

# ***First Steps on the Linux Command Line***

**Navigate directories and files**

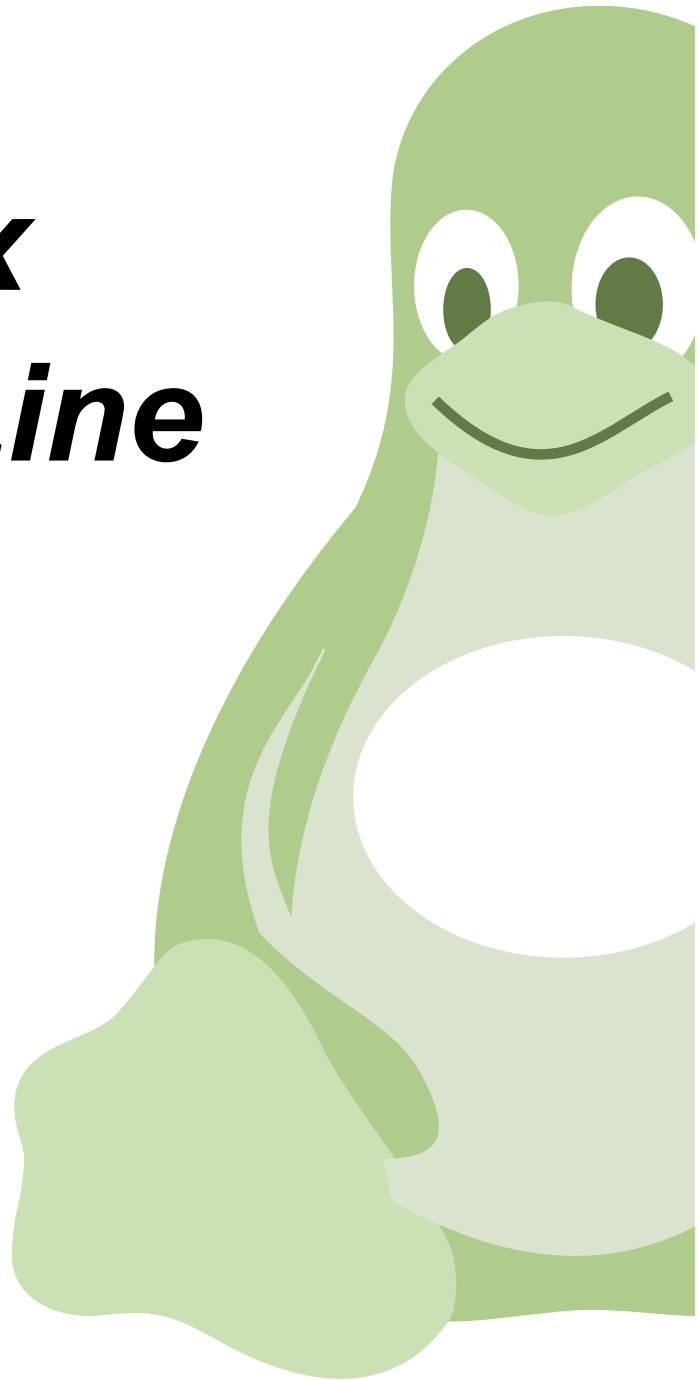
**Edit text files**

**Copy and remove files**

**Process text data**

**Unzip files**

**Run useful programs**



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# First steps on the Linux Command Line

## Summary

The goal of this tutorial is to teach basics of Unix using the command line. This tutorial is for you if you have no previous experience with Unix-like systems, or know a few commands but would like to know more.

## Requirements

Before starting, the .zip file with the exercise material must be copied to a Ubuntu computer, and unpacked in the home directory of the user doing the exercises. The trainees need to know how to open the console, and each of them should get a hardcopy of this tutorial and of the 'Unix/Linux Command Reference' document.

**Disclaimer:** This tutorial was prepared for Ubuntu Linux. It might work on other Linuxes as well, but I haven't tested that.

## Task

In this tutorial, you will be looking for a word with 22 characters. All characters are hidden in the exercises below. All exercises can be solved using the Unix command line.

### Solution:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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# First Steps on the Linux Command Line

## 1. Directories and files

### 1.1. Navigating directories

The first character is hidden in a file somewhere in the 'exercise1' directory. Use the commands

```
cd <directory_name>
```

(do not type the pointy brackets, just insert the directory name) and

```
ls
```

to move to the directory with the name 'solution\_1.1' and list its contents. If you went to a wrong directory, you can always type 'cd ..' to go back one level, or 'cd' to go back to the beginning.

