**Basic lifetime of a shell**

Let’s look at a shell from the top down. A shell does three main things in its lifetime.

* **Initialize**: In this step, a typical shell would read and execute its configuration files. These change aspects of the shell’s behavior.
* **Interpret**: Next, the shell reads commands from stdin (which could be interactive, or a file) and executes them.
* **Terminate**: After its commands are executed, the shell executes any shutdown commands, frees up any memory, and terminates.

## Basic loop of a shell

* **Read**: Read the command from standard input.
* **Parse**: Separate the command string into a program and arguments.
* **Execute**: Run the parsed command.