our interface to the operating system is called a *shell*.

The shell is the outermost layer of the operating system. Shells incorporate a programming language to control processes and files, as well as to start and control other programs. The shell manages the interaction between you and the operating system by prompting you for input, interpreting that input for the operating system, and then handling any resulting output from the operating system.

Shells provide a way for you to communicate with the operating system. This communication is carried out either interactively (input from the keyboard is acted upon immediately) or as a shell script. A *shell script* is a sequence of shell and operating system commands that is stored in a file.

When you log in to the system, the system locates the name of a shell program to execute. After it is executed, the shell displays a command prompt. This prompt is usually a $ (dollar sign). When you type a command at the prompt and press the Enter key, the shell evaluates the command and attempts to carry it out. Depending on your command instructions, the shell writes the command output to the screen or redirects the output. It then returns the command prompt and waits for you to type another command.

A *command line* is the line on which you type. It contains the shell prompt. The basic format for each line is as follows:

$ Command Argument(s)

The shell considers the first word of a command line (up to the first blank space) as the command and all subsequent words as arguments.

**Note:** When libc.a is moved or renamed, the Killed error message is displayed from the shell because there is no libc.a file available for the system to load and run the utilities. The **[recsh](https://www.ibm.com/docs/en/ssw_aix_72/r_commands/recsh.html)** command invokes the recovery shell, which provides an ability to rename libc.a if it is accidently moved.

* [**Shell concepts**](https://www.ibm.com/docs/en/ssw_aix_72/osmanagement/concept_shell.html)  
  Before you start working with the different types of shells available for AIX you need to understand basic terminology and features.
* [**Korn shell**](https://www.ibm.com/docs/en/ssw_aix_72/osmanagement/korn_shell.html)  
  The Korn shell (ksh command) is backwardly compatible with the Bourne shell (bsh command) and contains most of the Bourne shell features as well as several of the best features of the C shell.
* [**Bourne shell**](https://www.ibm.com/docs/en/ssw_aix_72/osmanagement/bourne_shell.html)  
  The Bourne shell is an interactive command interpreter and command programming language.
* [**C shell**](https://www.ibm.com/docs/en/ssw_aix_72/osmanagement/c_shell.html)  
  The C shell is an interactive command interpreter and a command programming language. It uses syntax that is similar to the C programming language.