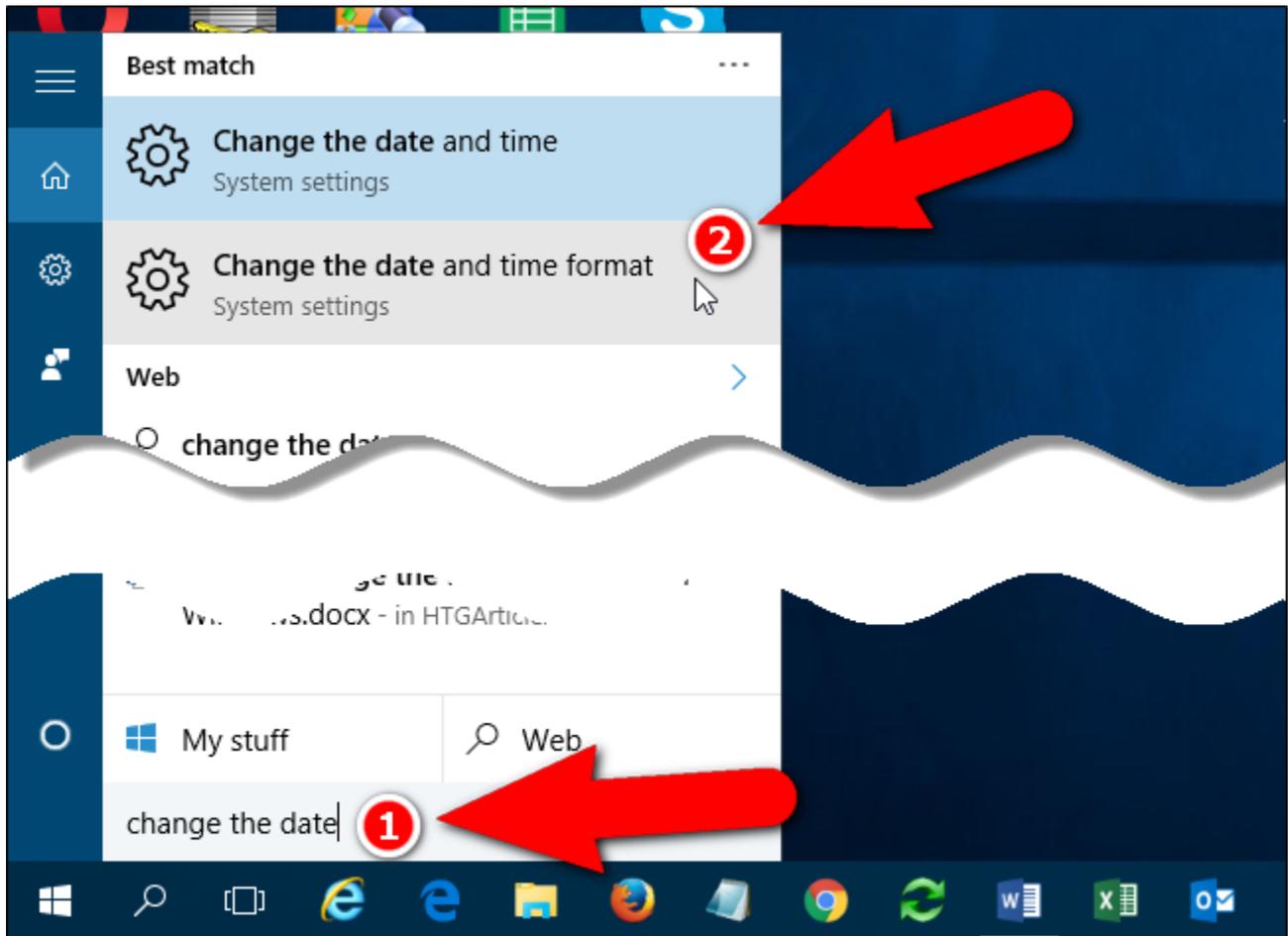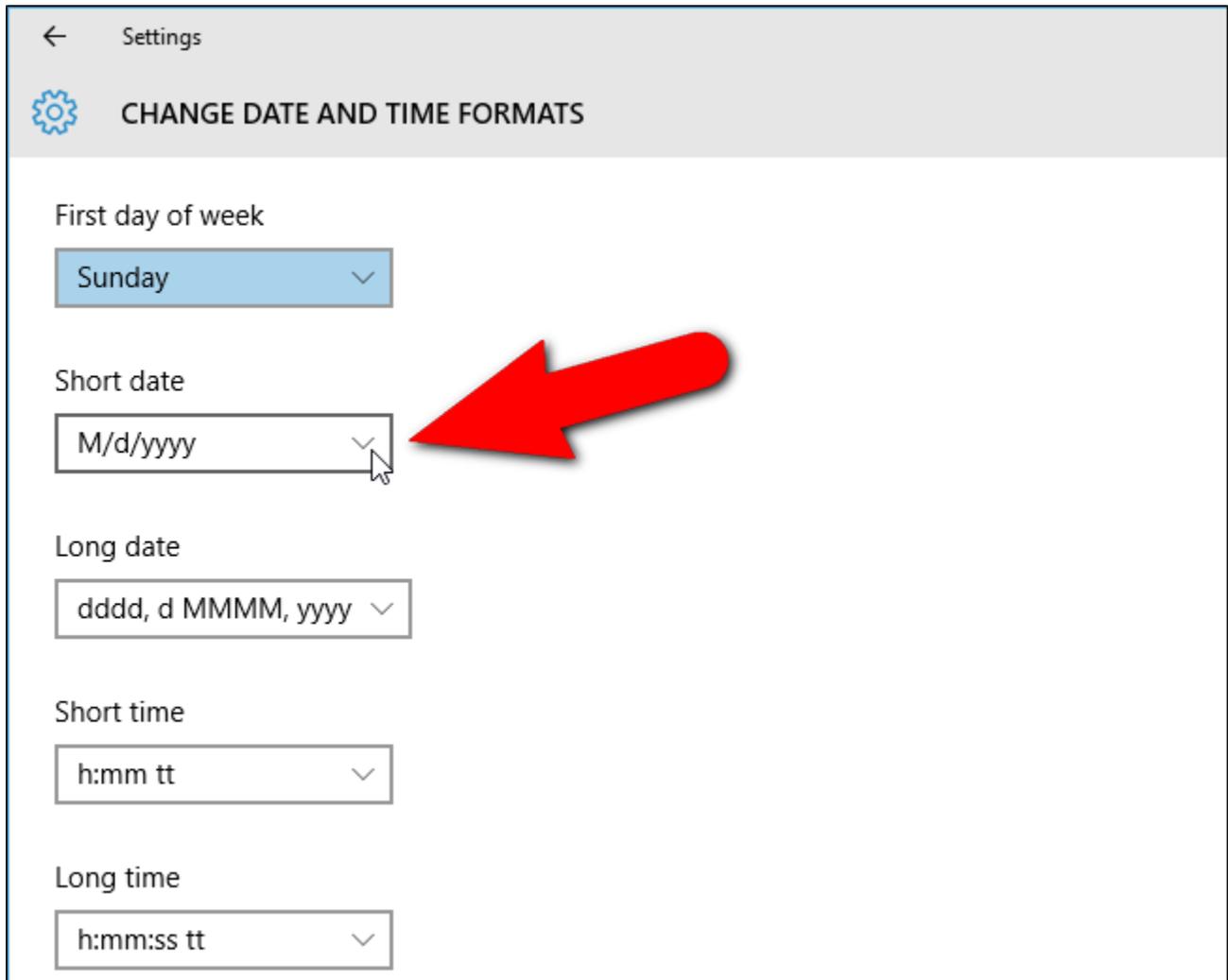# How to Access the Date and Time Format Settings in Windows 10

