



## Item Navigation

# strings

**strings** is used to extract all printable character strings found in the file or files given as arguments. It is useful in locating human-readable content embedded in binary files; for text files, you can just use **grep**.

For example, to search for the string **my\_string** in a spreadsheet:

```
1 $ strings book1.xls | grep my_string
```

The screenshot below shows a search of a number of programs to see which ones have GPL licenses of various versions.

```
c8:/tmp>strings --print-file-name /usr/bin/a* | grep GPL
/usr/bin/aclocal: License GPLv2+: GNU GPL version 2 or later <https://gnu.org/licenses/gpl-2.0.html>
/usr/bin/aclocal-1.16: License GPLv2+: GNU GPL version 2 or later <https://gnu.org/licenses/gpl-2.0.html>
/usr/bin/arch: License GPLv3+: GNU GPL version 3 or later <https://gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>.
/usr/bin/asciidoc: under the terms of the GNU General Public License (GPL).
/usr/bin/asciidoc.py: under the terms of the GNU General Public License (GPL).
/usr/bin/autoconf: License GPLv3+/Autoconf: GNU GPL version 3 or later
/usr/bin/autoheader: License GPLv3+/Autoconf: GNU GPL version 3 or later
/usr/bin/autom4te: License GPLv3+/Autoconf: GNU GPL version 3 or later
/usr/bin/automake: License GPLv2+: GNU GPL version 2 or later <https://gnu.org/licenses/gpl-2.0.html>
/usr/bin/automake-1.16: License GPLv2+: GNU GPL version 2 or later <https://gnu.org/licenses/gpl-2.0.html>
/usr/bin/autopoint: License GPLv3+: GNU GPL version 3 or later <http://gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>
/usr/bin/autoreconf: License GPLv3+/Autoconf: GNU GPL version 3 or later
/usr/bin/autoscan: License GPLv3+/Autoconf: GNU GPL version 3 or later
/usr/bin/autoupdate: License GPLv3+/Autoconf: GNU GPL version 3 or later
/usr/bin/awk: plugin_is_GPL_compatible
/usr/bin/awk: load_ext: library `s': does not define `plugin_is_GPL_compatible' (%s)
c8:/tmp>
```

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