

# The Sims 2 Setup Guide

Install and optimize TS2 with essential fixes for modern Windows (10/11) or Linux.

The web installer has been DMCA'd by EA!

**This guide is DISCONTINUED.**

**Stop sending me share requests!**



by **osab** | [Discord - TS2 Community](#) | Not affiliated with EA

**New!**

**[Updated/easier to follow version of the guide at TS2.crd.co](https://TS2.crd.co)**

---

## Obtaining the Game:

### ~~The Sims 2 Starter Pack~~ ~~(GitHub)~~

osab's open-source installer/repack of "The Sims 2 Ultimate Collection" from Origin

Features:

- Automated all-in-one installer - doesn't require discs or EA App!
- Includes base game & all packs/updates, with essential fixes to optimize the game for modern systems
- Optional store/pre-order content and clean neighborhood templates

To install, [continue to the next section!](#)

### Alternatives:

#### Origin/EA App (Discontinued)

Ultimate Collection - free 2014-2018 release including the base game & all packs/updates

This version is not available for purchase! Any online listings are scams selling pirated copies or Origin accounts against EA's TOS.

After installing from Origin/EA App, skip to [Part 3](#) and beyond.

#### Discs/Retail

Takes more effort to set up, but still works fine on modern PCs with manual fixes. No longer being sold, only available secondhand.

Repacks of this version such as OldGamesDownload/Mr. DJ are not recommended and more prone to various issues.

To install from discs, complete [Shinki's guide](#).

#### Mac:

The [Super Collection](#) by Aspyr is still available on the App Store and works with both Intel & Apple Silicon Macs.

Macs can only run the PC version by installing Windows with a VM or BootCamp. VMWare 13 can run the game on ARM with [edited graphics rules](#), but is not recommended and has graphics issues Parallels doesn't have. Ex: [1](#) [2](#) [3](#). [Parallels tutorial video for M1+ by Natalie Tinker](#)

---

# Preparing for Installation:

## 1. Know the recommended specs for modern systems:

Since TS2 was made for 2004 hardware, just about any recent computer should be able to run it. However, performance will vary depending on your specs. We recommend:

- 2 GHz CPU or higher, at least 4-8GB of RAM, and 20 GB free space (~15 GB is the bare minimum to install, but you'll need more space for your neighborhoods and any custom content)
- GPU with DirectX 9 or Vulkan support
- Windows 10 or 11, or Linux using Steam/Lutris/etc.

[Original Requirements \(for base game/older hardware\)](#)

## 2. Update graphics drivers (Windows):

- Driver download links for each GPU manufacturer: [NVIDIA](#), [AMD](#), or [Intel](#)
- ★ Pre-installed drivers from Microsoft/Windows Update may cause issues. Make sure to use drivers directly from the manufacturer.

## 3. Install an archive manager (Windows)

- You'll need this to extract various kinds of files for the game, especially if you want CC/mods! I recommend [7-Zip](#).

## 4. Disable OneDrive Documents syncing (Windows):

- Having OneDrive backup the Documents can result in disk space errors, conflicts, save-file corruption, missing hoods, etc. as it tries to sync before and during gameplay. You don't have to get rid of OneDrive entirely, you can still use the main OneDrive folder - but at the very least the Documents folder itself should be local to your user folder/excluded to ensure the game's folder does not get synced.
-

# Part 1: Installing The Sims 2 Starter Pack

Choose your installer option:

## Web Installer (Recommended)

- All-in-one, automated download & install process via the Internet.
- Directly downloads the game files as well as dependencies & fixes you need to make the game work correctly from GitHub.

## Standalone Installer (Offline option)

- Offline installer script which installs pre-extracted Ultimate Collection game files and applies dependencies & fixes.
- **⚠ This version DOES NOT download the game.** You'll need to first obtain and extract the Ultimate Collection game files, such as the [Web Installer game files](#) or the older [Standalone Starter Pack](#). It can also install other Ultimate Collection copies (including [G4tW's repack](#)), or replace the registry keys of existing installations (including EA App installs). The Web Installer is recommended instead for beginners.

**Download your chosen installer from the latest release.**

Includes shortened instructions — Downloads under “Assets” at the bottom.

When the installer has completed, continue to [Part 2: Graphics Setup](#) to fix the game's graphics configuration for your system.

