



Outlook - Manage and organize: Search Feature

Create a Search Folder

A Search Folder is a virtual folder that provides a view of all email items that match specific search criteria. For example, the **Unread Mail** Search Folder enables you to view all unread messages in one folder, even though the messages might be saved in different folders across your mailbox.

Note: Search Folders can't contain search results from multiple Outlook Data Files (.pst).

Create a new Search Folder

You can create two different types of search folders.

Create and use predefined Search Folders

1. Select the **Folder** menu.
2. In the **New** group, select **New Search Folder**.
Keyboard shortcut To create a new Search Folder, click Ctrl+Shift+P.
3. From the **Select a Search Folder** list, click the Search Folder you want to add. Some of the predefined Search Folders are only available if you scroll down to the end of the list.
4. If the predefined Search Folder has customization options, you'll see those options appear under **Customize Search Folder**. For example, if you select **Mail with specific words**, under **Customize Search Folder**, specify the words to use.

Note: Search Folders use prefix matching searches when you type specific words to include in the search. For example, if you type "rain" in the word list, the Search Folder will include messages that contain the word "rain" and the word "rainy." The Search Folder will not contain messages that include the words "brain" or "grain."

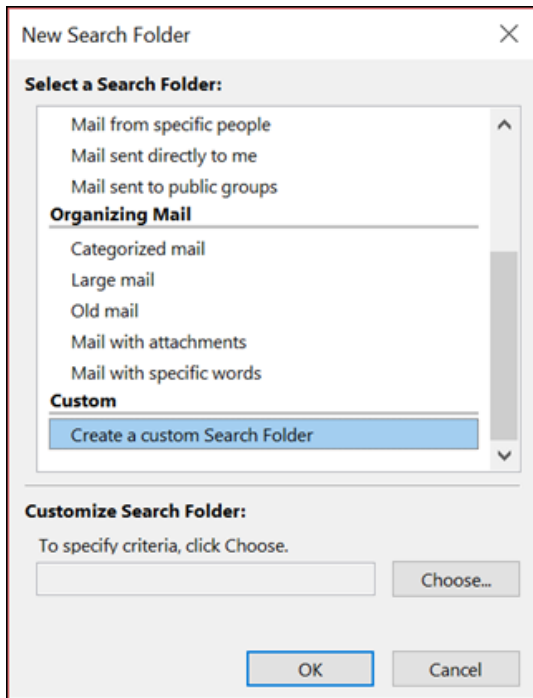
5. If you have multiple accounts in Outlook, you can specify which account to search. Use the **Search mail in** box to pick the email account you want to search. then select **OK**.

Create a customized Search Folder

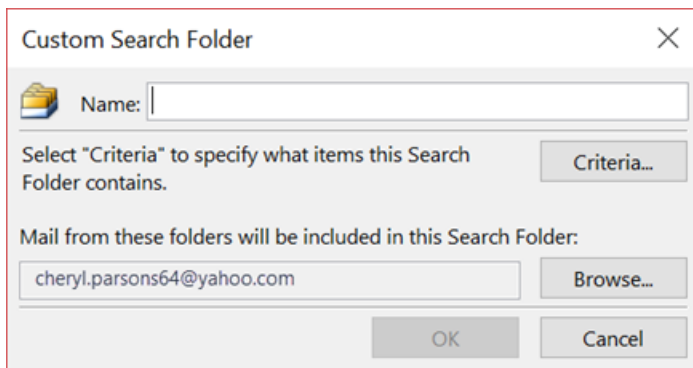
1. Select the **Folder** menu.
2. In the **New** group, select **New Search Folder**.
Keyboard shortcut To create a Search Folder, click Ctrl+Shift+P.
3. From the **Select a Search Folder** list, scroll down to the bottom and then click **Create a custom Search Folder**.



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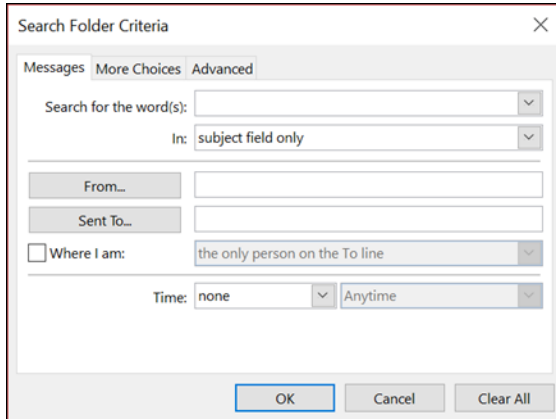
4. Under **Customize Search Folder**, click **Choose**.
5. Type a name for your custom Search Folder.



6. Click **Criteria**, and then select the options that you want.
 - The **Messages** tab contains criteria on the message content or properties, such as sender, keywords, or recipients.



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- The **More Choices** tab contains criteria on other message conditions, such as importance, flags, attachments, or categorization.
 - The **Advanced** tab enables you to make detailed criteria. Under **Define more criteria**, click **Field**, click the type of criterion that you want, and then click the specific criterion from the list. Then in the **Condition** box and the **Value** box, click the options that you want, and then click **Add to List**. Repeat for each criterion that you want to add to this search folder, and then click **OK**.
7. Click **Browse**, select the folders that you want to be searched.
 8. Click **OK** to close each open dialog box.

