Customizing the Command Line Prompt

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The default command line prompt is **$** for normal users and **#** for the root or superuser.

Customizing the command line prompt is as simple as modifying the value of the environment variable PS1. For example, to set it to display the hostname, user and current directory:

```
1
2
$ PS1="\h:\u:\w>"
c7:coop:/tmp>
```

Besides the aesthetic value of having a prettier prompt than the default value, embedding more information in the prompt can be quite useful. In the example given we have shown:

- The machine name - this is useful if you run command line windows on remote machines from your desktop; you can always tell where you are, and this can avoid many errors.

- The user name - this is particularly important if you are running as a superuser (root) and can help you avoid errors where you take what you think is a benign action and wind up crippling your system.

- The current directory - it is always important to know where you are. You certainly do not want to do something like **rm *** in the wrong directory.

Here is a table with some of the possible special characters that can be embedded in the PS1 string:

Character	Meaning	Example Output
\t	Time in HH:MM:SS	08:43:40
\d	Date in "Weekday Month Date"	Fri Mar 12
\n	Newline	

Character	Meaning	Example Output
\s	Shell name	bash
\w	Current working directory	/usr/local/bin
\W	Basename of current working directory	bin
\u	User	coop
\h	Hostname	c7
\#	Command number (this session)	43
\!	History number (in history file)	1057

Note you can embed any other string you like in the prompt.