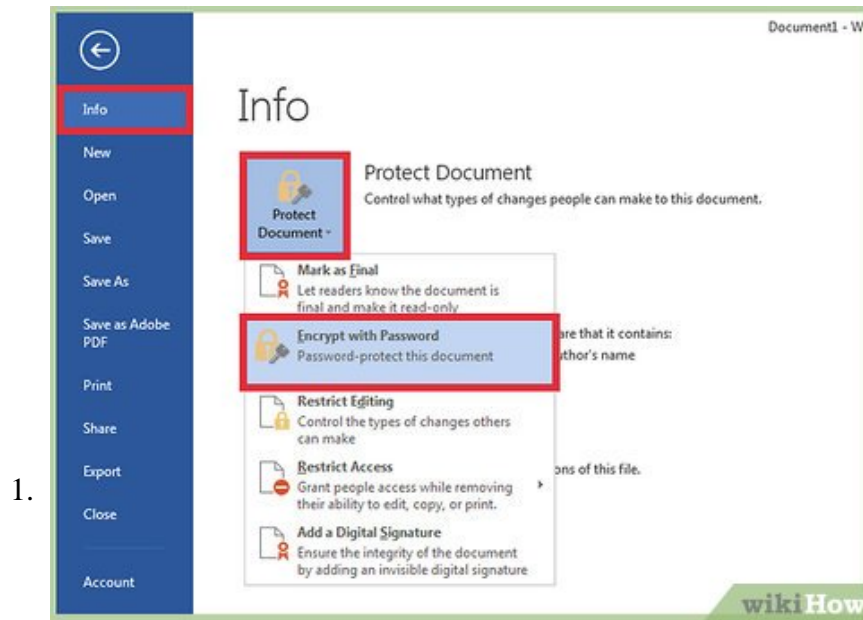


# How to Create a Password Protected File on Windows 7

Windows 7 creates an inconvenience for protecting your data by not allowing you to protect individual files with a password natively unlike previous iterations such as Windows XP. Instead the operating system provides workarounds and...

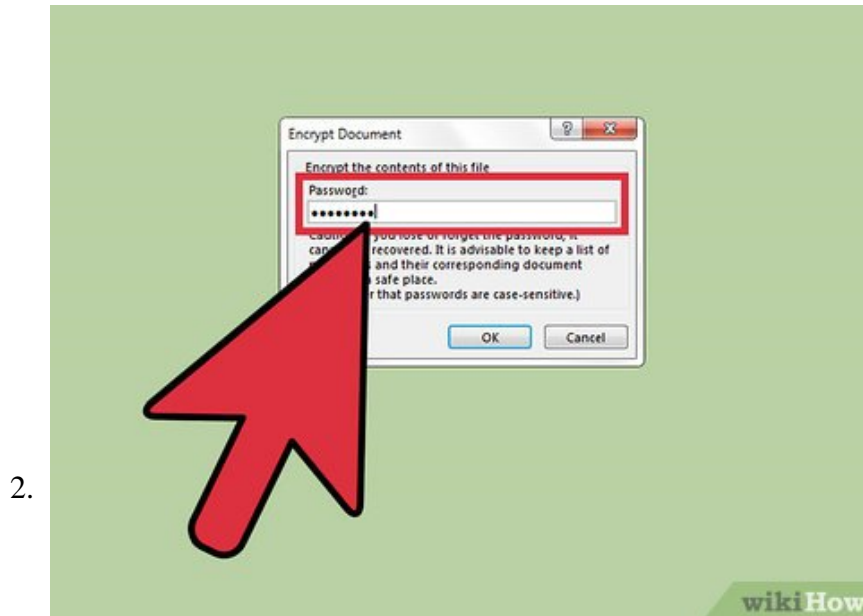
Method 1 of 3:

