

file systems, there was a small but unavoidable performance hit, but for networked file systems, the performance impact could be very high. Starting with version 8.2.1, the default behavior is that files are kept open if no more than 200 files are specified, but that the behavior can be explicitly overridden with the **--keep-files-open** flag. If you are merging more than 200 files but less than the operating system's max open files limit, you may want to use **--keep-files-open=y**, especially if working over a networked file system. If you are using a local file system where the overhead is low and you might sometimes merge more than the OS limit's number of files from a script and are not worried about a few seconds additional processing time, you may want to specify **--keep-files-open=n**.

--pages options --

Select specific pages from one or more input files. See [Section 3.5, “Page Selection Options”, page 10](#) for details on how to do page selection (splitting and merging).

--collate

When specified, collate rather than concatenate pages from files specified with **--pages**. See [Section 3.5, “Page Selection Options”, page 10](#) for additional details.

--split-pages=[n]

Write each group of **n** pages to a separate output file. If **n** is not specified, create single pages. Output file names are generated as follows:

- If the string `%d` appears in the output file name, it is replaced with a range of zero-padded page numbers starting from 1.
- Otherwise, if the output file name ends in `.pdf` (case insensitive), a zero-padded page range, preceded by a dash, is inserted before the file extension.
- Otherwise, the file name is appended with a zero-padded page range preceded by a dash.

Page ranges are a single number in the case of single-page groups or two numbers separated by a dash otherwise. For example, if *infile.pdf* has 12 pages

- **qpdf --split-pages infile.pdf %d-out** would generate files *01-out* through *12-out*
- **qpdf --split-pages=2 infile.pdf outfile.pdf** would generate files *outfile-01-02.pdf* through *outfile-11-12.pdf*
- **qpdf --split-pages infile.pdf something.else** would generate files *something.else-01* through *something.else-12*

Note that outlines, threads, and other global features of the original PDF file are not preserved. For each page of output, this option creates an empty PDF and copies a single page from the output into it. If you require the global data, you will have to run **qpdf** with the **--pages** option once for each file. Using **--split-pages** is much faster if you don't require the global data.

--overlay options --

Overlay pages from another file onto the output pages. See [Section 3.6, “Overlay and Underlay Options”, page 12](#) for details on overlay/underlay.

--underlay options --

Overlay pages from another file onto the output pages. See [Section 3.6, “Overlay and Underlay Options”, page 12](#) for details on overlay/underlay.

Password-protected files may be opened by specifying a password. By default, qpdf will preserve any encryption data associated with a file. If **--decrypt** is specified, qpdf will attempt to remove any encryption information. If **--encrypt** is specified, qpdf will replace the document's encryption parameters with whatever is specified.