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Howto: Linux Add User To Group

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Q. How can I add a user to a group under Linux operating system?

A. You can use `useradd` or `usermod` commands to add a user to a group. `useradd` command creates a new user or update default new user information. `usermod` command modifies a user account i.e. it is useful to add user to existing group. There are two types of group. First is primary user group and other is secondary group. All user account related information is stored in [/etc/passwd](#) ^[2], [/etc/shadow](#) ^[3] and [/etc/group](#) ^[2] files to store user information.

useradd example - Add a new user to secondary group

Use `useradd` command to add new users to existing group (or create a new group and then add user). If group does not exist, create it. Syntax:

```
useradd -G {group-name} username
```

Create a new user called `vivek` and add it to group called `developers`. First login as a root user (make sure group `developers` exists), enter:

```
# grep developers /etc/group
```

Output:

```
developers:x:1124:
```

If you do not see any output then you need to add group `developers` using `groupadd` command:

```
# groupadd developers
```

Next, add a user called `vivek` to group `developers`:

```
# useradd -G developers vivek
```

Setup password for user `vivek`:

```
# passwd vivek
```

Ensure that user added properly to group `developers`:

```
# id vivek
```

Output:

```
uid=1122(vivek) gid=1125(vivek) groups=1125(vivek),1124(developers)
```

Please note that capital G (-G) option add user to a list of supplementary groups. Each group is separated from the next by a comma, with no intervening whitespace. For example, add user `jerry` to groups `admins`, `ftp`, `www`, and `developers`, enter:

```
# useradd -G admins,ftp,www,developers jerry
```

useradd example - Add a new user to primary group

To add a user `tony` to group `developers` use following command:

```
# useradd -g developers tony
```

```
# id tony
```

```
uid=1123(tony) gid=1124(developers) groups=1124(developers)
```

Please note that small -g option add user to initial login group (primary group). The group name must exist. A group number must refer to an already existing group.

usermod example - Add a existing user to existing group

Add existing user tony to ftp supplementary/secondary group with usermod command using -a option ~ i.e. add the user to the supplemental group(s). Use only with -G option :

```
# usermod -a -G ftp tony
```

Change existing user tony primary group to www:

```
# usermod -g www tony
```

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[3] /etc/shadow: <http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/understanding-etcshadow-file/>