- ★ **If your installation is incomplete** due to a download error or missing packs, either run the installer again with a better Internet connection or download & extract the missing packs from [here](#). In situations without a stable connection to GitHub or

continued download errors, it may be better to use the standalone download+installer instead.

---

## Part 2: Graphics Setup

TS2 cannot detect modern graphics cards out of the box, resulting in errors, crashes, and graphical bugs:

Crashing or inability to launch the game (DX9 error), Forced low graphics settings/resolution, Incorrectly detected texture memory, "Pink flashing/soup" and more...

The fixes covered in this section address this, letting the game properly utilize your GPU.

### Graphics Rules Maker (GRM) Setup

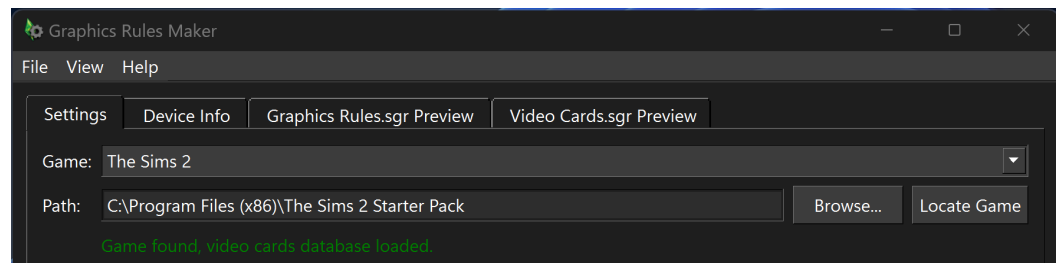
This tool is used to patch the game's Graphics Rules & Video Cards databases for your system.

GRM will be pre-installed to your Program Files if you used the Starter Pack.

If you don't have GRM or have an older version, download and install **version 2.3.0: 64-bit, 32-bit**




1. Run GRM **as Administrator**.
  - The GRM installer should run the program automatically once it's completed.
  - If your changes fail to write when you click "Save Files," make sure you're running as admin and have proper permissions on the game folder.
2. In the "**Game:**" dropdown box, select "**The Sims 2.**"
3. Set the folder path to "**C:\Program Files (x86)\The Sims 2 Starter Pack**" [or equivalent] as shown in the image below. It should then say in green that the game has been successfully located.

- If you don't have the Starter Pack, it'll usually be "EA GAMES\The Sims 2." If you chose a custom folder location, set it to that instead.



- If you get an error about missing graphics rules files or game application, you may have used Standalone instead of the Web Installer by accident.
4. Click the **"Auto-detect"** button to automatically input the correct texture memory and tweaks for your system.



- If you have integrated graphics such as Intel/AMD CPUs' onboard graphics, GRM may overestimate the texture memory to 4096. You may need to lower this to a value like 512 or 1024 to avoid crashing, as shared memory on integrated cards will count towards the game's 4GB memory limit.
  - Uncheck  **"Disable Sim shadows"** - we will be using either the Sim Shadow Fix or DXVK.
  - Check  **"Disable Dirty Rectangle optimizations."** Resolves cases of transparent flickering graphics and fixes the depth buffer for Reshade support.
5. Set both the **"Default Resolution"** and **"Max Resolution"** dropdowns to match your monitor (typically the largest resolution on the list).
-  The larger you make the resolution, the smaller the in-game UI will appear. You can resolve this by lowering it in-game or upscaling with tools such as Magpie, Borderless Gaming, or Lossless Scaling.
6. **Save your changes** by clicking **"Save files..."** at the bottom right.



- Click **"Yes"** if GRM asks you to add your graphics card(s) to the database.
  - If you get an error while saving files, make sure you've run the program as administrator and check that your game folder has sufficient permissions. Or, you can follow the prompts to move the files manually.
7. To apply these same fixes to **The Sims 2 Body Shop**, select it from the "Game" dropdown, then once again Auto-Detect, and save.
- 

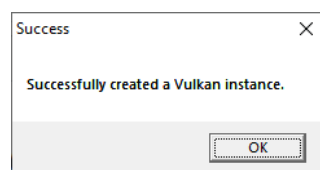
## DXVK - Optional/Experimental

Recommended for **modern AMD GPUs only [RX 400 (Polaris) series and later]** on Windows. Not recommended/experimental for others.