If you're using Windows 10, click on the Search box or button on the Taskbar. If you don't see the Search box or button, you can easily [enable one or the other](#).
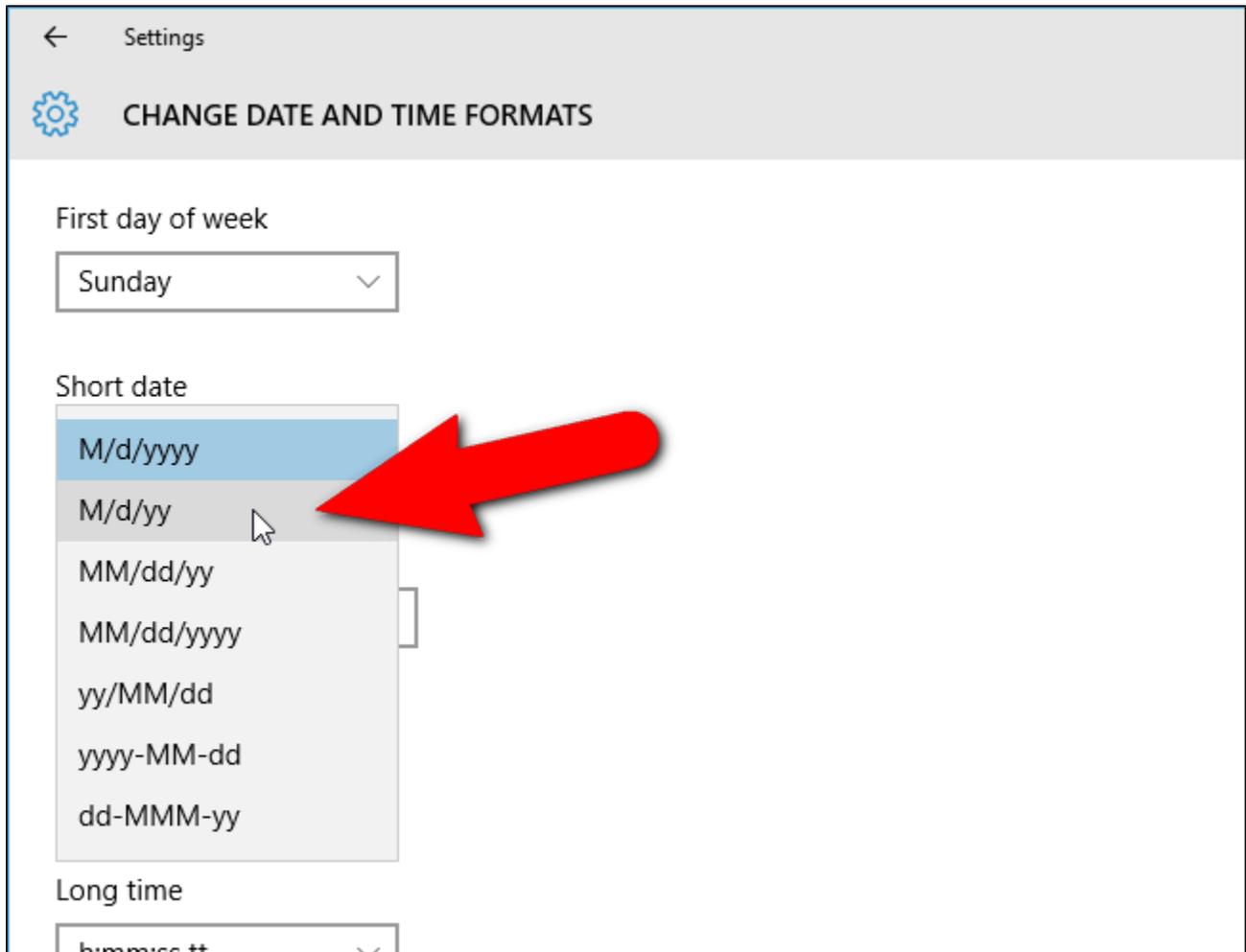
Type "change the date" in the Search box. Results start to display as you type. Click "Change the date and time format" in the list of results.
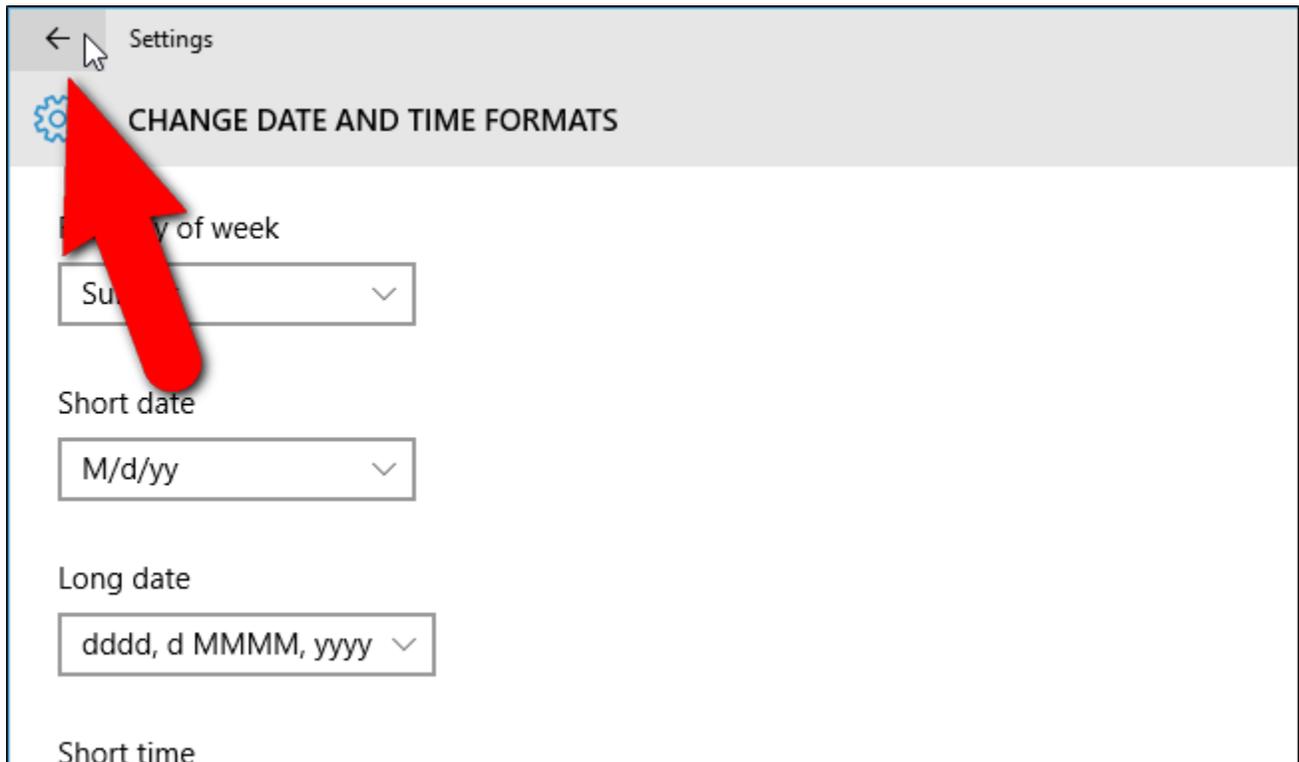

On this Change Date and Time Formats settings screen, you can select different formats for the "Short date", "Long date", "Short time", and "Long time".
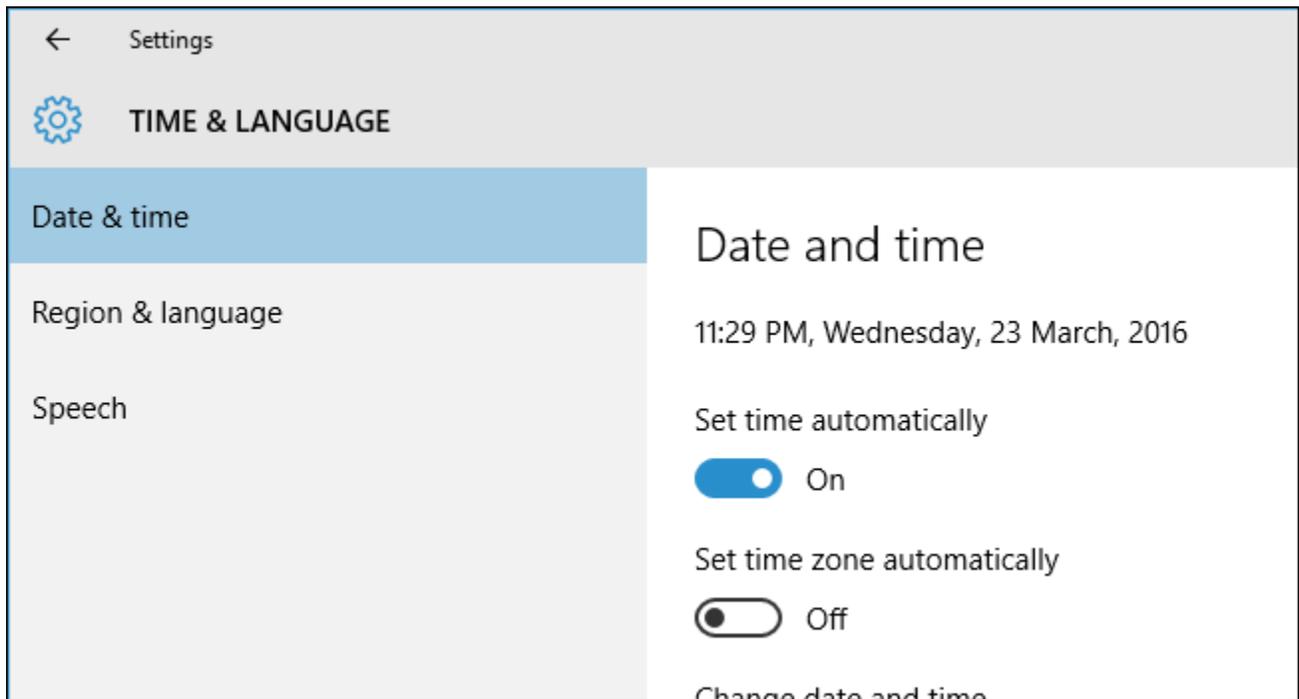
You may not see the format you want in the list of options for the date or time. For example, there are various formats using slashes and a couple using dashes, but no dates using periods. You have to access a screen in the old Control Panel to be able to enter a custom date or time format.
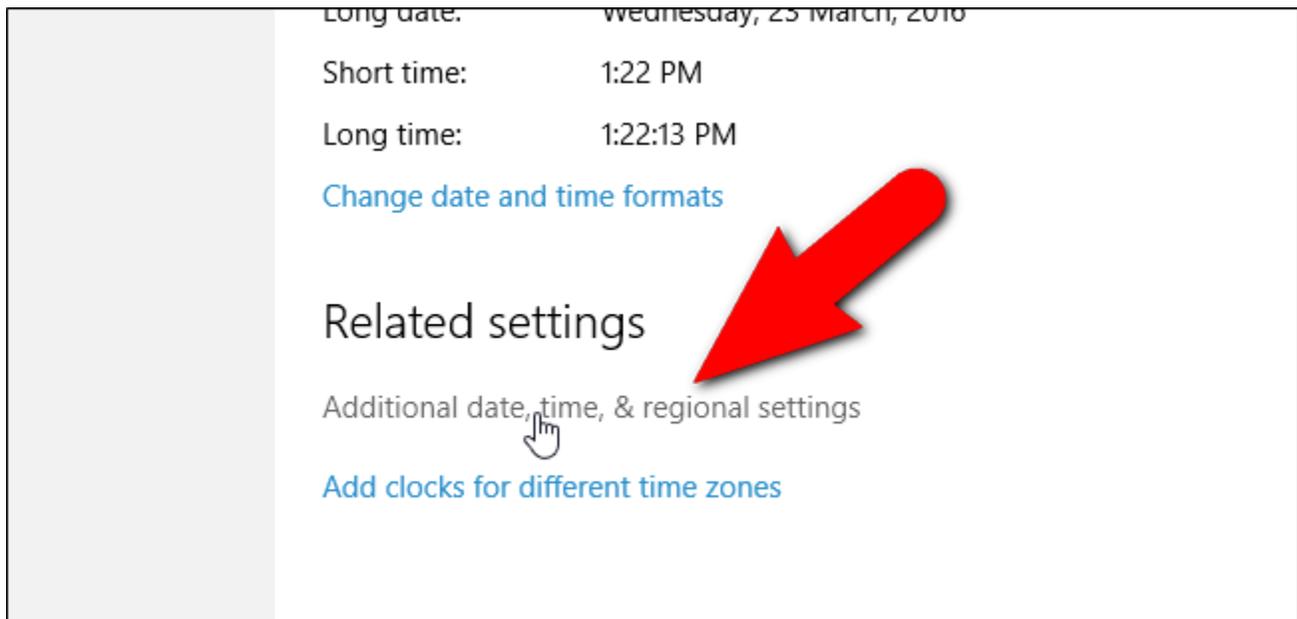
To access the screen in the Control Panel that will allow you to enter a custom date or time format, click the back arrow button in the upper-left corner of the Settings screen.

