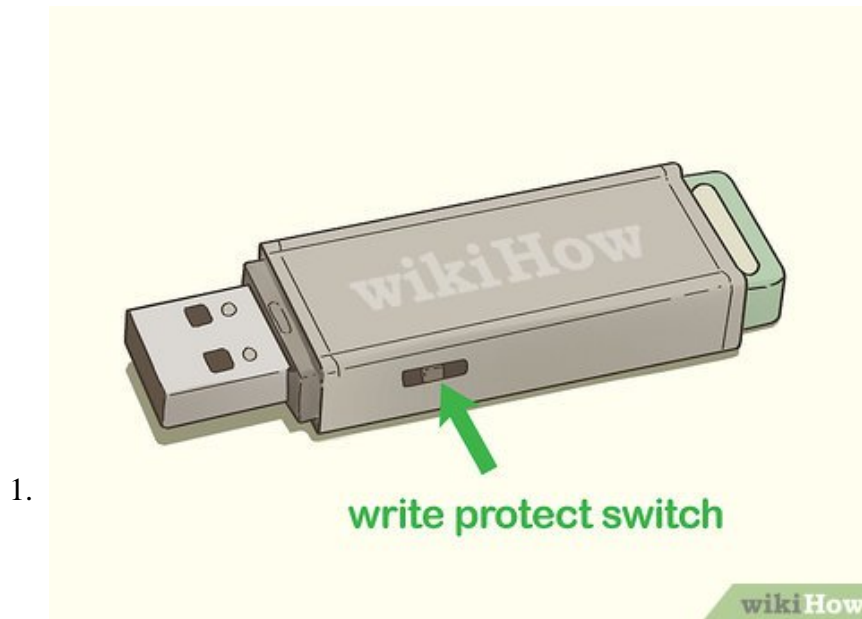


How to Format a Write-Protected Pen Drive

If your pen drive is write-protected, you may not have the ability to modify files or format the drive. There are a few things you can do to remove write protection from a USB drive. However, it's also possible the drive may be failing or...

Method 1 of 3:

Using Diskpart (Windows)



Toggle the switch on the USB drive. If your USB drive has a physical write-protection switch on its exterior, it might be in the wrong (locked) position. Try toggling the switch before you continue with this method.

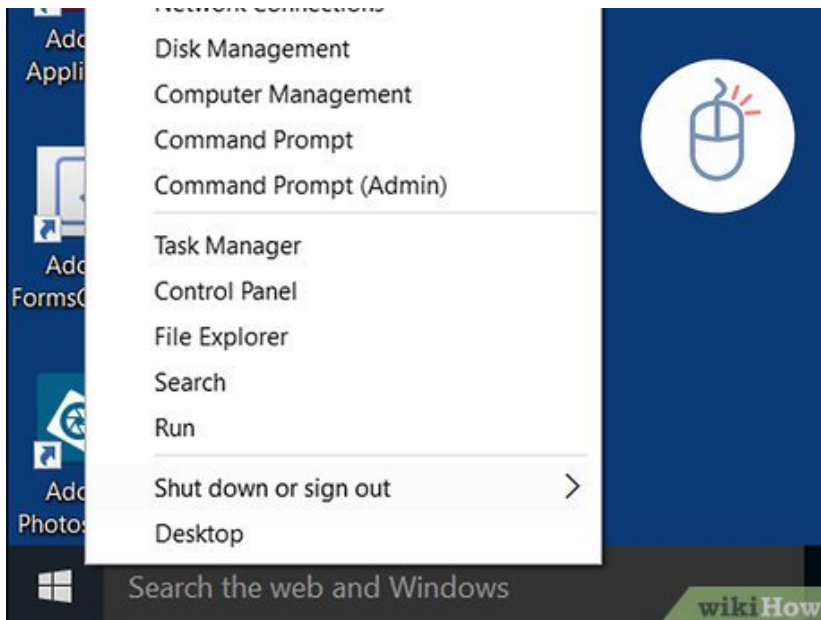
1. In some instances, a pen drive can be locked using security software that prevents permission changes on a flash drive. If this is the case, you may not be able to remove write-protection from the USB drive.^[1]

2.

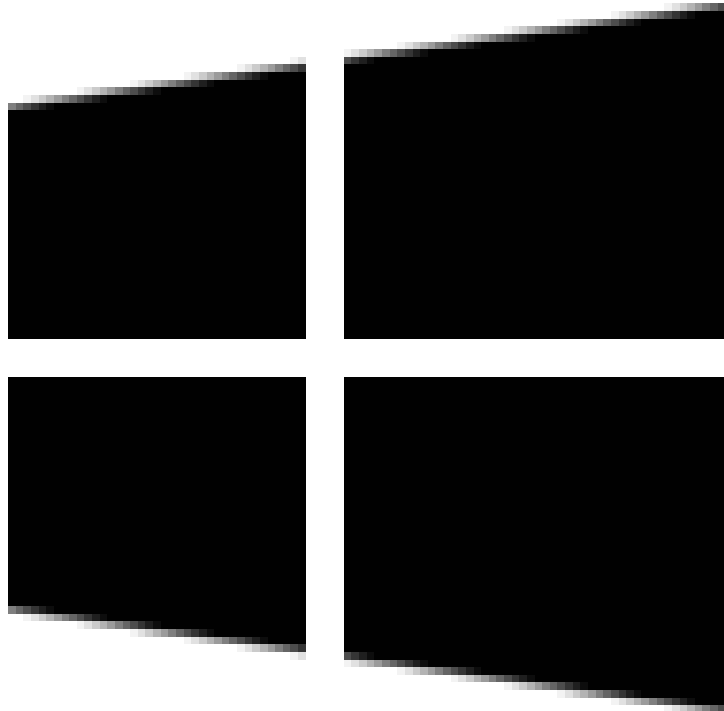


Insert the pen drive into an open USB slot. You can use any available USB slot on your PC.

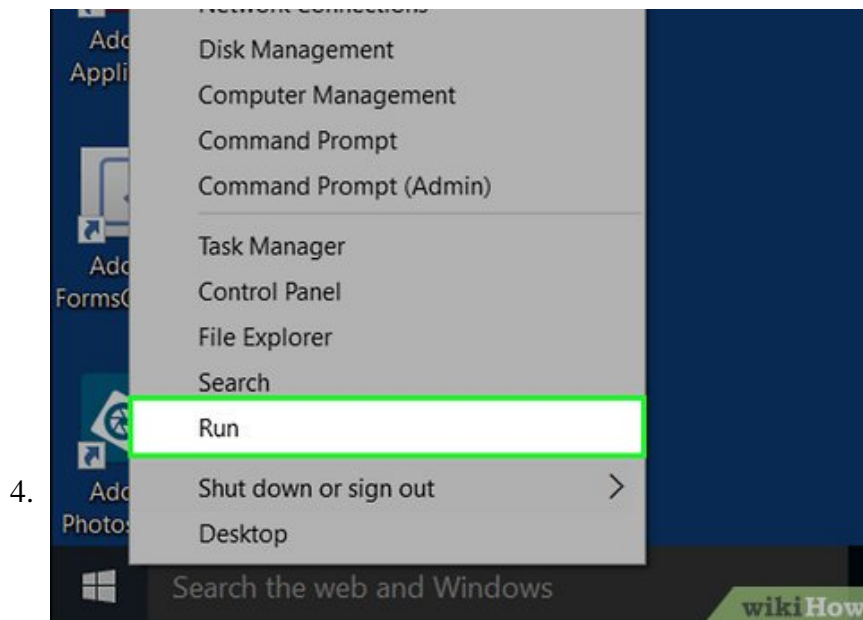
3.



