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Viewing Compressed Files

When working with compressed files, many standard commands cannot be used directly. For many commonly-used file and text manipulation programs, there is also a version especially designed to work directly with compressed files. These associated utilities have the letter "**z**" prefixed to their name. For example, we have utility programs such as **zcat**, **zless**, **zdiff** and **zgrep**.

Here is a table listing some **z** family commands:

Command	Description
$ zcat compressed-file.txt.gz	To view a compressed file
$ zless somefile.gz or $ zmore somefile.gz	To page through a compressed file
$ zgrep -i less somefile.gz	To search inside a compressed file
$ zdiff file1.txt.gz file2.txt.gz	To compare two compressed files

Note that if you run **zless** on an uncompressed file, it will still work and ignore the decompression stage. There are also equivalent utility programs for other compression methods besides **gzip.**

For example, we have **bzcat** and **bzless** associated with **bzip2**, and **xzcat** and **xzless** associated with **xz**.

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