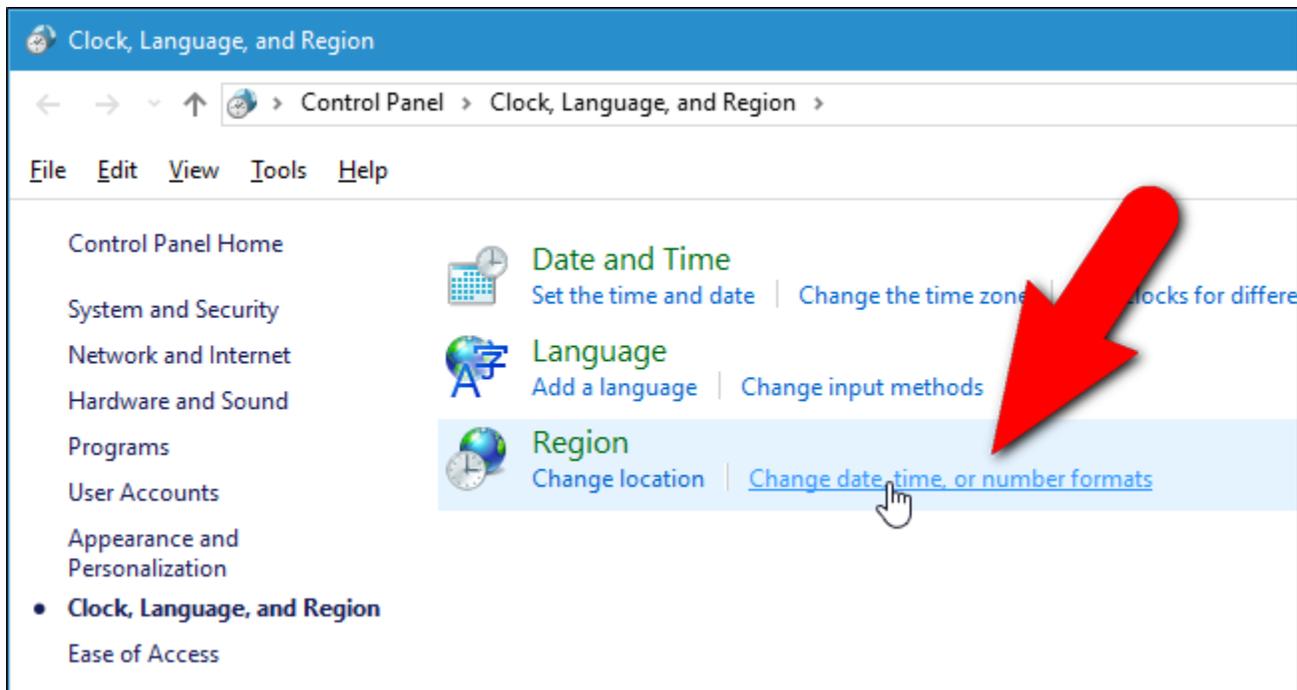You are returned to the Date & time screen in the Time & Language settings.

Scroll down on the right side of the Date and time screen and click the "Additional date, time, & regional settings" link under Related settings.
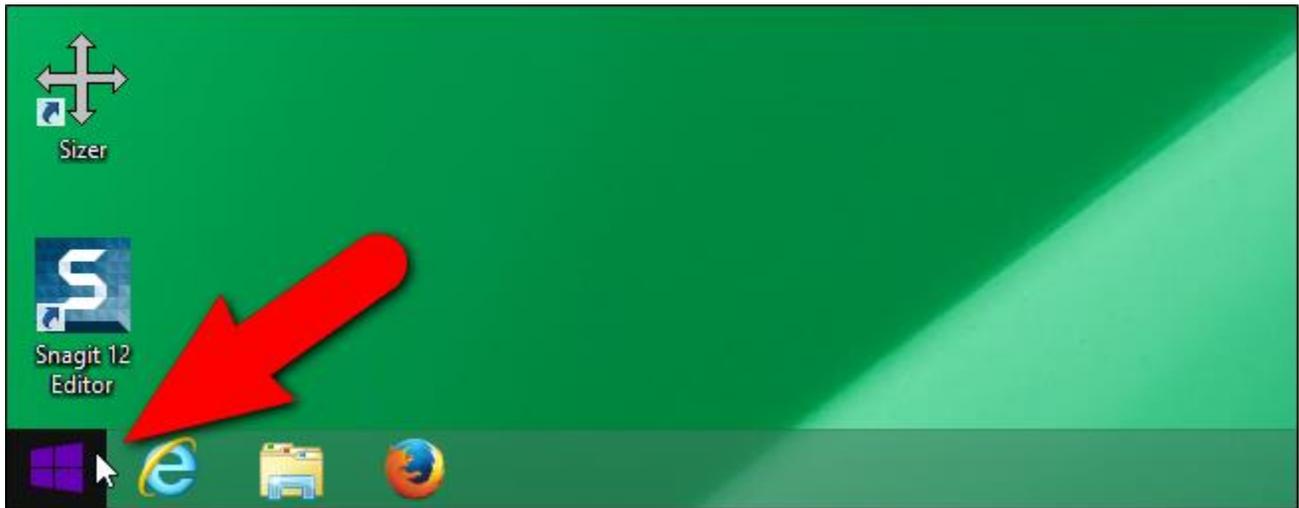
The Clock, Language, and Region screen on the Control Panel displays. In the Region section on the right, click the "Change date, time, or number formats" link. This opens the Region dialog box. See the last section of this post for information on how to create a custom date or time format from this menu.