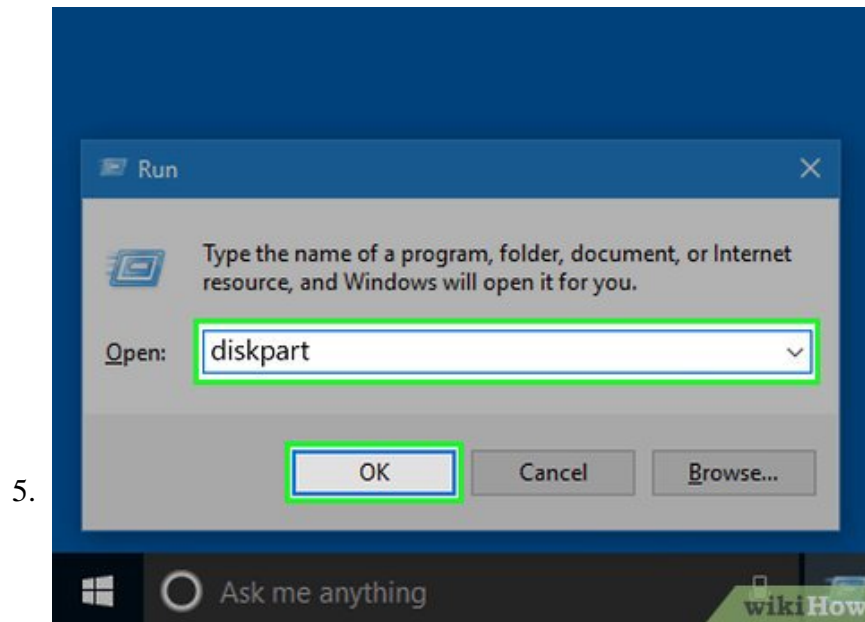
Right-click the Start



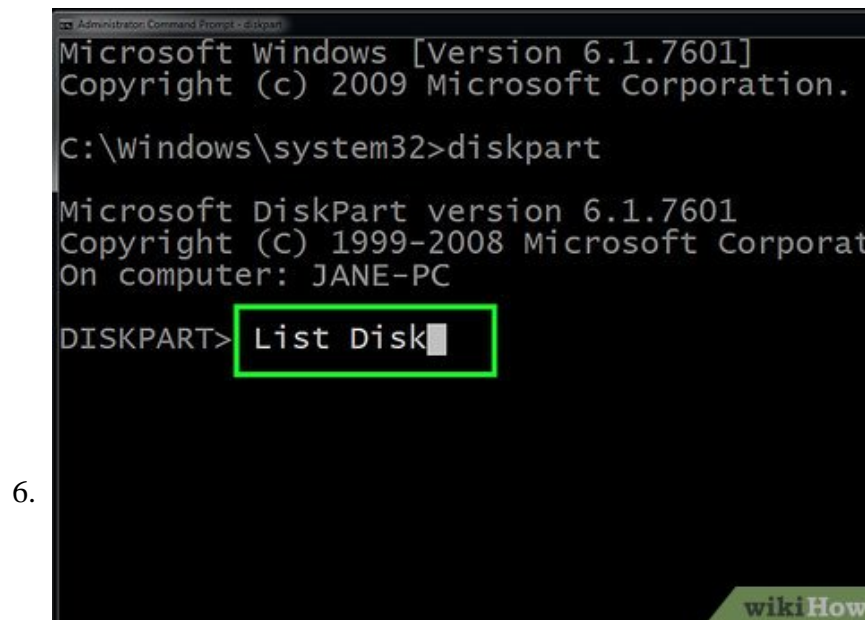
menu. It's usually at the bottom-left corner of the screen. This displays a menu.



Click **Run**. It's at the bottom of the menu that appears when you right-click the windows Start menu. This opens Run in a new window.



Type **diskpart** into Run and press **Enter**. This opens Diskpart in the Command Prompt.



Type **list disk** and press **Enter**. A list of all drives, including your pen drive, will appear. Each drive is labeled "Disk (number)", and each number is unique to that drive.

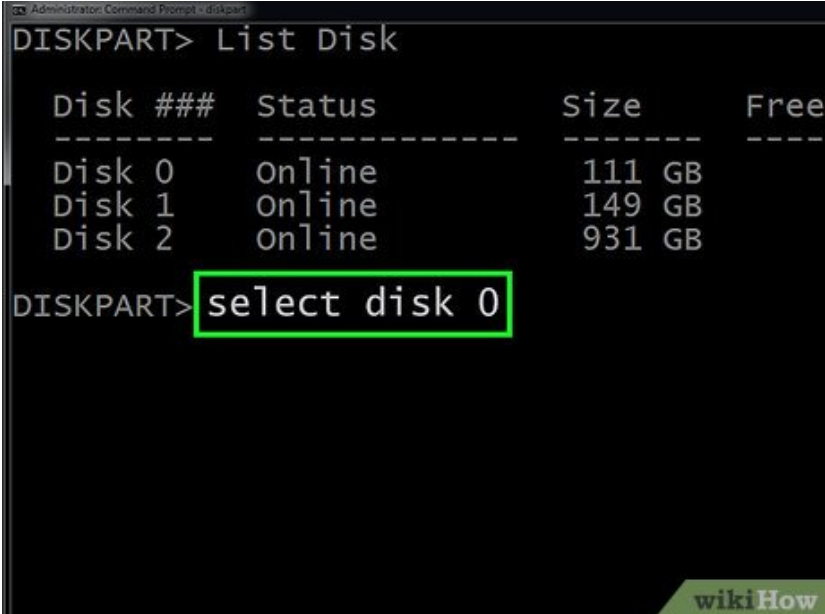
1. You should be able to identify your USB drive by how much space it has listed under "Size". For example, if your USB drive is a 32 GB drive, it should say "32 GB" or close to that below "Size" in the Command Prompt.

