## Experiment no. 10

**Aim:** To learn Dockerfile instructions, build an image for a sample web application using DOCKERFILE

## Theory:

#### 1. Introduction to Dockerfile

Dockerfile is a simple text file containing a set of instructions that Docker uses to automate the process of building a Docker image. Each instruction in a Dockerfile creates a new layer in the image, and together, they define the complete environment required to run an application.

This is especially useful when building repeatable, version-controlled container images for web applications, ensuring consistent setups across different stages of development and deployment.

#### 2. Importance of Dockerfile in DevOps and CI/CD

In DevOps practices, automation is key—and Dockerfiles play a pivotal role by:

- Providing blueprints for application containers
- Ensuring consistency across environments (dev, test, prod)
- Enabling automation in CI/CD pipelines
- Supporting scalability and maintainability of containerized apps
- Instead of manually installing dependencies and setting environments,
   Dockerfile encapsulates everything needed to build and run the application.

## 3. Basic Syntax and Structure of Dockerfile

A Dockerfile contains sequential instructions. Here's a breakdown of commonly used directives:

- FROM Specifies the base image (e.g., FROM ubuntu or FROM node:14)
- MAINTAINER (deprecated, use LABEL) Metadata about the author
- LABEL Add descriptive metadata (e.g., version, description)
- RUN Executes commands during image build (e.g., RUN apt-get update)
- COPY / ADD Copy files from host to image (COPY is preferred)
- WORKDIR Sets the working directory inside the container
- ENV Sets environment variables
- EXPOSE Informs which port the container listens on
- CMD Default command when a container is run
- ENTRYPOINT Configures the container as an executable

## 4. Key Considerations While Writing Dockerfiles

- A well-optimized Dockerfile results in faster builds, smaller image sizes, and better performance.
- Use official or minimal base images
- Combine commands using && to reduce layers
- Leverage Docker caching by ordering instructions smartly (e.g., copy dependencies first)
- Avoid copying unnecessary files (use .dockerignore)

## 5. Real-World Application of Dockerfile

In actual development and deployment:

- Teams use Dockerfile in version control to build repeatable environments
- CI/CD pipelines automatically build images from Dockerfiles
- Microservices can be deployed individually using custom Dockerfiles for each service
- Organizations often maintain private registries of Dockerfile-based images

#### **Benefits of Docker**

- 1. Portability: Containers can run on any platform that supports Docker. Applications behave consistently across different environments.
- 2. Efficiency: Containers share the host OS kernel, reducing overhead and improving performance. They consume fewer resources compared to virtual machines.
- 3. Isolation: Each container runs in its own isolated environment, preventing dependency conflicts.
- 4. Scalability: Applications can be scaled up quickly by launching multiple containers. Docker enables automatic load balancing in large-scale deployments.
- 5. Consistency: Ensures that the application runsthe same way in development, testing, and production. Eliminates the "works on my machine" problem.

## DIRECTIVE argument

Although the DIRECTIVE is case-insensitive, it is recommended to write all directives in uppercase to differentiate them from arguments. A Dockerfile usually consists of multiple lines of instructions that are executed sequentially by the Docker engine during the image-building process.

Now that you understand the purpose of a Dockerfile, let's get our hands dirty by building one for a sample Python application.

### Building a Dockerfile for a Sample Python/Flask Application

The application we'll be working with is a simple Flask app with only one home route that returns Hello, World!.

Let's start by setting up the Flask application. Open your favorite code editor and create a new directory for your project. In this directory, create a new file named app.py and add the following Python code:

```
from flask import Flask

app = Flask(__name__)

@app.route('/')

def hello():

return 'Hello, World!'
```

### Now, let's build the Dockerfile.

In the same directory as your app.py, create a new file named Dockerfile (with no file extension). This is where you'll write the instructions for Docker to build your image.

Now, follow the steps below to create the Dockerfile:

## **#1:** Specify the base image

The very first instruction you write in a Dockerfile must be the FROM directive, which specifies the base image. The base image is the image from which all

other layers in your Docker image will be built. It's the foundation of your Docker image, much like the foundation of a building.