## Password-Protecting a Microsoft Office Document



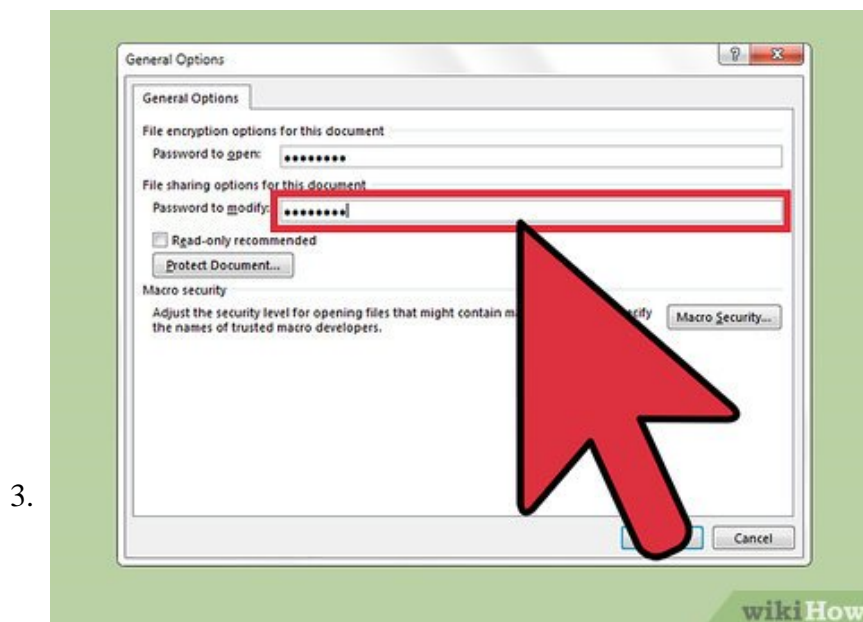
**Enable password-protection for your document.** You are able to activate password protection for Word, PowerPoint or Excel documents. This will limit the ability to open the file by requiring a password to be entered. The process may differ slightly depending on which version of Microsoft Office you have.

1. In Microsoft Office 2007, click on the Microsoft Office logo, click on 'Prepare' in the menu, then choose 'Encrypt Document.'
2. In Microsoft Office 2010 and beyond, click on the 'File' tab, then click on 'Info,' click on 'Protect Document' and click on 'encrypt with Password.'<sup>[1]</sup>



**Create a password for your document.** In this new window type in a password and then click on 'OK.' Confirm the password by retyping the password then clicking on 'OK.' Save your document to enable the password.

1. To enable both the ability to open a document and edit a document to require a password you will need to create two separate passwords. You can set them to be the same password or use two separate passwords.



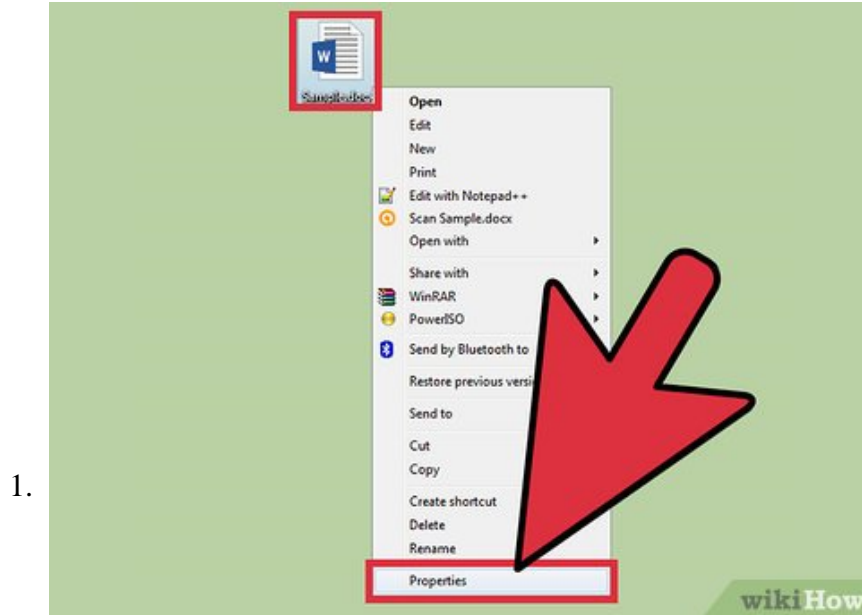
**Enable password-protection to edit a document.** You will need to set a separate password for users who want to make changes to a document. The process differs depending on which version of Microsoft Office you are using. Click on the Microsoft Office logo, click 'Save As,' or if you do not see the icon, click on the 'File' tab then click on 'Save As.' At the bottom of the Save As window, click on 'Tools.' You will see a new menu, click on 'General Options.' Under the file sharing options for the document, you will see 'Password to Modify.' Type in a password, click on 'OK' then confirm the password and click on 'OK.'

