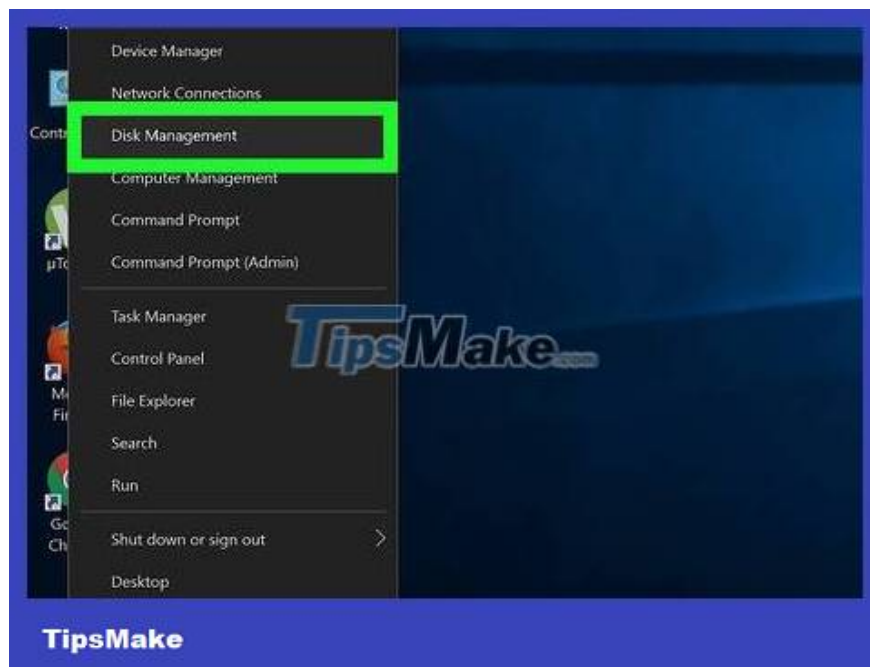


How to Format a USB if Windows Can't

If Windows cannot recognize or format the USB drive properly, there may be a problem with the operating system or the USB drive. If the problem is in Windows, you can solve it by reinstalling the USB driver. If the problem is with the USB drive (and it's not damaged), you can fix it with an advanced format.

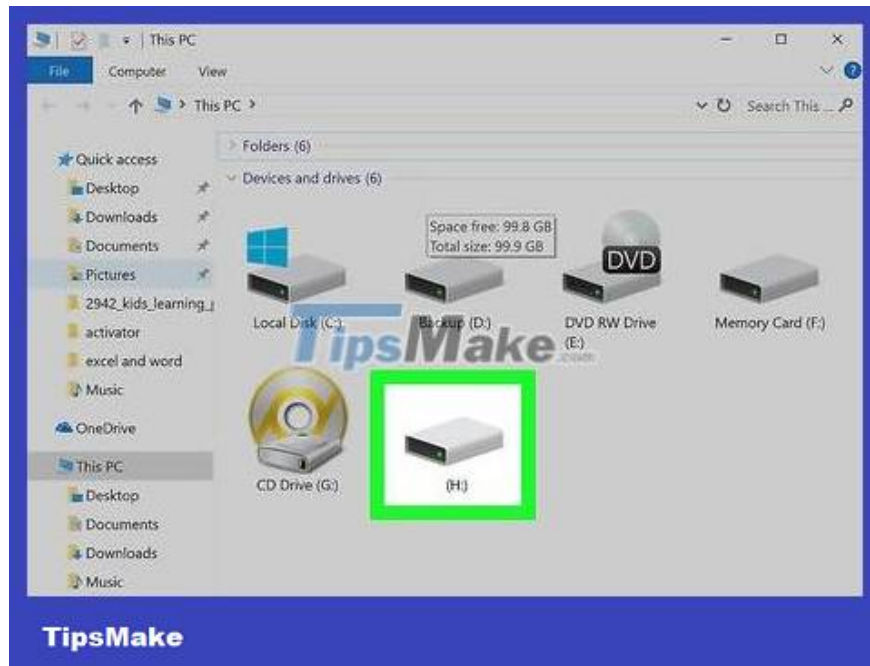
First way



Plug the USB into the computer and open Disk Management. This Windows utility allows you to manage all connected drives. USB drives that are not formatted properly will still appear in this utility.

