

Command: comm

The comm command compares two sorted files line by line and writes three columns to standard output. These columns show lines that are unique to files one, lines that are unique to file two and lines that are shared by both files. It also supports suppressing column outputs and comparing lines without case sensitivity.

To compare two files line by line using comm it is a prerequisite that files are first sorted.

The following is the contents of set1.txt.

1
2
3

The following is the contents of set2.txt.

8
3
2

As these files are not sorted sort can be used to accomplish this

```
comm <(sort set1.txt) <(sort set2.txt)
```

1

2
3

8

The output is in three columns. The first is lines that are only in file one (set1.txt), the second is lines only in file two (set2.txt), the third is line that are in both files.

To show specific comparisons using comm pass the option of the column that should be suppressed. In the following example only column three, or the lines that are common to both files are shown.

```
comm -12 <(sort set1.txt) <(sort set2.txt)
```

2
3

The following example shows lines that are unique to set1.txt.

```
comm -23 <(sort set1.txt) <(sort set2.txt)
```

1

The following example shows lines that are unique to set2.txt.

```
comm -23 <(sort set1.txt) <(sort set2.txt)
```

8

To ignore case sensitivity when using comm pass the -i option.

```
cat words1.txt
```

Apple

Banana

Orange

```
cat words2.txt
```

apple

banana

orange

```
]$ comm words1.txt words2.txt
```

Apple

Banana

Orange

apple

banana

orange

```
comm -i words1.txt words2.txt
```

Apple

Banana

Orange