard disk as a hierarchy of drives and folders using the **File Explorer** program.

Source: All images provided by Sophia

## ☰ TERMS TO KNOW

**Boot Process**

Process for powering on a computer and loading the operating system.

**Logging On**

Opens the user account and makes the computer ready to be used.

**Welcome Screen**

Presents a list of the names of all user accounts on the computer.