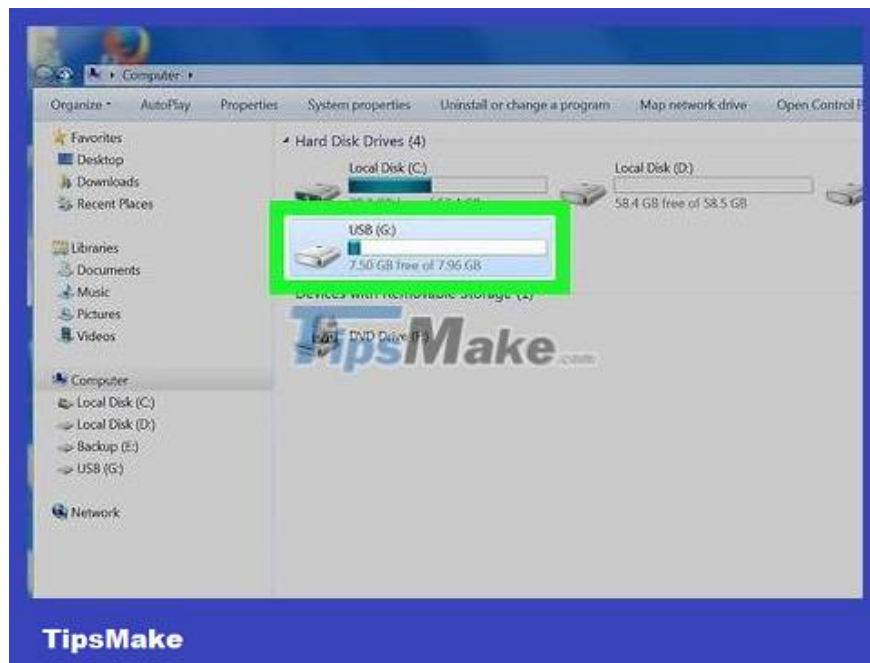
Press the Windows + R combination and type `diskmgmt.msct` to run the Disk Management utility.

Find the USB in the list of connected drives. If your USB drive is listed here, it may not be formatted properly. Click for instructions on formatting the drive. If your USB doesn't appear, read on to learn how to troubleshoot the problem.



Plug the drive into another USB port. Before continuing, the quickest way you can determine the problem is to try plugging the drive into another USB port on your computer. You must plug it directly into a port on your computer, not additional USB ports.

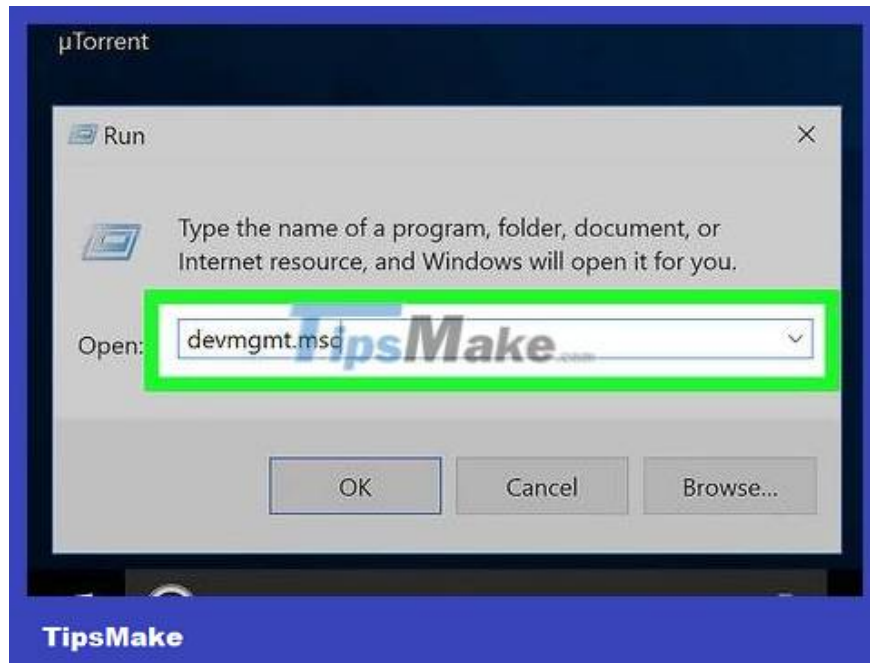
If the drive works on another USB port, the first port is probably damaged. There is nothing you can do other than replace the motherboard. In the immediate future, you need to avoid using this port in the near future.



