Getting Help and Reading Documentation: Takeaways

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 wraping 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:

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

- Explain Shell
- 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.