Delete a Search Folder

If you no longer need a Search Folder, you can delete it. A Search Folder is a virtual folder. Deleting a Search Folder from the folder list doesn't delete the messages displayed in the folder. If you want to delete all messages within a Search Folder, open the Search Folder, select all of the messages, then click Delete on your keyboard.

To delete a search folder, use the following steps.

1. In the Folder List, select the down arrow next to the word **Search Folders** if needed to expand your list of Search Folders.
2. Right-click the Search Folder you want to delete, and choose **Delete Folder**.

Important: Deleting a Search Folder doesn't delete any messages. Deleting a folder that's not a Search Folder will delete both the folder and the messages inside the folder.

Find people and contacts

There are several different ways you can search for a contact. You can use the Search People box on the ribbon in any Outlook folder, search while composing a new message or meeting, or search in Outlook's People pane (formerly known as the Contacts folder).



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Search for a contact using the Search People box on the ribbon

This is the quickest and easiest way to find a contact. Position your cursor in the Search People box, then start typing the first few letters of the person's first name or email address. As you type, Outlook will continually refine the search. For example, if you type the letter **t**, Outlook will return matches such as *Tony*, *Teresa*, and *Tanya*. If you type **ta**, Outlook will further refine that list to *Tanya*.

Search for a contact while composing a new message

When you select the To, Cc, or Bcc buttons in a new message, Outlook will display your default address book. If you have an Exchange or Microsoft 365 account, that's your organization's Global Address List. If you're using a POP or IMAP account, you'll see your Contacts folder.

If you have multiple contacts folders or address books, you can use the drop-down under Address Book to choose among them. When you do, you'll see an alphabetized list of contacts, sorted by name.

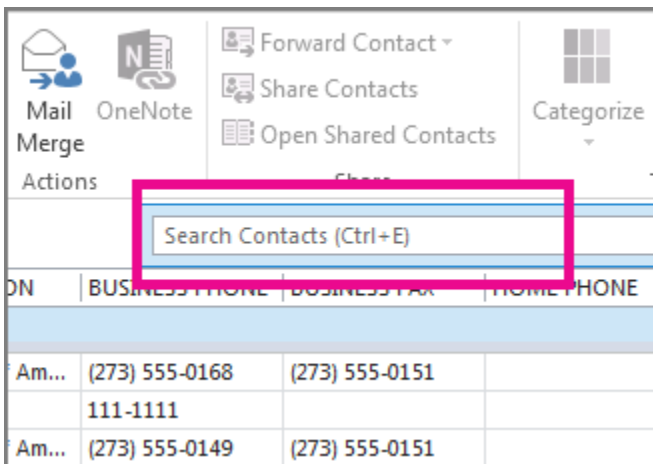
To search, type part of the contact's name in the Search box and then select Go. You can select the More columns radio button to search by other fields, including department, phone, and location. Once Outlook returns a list of contacts, double-click the one you want to add the contact to the To box, or select the contact and then click To, Cc, or Bcc to add the contact to the respective boxes.

Search for a contact in the People pane

1. Choose **People** at the bottom of the screen.



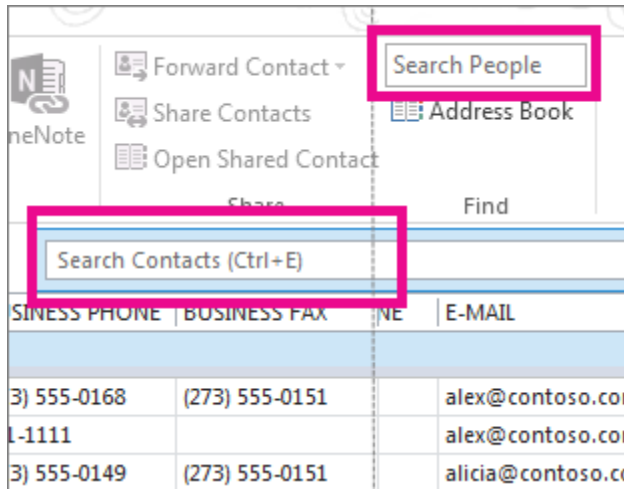
2. Above your contacts list, place your cursor in the **Search Contacts** box.



Note: The Search Contacts box at the top of your list of contacts is different than the **Search People** box, which is in the top-right corner of the Outlook ribbon. The Search People box only searches on names and email addresses. The Search Contacts box searches phone numbers, addresses, company names, and more.