Note that there are other ways of accessing the Control Panel in Windows 10 as well.
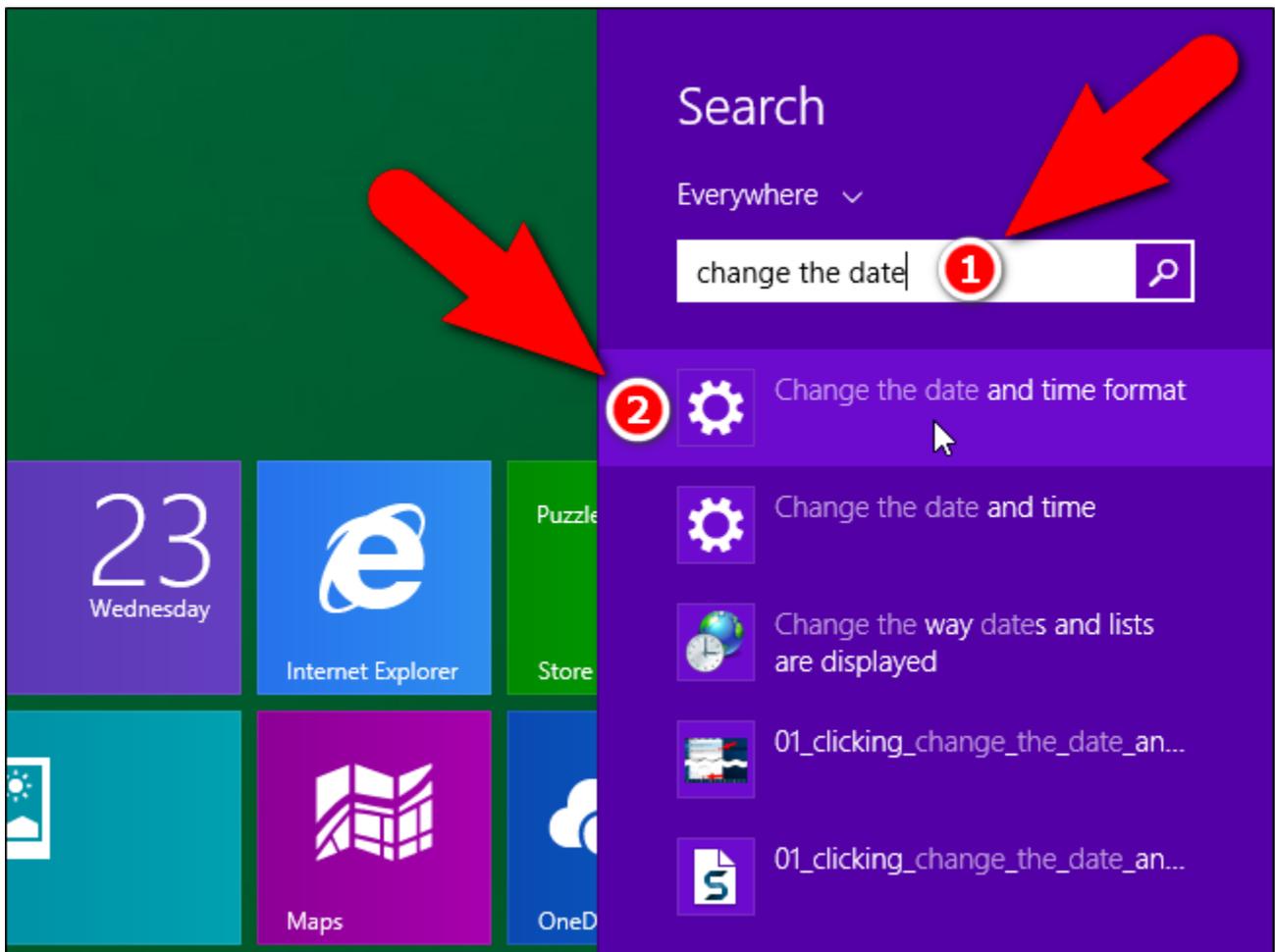

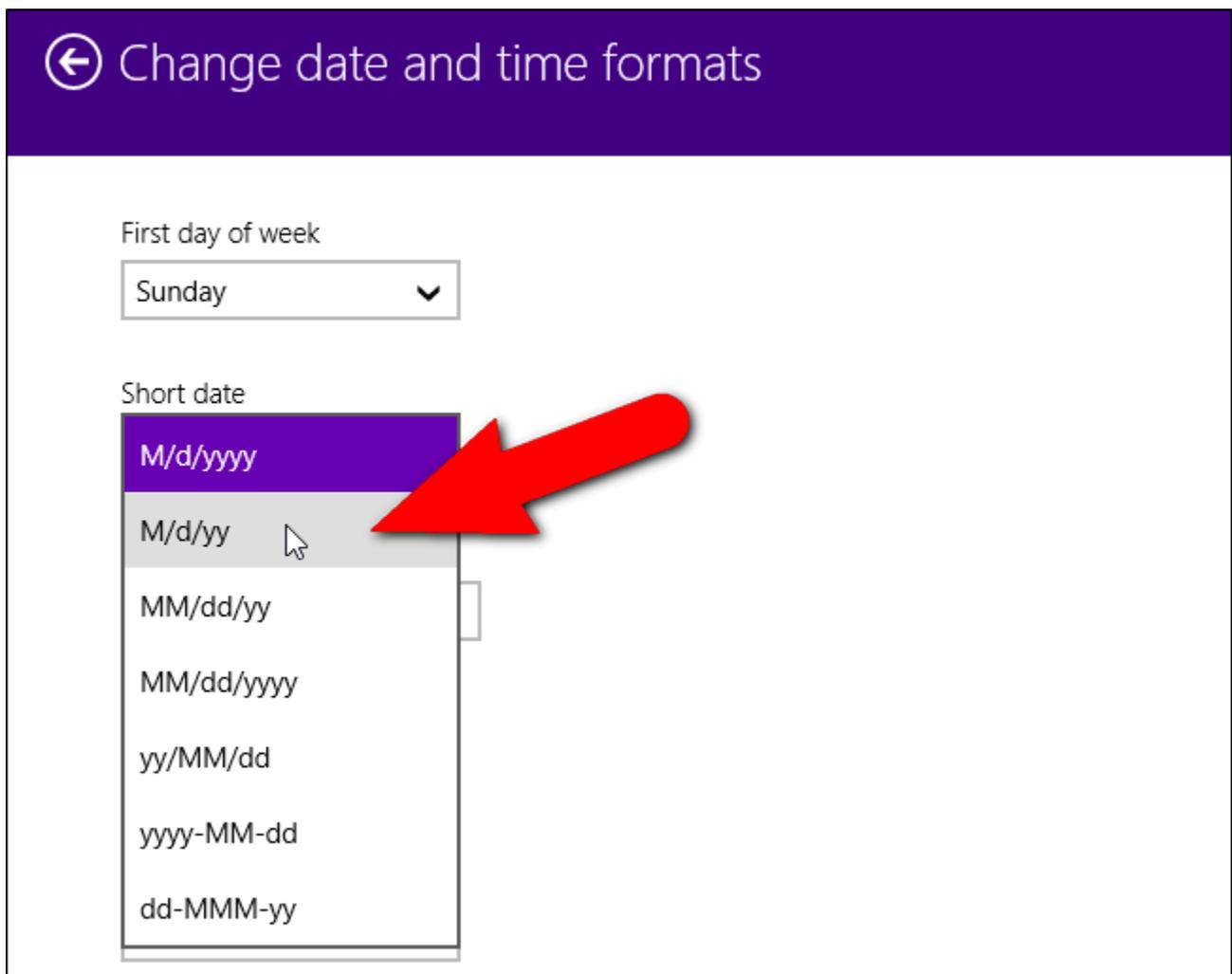**How to Access the Date and Time Format Settings in Windows 8.1**

If you're using Windows 8.1, the procedure for changing the format of the date and time is slightly different. To begin, make sure the Start screen is active. If you're on the desktop, click the "Start" button in the lower-left corner of the screen.
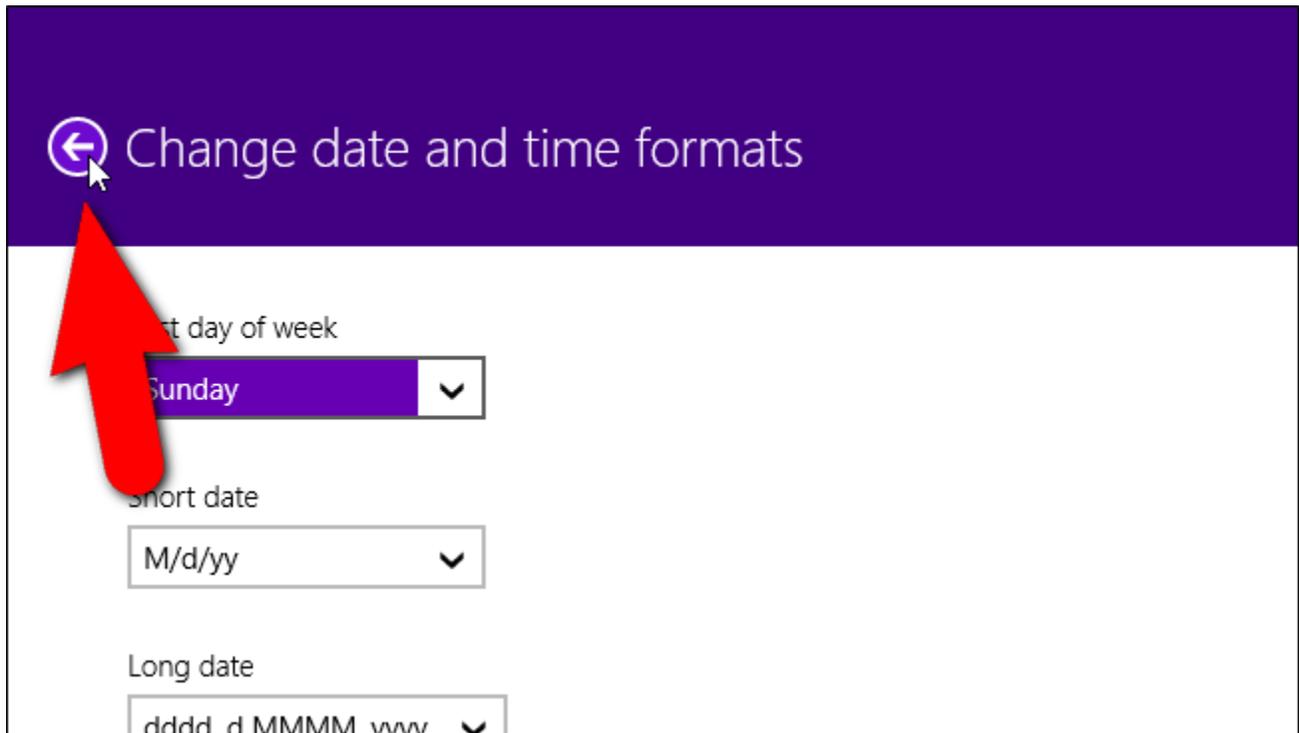