7.

```
Administrator: Command Prompt - diskpart
DISKPART> List Disk

Disk ###  Status              Size              Free
-----  -
Disk 0    Online              111 GB
Disk 1    Online              149 GB
Disk 2    Online              931 GB

DISKPART> select disk 0
```

A screenshot of the Diskpart command prompt. The title bar reads "Administrator: Command Prompt - diskpart". The prompt shows the command "DISKPART> List Disk" followed by a table of disk information. The table has columns for "Disk ###", "Status", "Size", and "Free". The data rows are: "Disk 0 Online 111 GB", "Disk 1 Online 149 GB", and "Disk 2 Online 931 GB". Below the table, the command "DISKPART> select disk 0" is entered, and the text "select disk 0" is highlighted with a green rectangular box. A "wikiHow" logo is visible in the bottom right corner.

Type **select disk #** and press **Enter**. Replace # with the number of your pen drive (i.e. "select disk 3"). This selects the USB drive in Diskpart.

8.

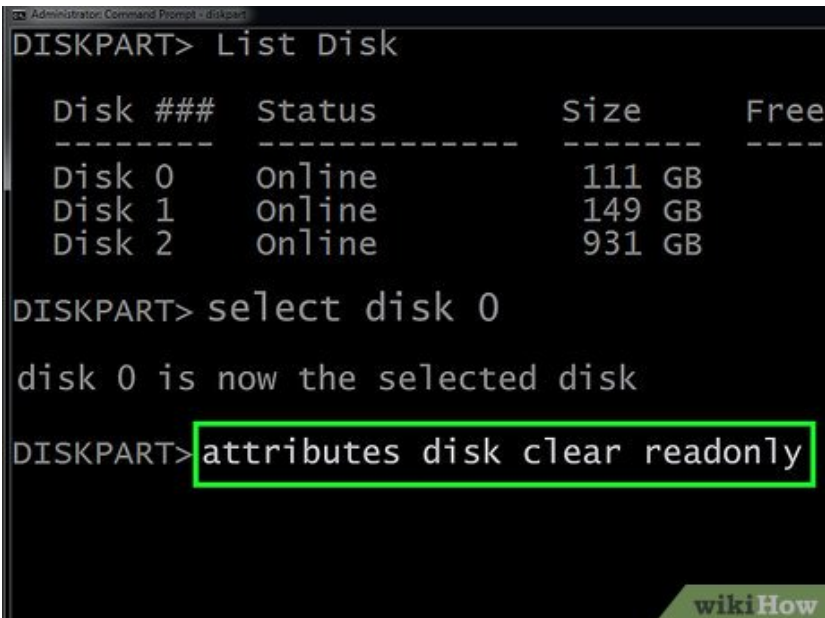
```
Administrator: Command Prompt - diskpart
DISKPART> List Disk

Disk ###  Status              Size              Free
-----  -
Disk 0    Online              111 GB
Disk 1    Online              149 GB
Disk 2    Online              931 GB

DISKPART> select disk 0

disk 0 is now the selected disk

DISKPART> attributes disk clear readonly
```

A screenshot of the Diskpart command prompt. The title bar reads "Administrator: Command Prompt - diskpart". The prompt shows the command "DISKPART> List Disk" followed by a table of disk information. The table has columns for "Disk ###", "Status", "Size", and "Free". The data rows are: "Disk 0 Online 111 GB", "Disk 1 Online 149 GB", and "Disk 2 Online 931 GB". Below the table, the command "DISKPART> select disk 0" is entered, followed by the output "disk 0 is now the selected disk". Then, the command "DISKPART> attributes disk clear readonly" is entered, and the text "attributes disk clear readonly" is highlighted with a green rectangular box. A "wikiHow" logo is visible in the bottom right corner.

Type **attributes disk clear readonly** and press **Enter**. This should remove write-protected status from the drive.

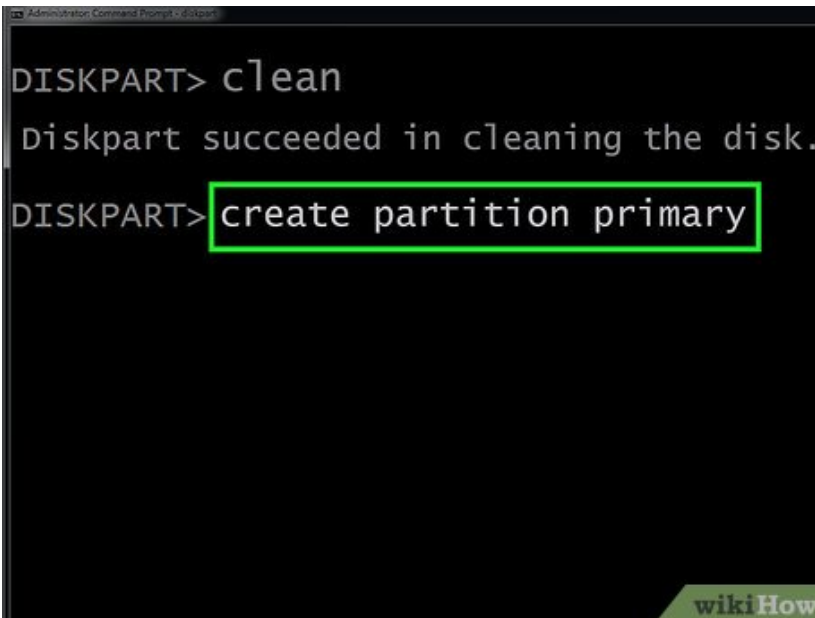
9.

A screenshot of a Windows command prompt window titled "Administrator: Command Prompt - diskpart". The prompt shows "DISKPART>" followed by the word "clean" which is highlighted with a green rectangular box. A "wikiHow" logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the window.

```
Administrator: Command Prompt - diskpart
DISKPART> clean
```

Type **clean** and press **? Enter**. This should remove the data from the drive. Once it's removed, you'll be able to set it up for use.

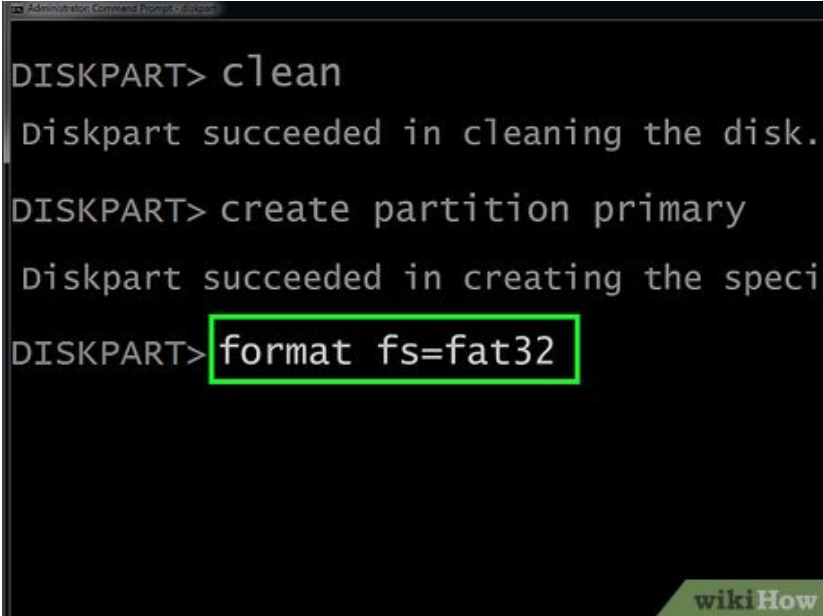
10.