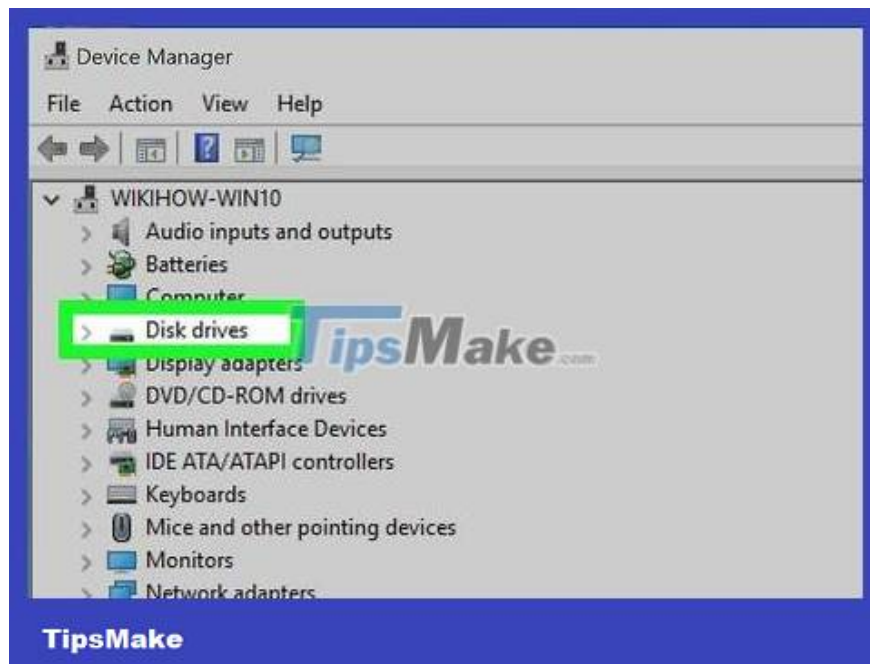
Plug the USB into another computer. If the drive still doesn't appear when you plug it into another computer, the USB may be damaged. You need to buy a new USB drive.

If the drive appears when you plug it into another computer, there may be a problem with the driver on your computer. See the next section for how to troubleshoot driver problems.