On the Start screen, start typing "change the date" (without the quotes). The Search panel opens and results start to display. When you see "Change the date and time format" appear in the list with the settings icon, click on it.
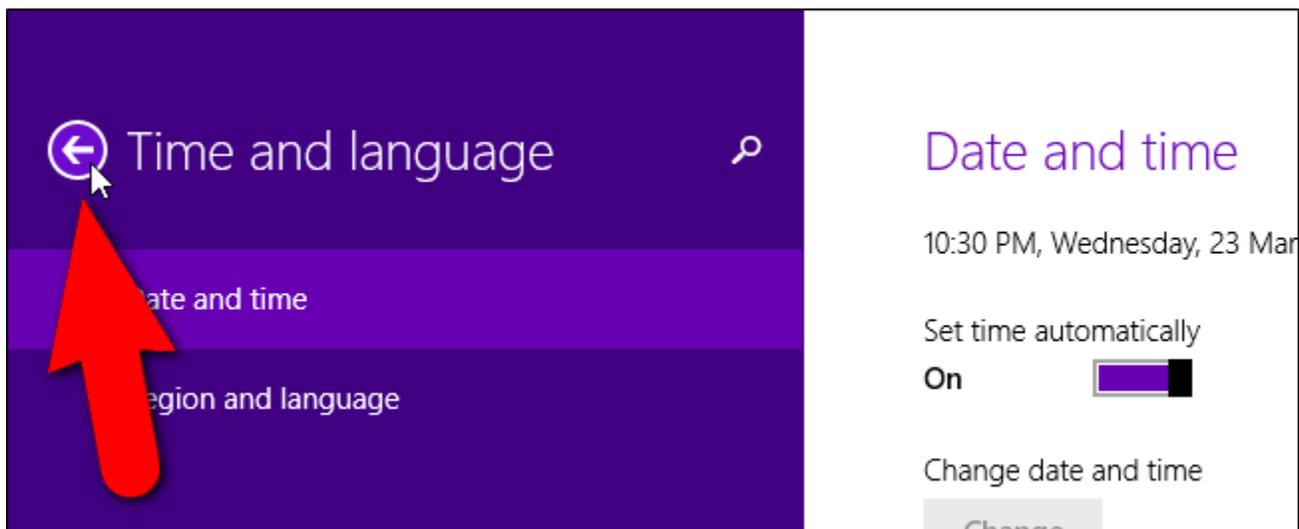
This screen allows you to select different formats for the short and long date and short and long time. However, as with Windows 10, you are limited in the available choices. If you want to use periods in your dates, you will have to enter a custom date format. We'll show you how to access the Control Panel screen you need to do this.

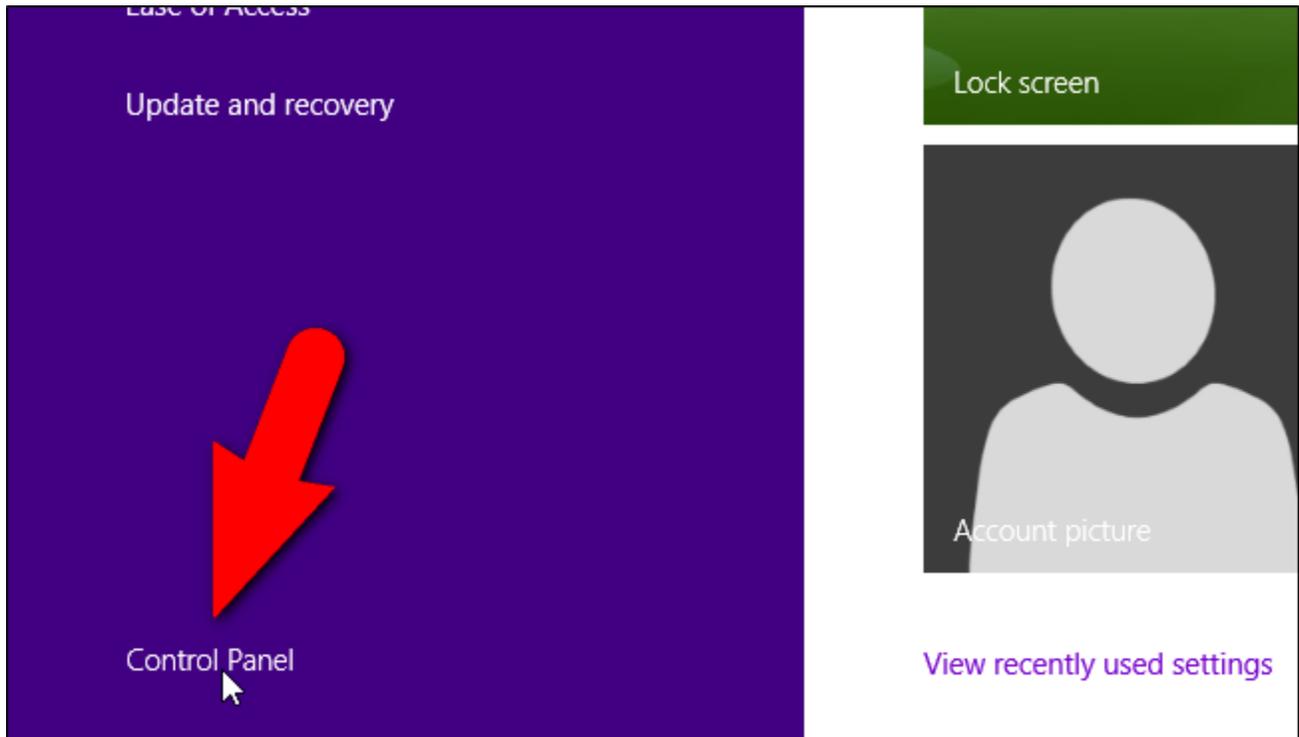To access the Control Panel, we have to go back a couple of screens. So, click the back arrow button in the upper-left corner of the Change date and tine formats screen…

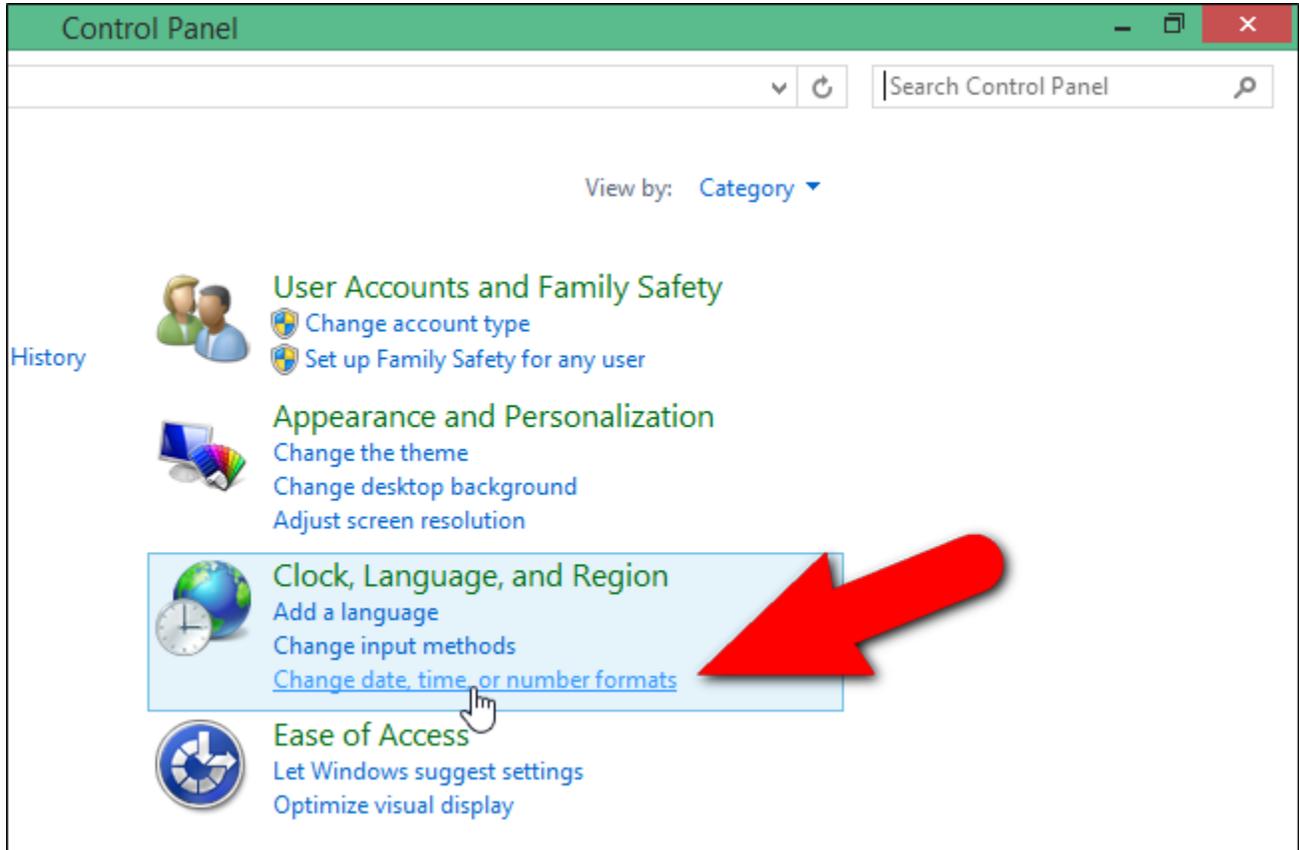…and again on the Time and language screen.