A screenshot of a Windows command prompt window titled "Administrator: Command Prompt - diskpart". The prompt shows "DISKPART> clean" followed by the message "Diskpart succeeded in cleaning the disk." Below this, the prompt shows "DISKPART>" followed by the command "create partition primary" which is highlighted with a green rectangular box. A "wikiHow" logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the window.

```
Administrator: Command Prompt - diskpart
DISKPART> clean
Diskpart succeeded in cleaning the disk.
DISKPART> create partition primary
```

Type **create partition primary** and press **? Enter**. This creates a partition on the USB drive.

11.

A screenshot of the Diskpart command prompt window. The title bar reads "Administrator Command Prompt - diskpart". The command history shows: DISKPART> clean, Diskpart succeeded in cleaning the disk., DISKPART> create partition primary, Diskpart succeeded in creating the speci, and DISKPART> format fs=fat32. The command "format fs=fat32" is highlighted with a green rectangular box. A "wikiHow" logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the screenshot.

```
Administrator Command Prompt - diskpart
DISKPART> clean
Diskpart succeeded in cleaning the disk.
DISKPART> create partition primary
Diskpart succeeded in creating the speci
DISKPART> format fs=fat32
```

Type **format fs=fat32** or **format fs=ntfs** and press **? Enter**. This formats the drive in a format that is readable on any operating system. If the USB drive storage is smaller than 32GB, type "format fs=fat32". If the drive is greater than 32GB, type "format fs=ntfs".^[2]

12.

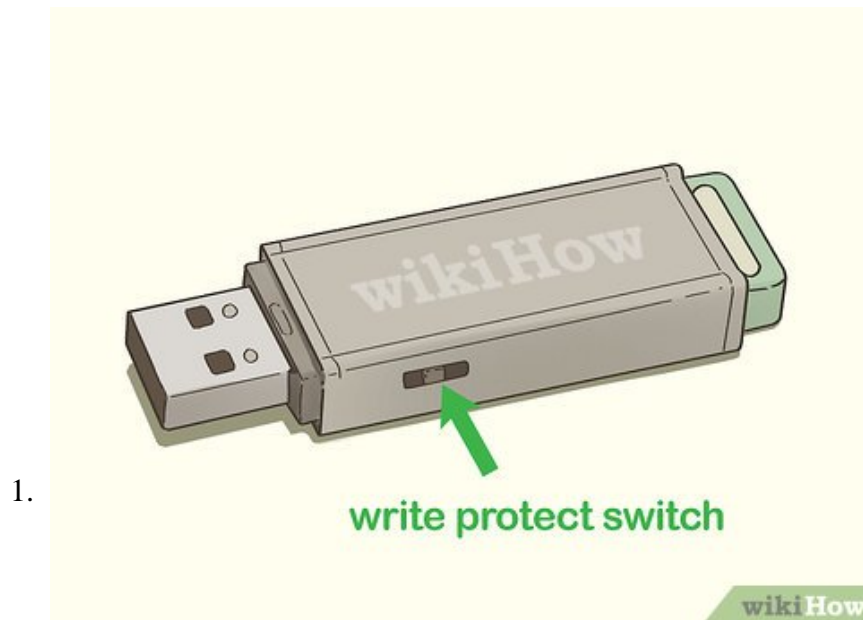
A screenshot of the Diskpart command prompt window. The title bar reads "Administrator Command Prompt - diskpart". The command history shows: DISKPART> exit. The command "exit" is highlighted with a green rectangular box. A "wikiHow" logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the screenshot.

```
Administrator Command Prompt - diskpart
DISKPART> exit
```

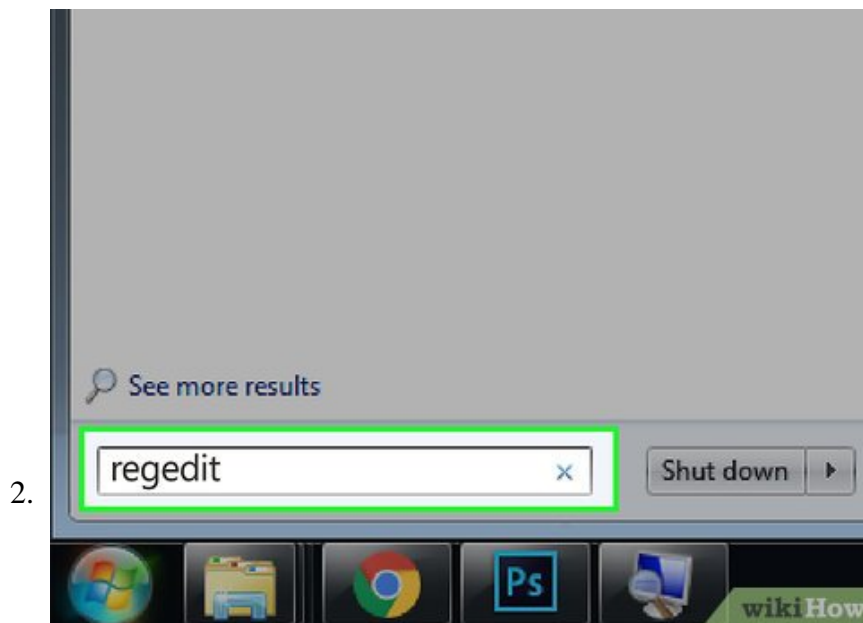
Type **exit** and press **? Enter**. This returns you to the standard command prompt. The drive should now be available for data storage and other uses.