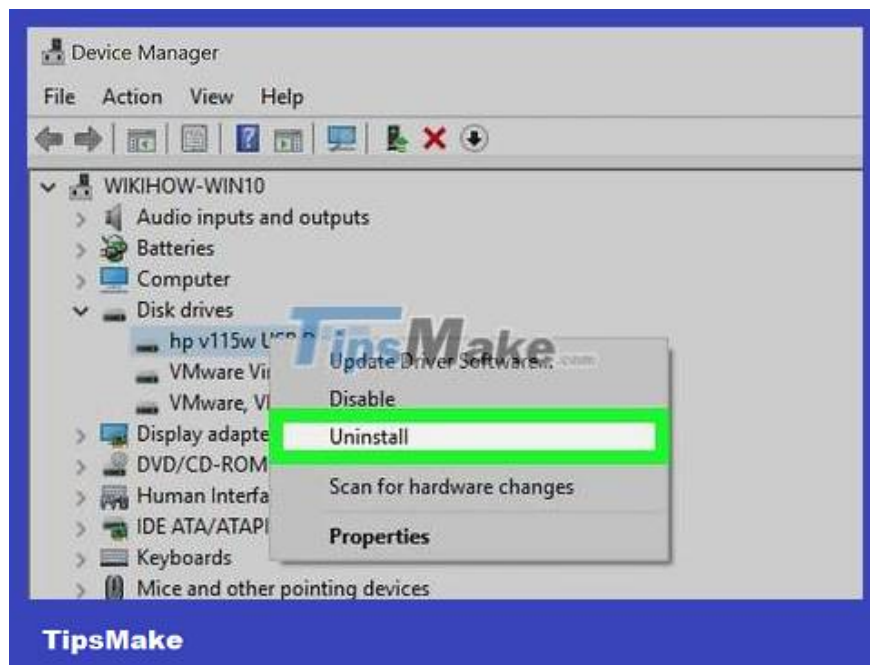
Delete and reinstall the driver



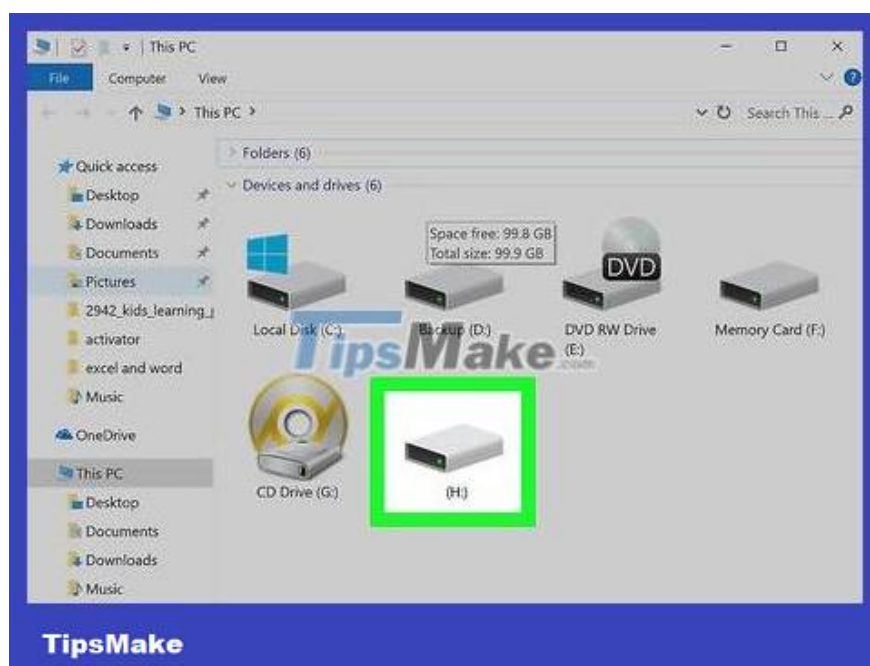
Press . Combine Windows + R and type `devmgmt.msc`. Device Manager will open.



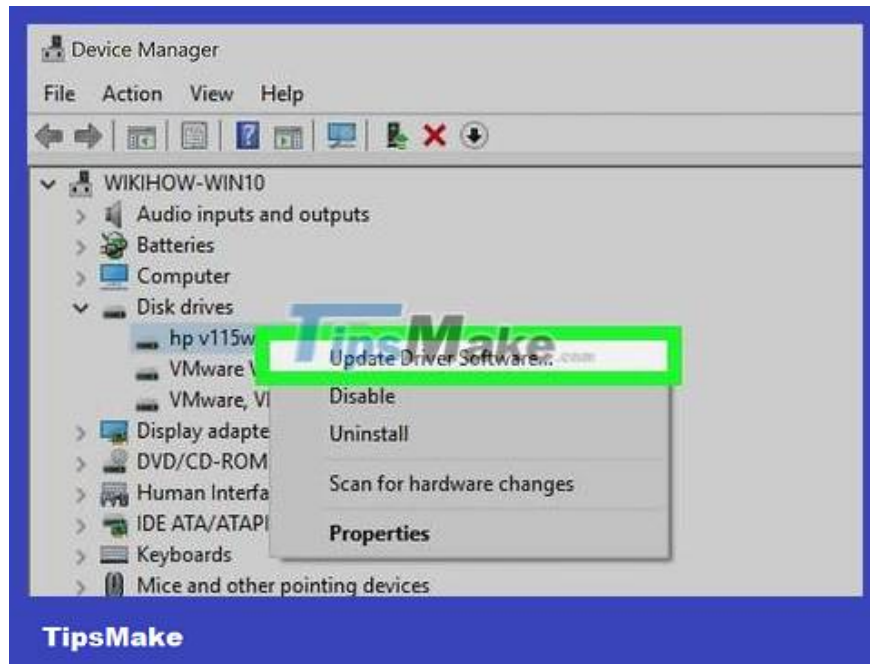
Expand the "Disk drives" section. All connected drives will appear, including hard drives and USB drives.



