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Removing Files

The `rm` command is used to delete files and directories. It is important to keep in mind that deleted files and directories do not go into a "trash can" as with desktop-oriented operating systems. When a file is deleted with the `rm` command, it is almost always permanently gone.

`rm [OPTIONS] FILE`

Follow Along

Use the following command to switch to the `Documents` directory:

```
sysadmin@localhost:~$ cd ~/Documents
```

Without any options, the `rm` command is typically used to remove regular files:

```
sysadmin@localhost:~/Documents$ rm linux.txt
sysadmin@localhost:~/Documents$ ls linux.txt
ls: cannot access linux.txt: No such file or directory
```

The `rm` command will ignore directories that it's asked to remove; to delete a directory, use a recursive option, either the `-r` or `-R` options. Just be careful since these options are "recursive", this will delete all files and all subdirectories:

```
sysadmin@localhost:~/Documents$ rm Work
rm: cannot remove 'Work': Is a directory
sysadmin@localhost:~/Documents$ rm -r Work
sysadmin@localhost:~/Documents$ ls Work
ls: cannot access Work: No such file or directory
```

Warning

The `rm` command removes files permanently. To repeat the examples above, reset the terminal using the reset button.

Consider This

Permissions can have an impact on file management commands, such as the `rm` command.

To delete a file within a directory, a user must have write and execute permission on a directory. Regular users typically only have this type of permission in their home directory and its subdirectories.