Add the following instruction to your Dockerfile:

FROM python:3.11-slim

Here, we're telling Docker to use the official Python Docker image, and more specifically, the 3.11-slim version. This slim variant of Python Docker image is a minimal version that excludes some packages to make the image smaller. Note that the base image you specify will be downloaded from Docker Hub, Docker's official image registry. The reason we're using Python as the base image is that the application containerization is written in Python. The Python base image includes a Python interpreter, which is necessary to run Python code, as well as a number of commonly used Python utilities and libraries. By using the Python base image, we're ensuring that the environment within the Docker container is preconfigured for running Python code.

## **#2 Set the working directory**

Once you've chosen the base image, the next step is to determine the working directory using the WORKDIR directive. Insert the following line after the FROM directive:

## WORKDIR /app

Here, we're telling Docker to create a directory named app in the Docker container and use it as the current working directory. All instructions that FROM python:3.11-slim WORKDIR

/app follow (like RUN, COPY, and CMD) will be run in this directory inside the container. Think of this as typing the command cd /app in a terminal to change the current working directory to /app. The difference here is that it's being done within the Docker container as part of the build process. A working directory within the container is necessary because it designates a specific location for our application code within the container and determines where commands will be run from. If we don't set a working directory, Docker won't

have a clear context for where your application is located, which would make it harder to interact with.

**#3 Install dependencies** Once the working directory is set, the next step is to install the dependencies. Our Python application relies on the Flask web framework, which manages requests, routes URLs, and handles other web-related tasks. To install Flask, add the following instruction in your Dockerfile just under the WORKDIR directive:

RUN pip install flask==2.3

Here, we're instructing Docker to use pip (a package installer for Python) to install the specific version of Flask we need for our application.

**#4 Copy application files to the container** After setting up the working directory and installing the necessary dependencies, we're now ready to copy the application files into the Docker container. To do this, add the following instruction just below the RUN directive:

## COPY . /app

This line copies everything in the current directory (denoted by ".") on our host machine into the /app directory we previously set as our working directory within the Docker container. It's like using the cp command in the terminal to copy files from one directory to another, but in this context, it's copying files from your local machine to the Docker container. Why do we need to do this? It's simple. Without this step, the Docker container wouldn't have access to our application's code, making it impossible to run our app.

#5 Specify the environment variable Once the application files are copied, we need to set up the FLASK\_APP environment variable for our Docker container using the ENV directive. Now, you may be wondering why we need this environment variable in the first place. In our app.py file, we create an instance of the Flask application and assign it to the variable app. This application instance is what Flask needs to run, and it's located in the app.py file. When starting our Flask application using the flask run command (which we'll discuss in the next section), Flask must know where to locate the application instance to run. Flask uses the FLASK\_APP environment variable to find this instance. Hence, we need to use the ENV directive to set the value of FLASK\_APP to

app.py. To do this, add the following line under the RUN directive:

## ENV FLASK\_APP=app.py

This line ensures Flask knows exactly where to find the application instance to run, which in our case is app.py.

**6 Define the default command** The last instruction that we need for our application is to specify the default command that will be executed when the Docker container starts:

from the image, we'll build from this Dockerfile.

## **Insert the following instruction below the ENV directive:**

Here's what each part of the argument passed to the CMD directive does:

- flask: This is the program that we want to run. In this case, it's the Flask command- line interface.
- run: This command instructs Flask to start a local development server.
- --host=0.0.0.0: This argument tells the Flask server to listen on all public IPs. In the context of Docker, this means the Flask application will be accessible on any IP address that can reach the Docker container.
- --port=5000: This argument specifies the port number that the Flask server will listen on. Port 5000 is the default port for Flask, but it's good practice to explicitly declare it for clarity.

