

# Getting Help and Reading Documentation: Takeaways



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## Syntax

- Identify the type of a command: `type command` .
- Create an alias: `alias alias_name=command` .
- Remove an alias: `unalias alias_name` .
- Get a brief description of what an executable file does: `whatis command` .
- Access the manual of an executable file: `man command` .
- Access the manual of a built-in command: `help command` .
- See the contents of a file with `less` : `less filename` .
- See the contents of a file with `less` without wrapping lines: `less - S filename` .

## Concepts

- There are five different types of commands: `file` , `builtin` , `alias` , `function` , and `keyword` .
- Only the executable files and built-ins have documentation.
- The way to access documentation depends on the type of command it is.
- Understanding usage messages:

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>bold text</b>        | type exactly as shown.                             |
| <i>italic text</i>      | replace with appropriate argument.                 |
| <code>[-abc]</code>     | any or all arguments within [ ] are optional.      |
| <code>-a -b</code>      | options delimited by   cannot be used together.    |
| <u>argument</u> ...     | <u>argument</u> is repeatable.                     |
| <u>[expression]</u> ... | entire <u>expression</u> within [ ] is repeatable. |

- A terminal pager is a program used to view the contents of a text file by navigating it page by page.

- The `man` command uses a terminal pager to display documentation.
- Working with `less` :

| Input             | Action   |
|-------------------|--|
| Up/down arrows    | Scroll up/down one line                                  |
| Left/right arrows | Move page to the left/right                              |
| b                 | Scroll up (or backwards) one page                        |
| Space             | Scroll down one page                                     |
| g                 | Move to the beginning of the file                        |
| G                 | Move to the end of the file                              |
| /pattern          | Search forward for the occurrence of the regex pattern   |
| ?pattern          | Search backwards for the occurrence of the regex pattern |
| n                 | Find next occurrence of the previous search              |
| N                 | Find previous occurrence of the previous search          |
| :p                | Move to previous file                                    |
| :n                | Move to next file  |
| h                 | Display less's help screen (with less)                   |
| q                 | Quit the active instance of less                         |

## Resources

- Bash's [keywords](#)
- Bash's [special built-ins](#)
- Bash's [autocompletion](#)

- Identifying what command is run when there is more than one with the same name:
  - [In Bash](#)
  - [POSIX standards](#)
- [POSIX standards on](#) `man`
- [POSIX standards on command syntax](#)
- Search across all man pages with the `apropos` [command](#).
- The `info` [command](#).

