

NAME

m4 – macro processor

SYNOPSIS

m4 [*OPTION*]... [*FILE*]...

DESCRIPTION

Process macros in FILEs. If no FILE or if FILE is ‘–’, standard input is read.

Mandatory or optional arguments to long options are mandatory or optional for short options too.

Operation modes:

- help** display this help and exit
- version**
output version information and exit
- E, --fatal-warnings**
once: warnings become errors, twice: stop execution at first error
- i, --interactive**
unbuffer output, ignore interrupts
- P, --prefix-builtins**
force a ‘m4_’ prefix to all builtins
- Q, --quiet, --silent**
suppress some warnings for builtins
- warn-macro-sequence[=REGEXP]**
warn if macro definition matches REGEXP,
default `\${([^\}]*)}\[0-9][0-9]+\)`
- W, --word-regexp=REGEXP**
use REGEXP for macro name syntax

Preprocessor features:

- D, --define=NAME[=VALUE]**
define NAME as having VALUE, or empty
- I, --include=DIRECTORY**
append DIRECTORY to include path
- s, --synclines**
generate ‘#line NUM "FILE"’ lines
- U, --undefine=NAME**
undefine NAME

Limits control:

- g, --gnu**
override **-G** to re-enable GNU extensions
- G, --traditional**
suppress all GNU extensions
- H, --hashsize=PRIME**
set symbol lookup hash table size [509]
- L, --nesting-limit=NUMBER**
change nesting limit, 0 for unlimited [0]

Frozen state files:

- F, --freeze-state=FILE**
produce a frozen state on FILE at end

-R, --reload-state=FILE
 reload a frozen state from FILE at start

Debugging:

-d, --debug[=FLAGS]
 set debug level (no FLAGS implies ‘aeq’)

--debugfile[=FILE]
 redirect debug and trace output to FILE (default stderr, discard if empty string)

-l, --arglength=NUM
 restrict macro tracing size

-t, --trace=NAME
 trace NAME when it is defined

FLAGS is any of:

a show actual arguments

c show before collect, after collect and after call

e show expansion

f say current input file name

i show changes in input files

l say current input line number

p show results of path searches

q quote values as necessary, with a or e flag

t trace for all macro calls, not only traceon’ed

x add a unique macro call id, useful with c flag

V shorthand for all of the above flags

If defined, the environment variable ‘M4PATH’ is a colon-separated list of directories included after any specified by ‘-I’.

Exit status is 0 for success, 1 for failure, 63 for frozen file version mismatch, or whatever value was passed to the m4exit macro.

AUTHOR

Written by Rene’ Seindal.

REPORTING BUGS

Report bugs to: bug-m4@gnu.org
 GNU M4 home page: <http://www.gnu.org/software/m4/>
 General help using GNU software: <http://www.gnu.org/gethelp/>

COPYRIGHT

Copyright © 2016 Free Software Foundation, Inc. License GPLv3+: GNU GPL version 3 or later
[<http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>](http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html).
 This is free software: you are free to change and redistribute it. There is NO WARRANTY, to the extent permitted by law.

SEE ALSO

The full documentation for **m4** is maintained as a Texinfo manual. If the **info** and **m4** programs are properly installed at your site, the command

info m4

should give you access to the complete manual.