At the bottom of the left pane on the PC Settings screen, click the "Control Panel" link. Note that there are [several different ways you can access the Control Panel in Windows 8/8.1](#).
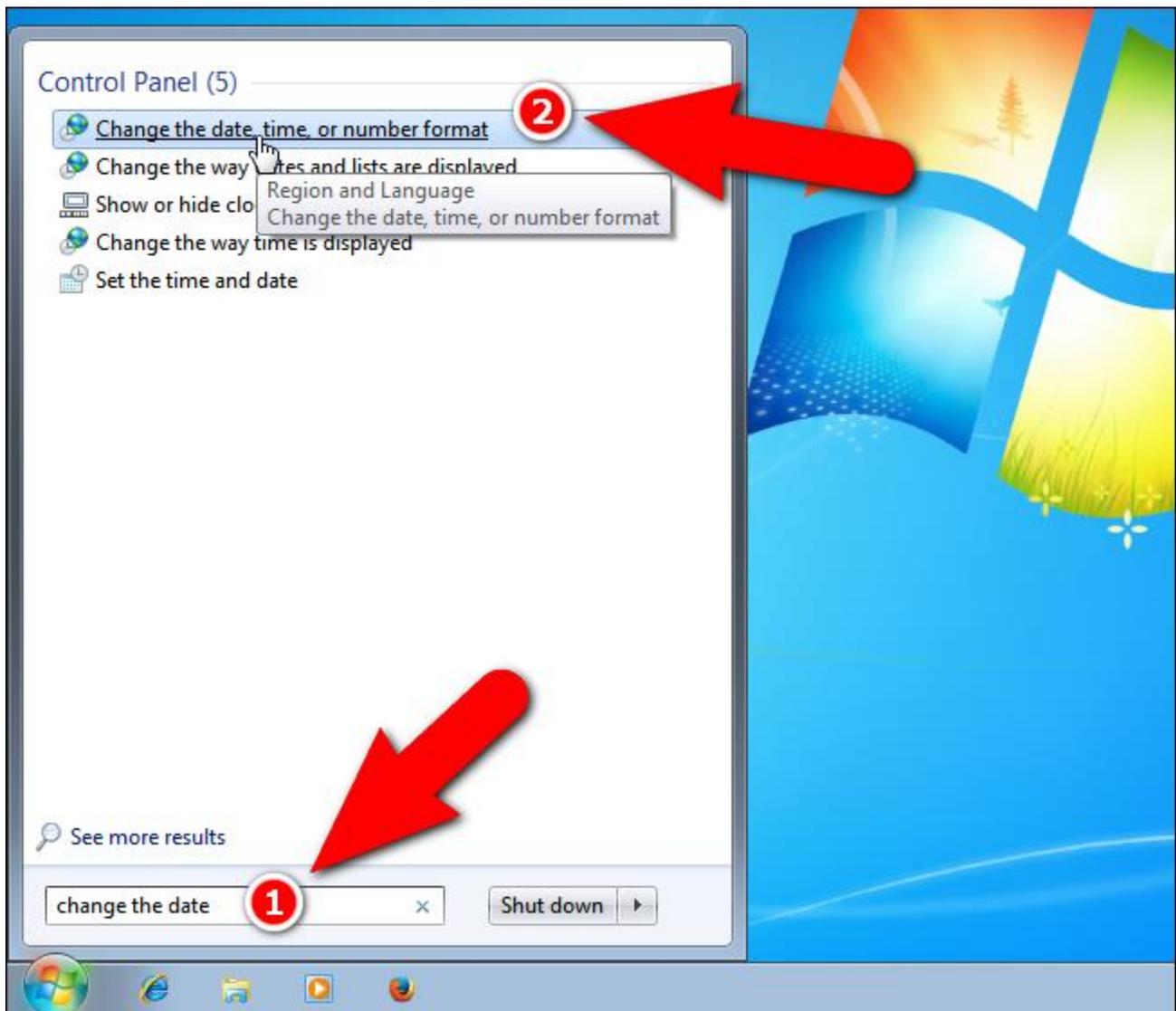
On the Control Panel, click the "Change date, time, or number formats" link under Clock, Language, and Region. This opens the Region dialog box, which you will use in the last section of this article to customize the date and time format.

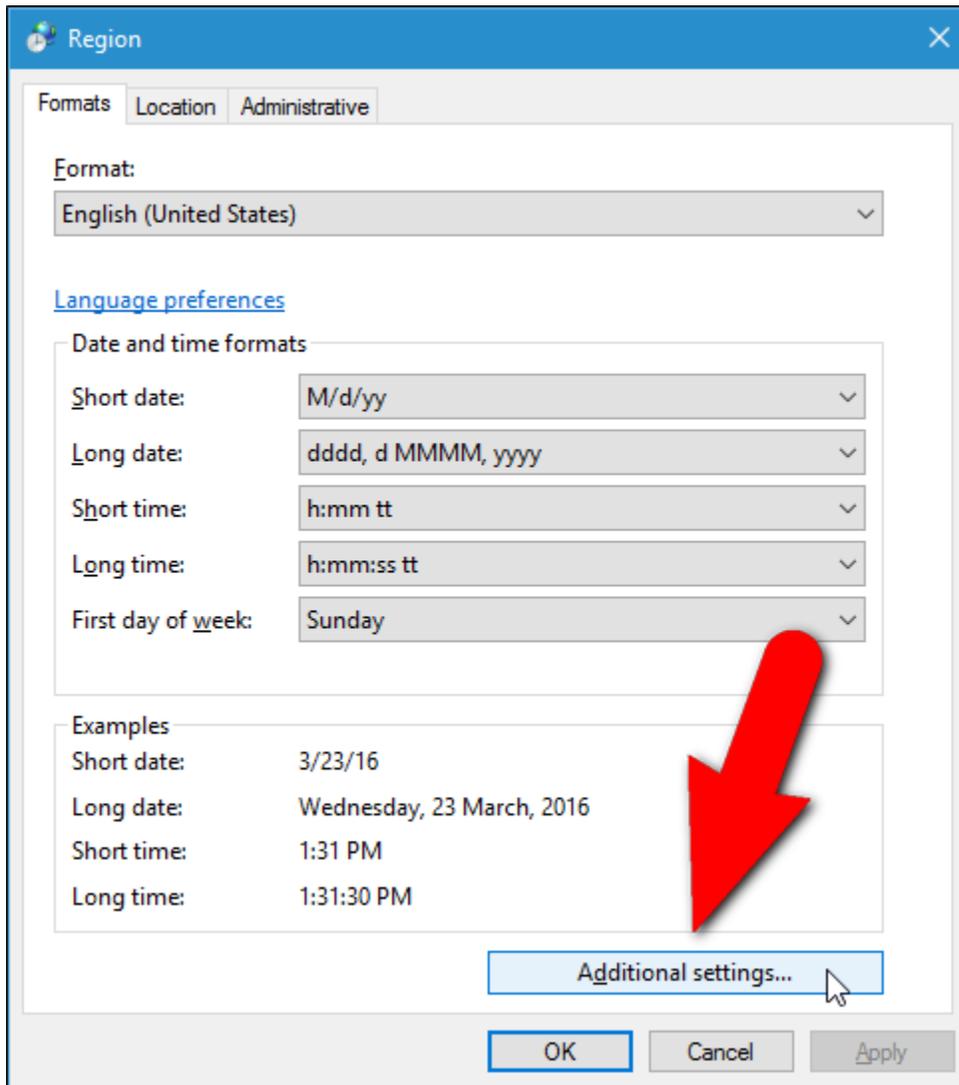## How to Access the Date and Time Format Settings in Windows 7