Method 2 of 3:

Using the Registry Editor (Windows)

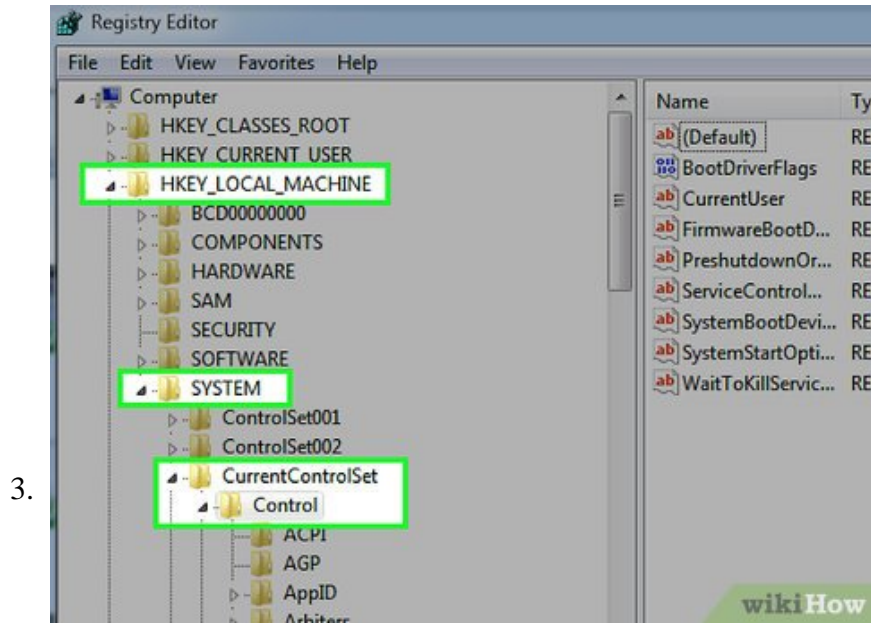


Toggle the switch on the USB drive. If your USB drive has a physical write-protection switch on its exterior, it might be in the wrong (locked) position. Try toggling the switch before you continue with this method.



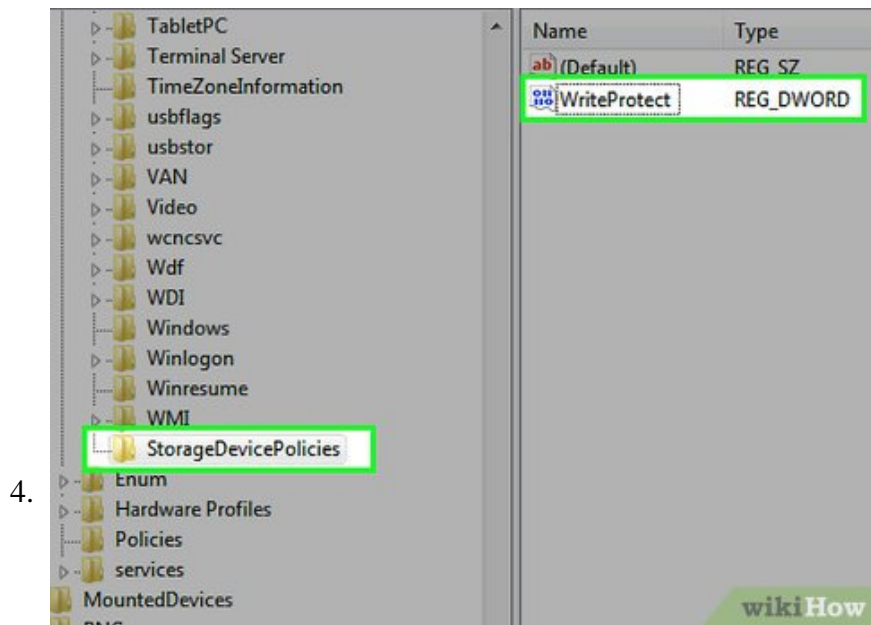
Open the Windows Registry Editor on your PC. Here's how:

1. Press `?Win+S` to open the search bar.
2. Type `regedit` into the search field.
3. Click **Registry Editor** in the search results.
4. Click **Yes** to run the app.



Go to the Control folder. Use the following steps to navigate to the Control folder in the system registry. You should see several more folders inside the Control folder.

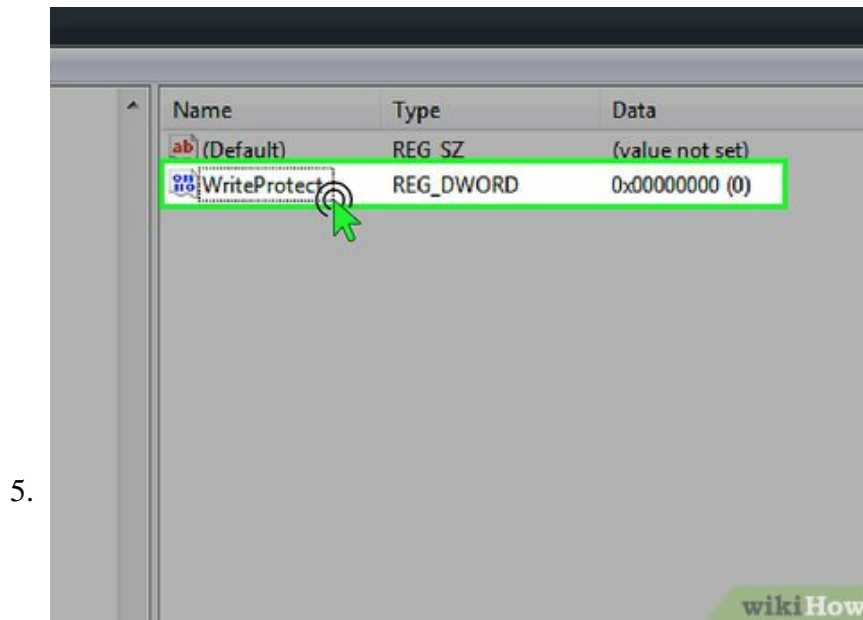
1. Click the **HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE** folder.
2. Click the **SYSTEM** folder.
3. Click the **CurrentControlSet** folder.
4. Click the **Control** folder.



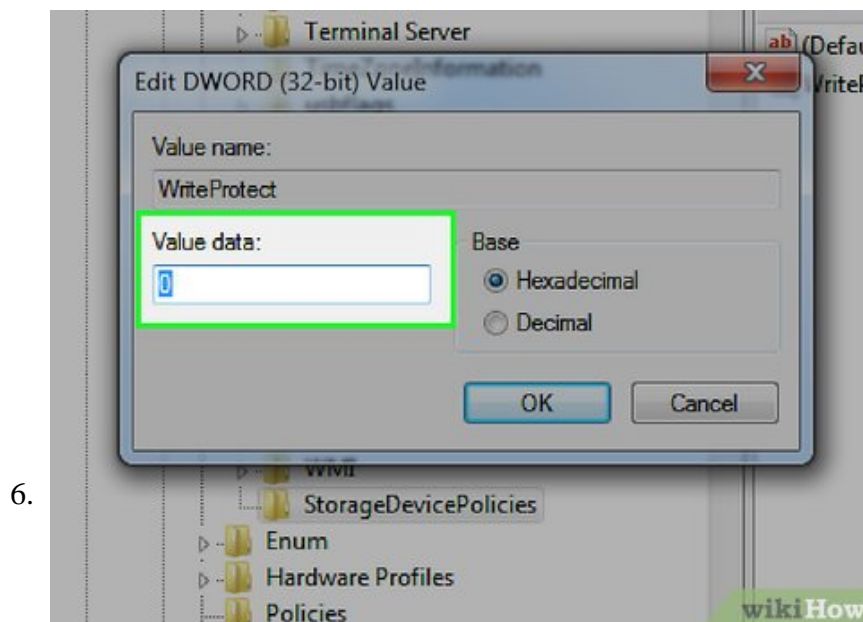
Click the `StorageDevicePolicies` folder (if it exists). If you see this folder in the left panel (under the "Control" folder), double-click it to display its contents in the right panel. If you don't see this folder, perform the following steps to create it:^[3]

1. Right-click a blank area of the right panel to open the context menu.
2. Select **New** and then **Key** on the menu.
3. Type `StorageDevicePolicies` and then click the blank area to save the new key.

