

**NAME**

cp – copy files and directories

**SYNOPSIS**

**cp** [*OPTION*]... [-*T*] *SOURCE DEST*

**cp** [*OPTION*]... *SOURCE... DIRECTORY*

**cp** [*OPTION*]... -*t* *DIRECTORY SOURCE...*

**DESCRIPTION**

Copy *SOURCE* to *DEST*, or multiple *SOURCE*(s) to *DIRECTORY*.

Mandatory arguments to long options are mandatory for short options too.

**-a, --archive**

same as **-dR --preserve=all**

**--attributes-only**

don't copy the file data, just the attributes

**--backup[=*CONTROL*]**

make a backup of each existing destination file

**-b**

like **--backup** but does not accept an argument

**--copy-contents**

copy contents of special files when recursive

**-d**

same as **--no-dereference --preserve=links**

**-f, --force**

if an existing destination file cannot be opened, remove it and try again (this option is ignored when the **-n** option is also used)

**-i, --interactive**

prompt before overwrite (overrides a previous **-n** option)

**-H**

follow command-line symbolic links in *SOURCE*

**-l, --link**

hard link files instead of copying

**-L, --dereference**

always follow symbolic links in *SOURCE*

**-n, --no-clobber**

do not overwrite an existing file (overrides a previous **-i** option)

**-P, --no-dereference**

never follow symbolic links in *SOURCE*

**-p**

same as **--preserve=mode,ownership,timestamps**

**--preserve[=*ATTR\_LIST*]**

preserve the specified attributes (default: mode,ownership,timestamps), if possible additional attributes: context, links, xattr, all

**--no-preserve=*ATTR\_LIST***

don't preserve the specified attributes

**--parents**

use full source file name under *DIRECTORY*

**-R, -r, --recursive**

copy directories recursively

**--reflink[=*WHEN*]**

control clone/CoW copies. See below

- remove-destination**  
remove each existing destination file before attempting to open it (contrast with **--force**)
- sparse=WHEN**  
control creation of sparse files. See below
- strip-trailing-slashes**  
remove any trailing slashes from each SOURCE argument
- s, --symbolic-link**  
make symbolic links instead of copying
- S, --suffix=SUFFIX**  
override the usual backup suffix
- t, --target-directory=DIRECTORY**  
copy all SOURCE arguments into DIRECTORY
- T, --no-target-directory**  
treat DEST as a normal file
- u, --update**  
copy only when the SOURCE file is newer than the destination file or when the destination file is missing
- v, --verbose**  
explain what is being done
- x, --one-file-system**  
stay on this file system
- Z** set SELinux security context of destination file to default type
- context[=CTX]**  
like **-Z**, or if CTX is specified then set the SELinux or SMACK security context to CTX
- help** display this help and exit
- version**  
output version information and exit

By default, sparse SOURCE files are detected by a crude heuristic and the corresponding DEST file is made sparse as well. That is the behavior selected by **--sparse=auto**. Specify **--sparse=always** to create a sparse DEST file whenever the SOURCE file contains a long enough sequence of zero bytes. Use **--sparse=never** to inhibit creation of sparse files.

When **--reflink[=always]** is specified, perform a lightweight copy, where the data blocks are copied only when modified. If this is not possible the copy fails, or if **--reflink=auto** is specified, fall back to a standard copy. Use **--reflink=never** to ensure a standard copy is performed.

The backup suffix is '~', unless set with **--suffix** or `SIMPLE_BACKUP_SUFFIX`. The version control method may be selected via the **--backup** option or through the `VERSION_CONTROL` environment variable. Here are the values:

- none, off  
never make backups (even if **--backup** is given)
- numbered, t  
make numbered backups
- existing, nil  
numbered if numbered backups exist, simple otherwise
- simple, never  
always make simple backups

As a special case, cp makes a backup of SOURCE when the force and backup options are given and

SOURCE and DEST are the same name for an existing, regular file.

**AUTHOR**

Written by Torbjorn Granlund, David MacKenzie, and Jim Meyering.

**REPORTING BUGS**

GNU coreutils online help: <<https://www.gnu.org/software/coreutils/>>

Report any translation bugs to <<https://translationproject.org/team/>>

**COPYRIGHT**

Copyright © 2020 Free Software Foundation, Inc. License GPLv3+: GNU GPL version 3 or later  
<<https://gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>>.

This is free software: you are free to change and redistribute it. There is NO WARRANTY, to the extent permitted by law.

**SEE ALSO**

Full documentation <<https://www.gnu.org/software/coreutils/cp>>  
or available locally via: info '(coreutils) cp invocation'