

Linux Command Basics: Working with Files and Directories

This handout provides a series of foundational commands in Linux systems to help manage files and directories. This handout does not include a complete list of Linux commands; however, they serve as a foundation for students to provide them with a brief explanation of the use of base commands.

It is important to note that Linux systems have various distributions, or different versions, that use similar terminal commands. A brief explanation of the command format is included below, which is essential to bridge the gap between distributions and the structure of commands.

Linux commands can contain four parts, but commands do not have to contain each segment.

command [-flag(s)] [value]] [argument(s)]

- Command: The primary function, which tells the terminal what action to perform
- Flags: Modify the command by providing specific details or settings for the action
- Value: A guideline for the flag
- Arguments: The item the command operates on

The commands listed in the tables below provide examples that explain what certain commands and flags represent, or examples of the execution of these commands.

Navigating Directories

Command	Function / Description	Example
<code>cd</code>	Moves from one directory to another.	<code>cd / directory_name</code>
<code>cd ..</code>	Moves up one directory level	<code>cd ..</code>
<code>cd ~</code>	Goes to the home directory	<code>cd ~</code>
<code>ls</code>	List all the files and folders inside of the current working directory	<code>ls</code>
<code>ls -a</code>	Shows all files, including hidden ones	<code>ls -a</code>
<code>ls -l</code>	Shows detailed file information	<code>ls -l</code>
<code>pwd</code>	Print working directory returns the path of the directory the user is in	<code>pwd</code>

Creating Directories and Files

Command	Function / Description	Example
mkdir	Creates a directory	mkdir directory_name
rmdir	Deletes a directory	rmdir directory_name
touch	Creates an empty file	touch _file_name. extension
cp	Copies files and directories	cp _file_name. extension /file_path
mv	Moves files and directories	mv file_name. extension /file_path
rm	Removes files	rm name.extension
echo	Outputs the text onto the terminal	echo text

There are many Linux commands and variations of basic commands that complete different tasks. The **man** and **--help** commands provide a detailed explanation about each command.

Reference Commands

Command	Function / Description	Example
man	Opens manual pages for a command	man command
--help	Shows information for a command	command --help

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