"Mastering the Command Line"

Top 50 Linux Commands Every User Should Know "Explained with Real-World Examples"

- 1. ls—The most frequently used command in Linux to list directories
- 2. pwd—Print working directory command in Linux
- 3. cd—Linux command to navigate through directories
- 4. mkdir—Command used to create directories in Linux
- **5.** mv—Move or rename files in Linux
- 6. cp—Similar usage as mv but for copying files in Linux
- 7. rm—Delete files or directories
- 8. touch—Create blank/empty files
- 9. ln—Create symbolic links (shortcuts) to other files
- 10. cat—Display file contents on the terminal
- 11. clear—Clear the terminal display
- 12. echo—Print any text that follows the command
- 13. less—Linux command to display paged outputs in the terminal
- 14. man—Access manual pages for all Linux commands
- 15. uname—Linux command to get basic information about the OS
- 16. whoami—Get the active username
- 17. tar—Command to extract and compress files in Linux
- **18. grep**—Search for a string within an output
- 19. head—Return the specified number of lines from the top
- 20. tail—Return the specified number of lines from the bottom

- **21. diff**—Find the difference between two files
- 22. cmp—Allows you to check if two files are identical
- 23. comm—Combines the functionality of diff and cmp
- **24. sort**—Linux command to sort the content of a file while outputting
- 25. export—Export environment variables in Linux
- **26. zip**—Zip files in Linux
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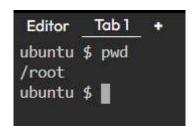
- 42. sudo—Command to escalate privileges in Linux
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- **44. alias**—Create custom shortcuts for your regularly used commands
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- 47. whatis—Find what a command is used for
- **48.** top—View active processes live with their system usage
- **49. useradd** and **usermod**—Add new user or change existing users data
- **50.** passwd—Create or update passwords for existing users

Learn more about each command's real-time use case:

1. ls—The most frequently used command in Linux to list directories.

```
ubuntu $ pwd
/root
ubuntu $ 1s
filesystem
ubuntu $ [
```

2. pwd—Print working directory command in Linux



3. cd—Linux command to navigate through directories

```
Editor Tabl +
ubuntu $ dir
filesystem
ubuntu $ cd filesystem
ubuntu $ pwd
/root/filesystem
ubuntu $ |
```

4. mkdir—Command used to create directories in Linux

```
Editor Tabl +
ubuntu $ mkdir mani
ubuntu $ ls
filesystem mani
ubuntu $ ■
```

5. mv—Move or rename files in Linux

```
ubuntu $ mkdir mani
ubuntu $ ls
filesystem mani
ubuntu $ mv mani mani_2023
ubuntu $ ls
filesystem mani_2023
ubuntu $ [
```

6. cp—Similar usage as my but for copying files in Linux

```
Editor __Tabl__ +
ubuntu $ ls
filesystem mani
ubuntu $ cp -r mani mani-copy
ubuntu $ ls
filesystem mani mani-copy
ubuntu $ |
```

7. rm—Delete files or directories

```
ubuntu $ 1s

filesystem mani_2023

ubuntu $ rmdir mani_2023

ubuntu $ 1s

filesystem

ubuntu $ [
```

8. touch—Create blank/empty files

```
ubuntu $ ls

filesystem

ubuntu $ touch mani.txt

ubuntu $ ls

filesystem mani.txt

ubuntu $ |
```

9. ln—Create symbolic links (shortcuts) to other files

```
ubuntu $ 1s

filesystem mani.txt
ubuntu $ 1n -s mani.txt mani.txt-link
ubuntu $ 1s

filesystem mani.txt mani.txt-link
ubuntu $ 1s -1
total 0

lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem -> /
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 0 Mar 23 08:27 mani.txt
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 8 Mar 23 08:31 mani.txt-link -> mani.txt
ubuntu $ |
```

10. cat—Display file contents on the terminal

```
ubuntu $ ls

filesystem mani.txt mani.txt-link

ubuntu $ cat mani.txt

hello , this txt edited with nano.

ubuntu $ ||
```

11. clear—Clear the terminal display

```
ubuntu $ ls -l
total 4
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem -> /
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 35 Mar 23 08:36 mani.txt
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 8 Mar 23 08:31 mani.txt-link -> mani.txt
ubuntu $ clear
```

```
Editor Tab 1 + ubuntu $ |
```

12. echo—Print any text that follows the command.

```
ubuntu $ 1s -1
total 4
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem -> /
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 35 Mar 23 08:36 mani.txt
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 8 Mar 23 08:31 mani.txt-link -> mani.txt
ubuntu $ echo mani.txt
mani.txt
ubuntu $ echo filesystme
filesystme
```