Save your document to keep the password.[2]

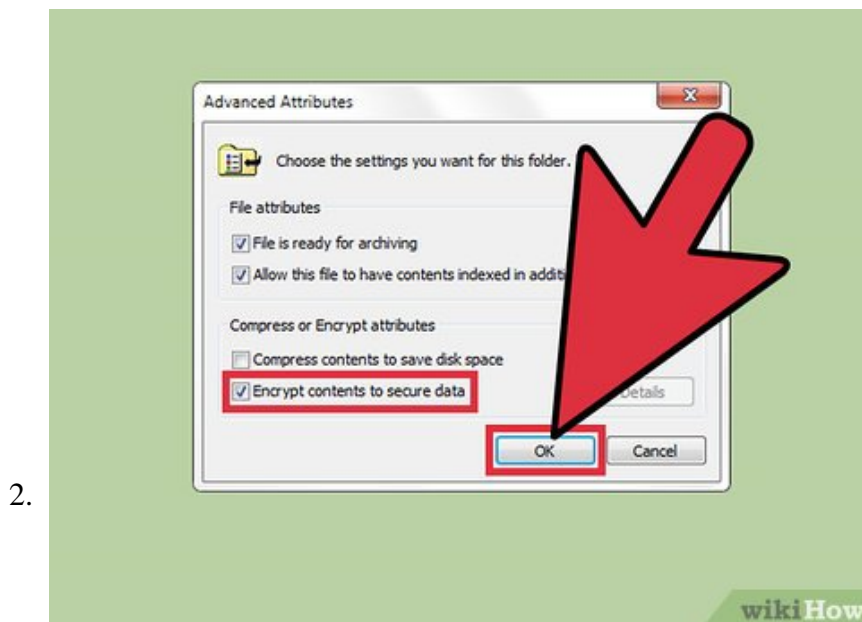
1. This method is not required if you want to just restrict access to opening a file.

Method 2 of 3:

## Using an Encrypting File System to Protect Files



**Access the properties of your file.** An alternative to protecting a file is to use Microsoft's Encrypting File System (EFS) which embeds a key on the file that restricts access unless that key can be decrypted by your computer. Right click on the file you want to encrypt to bring up a menu. Click on 'Properties' to bring up the Properties window.



**Enable encryption on your file.** Under the 'General' tab, click on 'Advanced' to bring up the Advanced Attributes window. Click on 'Encrypt contents to secure data' to check the box then click on 'OK.'

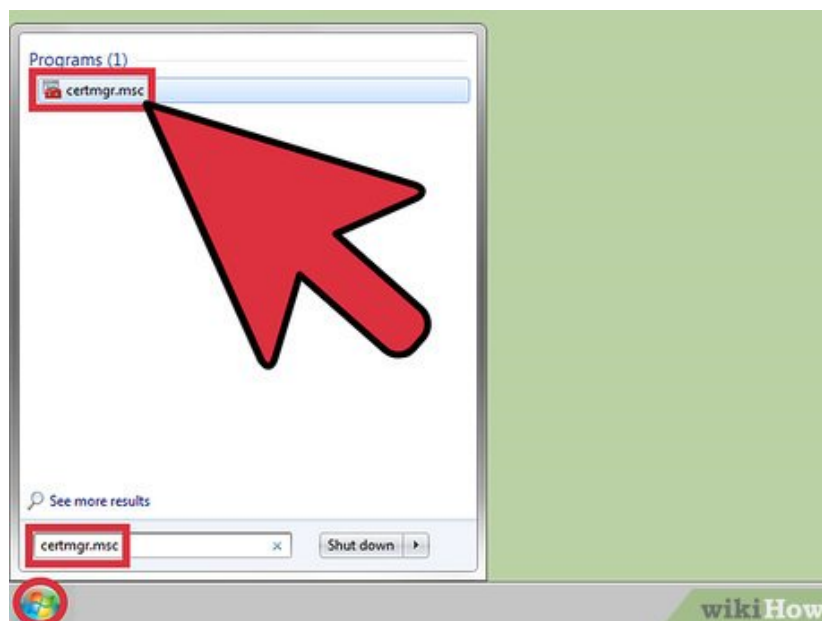
3.