DXVK is an open-source .dll that translates Direct3D 9 to the more modern Vulkan API. On Windows, DXVK is only needed in certain cases where Graphics Rules Maker doesn't fully fix the graphics for the specific hardware. It isn't a "one-size-fits-all" solution, and is generally used as a last resort. In TS2, it masks your GPU as an "NVIDIA 7800 GTX," which makes the game recognize it as a supported GPU and unlocks the maximum graphics rules settings.

If your game works fine as-is without it, it's generally not recommended to add DXVK. However, it is recommended to enable it when using modern **AMD** graphics (RX 400 series and later), as it fixes loading issues with these cards which cause the game to take an extremely long time to start.

1. Firstly, check whether your system supports Vulkan. It will likely need to be relatively modern. If it doesn't, you cannot use DXVK and should continue to Part 4. Your GPU will need Vulkan 1.3 support, so even if it can create a basic instance, DXVK might not end up working.



← Simply run the .exe, the result should look like this!

2. [Download DXVK .tar.gz](#)
  - a. If you used the Web Installer and selected the DXVK option, it will already be installed. Skip to [dxvk.conf Setup](#) below.
3. Open DXVK-(latest).tar.gz with your chosen program, such as 7-zip.
4. From the [32-BIT \(x32\)](#) folder, extract "d3d9.dll" into "The Sims 2 Starter Pack\Fun With Pets\SP9\TSBin."
5. You must run the game in Borderless or Windowed mode with DXVK. You can do this with RPC (during Part 3).

## dxvk.conf Setup

By default, DXVK allocates 2 GB of texture memory in its emulation of d3d9. If you have enough GPU memory and want to allocate more than 2 GB, you can do so via a dxvk.conf file.

1. Open the folder "The Sims 2 Starter Pack\Fun with Pets\SP9\TSBin\"
  2. Create a new text document with a notepad software, and name it:  
dxvk.conf  
Make sure there is no ".txt" e.g. "dxvk.conf.txt", or it will be considered a text document.
  3. Windows may warn you about the file extension change, click OK.
  4. Open the "dxvk.conf" document in your notepad, and paste the following. Replace X with the amount of texture memory you set in Graphics Rules Maker:  
`d3d9.maxAvailableMemory=XXXX`
  5. A useful tweak that you can choose to add on another line:  
`d3d9.presentInterval=0` (improves performance.)
  6. Save and exit the document.
-

## Part 3: Sims2RPC & Post-Setup

**RPC NOTICE:** The Sims2RPC launcher has a false trojan flag in certain antivirus suites due to the way it injects code into TS2.

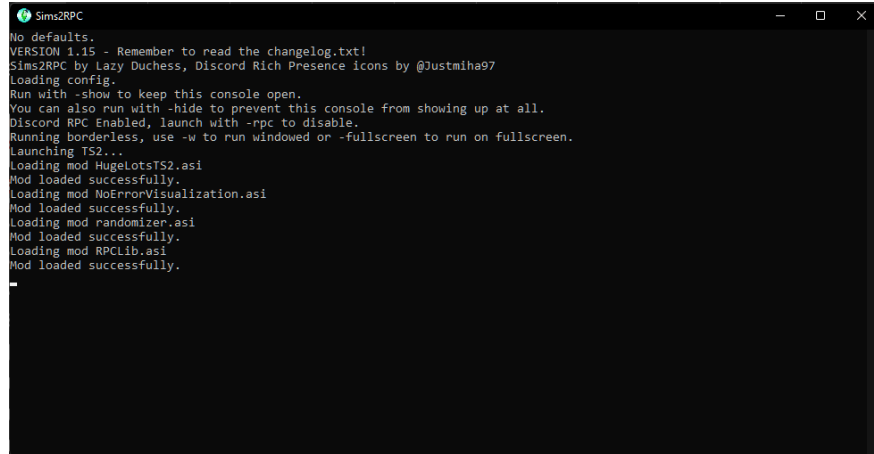
If when installing or launching the game, you find out your Sims2RPC files are mysteriously missing/quarantined, temporarily disable your antivirus (including Windows Defender) and create an exception for your Sims 2 folder, then reinstall Sims2RPC from [here](#).