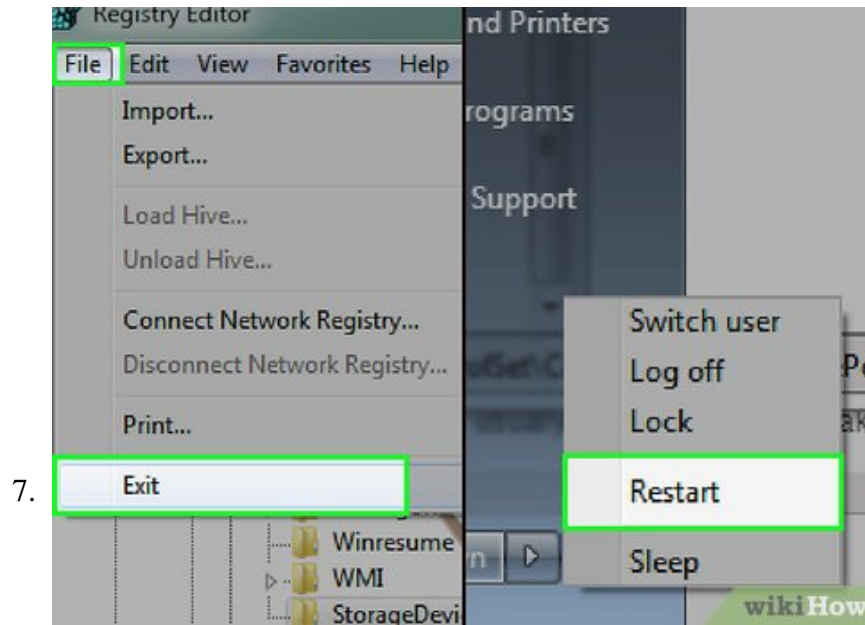
4. Click **StorageDevicePolicies** in the left panel to open it.
5. Right-click a blank area in the right panel and select **New > DWORD**.
6. Type `WriteProtect` and then click anywhere to save the DWORD.



Double-click `WriteProtect` in the right column. A dialog window will appear.



Enter "0" as the "Value Data" amount and click `OK`. Enter the numerical zero without the quotes.

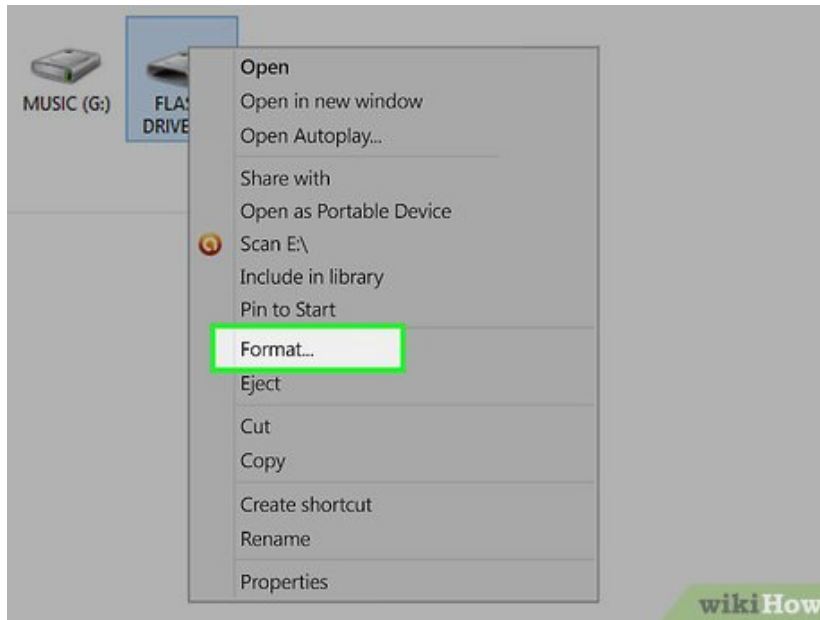


Close Registry Editor and restart your PC. Changes you make in the Registry Editor usually require a restart to take effect.



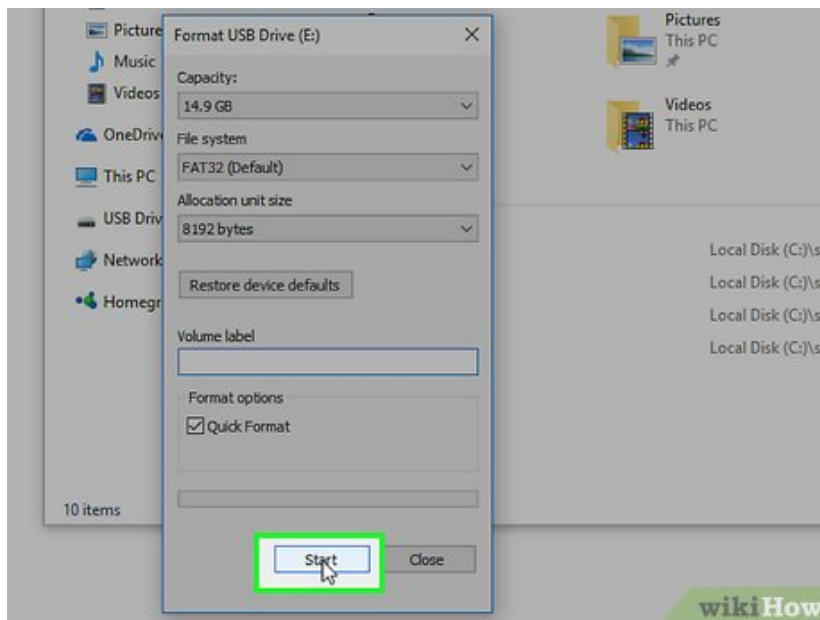
Connect the pen drive to the PC and open File Explorer. You can open the File Explorer by pressing **Win + E** or by right-clicking the Start menu and selecting **File Explorer**.

9.



Right-click the pen drive and select **Format**. Your options for erasing and reformatting the drive will appear.

10.



Select your formatting preferences and click **Start**. This should delete the contents of the pen drive and prepare it for use.^[4]

1. If this method did not work for you, try the "Using Diskpart (Windows)" method.

Method 3 of 3:

Using Disk Utility (Mac OS X)

1.



Toggle the switch on the USB drive. If your USB drive has a physical write-protection switch on its exterior, it might be in the wrong (locked) position. Try toggling the switch before you continue with this method.

2.



Insert the write-protected pen drive into a USB slot on your Mac.