After this, our Dockerfile is ready. It should look like this:

FROM python:3.11-slim

WORKDIR /app

RUN pip install flask==2.3

COPY . /app

ENV FLASK\_APP=app.py

CMD ["flask", "run", "--host=0.0.0.0", "--port=5000"]

It's worth noting that the directives we used in the Dockerfile for our Python app aren't the only ones available in Docker. But they are the ones you'll often encounter when working with Dockerfiles.

**#7 Create a .dockerignore file** Before we go ahead and build our Docker image, we need to take care of one last thing. Remember the following COPY directive?

## COPY . /app

This line instructs Docker to copy everything from our current directory to the app directory inside the container, which includes the Dockerfile itself. But, the Dockerfile isn't required for our app to work—it's just for us to create the Docker image. So, we need to ensure that the Dockerfile doesn't get copied to the app directory in the container. Here's how we do it: Create a new file called .dockerignore in the same directory as your Dockerfile. This file works much like a .gitignore file if you're familiar with Git. Then, add the word Dockerfile to this file. This tells Docker to ignore the Dockerfile when copying files into the container. Now that we've prepared everything, it's time to build our Docker image, run a container from this image, and test our application to see if everything works as expected.

#### **Building and running the Docker Image**

Open a terminal and navigate to the directory where your Dockerfile is located. Now, run the following command to create an image named sample-flask-app:v1 (you can name the image anything you prefer):

# \$ docker build . -t sample-flask-app:v1

In the command above, the dot (.) after the build command indicates that the current directory is the build context. We're using the -t flag to tag the Docker image with the name sample- flask-app and version v1. After running this command, you'll see an output similar to this:

```
$ docker build . -t sample-flask-app:v1
[+] Building 17.7s (10/10) FINISHED docker:default
=> => transferring dockerfile: 192B
=> [internal] load metadata for docker.io/l 3.5s
=> [auth] library/python:pull token for reg 0.0s
=> [internal] load .dockerignore
=> => transferring context: 50B
                                             0.08
=> [1/4] FROM docker.io/library/python:3.11 9.0s
=> => resolve docker.io/library/python:3.11 0.0s
=> => sha256:1103112ebfc46e 3.51MB / 3.51MB 1.9s
=> => sha256:b4b80ef7128d 12.87MB / 12.87MB 2.7s
=> => sha256:a2eb07f336e4f1 1.65kB / 1.65kB 0.0s
=> => sha256:8a1e25ce7c4f 29.12MB / 29.12MB 4.8s
=> => sha256:cc7f04ac52f8a3bad5 243B / 243B 2.4s
=> => sha256:87b8bf94a2ace2 3.41MB / 3.41MB 3.3s
=> => extracting sha256:8a1e25ce7c4f75e372e 1.8s
=> => extracting sha256:1103112ebfc46e01c0f 0.2s
=> => extracting sha256:b4b80ef7128dc9bd114 1.0s
=> => extracting sha256:cc7f04ac52f8a3bad5b 0.0s
=> => extracting sha256:87b8bf94a2ace2b005d 0.7s
=> [internal] load build context
=> => transferring context: 1948
                                             0.05
=> [2/4] WORKDIR /app
                                             0.25
=> [3/4] RUN pip install flask==2.3
=> [4/4] COPY . /app
                                             0.08
=> exporting to image
=> => exporting layers
=> => writing image sha256:c6879156c7750c89 0.0s
=> => naming to docker.io/library/sample-fl 0.0s
What's Next?
 View a summary of image vulnerabilities and recommendations → docker scout quickview
```

To make sure the image sample-flask-app:v1 has been successfully created, run the following command to check the list of Docker images on your system:

\$ docker image ls

## The resulting output should look something like this:

<pre>\$ docker image ls</pre>				
REPOSITORY	TAG	IMAGE ID	CREATED	SIZE
sample-flask-app	V1	c6879156c775	10 seconds ago	147MB
mongo	latest	24041ceefc56	6 days ago	755MB

In the list, you should see sample-flask-app:v1, which confirms the image is now in our system. Now, run the sample-flask-app:v1 image as a container by executing the following command:

## \$ docker container run -d -p 5000:5000 sample-flask-app:v1

The -d flag is short for --detach and runs the container in the background. The -p flag is short for --publish and maps port 5000 of the host to port 5000 of the Docker container. After running this command, you'll see an output like this:

```
$ docker container run -d -p 5000:5000 sample-flask-app:v1
ff37071dd4cef95cc1dc2ce7e145019339cfaec54575659f72aea4e560238f8c
```

The long string you see printed in the terminal is the container ID. To make sure the container is running, list the currently active Docker containers by running the following command:

# \$ docker container ls

You should see something like this:

```
$ docker container ls

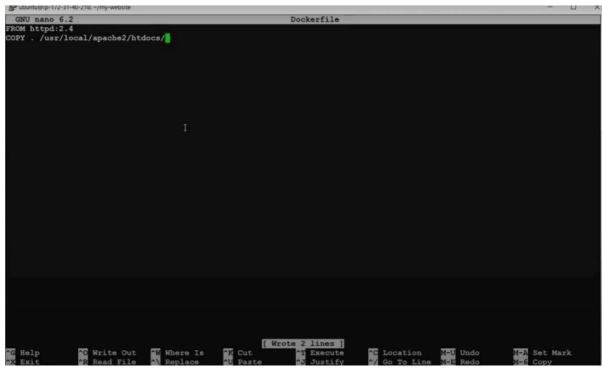
CONTAINER ID IMAGE COMMAND CREATED STATUS PORTS NAMES

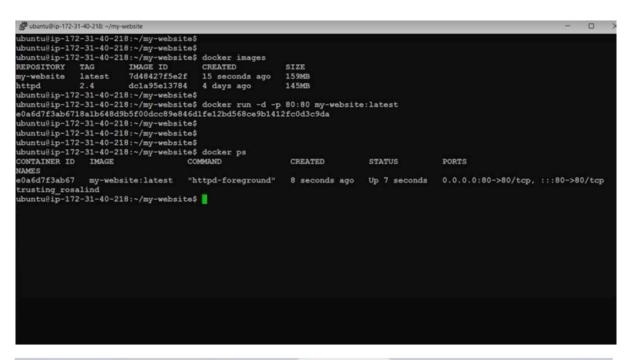
c301c50152ac sample-flask-app:v1 "flask run --host=0..." 14 seconds ago Up 12 seconds 0.0.0.0:5000->5000/tcp xenodochial_mendel
```

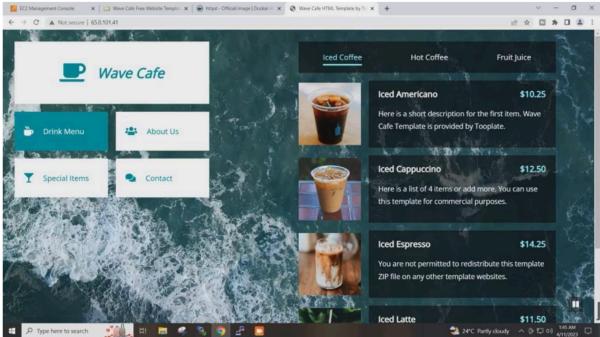
#### **Screenshots:**

```
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website$
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website$
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website$
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website$ 1s
2121_wave_cafe wave-cafe.zip
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website$ cd 2121_wave_cafe
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website/2121_wave_cafe$ 1s
css fontawesome img index.html js video
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website/2121_wave_cafe$ cp -R * ../.
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website/2121_wave_cafe$
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website/2121_wave_cafe$
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website/2121_wave_cafe$
cd ...
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website/2121_wave_cafe$ cd ...
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website/2121_wave_cafe$ cd ...
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website$ is
2121_wave_cafe css fontawesome img index.html js video wave-cafe.zip
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website$ Is
css fontawesome img index.html js video
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website$ ls
css fontawesome img index.html js video
ubuntu@ip-172-31-40-218:-/my-website$ nano Dockerfila

I
```







**Conclusion:** Hence we have successfully learnt Dockerfile instructions & built an image for a sample web application using DOCKERFILE.