The Starter Pack comes with [Sims2RPC](#)  by [Lazy Duchess](#) as both its no-CD patch and launcher. It **requires Mansion & Garden Stuff**.

- i Non-Starter-Pack users can install via auto installer or by manually extracting to \Fun with Pets\SP9\TSBin. If you don't want to use RPC, you can alternatively use ["George" \(a.k.a. no-CD version of Sims2EP9.exe\)](#) with the [4GB patch tool](#).

Sims2RPC provides:

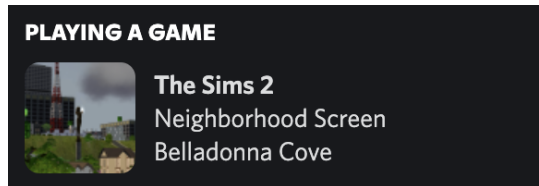
- Discord Rich Presence integration
  - No-CD crack for the game
  - "Firstborn syndrome" fix
  - Optional: 4GB patch, automatic cache clearing, graphics & camera improvements, and many more useful features.
1. To launch the game, use Sims2RPC.exe located in "The Sims 2 Starter Pack\Fun with Pets\SP9\TSBin." You will see RPC's terminal window pop up and start loading, then the game should launch.
    - If you choose to create shortcuts in the Web or Standalone Installers, a shortcut to RPC will be made on both the Desktop and the Start Menu so you can launch the game easily.

A screenshot of a Windows command prompt window titled "Sims2RPC". The window has standard Windows window controls (minimize, maximize, close) in the top right corner. The text inside the console is as follows:

```
No defaults.
VERSION 1.15 - Remember to read the changelog.txt!
Sims2RPC by Lazy Duchess, Discord Rich Presence icons by @Justmha97
Loading config.
Run with -show to keep this console open.
You can also run with -hide to prevent this console from showing up at all.
Discord RPC Enabled, launch with -rpc to disable.
Running borderless, use -w to run windowed or -fullscreen to run on fullscreen.
Launching TS2...
Loading mod HugeLotsTS2.asi
Mod loaded successfully.
Loading mod NoErrorVisualization.asi
Mod loaded successfully.
Loading mod Randomizer.asi
Mod loaded successfully.
Loading mod RPCLib.asi
Mod loaded successfully.
```

2. The first time you open Sims2RPC, be sure to run it as Administrator so it can set up properly. You should also run its settings app (Sims2RPCSettings.exe) and check for updates if it doesn't do so automatically.
3. Configure your RPC Settings:
  - Set the window mode:
    - i. Borderless: A modern fullscreen mode using a borderless window.
    - ii. Windowed: This mode runs the game as a window on the desktop. The in-game resolution setting affects the size of the game window.
      - This mode can be upscaled to borderless from a lower resolution using tools like [Magpie](#), giving the effect of a bigger UI without losing too much clarity.
    - iii. Fullscreen (**NOT recommended on modern Windows** & may cause issues): This mode fills the screen, even if lowering the screen resolution. It does not work with DXVK. It may cause the DirectX 9.0c error or have issues with alt-tabbing.
  - Check "Apply 4GB Patch" if you have 8GB or more of total RAM.
    - i. To check how much RAM you have, open Task Manager and choose "Memory" under the "Performance" tab.

- The rest of the options on the main page depend largely on personal preference, so set them however you like.
  - i. Enabling Discord Rich Presence will share your TS2 game status on Discord!



- ii. Examples:



4. **Do not** start the game with "Sims2EP9.exe," or you may get an Origin error. The included "Sims2EP9" exe is the original/not cracked.
  - If you need to bypass RPC, you can run "Sims2EP9RPC.exe" instead, which is always cracked.

The Sims 2 Body Shop is included in the "Fun with Pets\SP9\CSBin" folder.

## Game Directories

- **MODS**

- .package format mods go to "Documents\EA Games\The Sims 2 Ultimate Collection\Downloads" unless otherwise specified.
- The "mods" folder in TSBin is **not** for regular mods, it is for Sims2RPC and is only used for .asi injection mods.

- **Game Program Files (Root) Folder**

- Starter Pack: C:\Program Files (x86)\The Sims 2 Starter Pack, location can be customized
- Origin: C:\Program Files (x86)\Origin Games\The Sims 2 Ultimate Collection," newer installs may have "EA Games" instead of Origin Games

- Every pack has a TSData folder where its data is stored.