Right-click the USB and select "Uninstall". The USB drive will be deleted from the system.



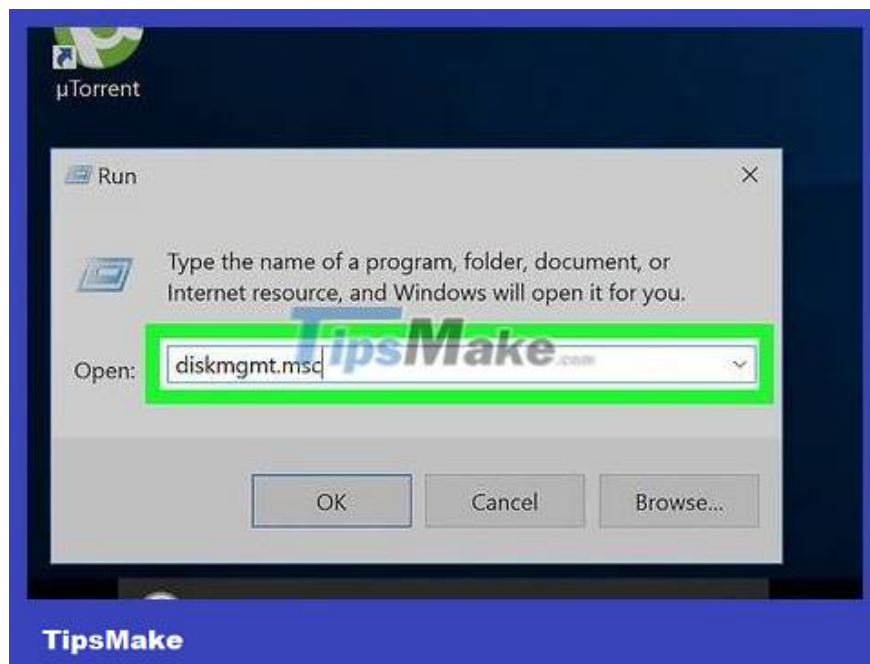
Unplug the USB and plug it back in. Windows will try to automatically install the driver.



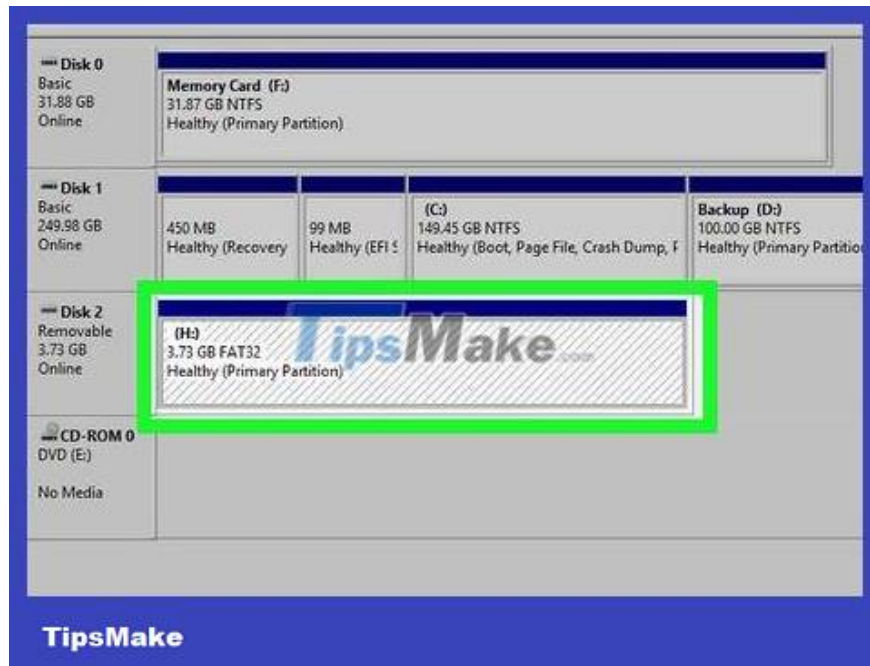
Update USB drive. If you see a yellow exclamation mark appear next to any device, there is a driver problem. If a yellow exclamation mark is placed next to the Universal Serial Bus controller, the USB drive driver is having problems.

