1. Connectivity & Inventory

ansible all -m ping — Tests connectivity to all hosts in the inventory.

ansible all --list-hosts — Displays a list of all managed nodes.

ansible-inventory --graph — Shows the inventory structure in a visual hierarchy.

ansible-config dump — Shows the current active configuration settings.

2. Ad-Hoc Commands (Quick Tasks)

ansible <group> -m setup — Gathers all "facts" (system info) from the target hosts.

ansible all -a "uptime" — Executes a raw shell command (uptime) on all hosts.

ansible all -m apt -a "name=git state=present" -b — Installs a package using sudo (-b).

ansible all -m service -a "name=ssh state=started" — Ensures a service is running.

ansible all -m copy -a "src=file.txt dest=/tmp/" — Copies a local file to remote nodes.

3. Playbook Execution & Debugging

ansible-playbook site.yml — Runs the specified playbook.

ansible-playbook site.yml --check — Dry Run: Predicts changes without applying them.

ansible-playbook site.yml --syntax-check — Validates YAML syntax without running.

ansible-playbook site.yml --limit web — Runs the playbook only on the "web" group.

ansible-playbook site.yml --step — Prompts for confirmation before every single task.

ansible-playbook site.yml -vvv — Enables maximum verbosity for deep troubleshooting.

4. Security (Ansible Vault)

ansible-vault create secret.yml — Creates a new encrypted data file.

ansible-vault encrypt <file> — Encrypts an existing plain-text file.

ansible-vault edit <file> — Decrypts, opens for editing, and re-encrypts on save.

ansible-playbook site.yml --ask-vault-pass — Runs a playbook that requires a vault password.

5. Role & Galaxy Management

ansible-galaxy init <role_name>   – Creates the standard directory structure for a role.

ansible-galaxy install <user.role>   – Downloads a community role from Ansible Galaxy.

ansible-galaxy list   – Displays all roles currently installed on the local system.