**Set the level of encryption of your file.** You can choose to encrypt only the file or to encrypt the file and the parent directory.<sup>[3]</sup> After this, the only way the file can be opened is by decrypting the file with a certificate on your computer. You will only need to open the file to decrypt it. If you are logged in as a different user or you are on a different computer, you will need to export the certificate.

1. If the encryption level is set to encrypt the parent folder as well, you will restrict access to the folder as well.

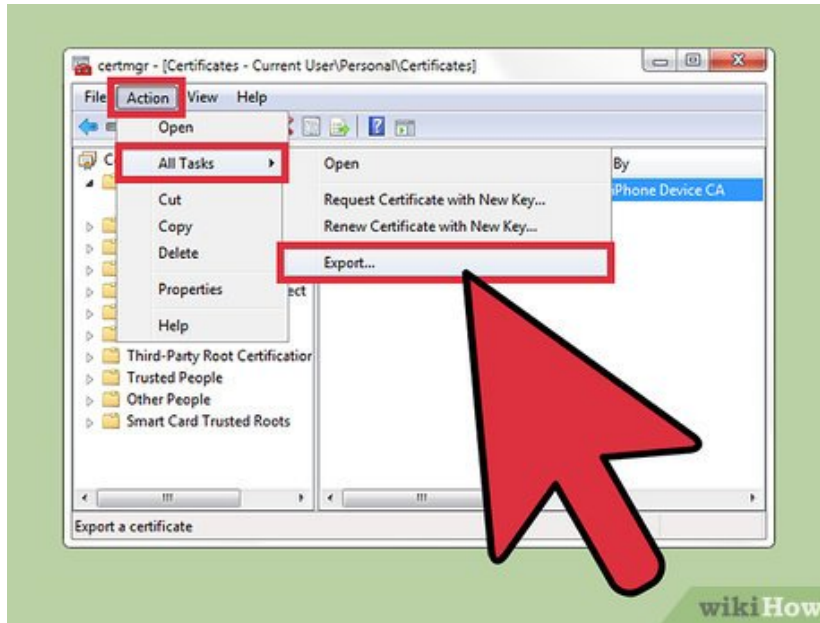
4.



**Open the Certificate Manager to manage your certificate.** In order to manage the decryption certificate, you will need to access the certificate manager which is necessary if you want to remove your certificate, create a backup or share it with others. You are not required to create a backup of the certificate, but if the certificate gets lost or damaged you will not have access to your encrypted file.<sup>[4]</sup>

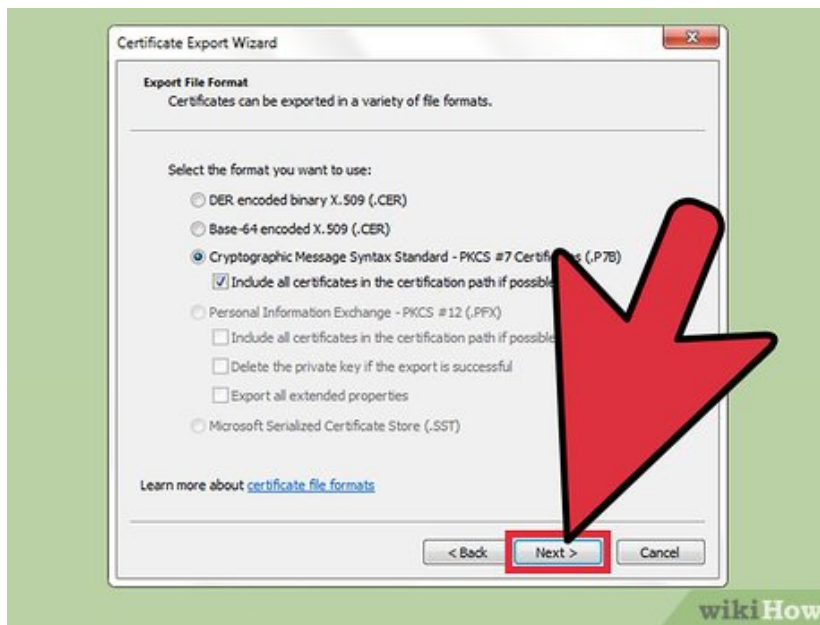
Click on the 'Start' button. In the search box type in "certmgr.msc" in the search box then press ? Enter to bring up a new window.