Right-click the inactive device and select "Update Driver Software". Follow the instructions to reinstall the driver.

Reformat the drive using Disk Management



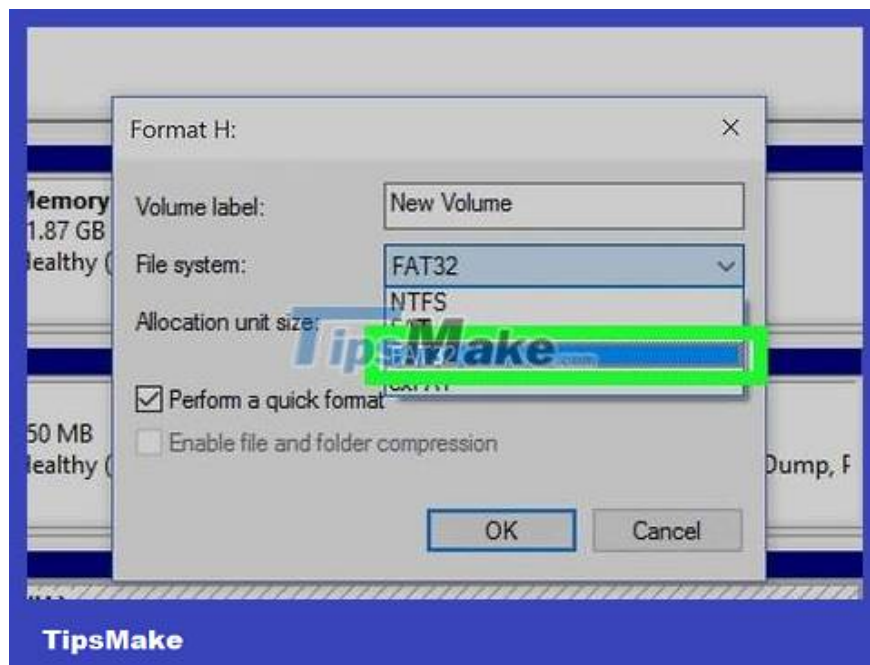
Press . Combine Windows + R and type `diskmgmt.msc`. The Disk Management utility will open.



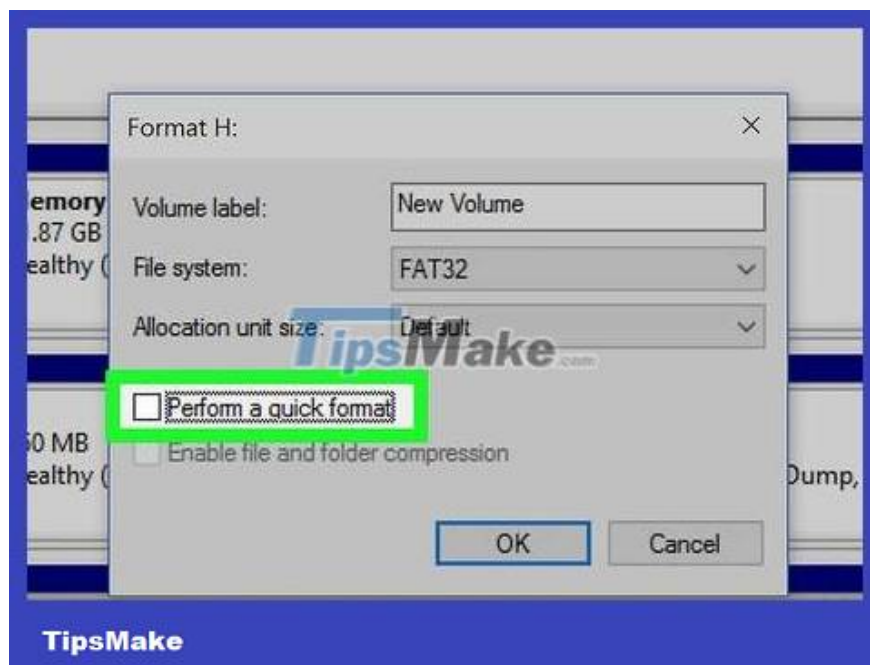
Right click on the USB drive partition. You will see all partitions for each drive in the bottom pane of the Disk Management window.