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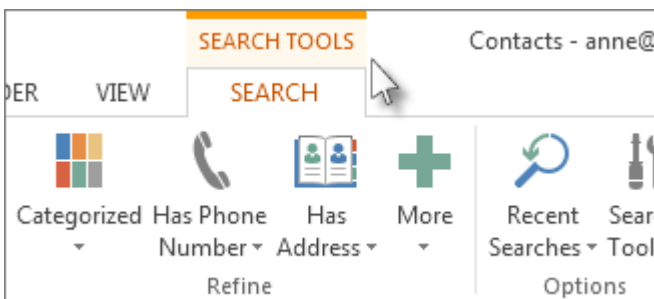
- Type the *person's name* or *other information*—like a phone number or company name—you want to search for.
Tip: You can search for complete or partial information. If you're searching for someone named Chris Preston, for example, you can type the full name or “pre,” which represents the first three characters of the last name.
- Outlook displays your search results in card form, showing the contact photo, email address, business or home address, and phone numbers. Choose the person you want from the search results.
Note: As you type, Outlook refines its search. For example, if you type the letter J, Outlook will return results that contain John, James, Jack, Julian, and Julie. If you type Jul, Outlook will return results that include Julian and Julie in any field, including company name, email address, and physical address.

Narrow your search

Getting too many results when you search for complete or partial information? Consider further refining your search.

When you choose the **Search People** box on the **People** tab, the **Search Tools** tab appears.

Tip: You can also press Ctrl+E to open the **Search Tools** tab.



There are many options available, including the following groups of options on the **Search Tools** tab, to help narrow your search.

- **Scope** Change the folders you want to search in.



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- **Refine** Search for people who have phone numbers or other specific types of information in their contact information.
- **Options** Use previous searches or change advanced search options.

Search and filter messages

Search is a powerful tool to help find email messages anywhere in Outlook.

Search email

1. Select the search bar, located above the Outlook ribbon.
2. Type a name, subject, or phrase which is included in the email message that you want to find.

Refine your search results

1. Select the search bar and type a name or subject.
2. Select an option to refine or widen your search: **All Mailboxes, Current Mailbox, Current Folder, Subfolder, or All Outlook Items.**
3. You can also select a category within the **Refine** group to further filter your search results:
 - **From** – only shows results from a specific person.
 - **Subject** - only shows results based on the subject.
 - **Has Attachment** – only shows emails that have attachments.
 - **Categorized** – only shows results that have a specific category assigned to them.
 - **This Week** - searches by when the email message was received: **Today, Yesterday, This Week, Last Week, This Month, Last Month, This Year, or Last Year.**
 - **Sent To** – searches messages **Sent to You, Not Sent Directly to You, or Sent to Another Recipient.**
 - **Unread** – only shows unread messages.
 - **Flagged** - only shows messages flagged by you.
 - **Important** - only shows emails marked as Important.
 - **More** - filters your results based on more advanced criteria, such as **Cc** or **Sensitivity.**
4. Select **Recent Searches** to run recent searches again.
Note: Outlook saves only the recent search query, not the results.
5. Select **Close Search** to close the **Search** tab.

[Click to watch the "Search and filter email" video.](#)

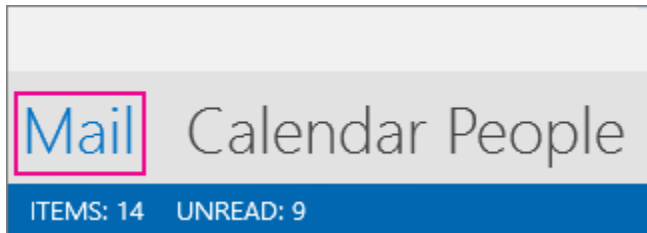


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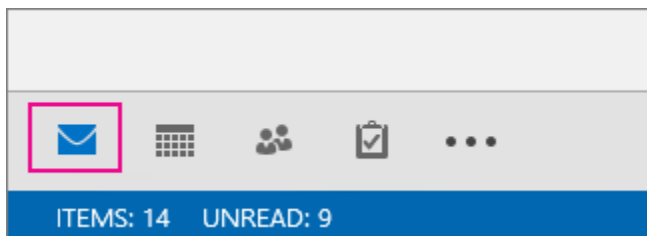
Find a message or item with Instant Search

Find a message

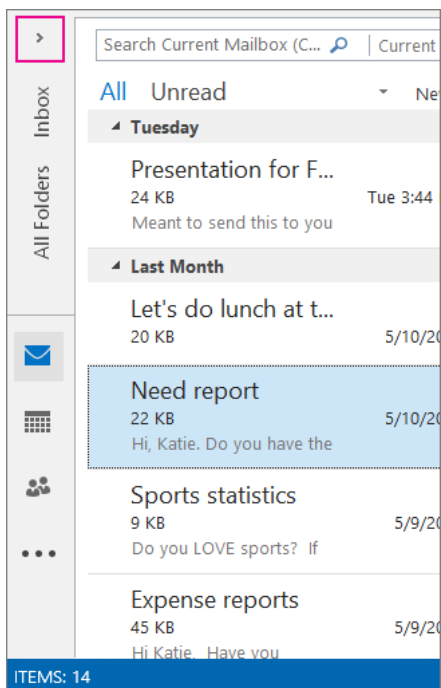
1. In the navigation bar, near the bottom of the screen, click **Mail**.



