**Mac Commands**

**Basic Utilities**

Here is a list of basic utilities that you will use on a regular basis. Anything in capital letters that starts with a dollar sign, like $THIS, is an argument to the utility. You should replace $THIS with the actual argument you want to give the computer.

man $UTIL

**man**ual. Get information for how to use any utility. Replace $UTIL with any utility, like ls, cd, or even man! Press the up and down arrows to scroll through the documentation. Press Q to quit and go back to the command line.

ls $DIR

**l**i**s**t. Lists the contents of the directory $DIR. If no directory is specified, lists the contents of the current working directory. Use the -l flag to get more information.

cd $DIR

**c**hange **d**irectory. Changes the current working directory to the directory $DIR. In effect, moves you around the computer.

pwd

**p**rint **w**orking **d**irectory. If you ever get lost in the computer, run this command to get a trail of breadcrumbs all the way down from the top level of the computer to see where you are.

less $FILE

Displays the contents of a file. Press the up and down arrows to scroll though the file. Press Q to quit and go back to the command line.

cp $FILE $LOCATION

**c**o**p**y. Copies the $FILE to the $LOCATION.

mv $FILE $LOCATION

**m**o**v**e. Moves the $FILE to the $LOCATION.

rm $FILE

**r**e**m**ove. Deletes a file **permanently**: there is no way to get it back. [Be careful when using this command!](https://www.davidbaumgold.com/tutorials/command-line/#warnings)

sudo $CMD

**s**uper **u**ser **do**. When you use this utility, you use an entire command as a single argument: for example, sudo ls -l ~/Desktop. sudo asks for your user account password. As a security measure, the screen does not display anything as you type, not even asterisks (\*). If the password is typed in correctly, sudo executes the $CMD with elevated permissions. [Be careful when using this command!](https://www.davidbaumgold.com/tutorials/command-line/#warnings)

A note about using sudo: The computer has a few built-in safety restraints to prevent normal users from doing bad things, like deleting critical files. The super user has no such restraints. Note that the super user is not necessarily bad: you must use sudo to install programs and do anything else that affects how your computer runs.