

dbt Minimal Project Structure

Simple dbt setup for small data teams. Flat model structure, basic tests, and minimal configuration overhead.

#dbt #sql #data #analytics #warehouse #elt

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Project Directory

dbt_project/

```
> models/ SQL transformat...
  | sources.yml Source definiti...
  | schema.yml Model docs & te...
  | customers.sql
  | orders.sql
  | revenue.sql
> seeds/ Static CSV data
  | country_codes.csv
> tests/ Custom data tes...
  | assert_positive_revenue.sql
> macros/ Reusable SQL/Ji...
  | cents_to_dollars.sql
> snapshots/ SCD Type 2
  | orders_snapshot.sql
dbt_project.yml Project config
profiles.yml Connection conf...
.gitignore
README.md
```

Why This Structure?

This flat structure works for small teams with <20 models. All models live in one folder with a single `schema.yml` for documentation and tests. Simple to navigate, minimal overhead. Upgrade to modular when you hit 20+ models.

Key Directories

models/ - SQL files that become views or tables in your warehouse
models/sources.yml - Declare raw tables from your warehouse
models/schema.yml - Column docs, tests, and model descriptions
macros/ - Reusable Jinja functions across models

Getting Started

1. `pip install dbt-postgres` (or dbt-snowflake, dbt-bigquery)
2. `dbt init my_project && cd my_project`
3. Configure `profiles.yml` with your warehouse credentials
4. `dbt debug` to test connection
5. `dbt run` to build models

Model Example

```
-- models/customers.sql
with source as (
  select * from {{ source('raw', 'customers') }}
),

renamed as (
  select
    id as customer_id,
    name as customer_name,
    created_at
  from source
)

select * from renamed
```

When To Use This

- Small teams with <20 models
- Single data source or simple pipelines
- Getting started with dbt
- Proof of concept or prototyping

When To Upgrade

- More than 20 models becoming hard to navigate
- Multiple developers stepping on each other
- Need clear staging vs. marts separation
- Complex dependencies across domains