If you don't see this, "Compact Navigation" might be turned on, so you'll see icons instead, like this:



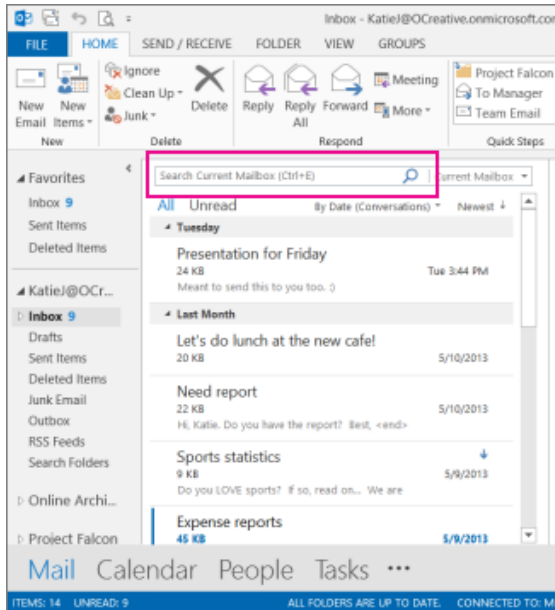
Or, in addition to "Compact Navigation" being on, the folder pane might be minimized, so the icons are arranged vertically. You can expand the folder pane by clicking the **Minimize/Expand** button, as shown here:



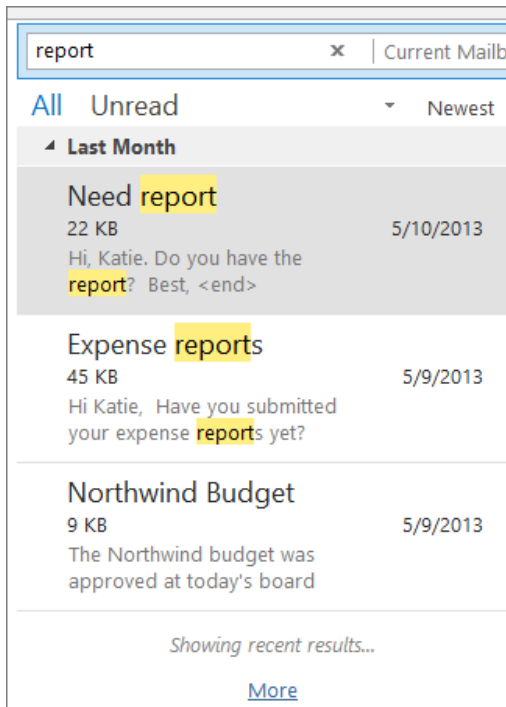


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2. Find the search box. It's at the top of your messages, as shown here:



3. To find a word that you know is in a message, or a message from a particular person, type the word or person's name (you can use first, last, and partial names) in the search box. Messages that contain the word or name you specified appear with the search text highlighted in the results.





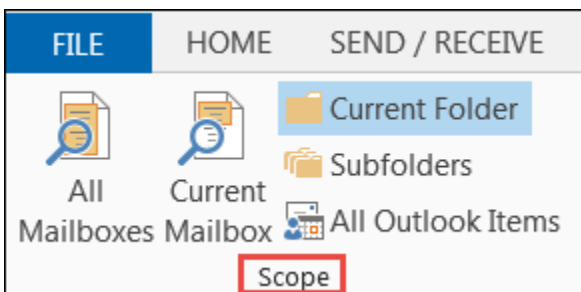
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4. You can narrow your results even further by changing your search. Here are some common examples:
 - Type **"expense reports"** (including the quotes) to find messages containing the exact phrase "expense reports."
 - Type **expense AND report** ("AND" needs to be in all caps) to find messages containing both the word expense and the word report, but not necessarily in that order. You can also use "OR."
 - Type **expense NOT report** ("NOT" needs to be in all caps) to find messages containing the word expense but not the word report.
5. NOTE: Searching will only find items if you search for an entire word, or the beginning of a word; if you search for the middle or end of a word you will not find the item. For example, if the message subject contains "Email about Office365", the following searches will NOT find that item:
 - "mail" -- because this is the end of the word "email"
 - "365" -- because this is the end of the word "Office365"
 - "ice" -- because this is in the middle of the word "Office365"
6. When you're finished, you can clear the search by clicking the in the search box.

Narrow your search results

If you can't find what you're looking for, use the search tools on the ribbon to narrow down your search. When you click the search box, you can select a scope option on the left side of the ribbon. Once you decide your scope, you can then refine your search further by selecting an option such as the subject line or the sender.

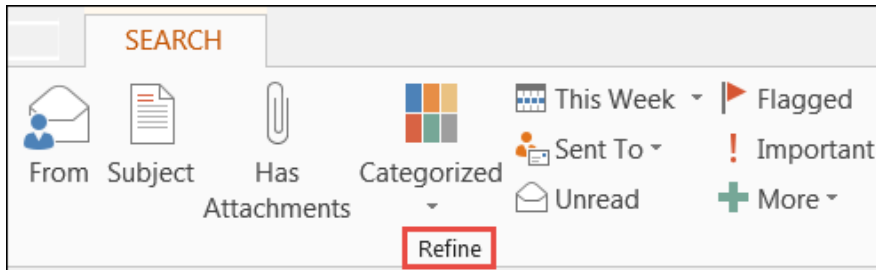
Scope (where to search): Here you can choose to search in specific folders, such as all your mailboxes, or just the current folder you've selected, which is your **Inbox** most of the time.