3.

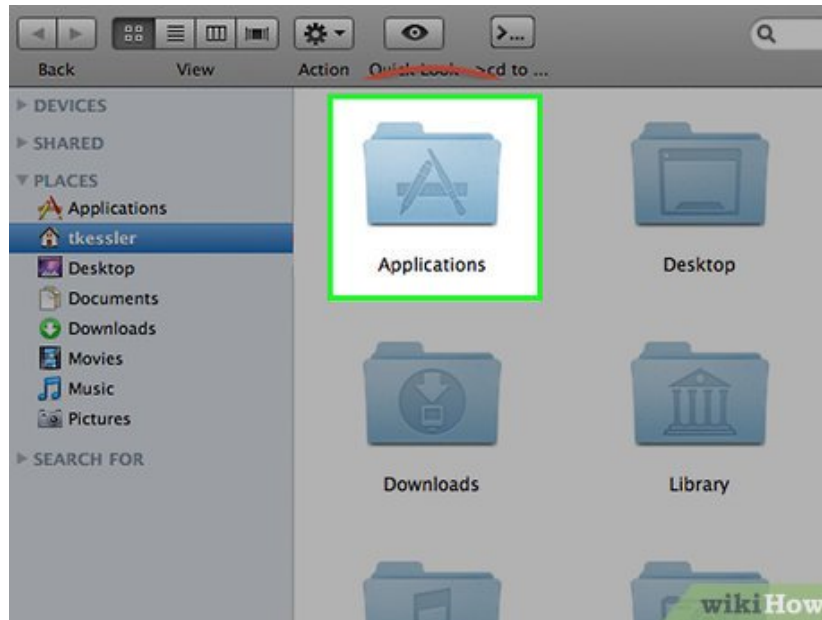


Open Finder



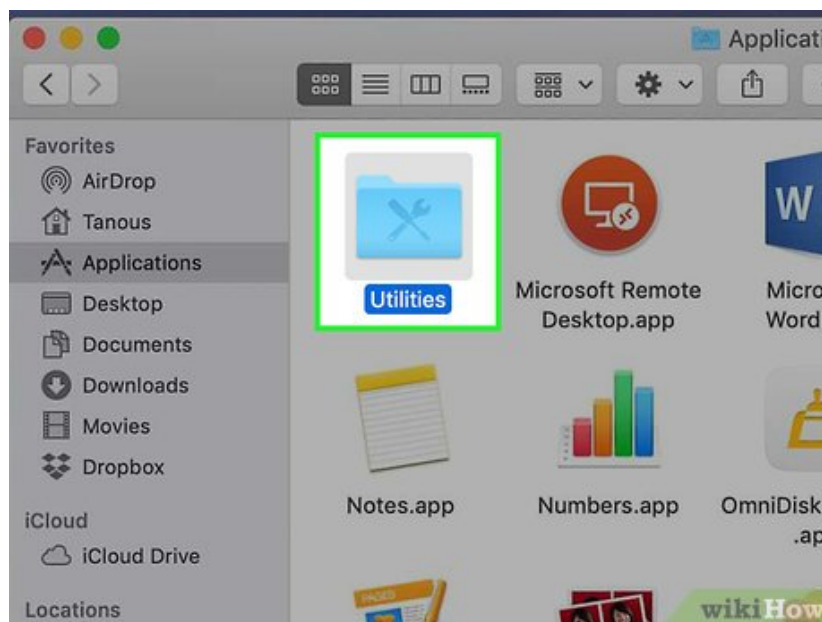
. It's the first icon on the Dock, which is usually at the bottom of the screen.

4.

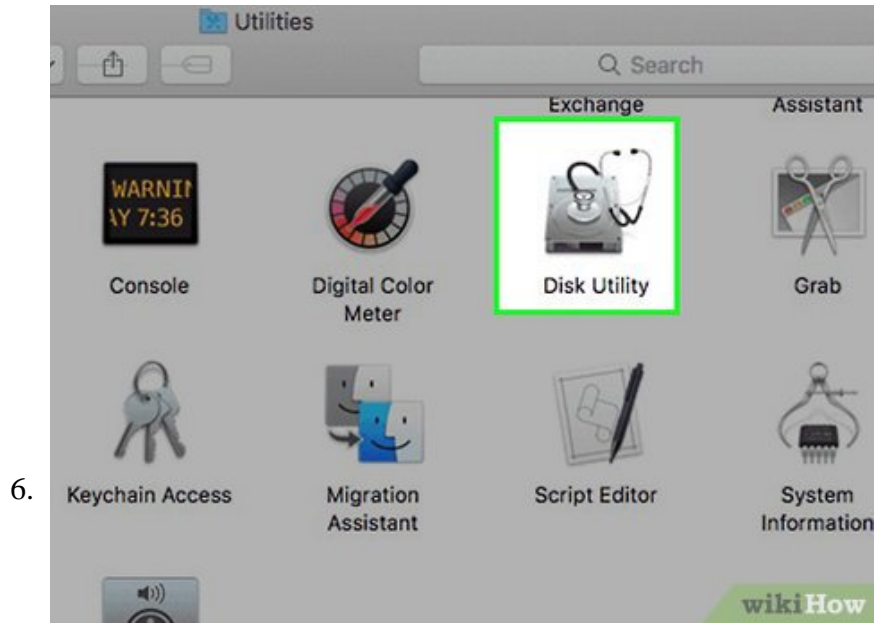


Click the **Applications** folder. It should be in the left panel. Some icons will appear in the right panel.

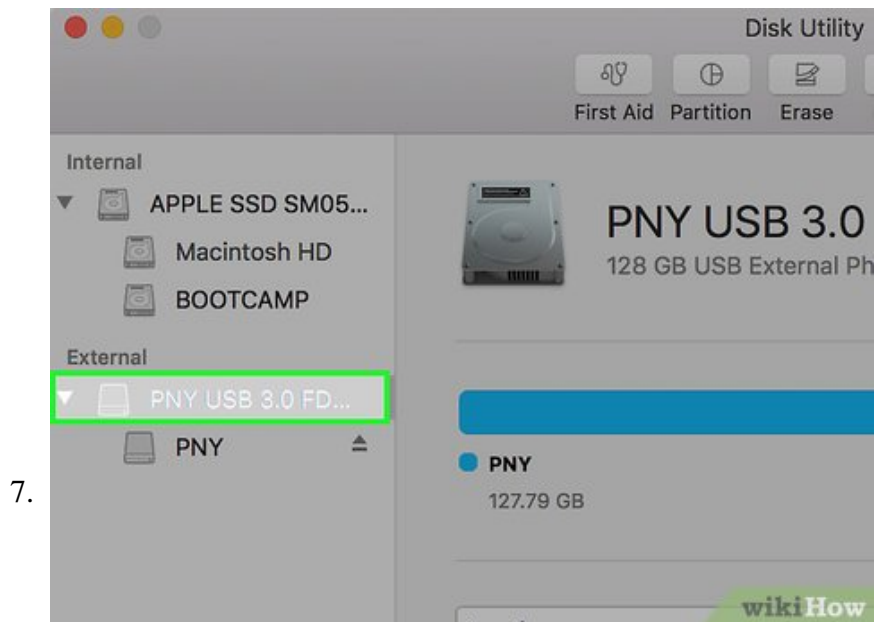
5.