To access the date and time format settings in Windows 7, click the Start menu button and enter "change the date" (without the quotes) into the Search box. Then, click the "Change the date, time, or number format" link in the list of results. This opens the Region dialog box we discuss in the next section. Unlike Windows 10 and 8.1, the Region dialog box is the only place you can select built-in date and time formats.
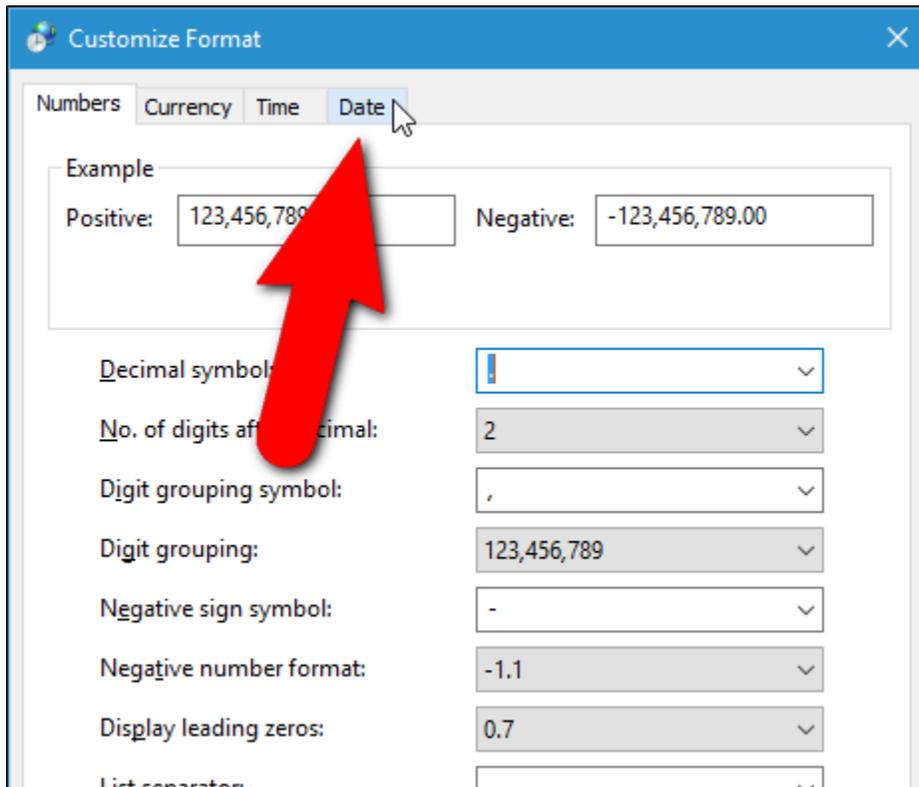

How to Customize the Date and Time Format in Windows 10, 8.1, and 7

Now, we will set up a custom date using periods. If you're using Windows 10 or 8.1, the Region dialog box should be open and the Formats tab should be active. If not, click on the "Formats" tab to activate it. Then, click "Additional settings" at the bottom of the tab.

This dialog box also allows you to select built-in date and time formats just like the Change Date and Time Formats screen in PC Settings in Windows 10 and 8.1.
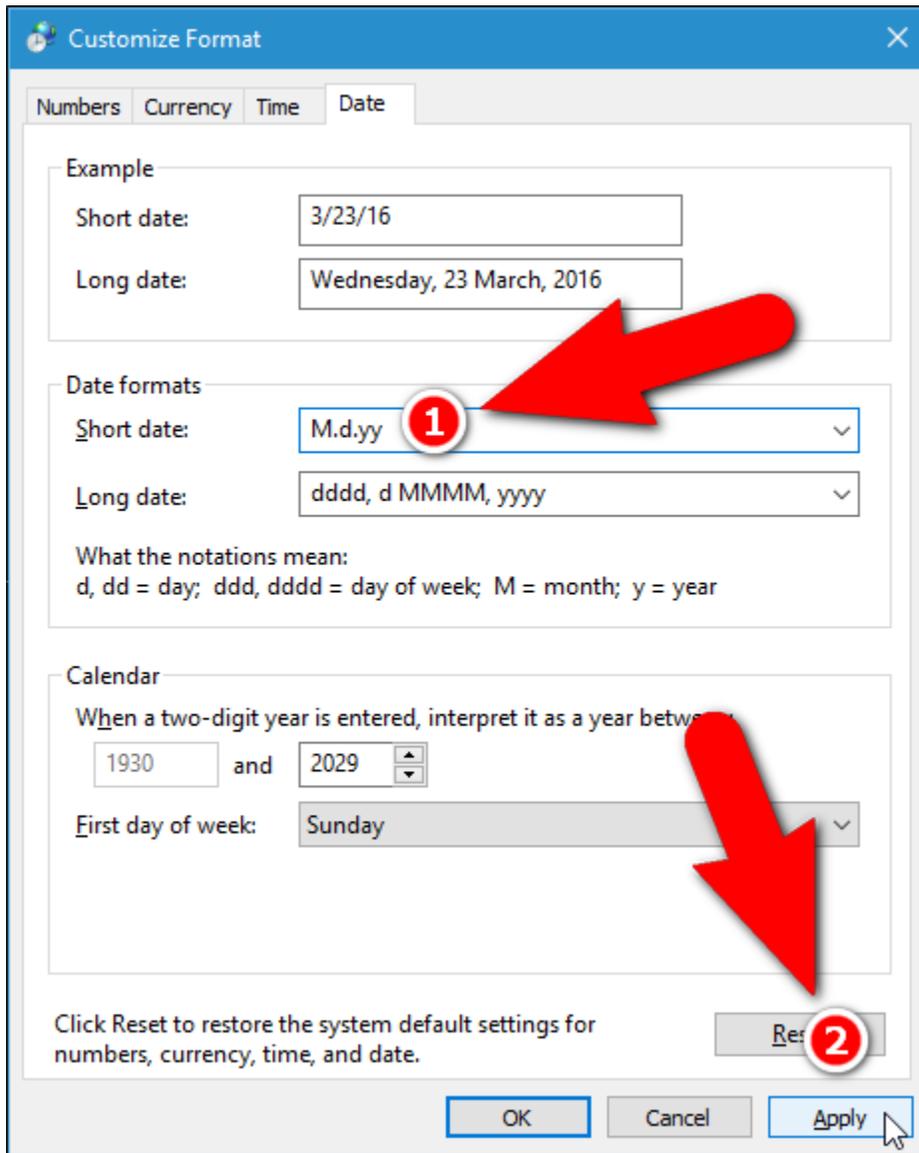
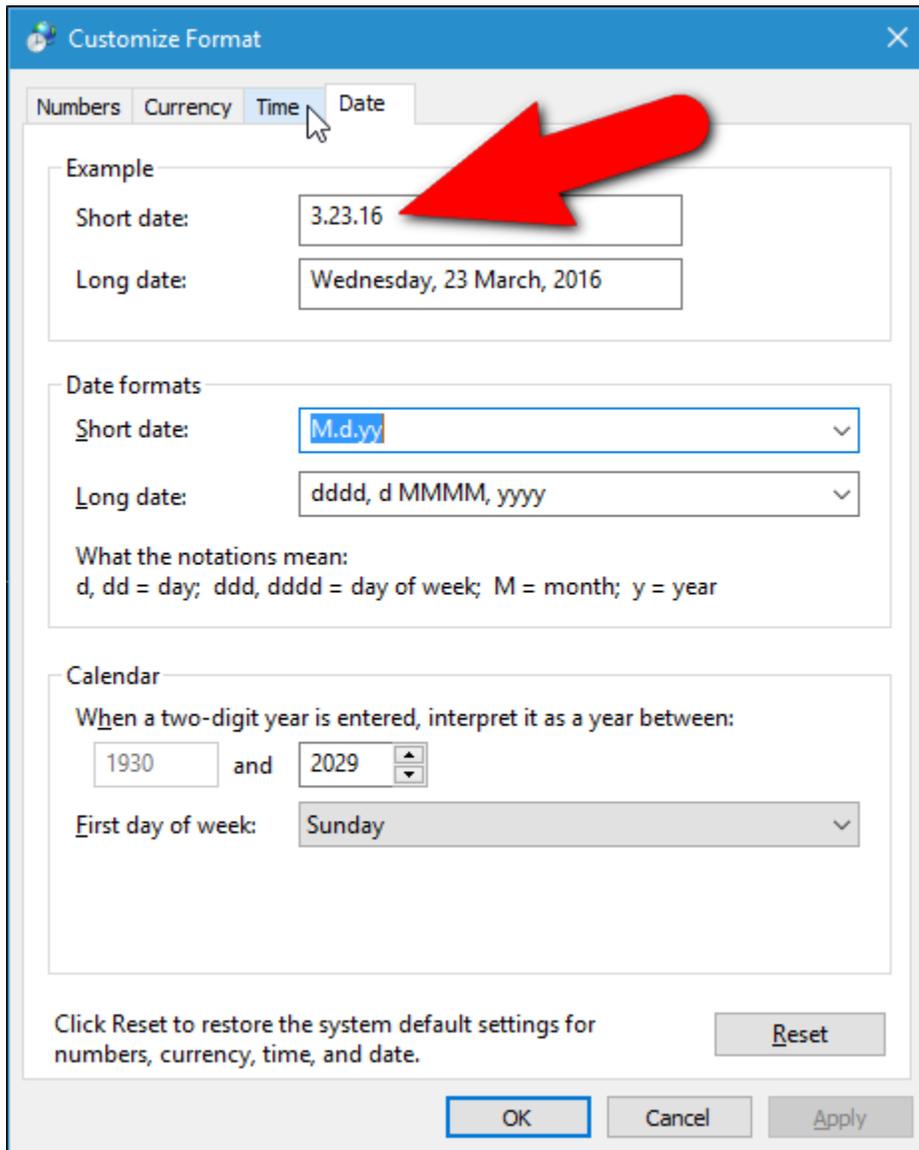On the Customize Format dialog box, click the "Date" tab.