- **Root folder\Fun With Pets\SP9\**

- This folder contains CSBin and TSBin.
  - TSBin includes the game executable files used to run the game.
  - TSData contains the game files.
    - This is where you can find configuration files such as "Graphics Rules.sgr" in \Res\Config.
  - CSBin includes **The Sims 2 Body Shop**.

- **Documents (Save File) Folder:**

- The game must be started at least once to create its "save file" folder in Documents. You can find it at

**(user folder)\Documents\EA Games\The Sims 2 Ultimate Collection\.**

- In The Sims 2, the "saves" are the neighborhoods themselves, stored in the Neighborhoods folder. This is unlike in Sims 3 and 4, where saves are separate from worlds.

It also houses:

- Config\, where you can access things like your UserStartup.cheat file
- Logs\, where you can find device configuration logs and Exception logs to troubleshoot game errors. One of the most helpful logs for troubleshooting is your (device)-config-log.txt.
- Downloads\ (needs to be manually created if it doesn't already exist) where the majority of CC & mods go in .package format.
- And more!
- Some mods, such as lighting mods, may actually have to be installed within the game root folders, or with external tools.

Creators will include instructions if this is the case, so make sure to read before you download.

---

## CC/Mod Resources

 [How to Install Custom Content & Mods for The Sims 2](#) - Pleasant Sims

### Guides from other creators:

- [Ultimate Visual Guide by acottonsock](#) (modern graphics - reshade, mods, and more)
- [BellaDovah's \(massive\) mods & CC list](#); [BellaDovah](#) also has great videos about CC, tools, and even rotational gameplay!
- [Pleasant Sims' Recommended Mods list](#), as well as Cindy's videos on how to [organize](#) CC.

### Popular mod resources:

- [Tumblr - s2cc tag](#)
- [ModTheSims](#)
- [Sims 2 Default Database](#) - replacement clothing, hairs, etc
- [Sims 2 Hair Database](#) - database of hair meshes & retextures

### More game fixes and other helpful mods:

- [Clean UI Mod](#)
- [Cyjon's Sims 2 Mods 'n' Stuff](#)
- [simNopke's tumblr](#)

Lastly, you can join the [TS2 Community](#) Discord server to find & share downloads/resources!

[SimsCord](#) is also a great server!

---

# ReShade 6

ReShade is a popular post-processing injector that allows you to add new shaders to games. Using these steps, you can get ReShade to work with TS2.

## PRIOR SETUP:

Before using ReShade, we need to disable Dirty Rectangle optimizations in GRM to support effects that require depth buffer access.

To do this, open Graphics Rules Maker (as Admin) and make sure the "Disable Dirty Rectangle Optimizations" box is checked in addition to your prior settings. Then click "Save Files."

As of ReShade 6+, you no longer need to disable Smooth Edges/MSAA to support depth buffers. If using a prior version, you'll need to upgrade to 6+ or turn off smooth edges (set to "Less") in-game before you use ReShade.

After these steps, your depth buffer options in ReShade should work properly.

## INSTALLING RESHADE:

### Method 1 - Sims2RPC Injection

This method requires Sims2RPC and uses the DirectX version of ReShade. This method is not compatible with DXVK (d3d9.dll in TSBin) installed. If you already have DXVK, try the second method first.

1. Open the latest ReShade installer (with full add-on support) from <https://reshade.me>.
2. Click Browse and navigate to your Sims 2 Folder (usually in "C:\Program Files (x86)"), then to Fun with Pets > SP9 > TSBin. Choose "Sims2EP9RPC.exe" and click next.
3. Select "Microsoft DirectX 10/11/12" from the list of Graphics APIs. On the next page, you can press "skip" unless you already have a preset to use.





---

# Troubleshooting & FAQs

Our main resources for solutions to frequent issues are in the [#ts2-faq](#) channel (in the Discord) and on my GitHub.

[r/Sims2Help](#) also has a helpful [wiki](#) with troubleshooting sections.

Our help channels are available if you can't find an answer in the guide or the FAQs, as well as many other online resources. [TS2 Community has a support forum channel](#) (and help channels for other Sims games too).

If you need help troubleshooting, create a new post for your issue in [#ts2-help](#)!

