The *locate* [command](http://www.linfo.org/command.html) is often the simplest and quickest way to find the locations of files and directories on [Linux](http://www.linfo.org/linuxdef.html) and other [Unix-like](http://www.linfo.org/unix-like.html) [operating systems](http://www.linfo.org/operating_systems_list.html).

The basic syntax for locate is:

locate [options] name(s)

When used without any [options](http://www.linfo.org/option.html), locate displays every [*absolute pathname*](http://www.linfo.org/absolute_pathname.html) for which the user has access permission that contains any of the names of files and/or directories that are provided to it as [arguments](http://www.linfo.org/argument.html) (i.e., input data).

Thus, for example, the following would list the absolute paths of all files named *file1* and all directories named *dir1* for which the user had access permission:

locate file1 dir1

 the following command uses the star wildcard to display all files on the system that have the *.png* [filename extension](http://www.linfo.org/filename_extension.html):

locate "\*.png"

The *-q* option is used to suppress error messages, such as those that might be returned in the event that the user does not have permission to access designated files or directories. Thus, the following would suppress any error messages in the above example:

locate "\*.png" -q

It is often the case that a large number of results will be returned for any query. The *-n* option followed by an integer limits the results to a specific number. For example, the following command would display only 15 results in a search for files that have an *.html* extension:

locate -n 15 "\*.html"

An alternative is to use a [*pipe*](http://www.linfo.org/pipe.html) (represented by the vertical bar character) to [redirect](http://www.linfo.org/redirection.html) the output of locate from the display screen to a *pager* such as *more* or *less*, which presents only one screenful of output at a time, for example,

locate "\*.html" | less

The *-i* option performs a case-insensitive search. That is, it will return any results that match the arguments regardless of whether individual letters are [lower case](http://www.linfo.org/lower_case.html) or upper case. For example, the following would return all files with the extension .html, .HTML, or some combination thereof:

locate -i "\*.HtmL"