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## Shell Script To Number Lines Of Files

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**Q.** How do I number each line of a text file? How do I write a shell script to display text file with line numbers added?

**A.** You don't have to write a shell script to add numbers to text file or code sample. You can use nl command which write each FILE to screen with line numbers added.



[1]

## nl command example

Type the command as follows:

```
$ nl /etc/passwd
```

Sample output:

```
1 root:x:0:0:root:/root:/bin/bash
2 daemon:x:1:1:daemon:/usr/sbin:/bin/sh
3 bin:x:2:2:bin:/bin:/bin/sh
4 sys:x:3:3:sys:/dev:/bin/sh
5 sync:x:4:65534:sync:/bin:/bin/sync
6 games:x:5:60:games:/usr/games:/bin/sh
7 man:x:6:12:man:/var/cache/man:/bin/sh
8 lp:x:7:7:lp:/var/spool/lpd:/bin/sh
9 mail:x:8:8:mail:/var/mail:/bin/sh
10 news:x:9:9:news:/var/spool/news:/bin/sh
.....
...
40 quagga:x:119:126:Quagga routing suite,,,:/var/run/quagga:/bin/false
41 oracle:x:1004:1004::/usr/lib/oracle/xe:/bin/bash
42 telnetd:x:112:120::/nonexistent:/bin/false
```

nl command has few more options:

```
$ nl --help
```

Output:

```
Usage: nl [OPTION]... [FILE]...
Write each FILE to standard output, with line numbers added.
With no FILE, or when FILE is -, read standard input.

Mandatory arguments to long options are mandatory for short options too.
-b, --body-numbering=STYLE      use STYLE for numbering body lines
-d, --section-delimiter=CC      use CC for separating logical pages
-f, --footer-numbering=STYLE     use STYLE for numbering footer lines
-h, --header-numbering=STYLE     use STYLE for numbering header lines
-i, --page-increment=NUMBER      line number increment at each line
-l, --join-blank-lines=NUMBER    group of NUMBER empty lines counted as one
-n, --number-format=FORMAT       insert line numbers according to FORMAT
-p, --no-renumber               do not reset line numbers at logical pages
-s, --number-separator=STRING    add STRING after (possible) line number
-v, --first-page=NUMBER          first line number on each logical page
-w, --number-width=NUMBER        use NUMBER columns for line numbers
--help                          display this help and exit
--version                        output version information and exit
```

By default, selects -v1 -i1 -l1 -sTAB -w6 -nrn -hn -bt -fn. CC are

two delimiter characters for separating logical pages, a missing second character implies :. Type \\ for \. STYLE is one of:

a	number all lines
t	number only nonempty lines
n	number no lines
pBRE	number only lines that contain a match for the basic regular expression, BRE

FORMAT is one of:

ln	left justified, no leading zeros
rn	right justified, no leading zeros
rz	right justified, leading zeros

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