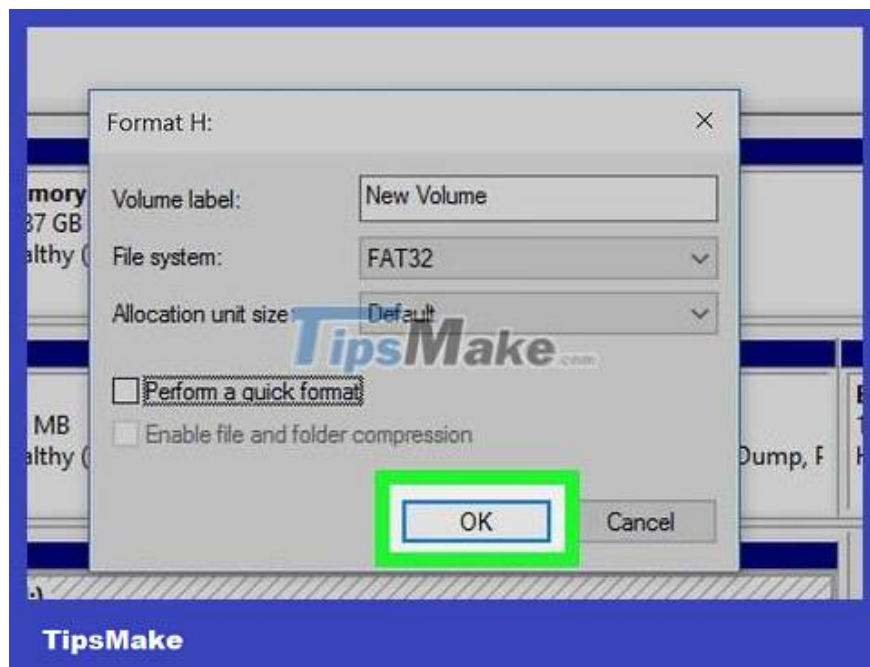
Select "Format" from the menu. The Format tool opens.



Select "FAT32" as the file system. This will allow most devices such as Windows, OS X, Linux and most gaming consoles to read USB drives.



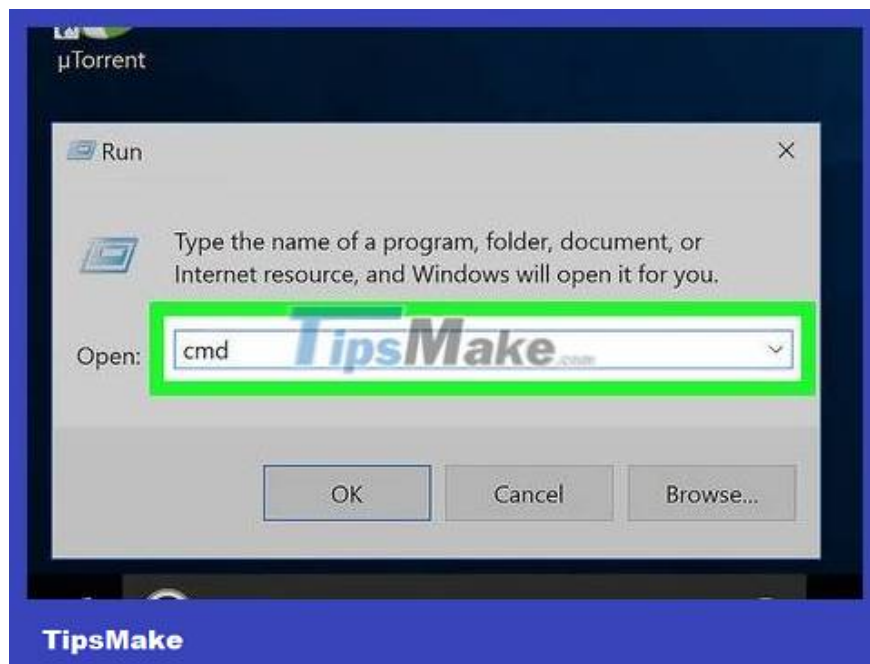
Uncheck "Perform a quick format". The formatting process will take longer, but Windows will be able to fix errors on the drive.



