

Table Of Contents

Table Of Contents ..... 1

Relative pathname example ..... 2

.. directory name ..... 2

Home-relative pathname with tilde (~) ..... 2

[Home](#) > [Faq](#) > [AIX](#)

## Understanding Linux / UNIX Relative Pathname

Posted by [Vivek Gite](#) <[vivek@nixcraft.com](mailto:vivek@nixcraft.com)>

# UNIX

[1]

**Q.** Can you explain the term relative pathname under UNIX or Linux oses?

**A.** The relative pathnames are opposite to [absolute pathname](#) <sup>[2]</sup>. A relative pathname does not begin with a slash (/). Generally you specify location relative to your current working directory. This is most useful to shorten a path name. For example, if your current working directory is /home/tom and if you would like to change directory to /home/tom/docs/bio, you can enter the command `cd docs/bio` instead of `cd /home/tom/docs/bio`.

So you can use a relative path name as a shortcut to the location of files and directories.

## Relative pathname example

To refer to a file in a subdirectory of the current working directory, use the name of the subdirectory followed by a slash (/) and the name of the file. For example, to display a file called `foo.txt` in a subdirectory called `bar` that is located in the current directory `/home/tom`, enter:

```
$ pwd
```

Output:

```
/home/tom
```

Now, enter the command:

```
$ cat bar/foo.txt
```

## .. directory name

To refer to a file in the parent directory of the current directory, use `../` followed by the name of the file. For example, if you are in `/home/tom/bar` and would like to display `/home/tom/file.txt`, use the pathname `../file.txt`:

```
$ pwd
```

Output:

```
/home/tom/bar
```

Now, enter the command:

```
$ cat ../file.txt
```

## Home-relative pathname with tilde (~)

The tilde character (~) can be used to refer to your home directory. For example, the pathname `~/file.txt` refers to a file named `file.txt` in your home directory `/home/tom/file.txt`.

```
$ pwd
```

Output:

```
/tmp
```

Now, enter the command:

```
$ cat ~/file.txt
```

4000+ howtos and counting! Want to read more Linux / UNIX howtos, tips and tricks? Subscribe to our [daily email](#) newsletter or [weekly newsletter](#) to make sure you don't miss a single tip/tricks. Alternatively, subscribe via [RSS/XML](#) feed.

Article printed from Frequently Asked Questions About Linux / UNIX: <http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/>

URL to article: <http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/relative-pathname/>

URLs in this post:

[1] Image: <http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/faq/category/unix/>

[2] absolute pathname: <http://www.cyberciti.biz/faq/understanding-absolute-pathnames/>

---

Copyright © 2006-2010 [nixCraft](#). All rights reserved. This print / pdf version is for personal non-commercial use only. More details <http://www.cyberciti.biz/tips/copyright>.