R Reference Card

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Getting help

Most R functions have online documentation.

`help(topic)` documentation on `topic`
`?topic` id.
`help.search("topic")` search the help system
`apropos("topic")` the names of all objects in the search list matching the regular expression "topic"
`help.start()` start the HTML version of help
`str(a)` display the internal *str*ucture of an R object
`summary(a)` gives a "summary" of `a`, usually a statistical summary but it is *generic* meaning it has different operations for different classes of `a`
`ls()` show objects in the search path; specify `pat="pat"` to search on a pattern
`ls.str()` str() for each variable in the search path
`dir()` show files in the current directory
`methods(a)` shows S3 methods of `a`
`methods(class=class(a))` lists all the methods to handle objects of class a

Input and output

`load()` load the datasets written with `save`
`data(x)` loads specified data sets
`library(x)` load add-on packages
`read.table(file)` reads a file in table format and creates a data frame from it; the default separator `sep=""` is any whitespace; use `header=TRUE` to read the first line as a header of column names; use `as.is=TRUE` to prevent character vectors from being converted to factors; use `comment.char=""` to prevent `"#"` from being interpreted as a comment; use `skip=n` to skip `n` lines before reading data; see the help for options on row naming, NA treatment, and others
`read.csv("filename",header=TRUE)` id. but with defaults set for reading comma-delimited files
`read.delim("filename",header=TRUE)` id. but with defaults set for reading tab-delimited files
`read.fwf(file,widths,header=FALSE,sep="",as.is=FALSE)` read a table of *f*ixed *width f*ormatted data into a 'data.frame'; `widths` is an integer vector, giving the widths of the fixed-width fields
`save(file,...)` saves the specified objects (...) in the XDR platform-independent binary format
`save.image(file)` saves all objects
`cat(..., file="", sep=" ")` prints the arguments after coercing to character; `sep` is the character separator between arguments
`print(a, ...)` prints its arguments; generic, meaning it can have different methods for different objects
`format(x,...)` format an R object for pretty printing
`write.table(x,file="",row.names=TRUE,col.names=TRUE, sep=" ")` prints `x` after converting to a data frame; if `quote` is `TRUE`, character or factor columns are surrounded by quotes ("); `sep` is the field separator; `eol` is the end-of-line separator; `na` is the string for missing values; use `col.names=NA` to add a blank column header to get the column headers aligned correctly for spreadsheet input
`sink(file)` output to `file`, until `sink()`

Most of the I/O functions have a `file` argument. This can often be a character string naming a file or a connection. `file=""` means the standard input or output. Connections can include files, pipes, zipped files, and R variables.

On windows, the file connection can also be used with `description = "clipboard"`. To read a table copied from Excel, use

```
x <- read.delim("clipboard")
```

To write a table to the clipboard for Excel, use

```
write.table(x,"clipboard",sep="\t",col.names=NA)
```

For database interaction, see packages `RODBC`, `DBI`, `RMySQL`, `RPgSQL`, and `ROracle`. See packages `XML`, `hdf5`, `netCDF` for reading other file formats.

Data creation

`c(...)` generic function to combine arguments with the default forming a vector; with `recursive=TRUE` descends through lists combining all elements into one vector
`from:to` generates a sequence; ":" has operator priority; 1:4 + 1 is "2,3,4,5"
`seq(from,to)` generates a sequence `by=` specifies increment; `length=` specifies desired length
`seq(along=x)` generates `1, 2, ..., length(along)`; useful for `for` loops
`rep(x,times)` replicate `x times`; use `each=` to repeat "each" element of `x each` times; `rep(c(1,2,3),2)` is 1 2 3 1 2 3; `rep(c(1,2,3),each=2)` is 1 1 2 2 3 3
`data.frame(...)` create a data frame of the named or unnamed arguments; `data.frame(v=1:4,ch=c("a","B","c","d"),n=10)`; shorter vectors are recycled to the length of the longest
`list(...)` create a list of the named or unnamed arguments; `list(a=c(1,2),b="hi",c=3i)`;
`array(x,dim=)` array with data `x`; specify dimensions like `dim=c(3,4,2)`; elements of `x` recycle if `x` is not long enough
`matrix(x,nrow=,ncol=)` matrix; elements of `x` recycle
`factor(x,levels=)` encodes a vector `x` as a factor
`gl(n,k,length=n*k,labels=1:n)` generate levels (factors) by specifying the pattern of their levels; `k` is the number of levels, and `n` is the number of replications
`expand.grid()` a data frame from all combinations of the supplied vectors or factors
`rbind(...)` combine arguments by rows for matrices, data frames, and others
`cbind(...)` id. by columns

Slicing and extracting data

Indexing vectors

`x[n]`	n^{th} element
`x[-n]`	all *but* the n^{th} element
`x[1:n]`	first `n` elements
`x[-(1:n)]`	elements from `n+1` to the end
`x[c(1,4,2)]`	specific elements
`x["name"]`	element named `"name"`
`x[x > 3]`	all elements greater than 3
`x[x > 3 & x < 5]`	all elements between 3 and 5
`x[x %in% c("a","and","the")]`	elements in the given set

Indexing lists

`x[n]`	list with elements `n`
`x[[n]]`	n^{th} element of the list
`x[["name"]]`	element of the list named `"name"`
`x$name`	id.

Indexing matrices

`x[i,j]`	element at row `i`, column `j`
`x[i,]`	row `i`
`x[,j]`	column `j`
`x[,c(1,3)]`	columns 1 and 3
`x["name",]`	row named `"name"`

Indexing data frames (matrix indexing plus the following)

`x[["name"]]`	column named `"name"`
`x$name`	id.

Variable conversion

`as.array(x), as.data.frame(x), as.numeric(x), as.logical(x), as.complex(x), as.character(x), ...` convert type; for a complete list, use `methods(as)`

Variable information

`is.na(x), is.null(x), is.array(x), is.data.frame(x), is.numeric(x), is.complex(x), is.character(x), ...` test for type; for a complete list, use `methods(is)`
`length(x)` number of elements in `x`
`dim(x)` Retrieve or set the dimension of an object; `dim(x) <- c(3,2)`
`dimnames(x)` Retrieve or set the dimension names of an object
`nrow(x)` number of rows; `NROW(x)` is the same but treats a vector as a one-row matrix
`ncol(x)` and **`NCOL(x)`** id. for columns
`class(x)` get or set the class of `x`; `class(x) <- "myclass"`
`unclass(x)` remove the class attribute of `x`
`attr(x,which)` get or set the attribute `which` of `x`
`attributes(obj)` get or set the list of attributes of `obj`

Data selection and manipulation

`which.max(x)` returns the index of the greatest element of **`x`**
`which.min(x)` returns the index of the smallest element of **`x`**
`rev(x)` reverses the elements of `x`
`sort(x)` sorts the elements of `x` in increasing order; to sort in decreasing order: `rev(sort(x))`
`cut(x,breaks)` divides `x` into intervals (factors); `breaks` is the number of cut intervals or a vector of cut points
`match(x, y)` returns a vector of the same length than `x` with the elements of `x` which are in `y` (`NA` otherwise)
`which(x == a)` returns a vector of the indices of `x` if the comparison operation is true (`TRUE`), in this example the values of `i` for which `x[i] == a` (the argument of this function must be a variable of mode logical)
`choose(n, k)` computes the combinations of k events among n repetitions $= n!/[(n-k)!k!]$
`na.omit(x)` suppresses the observations with missing data (`NA`) (suppresses the corresponding line if `x` is a matrix or a data frame)
`na.fail(x)` returns an error message if `x` contains at least one `NA`