

## NAME

**perror** – print a system error message

## SYNOPSIS

```
#include <stdio.h>
```

```
void perror(const char *s);
```

```
#include <errno.h>
```

```
const char * const sys_errlist[];
```

```
int sys_nerr;
```

```
int errno; /* Not really declared this way; see errno(3). */
```

Feature Test Macro Requirements for glibc (see **feature\_test\_macros(7)**):

```
sys_errlist, sys_nerr: _BSD_SOURCE
```

## DESCRIPTION

The routine **perror()** produces a message on the standard error output, describing the last error encountered during a call to a system or library function. First (if *s* is not NULL and *\*s* is not a null byte ('\0')) the argument string *s* is printed, followed by a colon and a blank. Then the message and a new-line.

To be of most use, the argument string should include the name of the function that incurred the error. The error number is taken from the external variable *errno*, which is set when errors occur but not cleared when successful calls are made.

The global error list *sys\_errlist[]* indexed by *errno* can be used to obtain the error message without the newline. The largest message number provided in the table is *sys\_nerr*–1. Be careful when directly accessing this list because new error values may not have been added to *sys\_errlist[]*. The use of *sys\_errlist[]* is nowadays deprecated.

When a system call fails, it usually returns –1 and sets the variable *errno* to a value describing what went wrong. (These values can be found in *<errno.h>*.) Many library functions do likewise. The function **perror()** serves to translate this error code into human-readable form. Note that *errno* is undefined after a successful library call: this call may well change this variable, even though it succeeds, for example because it internally used some other library function that failed. Thus, if a failing call is not immediately followed by a call to **perror()**, the value of *errno* should be saved.

## CONFORMING TO

The function **perror()** and the external *errno* (see **errno(3)**) conform to C89, C99, 4.3BSD, POSIX.1-2001. The externals *sys\_nerr* and *sys\_errlist* conform to BSD.

## NOTES

The externals *sys\_nerr* and *sys\_errlist* are defined by glibc, but in *<stdio.h>*.

## SEE ALSO

**err(3)**, **errno(3)**, **error(3)**, **strerror(3)**

## COLOPHON

This page is part of release 3.74 of the Linux *man-pages* project. A description of the project, information about reporting bugs, and the latest version of this page, can be found at <http://www.kernel.org/doc/man-pages/>.