13. less—Linux command to display paged outputs in the terminal.

```
ubuntu $ ls -l

total 4

lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem ->

-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 474 Mar 23 12:50 mani.txt

ubuntu $ less mani.txt
```

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<head>
        <title>My Simple Website</title>
</head>
<body>
        <header>
                <h1>Welcome to My Website</h1>
        </header>
        <nav>
                        <a href="#">Home</a><a href="#">About</a><a href="#">Contact</a>
        </nav>
                <h2>About Us</h2>
                We are a small team of developers who create amazing websites.
        </main>
                 © 2023 My Simple Website. All rights reserved.
        </footer>
</body>
</html>
  ni.txt (END)
```

14. man—Access manual pages for all Linux commands;

The man command in Linux is used to display the manual pages of Linux commands and other system functionalities.



```
Editor Tab 1 +
MKDIR(1)
                                                                        User Commands
       mkdir - make directories
       mkdir [OPTION]... DIRECTORY...
DESCRIPTION
       Create the DIRECTORY(ies), if they do not already exist.
       Mandatory arguments to long options are mandatory for short options too.
       -m, --mode=MODE
               set file mode (as in chmod), not a=rwx - umask
       -p, --parents
               no error if existing, make parent directories as needed
               print a message for each created directory
             set SELinux security context of each created directory to the default type
               like -Z, or if CTX is specified then set the SELinux or SMACK security context to CTX
       --help display this help and exit
               output version information and exit
       Written by David MacKenzie.
GNU coreutils online help: <a href="https://www.gnu.org/software/coreutils/">https://www.gnu.org/software/coreutils/</a>>
Manual page mkdir(1) line 1 (press h for help or q to quit)
```

15. uname—Linux command to get basic information about the OS

```
ubuntu $ uname
Linux
ubuntu $ █
```

16. whoami—Get the active username

```
ubuntu $ whoami
root
ubuntu $ ■
```

17. tar—Command to extract and compress files in Linux

```
ubuntu $ 1s -1
total 4
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem -> /
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 474 Mar 23 12:50 mani.txt
ubuntu $ tar -cvf archive.tar mani.txt
ubuntu $ tar -xvf archive.tar
mani.txt
ubuntu $ tar -xvf archive.tar
mani.txt
ubuntu $ tar -tvf archive.tar
-rw-r--r-- root/root 474 2023-03-23 12:50 mani.txt
ubuntu $ |
```

18. grep—Search for a string within an output

19. head—Return the specified number of lines from the top

```
ubuntu $ ls -1
total 16
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 10240 Mar 23 13:05 archive.tar
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem -> /
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 474 Mar 23 12:50 mani.txt
ubuntu $ head mani.txt
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<head>
        <title>My Simple Website</title>
</head>
<body>
        <header>
                <h1>Welcome to My Website</h1>
        </header>
        <nav>
ubuntu $
```

20. tail—Return the specified number of lines from the bottom

21. diff—Find the difference between two files

```
ubuntu $ 1s -1

total 24

-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 513 Mar 23 13:27 a

-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 10240 Mar 23 13:05 archive.tar

lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem -> /

-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 474 Mar 23 12:50 mani1.txt

-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 507 Mar 23 13:29 mani2.txt

ubuntu $ diff mani1.txt mani2.txt
26a27,28

> This code edited with nano tool

> ubuntu $ ■
```

22. cmp—Allows you to check if two files are identical.

```
ubuntu $ 1s -1
total 24
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 513 Mar 23 13:27 a
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 10240 Mar 23 13:05 archive.tar
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem -> /
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 474 Mar 23 12:50 mani1.txt
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 507 Mar 23 13:29 mani2.txt
ubuntu $ cmp mani1.txt mani2.txt
cmp: EOF on mani1.txt after byte 474, line 26
ubuntu $ |
```

23. comm—Combines the functionality of diff and cmp

24. sort—Linux command to sort the content of a file while outputting

```
ubuntu $ ls -l
total 4
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem -> /
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 39 Mar 23 13:51 mani.txt
ubuntu $ sort mani.txt
hello
this txt file edited with nano
ubuntu $ ■
```

25. export—Export environment variables in Linux

```
ubuntu $ export PASSWORD=mysupersecretpassword
ubuntu $ #!/bin/bash
ubuntu $ echo "The password is: $PASSWORD"
The password is: mysupersecretpassword
ubuntu $
```

26. zip—Zip files in Linux