5.



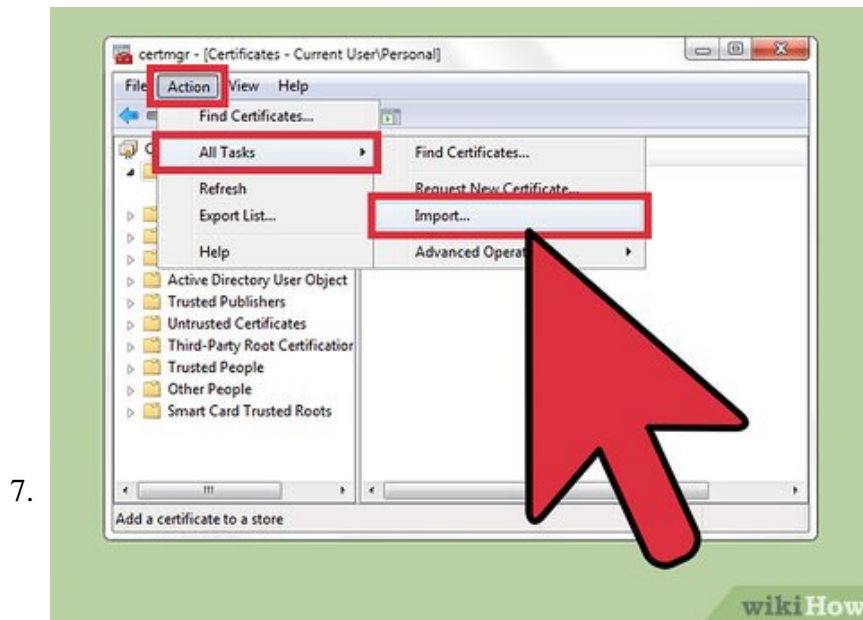
**Activate the Certificate Export Wizard to export your certificate.** In the left pane of the "Certificate Manager," double click 'Personal,' click on 'Certificates.' On the right hand side, click on the certificate that lists the Encrypting File Systems under 'Intended Purposes.' On the menu bar, click on Action>All Tasks>Export to bring up the 'Certificate Export Wizard.'

6.



**Create a backup of your EFS certificate.** Follow the instructions given by the wizard. Place a mark on 'Yes, export the private key.' Click 'Personal Information Exchange.' Type in the password you want to use and confirm the password. Your certificate will be exported and you will be prompted to name it. Type in a name for the file and the location (with the whole path) or you can click 'Browse' then navigate to a location, type in a name for the file then click 'Save.'

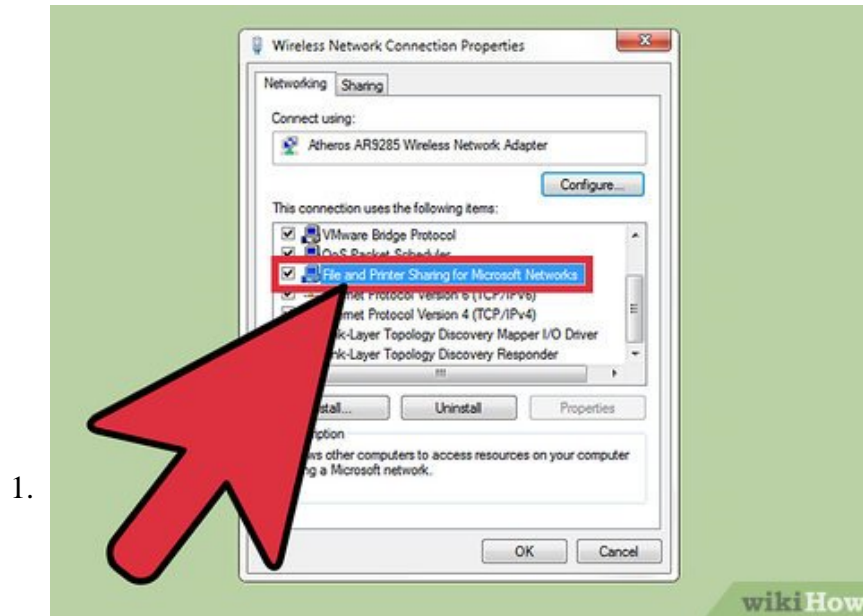
1. If you want to open the file on a different computer, make sure you have the certificate and the file sent together in order to be able to open the file.
2. You can save the certificate onto removable storage such as a USB drive or other storage media.