Double-click the **Utilities** folder. It's in the right panel.



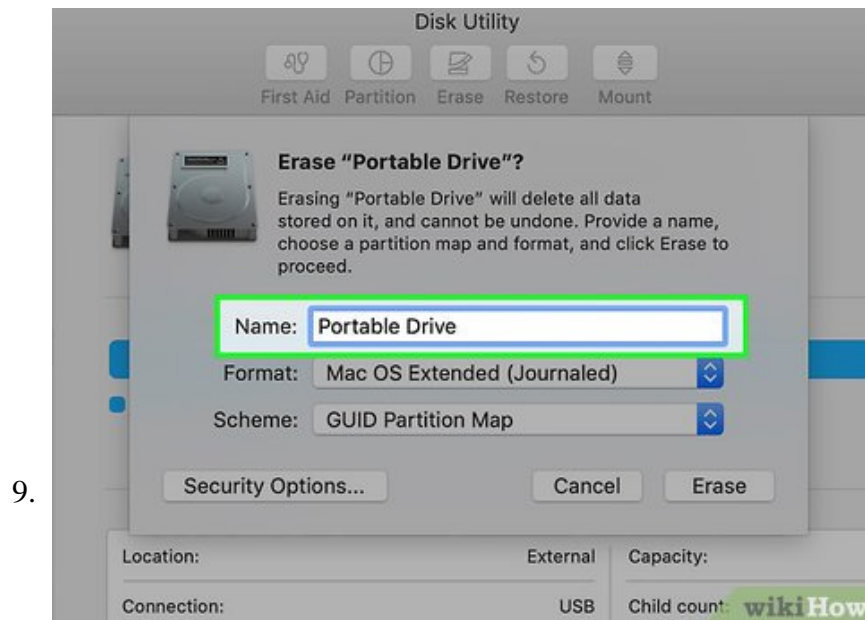
Double-click **Disk Utility** . It's the hard drive icon with a stethoscope in the right panel. This opens a tool you can use to format drives.



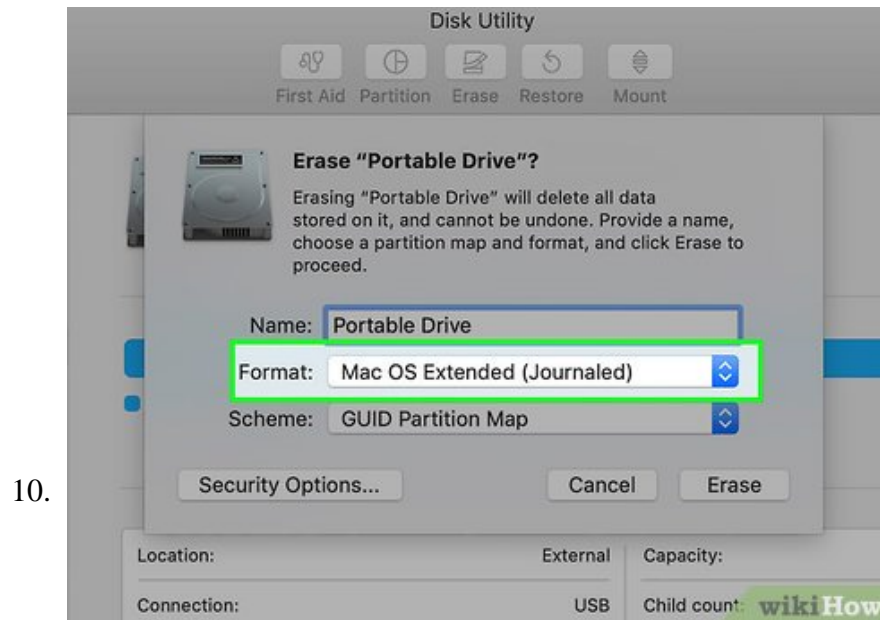
Select your pen drive in the left panel. Some info about the drive will appear in the right panel.



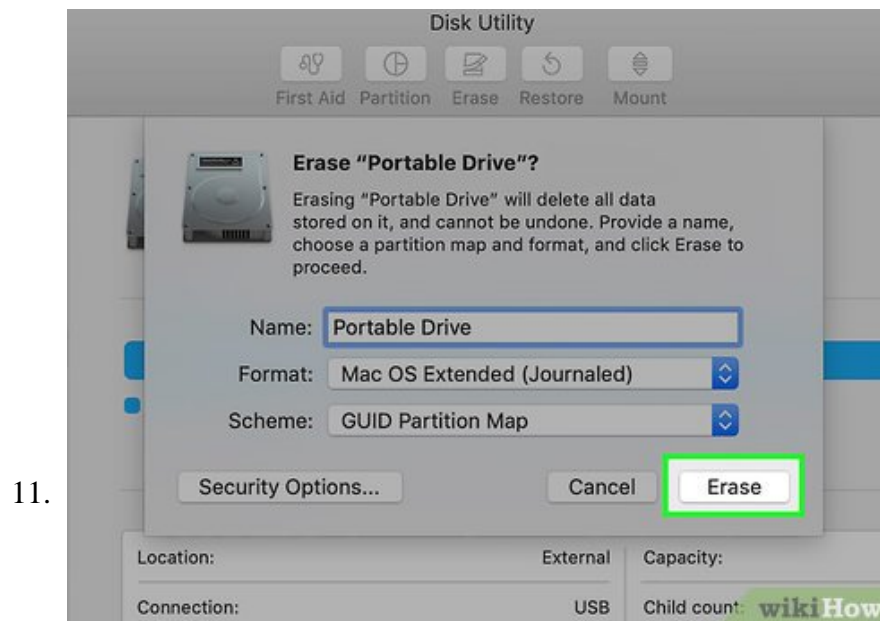
Click the **Erase** tab in the right panel. It's near the top of the panel.^[5]



Enter a name for the drive (optional). You can keep the default name if you wish.



Select a file system type from the "Format" menu. If you want your pen drive to be compatible with both PCs and Mac, select **MS-DOS (FAT)** (pen drives under 32GB) or **ExFAT** (drives over 32GB). Otherwise, choose your desired Mac filesystem type.



Click the **Erase** button. It's at the bottom-right corner of the active window. Your Mac will reformat the write-protected pen drive and change the sharing and permissions status to 'read and write.'^[6]

1. If this process does not make your drive usable, the issue is likely mechanical and you should replace the pen drive.

You finished reading the article "**How to Format a Write-Protected Pen Drive**" 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.
