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Examining the Linux / FreeBSD / UNIX filesystem with ls command

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Q. I'm new to Linux and how do I examine filesystem and identify regular files or directories?

A. Both Linux and UNIX comes with ls command for examining the filesystem. You can use ls command to look at the filesystem. ls command can display:

- => Character devices
- => Regular files
- => Sym links (symbolic links)
- => Directories
- => Pipes
- => Sockets
- => Block devices

[1]

ls command examples

Display /etc directory files, enter:

```
$ ls /etc
```

When invoked without any arguments, ls lists the files in the current working directory:

```
$ ls
```

Use -l (long option) to lists filenames, sizes, permissions, type and all other information:

```
$ ls -l /etc/passwd
```

Output:

```
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 2453 Jul 17 16:25 /etc/passwd
```

See [Linux / UNIX file permissions for more information](#) [2]

Directory

A directory is marked with a **d** as the first letter of the permissions field:

```
ls -ld /etc
```

Output:

```
drwxr-xr-x 88 root root 12288 Aug 5 23:46 /etc
```

Symbolic link

A symbolic link is marked with an **l** (lower case L) as the first letter of the permissions string:

```
ls -l /bin/nisdomainname
```

Output:

```
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 8 Jul 10 08:50 /bin/nisdomainname -> hostname
```

Similarly,

- A named pipe is marked with a **p** as the first letter of the permissions string.
- A socket is marked with a **s** as the first letter of the permissions string.
- A character device is marked with a **c** as the first letter of the permissions strings. (ls -l /dev/console)
- A block device is marked with a **b** (ls -l /dev/sdb1).

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