### 1.2. Show a hidden file

Some files are not visible immediately. To see them, you need the 'ls -a' command. The second character is hidden in the same directory as the first.

### 1.3. Execute a program

Go back to the directory 'exercise\_1/directoryB/'. When listing its contents, you should see a program. To find the next character, you need to execute the program. In Unix, this is done by typing

```
./program_name
```

### 1.4. Find out how big a file is

Go to the 'exercise\_1/directoryC/' catalog. To find the fourth character, you need to find out how big the text file in the directory is. This is done with the command

```
ls -l
```

In the table the command produces, you will find the file size in bytes, the file's owner, permissions to read and modify it, and the date/time of the last modification. When you want to obtain the fourth character, type './file\_size\_check' - the program will ask you for a file size.

**HINT:** When typing names of directories or files, try typing the first three characters, and press <TAB>. Unix tries to guess what you are typing.

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### 2. Edit text files

Please go back to the top directory of the tutorial material. Then, change to the directory 'exercise\_2'.

#### 2.1. See what is in a text file

In the directory 'exercise\_2/', you will find a text file 'solution\_2.1.txt'. The fifth character is inside that file. To see its contents, use the command

```
more <filename>
```

#### 2.2. Edit text files

To get character number six, you will need to create a text file in the 'exercise\_2' directory. On Ubuntu, you can do this using one of the editors 'nano' or 'gedit'. You can start both by typing the name of the program, or

```
nano <filename>
```

or

```
gedit <filename>
```

To save a file in 'nano', press 'Ctrl+o', to quit 'Ctrl+x'.

Create a file with a name by your choice in the 'exercise\_2' directory that contains the phrase 'Please give me solution 2.2'. Afterwards, run the program './text\_file\_check'.

**Hint:** If you want to know more about a particular command, type 'man <command>'. You get shown a help page that you can leave by pressing 'q'.

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### 3. Copy and remove files

Please go to the directory 'exercise\_3'.

#### 3.1. Create a directory and copy a file to it.

To find the next two characters, you need to create a subdirectory named 'solution' in 'exercise\_3' and copy the file 'codes.txt' to it. For creating directories, the command

```
mkdir <directory name>
```

can be used. For copying, you can use the command

```
cp <filename from> <filename to>
```

Use 'ls solution/' afterwards to see if the file is there. The program './check\_code' will give you the solution.

#### 3.2. Removing files

In the same directory, there is a file 'junk.txt' that does not contain anything useful, and should be deleted. To do so, use the

```
rm <filename>
```

command. Also, there are more files to be deleted in the 'data' directory. To remove more than one file at once, you can use '\*' as a wildcard, i.e. 'rm prot\*' will delete all of 'profile', 'protein.txt', 'prototype.doc'. To get characters number nine and ten, please run the program './check\_junk' after removing the files.

**WARNING: On Unix, it is not possible to undelete files!**

**HINT:** To remove an empty directory, you can use 'rmdir <directory name>'. To use a full directory and everything in it, the command 'rm -r <directory name>' exists. In combination with the '\*' symbol, this is dangerous, because it gives you the possibility to wipe out all your data with a single command (e.g. if you type the wrong directory by accident). Thus, first make a backup and then play with this command.

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### 4. Process text data

Please go to the directory 'exercise\_4'.

#### 4.1. comparing two files

There are two different versions of a text, 'foo\_long.txt', and 'foo\_short.txt'. To find out, how they differ, Unix provides the command

```
diff <filename1> <filename2>
```

Of course, you can look at the text first using 'more' or a text editor. The 11<sup>th</sup> character of the solution is the first character of the third last word in the output of 'diff'.

#### 4.2. Sorting a text file

Unix has a small program to sort text files alphabetically. It is called by

```
more <filename> | sort
```

The '|' is called a *pipe* and is often used to connect Unix programs to each other. The 12<sup>th</sup> character of the solution is the first character of the last word of the first line from the alphabetically sorted file '10000\_lines.txt'.

**Hint:** To store the sorted lines in a new file, you can add an output file, like 'more <filename> | sort > result.txt'.