Click . OK to start formatting. This may take a while, but if formatting is successful, the drive will appear in Windows. If it still doesn't work, try the next method.

When reformatting, all data on the USB drive will be erased.

Reformat the drive using Command Prompt



Open Command Prompt. You can open Command Prompt from the Start menu, or press Windows + R and type cmd.

```
Administrator: Command Prompt
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.14393]
(c) 2016 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Windows\system32>diskpart

TipsMake
```

Type . diskpart and press Enter. You will be prompted for administrator rights. The prompt will change to DISKPART>.

```
UNIQUEID - Displays or sets the
           master boot record (MBR) GUID.

DISKPART> list disk

Disk ###  Status   Size
-----  -
Disk 0    Online   32 GB
Disk 1    Online   250 GB
Disk 2    Online   3824 MB

TipsMake
```

Type . list disk and press Enter. All connected drives will appear.

```
DISKPART> list disk

Disk ###  Status              Size               Free
-----  -
Disk 0    Online              32 GB
Disk 1    Online              250 GB
Disk 2    Online              3824 MB

DISKPART> select disk 2

Disk 2 is now the selected disk.
```

TipsMake

Type . and press Enter. Replace # with the number corresponding to the USB drive. select disk #

```
DISKPART> list disk

Disk ###  Status              Size               Free     Dyn
-----  -
Disk 0    Online              32 GB           0 B
Disk 1    Online              250 GB           0 B
Disk 2    Online              3824 MB           0 B

DISKPART> select disk 2

Disk 2 is now the selected disk.

DISKPART> clean
```

TipsMake

Type . clean and press Enter. The computer will check the drive for errors.

```
DISKPART> select disk 2
Disk 2 is now the selected disk.
DISKPART> clean
DiskPart succeeded in cleaning the disk.
DISKPART> create partition primary
```

TipsMake

Type .create partition primary and press Enter. This command will create a new partition on the drive.

```
DISKPART> select disk 2
Disk 2 is now the selected disk.
DISKPART> clean
DiskPart succeeded in cleaning the disk.
DISKPART> create partition primary
DiskPart succeeded in creating the specified partition
DISKPART> active
DiskPart marked the current partition as active.
DISKPART>
```

TipsMake

Type .active and press Enter. This command will set the newly created partition as the active partition for the USB drive.

```
DISKPART> clean

DiskPart succeeded in cleaning the disk.

DISKPART> create partition primary

DiskPart succeeded in creating the specified part

DISKPART> active

DiskPart marked the current partition as active.

DISKPART> format fs=fat32

 0 percent completed
```

TipsMake

Type . format fs=fat32 then press Enter. The new partition will be formatted with the FAT32 file system, making the drive compatible with most devices and computers.

The formatting process will take a while.

```
DISKPART> active

DiskPart marked the current partition as act

DISKPART> format fs=fat32

 100 percent completed

DiskPart successfully formatted the volume.

DISKPART> exit

Leaving DiskPart...

C:\Windows\system32>
```

TipsMake

Type . exit then press Enter. The DISKPART utility will close.

If after using the DISKPART utility the USB still does not appear on Windows, or you get an error when trying to format it, it is likely that the drive is damaged and can no longer be used.

You finished reading the article "**How to Format a USB if Windows Can't**" edited by the [TipsMake](#) team. We hope this article has provided you with many useful tech tips and tricks. You can search for similar articles on tips and guides. Thank you for reading and for following us regularly.