Refine (what to search for): When you've selected your scope, you can add other criteria in the **Refine** group. When you select an option, Outlook adds a special script to the search box to limit its search.



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Let's take a look at the options.

- **From:** filters your search results to only show messages sent by a specific person. For example, you can search for all the messages sent by Sara.
- **Subject:** filters your search results based on the subject line of the email. For example, you can search for all the messages that have the keyword “*report*” in the subject line.
- **Has Attachments:** gives you all the messages that contain an attachment.
- **Categorized:** choose a category to see all the messages that you’ve flagged with a specific category.
- **This Week:** on the drop-down menu, choose a time frame to narrow your search results based on the time you received a message.
- **Sent To:** on the drop-down menu, choose an option to filter the results based on the email recipients. For example the messages that you were CCed on, or the ones that were sent to a specific person.
- **Unread:** brings up all the unread messages in the folder that you’ve selected.
- **Flagged:** brings up messages that you flagged to follow up.
- **Important:** shows all the messages that were marked with high importance.
- **More:** choose an option on the menu to further narrow down your search results. For example you can filter by sensitivity or message size.

Remember that you can mix and match these options.

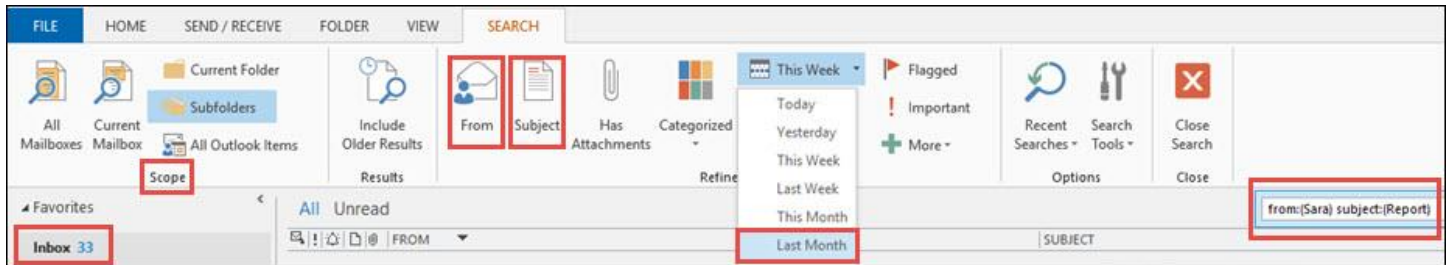
Here's an example: You can search for all the messages from Sara that you received last month, with the keyword “*report*” in the subject line.

To set up a search for this example:

1. Make sure **Inbox** is selected, then click in the **Search** box.
2. Select **Subfolders** in the **Scope** group.
3. Click **From** and type *Sara* to replace the highlighted text in the search box.
4. Click **Subject** and type *report* to replace the highlighted text in the search box.
5. From the drop-down menu next to **This Week**, select **Last Month**.



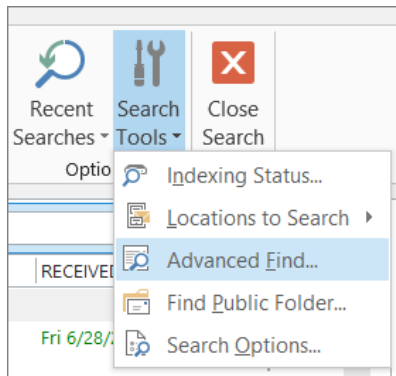
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Use Advanced Find

Getting too many results? Or are you just not finding what you want?

1. Click in the search box.
2. On the **Search** tab, click **Search Tools > Advanced Find**.

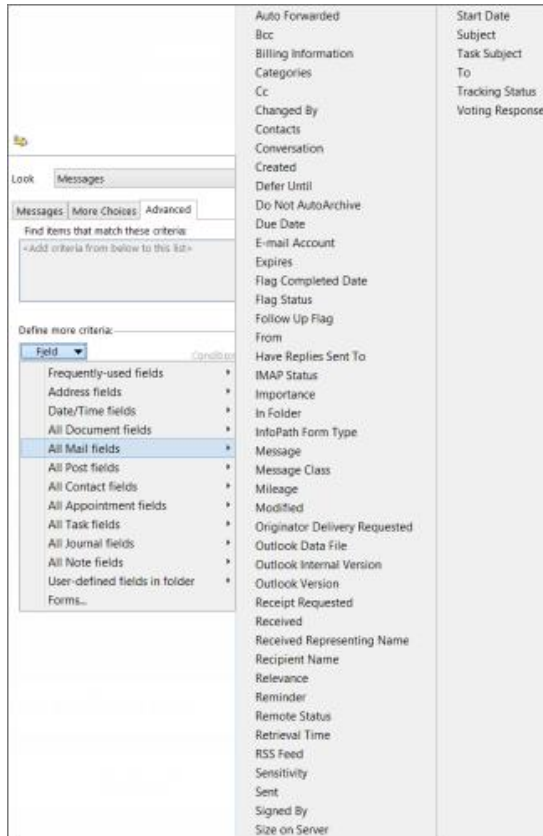


In the **Advanced Find** box, you can specify much more complex criteria and even search in your calendar, contacts list, notes, and tasks.