#### 4.3. Finding words in a text file

To look for specific words in a text file, the

```
grep <word> <filename>
```

command should be used. It produces all lines from the given file that contain the given word. It is very powerful and can handle search patterns etc. (not covered here). The 13<sup>th</sup> character of the solution is the first character of the second word in a line containing 'fool'.

**Hint:** You can search through many files at once by including a '\*' in the filename.

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### 5. Unzip files

Please go to the directory 'exercise\_5'.

#### 5.1. unzipping archives

Unzipping compressed files is a very basic and important task. On Unix, you often encounter WinZip archives, .tar archives, and .gz compressed files. For unpacking Win zip files, use

```
unzip <filename>
```

for .tar and .tar.gz files

```
tar -xf <filename>
```

and for .gz files,

```
gunzip <filename>
```

The 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> character of the solution are in a multiply wrapped archive in the 'exercise\_5' directory.

**Hint:** To wrap up a directory and everything within, you can use the command 'tar -cf backup.tar <directory>'. To subsequently compress it, use 'gzip backup.tar'.

### 6. Run useful programs

Please go to the directory 'exercise\_6'.

#### 6.1. Changing file access rights

Each file on Unix has separate permissions for reading 'r', writing 'w', and executing 'x'. When displaying them with 'ls -l', there is one triplet of these permissions for the file's owner, one for a group of users, and one for all others. The 'chmod' command allows to change these permissions, e.g.

```
chmod a+x <filename>
```

grants all users the permission to execute a file, while u-w forbids the current user (oneself) to write to the file (thereby protecting it from being deleted accidentally). The next two characters of the solution will be shown when you execute the './check\_permissions' program.

**Hint:** You can grant permissions for a whole directory tree using 'chmod -R a+x <directory>'.

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### 6.2. How much disk space have I left?

To find out, how much disk space you have left, you can use the

**df**

command. It lists all hard disk partitions, CD-ROMs, pendrives etc. Your data is stored in '/home/', if it does not exist, in '/'. All numbers are given in kilobyte (1000 byte or one 1000000th GB).

To obtain the 18th character, run the './check\_disk' program.

### 6.3. Set an environment variable

To install some programs, it is necessary to set so-called *environment variables*. These can be set using the command

**export <variable-name>=<value>**

but the variable will only be present in the same console window where you typed the command. You can see all variables by the

**env**

command.

To obtain the 19th character, you need to set the variable 'SOLUTION' to '6.3', and run the program './check\_variable'.

**Hint:** If you want to have an environment variable to be automatically set for each console window, write the export command to the file '.bashrc' in your home directory (this is a hidden file).

**Hint:** The 'env' command can be combined nicely with 'grep', e.g. to check your PATH variable, you can type: 'env | grep PATH'.



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### 6.4. Check whether you have internet

The easiest way to check from the Unix command line whether the internet connection works, is to send a request to a known server (e.g. `www.google.com`) using the command

```
ping <web address>
```

The command reports, how long a message takes back and forth to the given server. To interrupt the messages, press `'Ctrl+C'`. You can use the program `'./check_ping'` to get the third last character.

### 6.5. Managing processes

To see what programs are running on your machine, type

```
top
```

It displays you a list of all currently active programs. `'Shift+P'` sorts them by the CPU time they are using, `'Shift+M'` by the amount of memory they are using (if you don't see any program consuming lots of memory, start a web browser).

The last two characters of the solution are the first two characters of the second word in the highlighted bar containing the column labels.

**Hint:** If you want to get rid of one of the programs you started (e.g. because it crashed), you can do so by typing `'kill <pid>'`. You find the pid number in the first column of the `'top'` output. Of course, you may only interrupt your own programs, not those owned by `'root'`, the system admin.

## ***Acknowledgements***

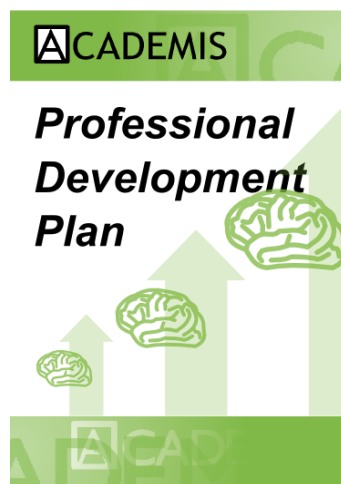
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