```
ubuntu $ 1s -1
total 4
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem -> /
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 39 Mar 23 13:51 mani.txt
ubuntu $ zip mani.zip mani.txt
  adding: mani.txt (stored 0%)
ubuntu $ 1s -1
total 8
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem -> /
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 39 Mar 23 13:51 mani.txt
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 205 Mar 23 14:17 mani.zip
```

27. unzip—Unzip files in Linux

```
ubuntu $ 1s -1
total 8
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root  1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem -> /
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 39 Mar 23 13:51 mani.txt
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 205 Mar 23 14:17 mani.zip
ubuntu $ unzip mani.zip
Archive: mani.zip
replace mani.txt? [y]es, [n]o, [A]ll, [N]one, [r]ename: n
ubuntu $ 1s -1
total 8
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root  1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem -> /
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 39 Mar 23 13:51 mani.txt
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 205 Mar 23 14:17 mani.zip
ubuntu $ []
```

28. ssh—Secure Shell command in Linux

ssh username@hostname

29. service—Linux command to start and stop services

```
root@ubuntu:~ →> service ssh status
root@ubuntu:~ →> service ssh stop
root@ubuntu:~ →> service ssh start
```

```
ubuntu $ service ssh status

• ssh.service - OpenBSD Secure Shell server
Loaded: loaded (/lib/systemd/system/ssh.service; enabled; vendor preset: enabled)
Active: active (running) since Thu 2023-02-23 12:36:58 UTC; 4 weeks 0 days ago
Docs: man:sshd_config(5)

Main PID: 597 (sshd)

Tasks: 75 (limit: 2339)
Memory: 1.36

GGroup: /system.slice/ssh.service
- 597 sshd: /usr/sbin/sshd -D [listener] 0 of 10-100 startups
-21578 /pof/theia/node /opt/theia/browser-app/src-gen/backend/main.js /root --hostname-0.0.0 --port 40205
-21589 bash -c while true; do /bin/kc-terminal -p 40200 -t disableleaveAlert=true bash; done
-21519 //bin/kc-terminal -p 40200 -t disableleaveAlert=true bash; done
-21612 sshd: kc-internal@notty
-21625 dhclient -v
-21677 Mclient -v
-21710 dhclient -v
```

30. ps—Display active processes

```
ubuntu $ ps
   PID TTY
                   TIME CMD
 22514 pts/0
               00:00:00 bash
 23118 pts/0
               00:00:00 systemctl
 23122 pts/0
              00:00:00 pager
 23296 pts/0
               00:00:00 sudo
 23297 pts/0 00:00:00 su
 23320 pts/0
                00:00:00 bash
 23848 pts/0
                00:00:00 ps
ubuntu $
```

31. kill and killall—Kill active processes by process ID or name

```
Editor
         Tab 1
ubuntu $ ps
    PID TTY
                        TIME CMD
  22514 pts/0
                   00:00:00 bash
  23118 pts/0
23122 pts/0
23296 pts/0
                   00:00:00 systemctl
                   00:00:00 pager
                   00:00:00 sudo
  23297 pts/0 00:00:00 su
23320 pts/0 00:00:00 ba
                   00:00:00 bash
 24066 pts/0
24658 pts/0
                   00:00:00 bash
                   00:00:00 ps
ubuntu $ kill 23297
ubuntu $
Session terminated, killing shell.....killed.
Terminated
ubuntu 💲 🗍
```

32. df—Display disk filesystem information

```
ubuntu $ df
Filesystem
udev 998196 0 998196 0% /dev
tmpfs 203096 1008 202088 1% /run
/dev/vda1 20134592 4595532 15522676 23% /
tmpfs 1015468 0 1015468 0% /dev/shm
tmpfs 5120 0 5120 0% /run/lock
tmpfs 1015468 0 1015468 0% /sys/fs/cgroup
/dev/loop0 64768 64768 0 100% /snap/core20/1634
/dev/loop1 69504 69504 0 100% /snap/snapd/17336
/dev/vda15 106858 5313 101545 5% /boot/efi
```

33. mount—Mount file systems in Linux.

```
root@ubuntu:~ -->> mount /dev/cdrom /mnt
root@ubuntu:~ -->> df -h
```

34. chmod—Command to change file permissions

```
ubuntu $ 1s -1

total 16

drwxr-xr-x 2 root root 4096 Mar 23 16:24 755

drwxr-xr-x 2 root root 4096 Mar 23 16:22 do-w

drwxr-xr-x 2 root root 4096 Mar 23 16:24 example.sh

lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem -> /

drwxr-xr-x 2 root root 4096 Mar 23 16:22 importany.txt

ubuntu $ | |
```

35. chown—Command for granting ownership of files or folders.