1. Click the **Advanced** tab.
2. Under **Define more criteria**, click the **Field** button and then click **All Mail Fields**. You'll see a menu of fields you can search on, such as **From**, **To**, **Received**, **Subject**, and dozens more.



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3. Start by choosing a field, then choose a condition and a value to test. For example:

From/ Contains/ Katie will search for messages from someone whose name includes "Katie." Notice we're using **contains** as the condition instead of **is (exactly)** so that we don't have to find an exact match. So if Katie's email name is "Katie Jordan," **From/is (exactly)/Katie** won't work because we'd need to specify Katie's full name, Katie Jordan, to get an exact match. That's where **contains** comes in handy as a condition.

4. Add as many additional conditions as you need or want to test. We'll add three more:

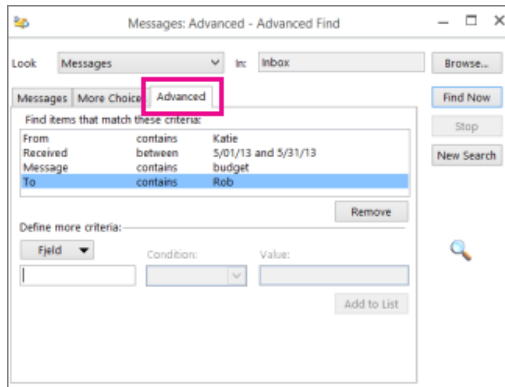
From | Contains | Katie will search for messages from someone whose name includes "Katie." Notice we're using **contains** as the condition instead of **is (exactly)** so that we don't have to find an exact match. So if Katie's email name is "Katie Jordan," **From | is (exactly) |Katie** won't work because we'd need to specify Katie's full name, Katie Jordan, to get an exact match. That's where **contains** comes in handy as a condition.

Then, let's say you add these as well:

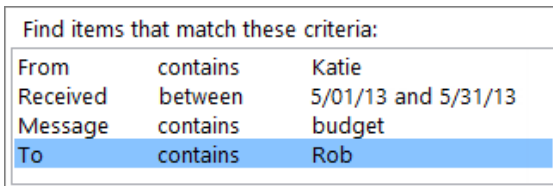
- **Received | between | 5/01/13 and 5/31/13**
- **Message | contains | budget**
- **To | contains | Rob**



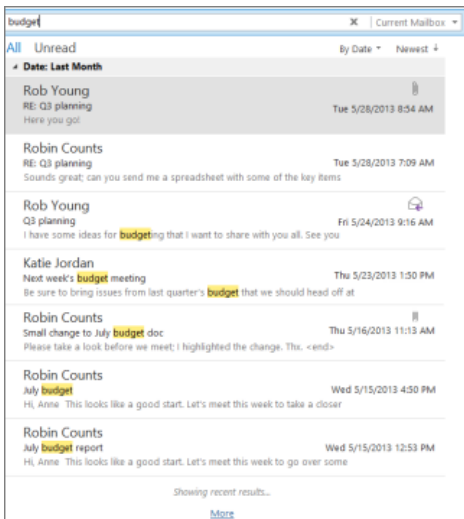
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Now, Outlook searches for messages from someone with "Katie" in her name that arrived in the inbox in May, 2013, with "budget" in the message body, and (in addition to you) were also sent to someone with "Rob" in his name. Here's a zoomed look at the list of the four criteria we added.



Finally, click **Find Now** to run the search.



Remove the limit on the number of search results

If the thought of more than 250 results doesn't scare you off, you can bypass that limit:

1. Click **File > Options > Search**.
2. Under **Results**, clear the **Improve search speed by limiting the number of results shown** check box.



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Learn to narrow your search criteria for better searches

You can type a number of phrases in the Search box at the top of the Outlook message list. In addition to searching for different words and phrases, you can use various operators, punctuation and keywords to narrow your search results.

The most basic way to search is to simply type in a word or phrase.

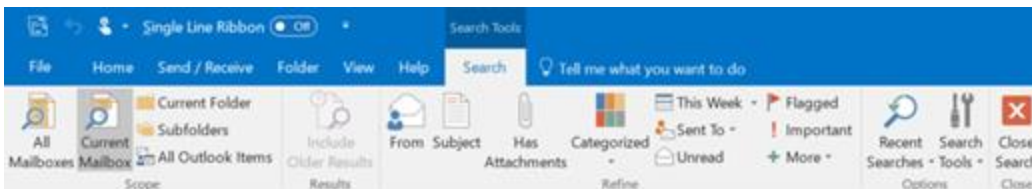
NOTE: Outlook uses what's called prefix matching when searching. So if you type **ray** into the Search box, Outlook will return messages that contain *ray*, *Ray*, *Raymond*, and *rays*, but not *disarray* or *tray*. Also, the search treats numbers that are connected to words (no spaces between the word and the number) as part of the word. Searching for "365" will NOT find messages that contain "Office365".