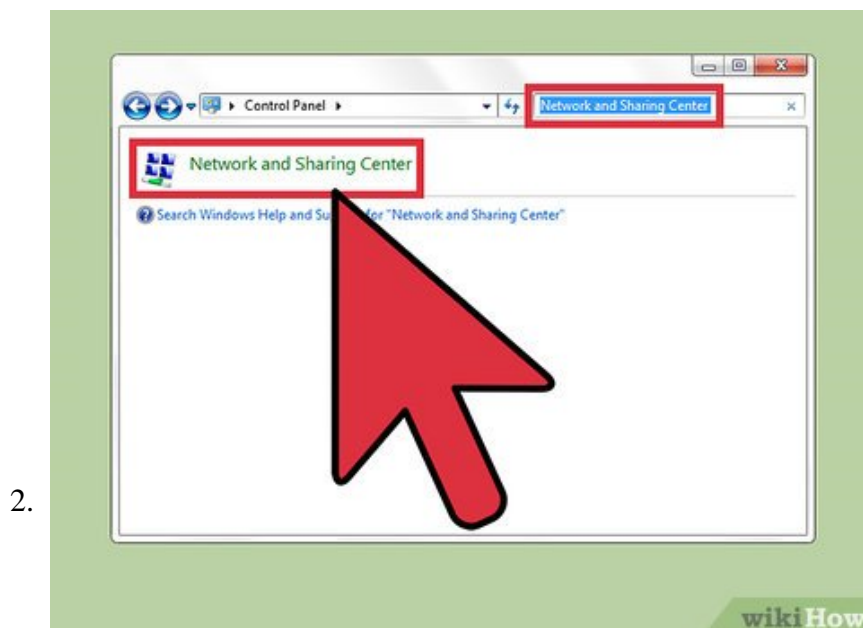
**Activate the Certificate Import Wizard on another computer.** When you are opening a file that is embedded with the EFS key as a different user or on a different computer, you can use the 'Certificate Manager' to import the certificate. To be able to open the file, navigate to the 'Certificate Manager,' click on the 'Personal' folder then on the menu bar click on Action>All Tasks>Import to bring up the 'Certificate Import Wizard.' Follow the instructions on the wizard then locate the certificate on the computer. You will be prompted for the password, select 'Mark this key as Exportable.' Click 'Place all certificates in the following store' and choose 'Personal.'

Method 3 of 3:

## Restricting Access to a File on a Network



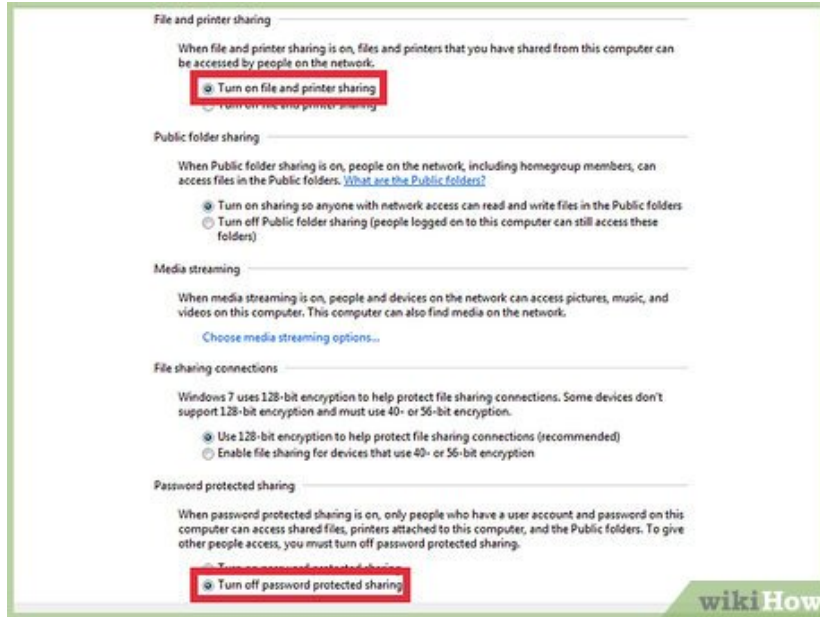
**Enable file sharing on your network.** As an alternative to password protecting the file itself, you can restrict access to the file to specific users. This will require assigned users to log in with their username and password if they are trying to access the file on your hard disk from a different computer. Navigate to the control panel by clicking on 'Start' then clicking on 'Control Panel.' In the 'Control Panel' window search for 'View network statuses and tasks' and click on the search result. Right click on your active connection type, which can either be your ethernet adapter or wireless adapter, to bring up a menu then choose 'Properties.' In this window make sure the 'Networking' tab is shown and ensure that the 'File and Printer Sharing for Microsoft Networks' has a checkmark next to it then click on 'OK.'<sup>[5]</sup>



**Ensure your computer is on the same network type and workgroup.** Return to the 'Control Panel' and search for 'Network and Sharing Center' and click on the result. If your computer is not on the same network as other computers, they will not be able to see each other or make a connection. You also need to make sure the workgroup type is the same as any discrepancy will prevent your computer from being able

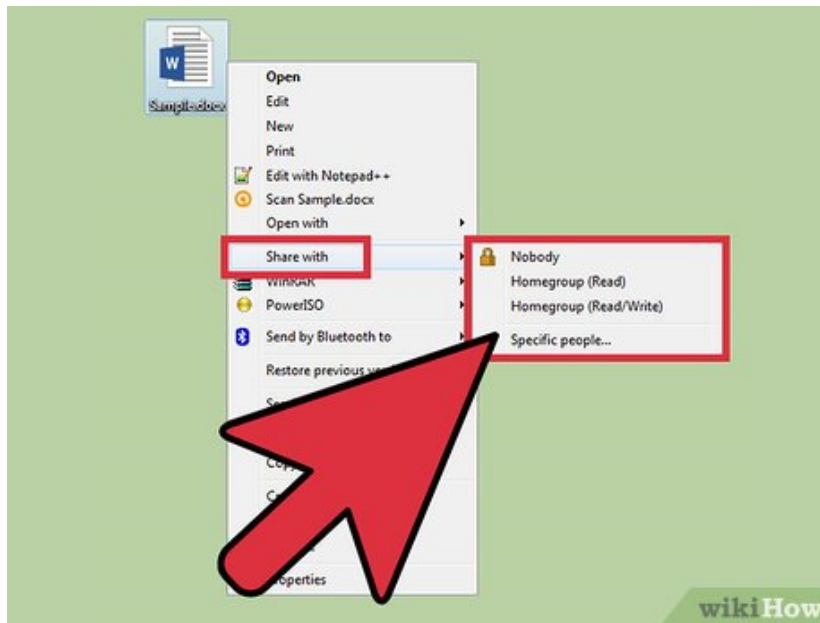
to connect to other computers. Click on the workgroup name to change this setting if it does not match your peers' workgroups.

3.



**Activate Advanced sharing settings.** On the 'Network and Sharing Center' locate 'Change advanced sharing settings' on the left column of the window and click on it. Make sure that both 'Turn on file and printer sharing,' and 'Turn on password protected sharing' are active.

4.



**Share the file on the network.** Right click on the file you want to permit access to. This will bring up a menu. Click on 'Share with...' and choose 'Specific people' Type in the username you wish to grant permission to and click 'Add' then click on 'OK.' Anytime that user attempts to access a shared file they will be prompted to log in with their username and password that is on the workgroup. If a user is not given permission to open the file, they will not be able to see the file on the network.

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