```
ubuntu $ touch important.txt
ubuntu $ chmod go-w important.txt
ubuntu $ ls -l
total 0
lrwxrwxrwx 1 root root 1 Feb 23 12:40 filesystem -> /
-rw-r--r-- 1 root root 0 Mar 23 16:29 important.txt
ubuntu $ |
```

36. ifconfig—Display network interfaces and IP addresses

```
Editor
ubuntu $ ifconfig
docker0: flags=4099<UP, BROADCAST, MULTICAST> mtu 1500
       inet 172.17.0.1 netmask 255.255.0.0 broadcast 172.17.255.255
       ether 02:42:fb:12:3b:47 txqueuelen 0 (Ethernet)
       RX packets 0 bytes 0 (0.0 B)
       RX errors 0 dropped 0 overruns 0 frame 0
       TX packets 0 bytes 0 (0.0 B)
       TX errors 0 dropped 0 overruns 0 carrier 0 collisions 0
enp1s0: flags=4163<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST> mtu 1460
       inet 172.30.1.2 netmask 255.255.255.0 broadcast 172.30.1.255
       ether f2:05:f6:3f:86:80 txqueuelen 1000 (Ethernet)
       RX packets 354854 bytes 495919765 (495.9 MB)
       RX errors 0 dropped 0 overruns 0 frame 0
       TX packets 36074 bytes 18302746 (18.3 MB)
       TX errors 0 dropped 0 overruns 0 carrier 0 collisions 0
lo: flags=73<UP,LOOPBACK,RUNNING> mtu 65536
       inet 127.0.0.1 netmask 255.0.0.0
       inet6 ::1 prefixlen 128 scopeid 0x10<host>
       loop txqueuelen 1000 (Local Loopback)
       RX packets 330 bytes 41538 (41.5 KB)
       RX errors 0 dropped 0 overruns 0 frame 0
       TX packets 330 bytes 41538 (41.5 KB)
       TX errors 0 dropped 0 overruns 0 carrier 0 collisions 0
ubuntu $
```

37. traceroute—Trace all the network hops to reach the destination

```
ubuntu $ traceroute localhost
traceroute to localhost (127.0.0.1), 64 hops max
     127.0.0.1 0.002ms 0.002ms 0.001ms
ubuntu $ traceroute google.com
traceroute to google.com (74.125.24.101), 64 hops max
     172.30.1.1 0.073ms 0.033ms 0.039ms
     51.79.228.231 0.077ms 0.042ms 0.041ms
 2
 3
     51.79.228.252 0.488ms 0.273ms 0.301ms
     10.161.49.124 0.212ms 0.166ms 0.144ms
 4
 5
     10.133.3.56 0.502ms 0.372ms 0.366ms
 6
     10.75.0.54 0.177ms 0.205ms 0.142ms
     10.75.248.14 0.885ms 0.638ms 0.757ms
 8
     103.5.15.16 4.384ms 1.964ms 1.968ms
 9
     10.200.0.198 1.480ms 1.330ms 1.347ms
10
11
     142.251.241.0 0.795ms 0.680ms 0.727ms
12
13
     108.170.240.241 2.985ms 0.986ms 0.895ms
     216.239.35.154 1.570ms * 1.501ms
14
15
     142.251.229.230 26.301ms 8.491ms 1.493ms
16
     66.249.94.149 2.482ms 2.588ms 3.031ms
17
18
     * * *
19
20
21
22
     * * *
23
24
25
26
    74.125.24.101 1.264ms 1.213ms 1.261ms
ubuntu 🖇 📗
```

38. wget—Direct download files from the internet.

39. ufw-Firewall command

```
ubuntu $ sudo ufw enable
Firewall is active and enabled on system startup
ubuntu $ sudo ufw allow ssh
Skipping adding existing rule
Skipping adding existing rule (v6)
ubuntu $ sudo ufw allow http
Skipping adding existing rule
Skipping adding existing rule
Skipping adding existing rule
Ubuntu $ I
```

40. iptables—Base firewall for all other firewall utilities to interface with

```
ubuntu $ sudo iptables -A INPUT -p tcp --dport 22 -j DROP
ubuntu $ sudo iptables -A INPUT -p tcp --dport 80 -j ACCEPT
ubuntu $ sudo iptables -P OUTPUT ACCEPT
ubuntu $ ufw allow 80
Rule added
Rule added (v6)
ubuntu $
```

- **41. apt, pacman, yum, rpm**—Package managers depending on the distro.
 - Debian and Debian-based distros—apt install <package name>
 - Arch and Arch-based distros—pacman -S <package name>
 - Red Hat and Red Hat-based distros—yum install <package name>
 - Fedora and CentOS—yum install <package>
- 42. sudo—Command to escalate privileges in Linux.