Search basics

- When you type words into the Search box, Outlook scans both email messages and many types of attachments for that word or phrase. For example, if you search for "project" either with or without quotes, Outlook will return all messages with the word project, projects, projector, projecting, etc. anywhere in the sender name, subject, message body, or attachments.
- When you type in an email address, for example `cheryl.parsons64@yahoo.com`, Outlook returns all email messages that contain that email address anywhere in the subject, message body, or many types of attachments as well as messages from that email address. To limit your search results to emails from an email address, type `from:cheryl.parsons64@yahoo.com` in the search box.

Use Outlook's built-in search filters

Outlook provides you with a number of built-in search filters. To use the built-in filters, click in the Search box. The Outlook ribbon will change to show the Search tab. Use any of the options in the Refine group to refine your search results.



Search reference tables

The following table shows you some examples of searches you might find useful. In addition to these examples, you can use AND, NOT, OR, <, >, =, and other operators to refine your search. Operators should be typed in uppercase letters.

Type this	To find this
bob	Items containing <i>bob</i> , <i>bobbinbobby</i> , <i>BOBBY</i> , <i>BoBby</i> , or any other combination of uppercase and lowercase letters. Instant Search is not case sensitive. This will NOT find items containing abcBOBdef, or 123bob.



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Type this	To find this
bob moore	Items containing <i>bob</i> , along with all of the variations listed in the previous row, or <i>moore</i> , along with any other words that contain <i>moore</i> , but not necessarily in that order.
bobby AND moore	Items containing both <i>bobby</i> and <i>moore</i> , but not necessarily in that order. Note that logical operators such as AND, NOT, and OR must be in uppercase letters.
bobby NOT moore	Items containing <i>bobby</i> , along with all variations listed in the first row of the table, but not <i>moore</i> .
bobby OR moore	Items containing <i>bobby</i> , along with all variations listed in the first row of the table, <i>moore</i> , or both.
"bob"	Items containing the exact phrase <i>bob</i> and not the variations such as <i>bobby</i> or <i>bobbin</i> . To search for an exact string, you must use quotation marks.
from:"bobby moore"	Items sent from <i>bobby moore</i> . Note the use of double quotes so that the search results match the exact phrase within the quotes. You can also type <i>from:</i> and then the first few letters of a contact's name and Outlook will suggest a list of contacts for you to select.
from:"bobby moore" about:"status report"	Items sent from <i>bobby moore</i> where <i>status report</i> appears in the subject line, body, or attachment contents. Note the use of double quotes so that the search results match the exact phrase within the quotes.
hasattachment:yes	Items that have attachments. You can also use <i>hasattachment:true</i> to get the same results.
attachments:presentation.pptx	Items that have attachments named <i>presentation.pptx</i> or an attachment that contains <i>presentation.pptx</i> within its contents.
subject:"bobby moore"	Items whose subject contains the phrase <i>bobby moore</i> .
cc:"bobby moore"	Items in which the display name <i>bobby moore</i> is on the Cc line.
cc:bobbymoore@contoso.com	Items in which the e-mail address <i>bobbymoore@contoso.com</i> is on the Cc line.
bcc:bobby	Items in which <i>bobby</i> is on the Bcc line.
category:red	Items that contain a category name that includes the word red. For example "Red category" or "Redo" or "Redundant."
messagesize:<10 KB	Items whose size is less than 10 kilobytes. Note the use of the "less than" comparison operator (<).
messagesize:>5 MB	Items whose size is larger than 5 megabytes. Note the use of the "greater than" comparison operator (>).
received:=1/1/2016	Items that arrived on 1/1/2016. Note the use of the "equals" comparison operator (=).



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Type this	To find this
	Note: Support for specifying custom dates via the Expanded Search drop-down is missing from some builds of Outlook for Windows. Users can still manually enter dates in the main search box. This is fixed in builds 16.0.12126.10000 and later.
received:yesterday	Items that arrived yesterday. Instant Search also recognizes the follow date values: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relative dates: For example, <i>today, tomorrow, yesterday</i> ▪ Multi-word relative dates: For example, <i>this week, next month, last week, past month, coming year</i> ▪ Days: <i>Sunday, Monday ... Saturday</i> ▪ Months: <i>January, February ... December</i>
received:last week	Items that arrived last week. Note that if you run this query again a month from now you will obtain different results because it is a time relative query.
due:last week	Items that are flagged for follow up a due date.
messagesize:tiny	Items whose size is less than 10 kilobytes
messagesize:small	Items whose size is between 10 and 25 kilobytes
messagesize:medium	Items whose size is between 25 and 100 kilobytes
messagesize:large	Items whose size is between 100 and 500 kilobytes
messagesize:verylarge	Items whose size is between 500 kilobytes and 1 megabyte
followupflag:follow up	Items that are flagged using the Follow Up flag.
messagesize:enormous	Items whose size is larger than 5 megabytes
hasflag:true	Items that are flagged for follow up.
from:bobby (received:1/7/17 OR received:1/8/17)	Items from <i>bobby</i> that arrived on either 1/7/17 or 1/8/17. Note the use of parentheses to group the dates.
received>=10/1/16 AND received<=10/5/16	Items that arrived between 10/1/16 and 10/5/16. Note: For received ranges, do not use a colon.
received>10/1/16 AND received<10/5/16	Items that arrived after 10/1/16 but before 10/5/16. Note: For received ranges, do not use a colon.
sent: yesterday	Returns all items sent yesterday (by anyone). This search will return items you sent to others and items others sent to you.
to:bobby	Items that you sent to <i>bobby</i> when you are searching in the Sent Items folder.
read:no	Items that have not been read. You can also use read:false to get the same results.
subject:status received:May	Items received from anyone during the month of May (any year) where the subject contains <i>status</i> .