In the Date formats section, the "Short date" drop-down list box is also an edit box, allowing you to enter a different format. So, type the format you want to use in the "Short date" box. In our example, we entered "M.d.yy". A small legend displays below the Short date and Long date drop-down lists indicating what the letters used in the date format mean. The "dd" for the day adds a leading zero before single-digit months. You can also use "MM" to add a leading zero before single-digit months, even though that notation is not listed. For the year, "yyyy" uses the full, four-digit year and "yy" uses the last two digits of the year. For example, "MM.dd.yyyy" would display as "03.09.2016". Once you've entered your custom format in the "Short date" box, click "Apply".
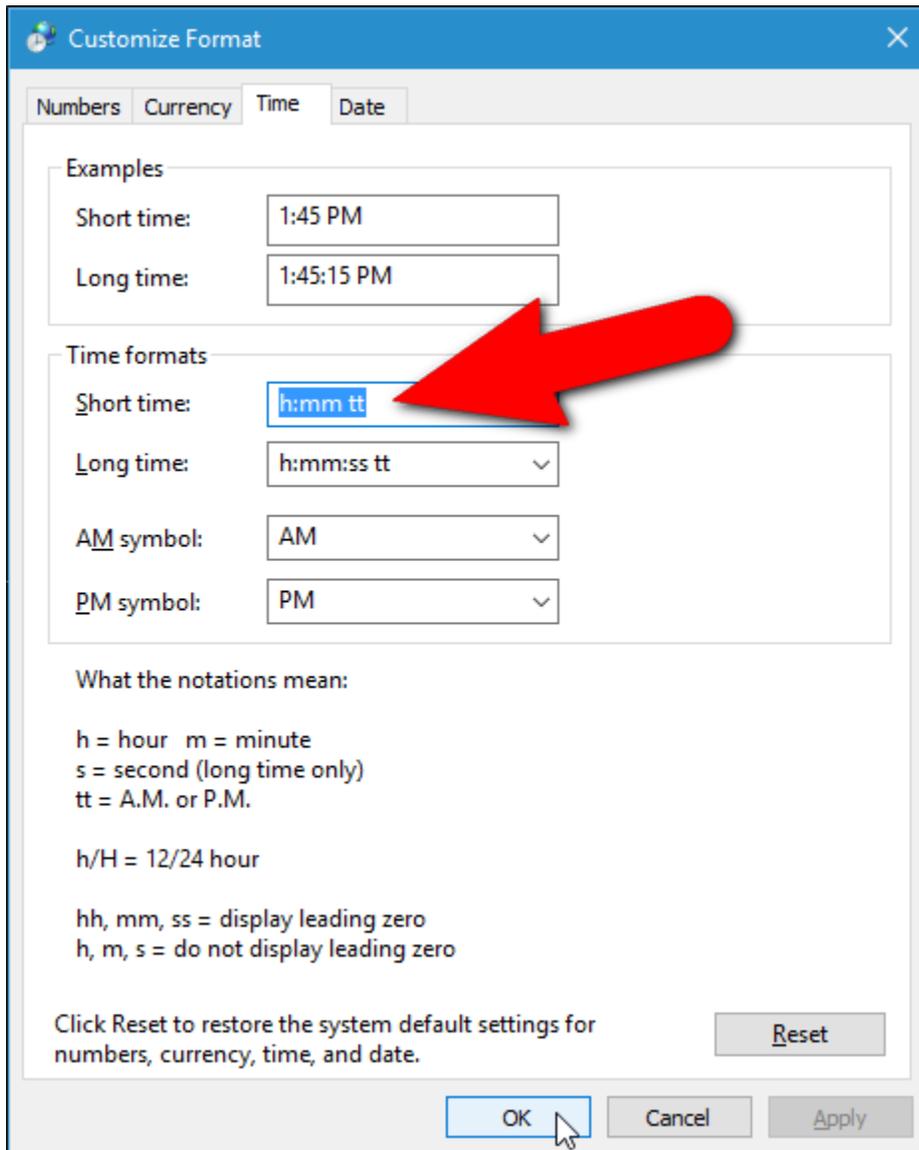
NOTE: The Short date is what's used to display the date in the notification area on the Taskbar. So, if you want to display a custom long date on the Taskbar, enter the long date you want to use in the "Short date" box, even if it's one that's available in the "Long date" drop-down list.
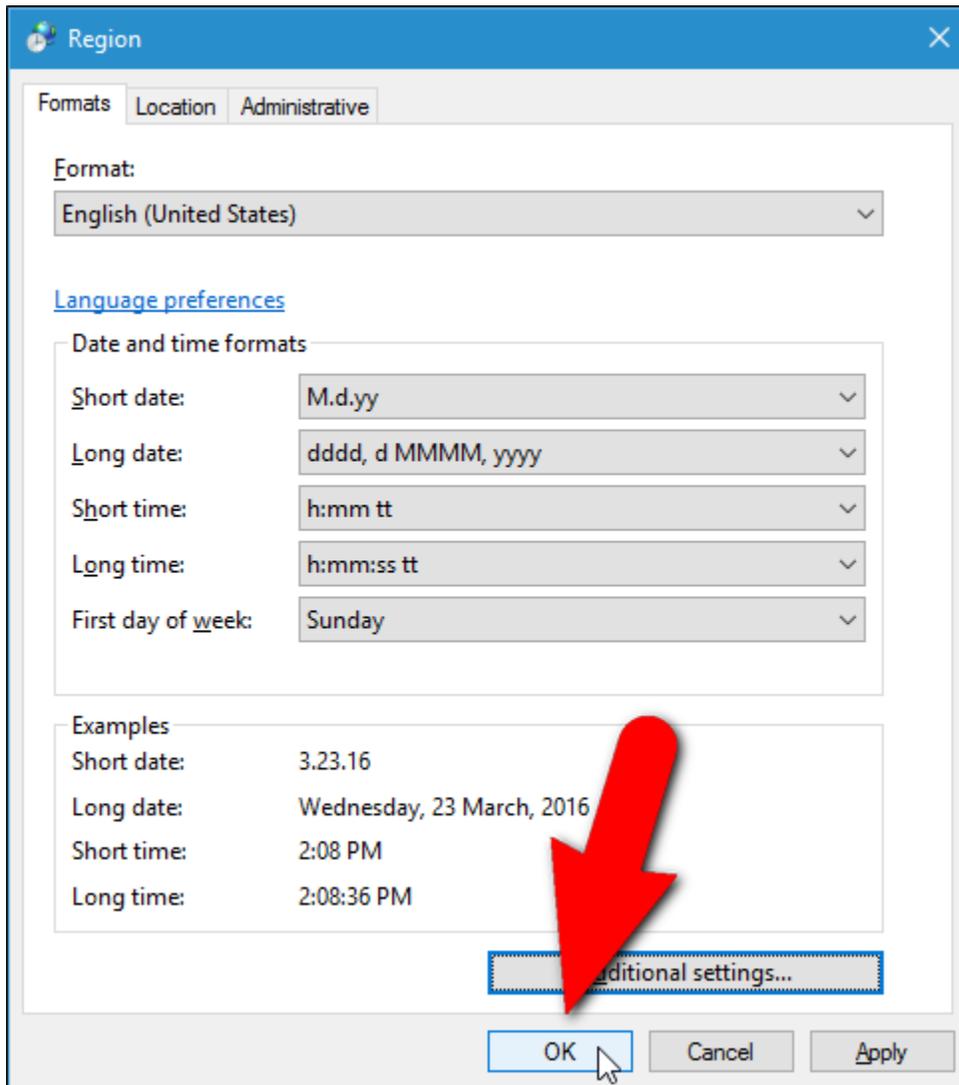
The custom date format you entered displays in the Short date box in the Example section. You can also enter a custom time format by clicking the "Time" tab.

Enter a custom time in the "Short time" box using the notation listed on the dialog box. Once you've set up your custom date and time, click "OK" on the Customize Format dialog box.

Click "OK" to close the Region dialog box. If the Control Panel and Settings windows are still open, click the "X" button in the upper-right corner of each window to close them.

Our custom date format with the periods now displays in the notification area of the Taskbar.

Note that when you change the date or time format back to a different format, after entering a custom format, the custom format is not preserved as a choice. You would have to enter it again to change to that custom format.

Lori Kaufman is a writer who likes to write geeky how-to articles to help make people's lives easier through the use of technology. She loves watching and reading mysteries and is an avid Doctor Who fan.
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