```
ubuntu $ sudo su
ubuntu $ pwd
/root
ubuntu $ ■
```

43. cal—View a command-line calendar.

```
ubuntu $ cal Januarry 2023
    January 2023
Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa
      3 4 5 6
   9 10 11 12 13 14
15 16 17 18 19 20 21
22 23 24 25 26 27 28
29 30 31
ubuntu $ cal March
                   2023
    March 2023
Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa
            2 3 4
         1
   6 7
           9 10 11
         8
12 13 14 15 16 17 18
19 20 21 22 23 24 25
26 27 28 29 30 31
ubuntu $
```

44. alias—Create custom shortcuts for your regularly used commands.

- 45. dd—Majorly used for creating bootable USB sticks
- **46. whereis**—Locate the binary, source, and manual pages for a command.

```
ubuntu $ whereis sudo
sudo: /usr/bin/sudo /usr/lib/sudo /usr/share/man/man8/sudo.8.gz
ubuntu $ ■
```

47. whatis—Find what a command is used for

```
ubuntu $ whatis sudo sudo (8) - execute a command as another user ubuntu $
```

48. top—View active processes live with their system usage

top - 16:56:44 up 54 min, 0 users, load average: 0.08, 0.08, 0.03										
Tasks: 123 total, 1 running, 122 sleeping, 0 stopped, 0 zombie %Cpu(s): 0.0 us, 1.3 sy, 4.7 ni, 94.0 id, 0.0 wa, 0.0 hi, 0.0 si, 0.0 st										
жсри(s) МіВ Мет				176.					8.8 buff/	
MiB Swa				1023.			z useu, B used.		.6 avail	
LITP 2Ma		1024.0	ocal,	1023.	z iree,	0.	o useu.	. 145:	o.o avaii	rielli
PID	USER	PR	NI	VIRT	RES	SHR S	%CPU	%MEM	TIME+	COMMAND
21578	root	39	19	858652	80168	34224 S	0.7	3.9	0:05.49	node
22499	root	20	0	0		0 I	0.3	0.0	0:00.11	kworker/u2:0-events_power_efficie
22596	root	39	19	842988	62776	30124 S	0.3	3.1	0:06.15	node
22669	root	39	19	559336	38880	29732 S	0.3	1.9	0:00.19	node
1	root	20		169472	12456	7864 S	0.0	0.6	0:13.83	systemd
2	root	20	0	0		0 S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	kthreadd
3	root	0	-20			0 I	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	rcu_gp
4	root	0	-20	0		0 I	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	rcu_par_gp
6	root	0	-20			0 I	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	kworker/0:0H-events_highpri
8	root	0	-20	0		0 I	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	mm_percpu_wq
9	root	20				0 S	0.0	0.0	0:00.53	ksoftirqd/0
10	root	20	0	0		0 I	0.0	0.0	0:00.55	rcu_sched
11	root	rt				0 S	0.0	0.0	0:00.01	migration/0
12	root	-51	0	0		0 S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	idle_inject/0
14	root	20				0 S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	cpuhp/0
15	root	20	0	0		0 S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	kdevtmpfs
16	root	0	-20			0 I	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	netns
17	root	20	0	0		0 S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	rcu_tasks_kthre
18	root	20				0 S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	kauditd
19	root	20	0	0		0 S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	khungtaskd
20	root	20				0 S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	oom_reaper
21	root	0	-20	0		0 I	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	writeback
22	poot	10	0	0	0	0.0	0 0	0 0	0.00 00	Iccompactd0

49. useradd and **usermod**—Add new user or change existing users data.

```
ubuntu $ useradd priyanka
ubuntu $ usermod -s /bin/zsh john
usermod: no changes
ubuntu $ usermod -s /bin/zsh priya
ubuntu $ ■
```

50. passwd—Create or update passwords for existing users.

```
ubuntu $ passwd
New password:
Retype new password:
passwd: password updated successfully
ubuntu $
```

Credits: digitalocean

That's it, thank you for reading.

In case you would like to continue the discussion, you can always reach out to me on <u>Twitter</u> or on LinkedIn for professional networking, if you feel like following me on <u>GitHub</u> you can also do that.

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