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Calendar Searches

The following searches will only return the proper results when run from a Calendar folder.

Type this	To find this
startdate:next week subject:status	Calendar items next week where the subject contains status.
is:recurring	Calendar items that are recurring.
organizer:bobby	Calendar items where <i>bobby</i> is the organizer.

Contact Searches

The following searches will only return the proper results when run from a Contacts folder.

Type this	To find this
firstname:bobby	Contacts that contain <i>bobby</i> in the First Name field.
lastname:moore	Contacts that contain <i>moore</i> in the Last Name field.
nickname:bobby	Contacts that contain <i>bobby</i> in the Nickname field.
jobtitle:physician	Contacts that contain <i>physician</i> in the Job Title field.
businessphone:555-0100	Contacts that contain <i>555-0100</i> in the Business Phone field.
homephone:555-0100	Contacts that contain <i>555-0100</i> in the Home Phone field.
mobilephone:555-0100	Contacts that contain <i>555-0100</i> in the Mobile Phone field.
businessfax:555-0100	Contacts that contain <i>555-0100</i> in the Business Fax field.
businessaddress:(4567 Main St., Buffalo, NY 98052)	Contacts that contain <i>4567 Main St., Buffalo, NY 98052</i> in the Business Address field. Note the use of parentheses to enclose the address.
homeaddress:(4567 Main St., Buffalo, NY 98052)	Contacts that contain <i>4567 Main St., Buffalo, NY 98052</i> in the Home Address field. Note the use of parentheses to enclose the address.
businesscity:buffalo	Contacts that contain <i>buffalo</i> in the Business City field.
businesspostalcode:98052	Contacts that contain <i>98052</i> in the Business Postal Code field.
street:(4567 Main St)	Contacts that contain <i>4567 Main St</i> in the Business Address Street field. Note the use of parentheses to enclose the address.
homestreet:(4567 Main St)	Contacts that contain <i>4567 Main St</i> in the Home Address Street field. Note the use of parentheses to enclose the address.
birthday:6/4/1960	Contacts that contain <i>6/4/1960</i> in the Birthday field.
webpage:www.contoso.com	Contacts that contain the URL <i>www.contoso.com</i> in the Web Page Address field.



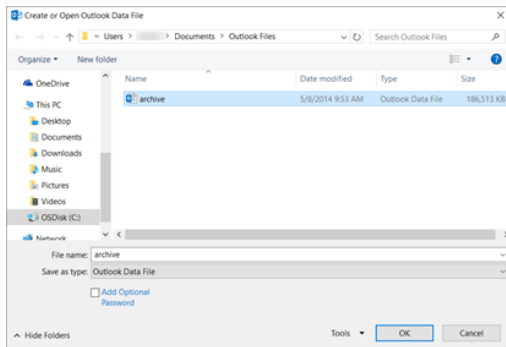
Outlook - Manage and organize: Search Feature

Open and find items in an archive Outlook Data File (.pst)

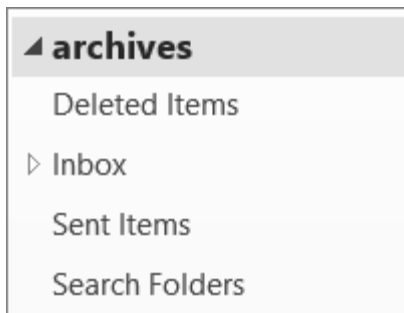
Open an Outlook data file

In order for Outlook to search a Personal Folders file for a specific word or phrase or sender, the file must be open in Outlook.

1. In Outlook on your desktop (Outlook 2016, Outlook 2013, Outlook 2010), choose File > **Open and Export > Open Outlook Data File**.
2. Choose the Outlook data file you want to open.



3. Expand the top level of the Outlook data file in the Outlook Navigation pane to see the subfolders in the file. Click each subfolder to see the contents.



4. To search for a specific email, use Outlook's built-in search tools.
5. If you want to *import* your archived items back into your Inbox, follow the instructions for [importing a .pst file](#).

Where is my .PST file?

In Outlook 2016, Outlook 2013, Outlook 2010, new Outlook data files are, by default, saved in the following locations:

- **Windows Vista, Windows 7, 8, and 10** `drive:\Users\user\Documents\Outlook Files\archive.pst`

For more information, please refer to the Microsoft training resource page [HERE](#)